

# Veterans Find Help, Homes in Indianapolis

The site of a former ironworks foundry in Indianapolis is now where 75 formerly homeless veterans call home. The Lincoln Apartments, an \$11.6 million low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) development for veterans, opened in 2013 with a dedication ceremony on the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address and now serves former military members who hit hard times.



Photos: Courtesy of Megan Barnett

# Veterans Find Help, Homes in Indianapolis

Lincoln Apartments was developed on the housing-first model, the concept that a homeless person must first have stable and permanent housing before other issues can be effectively addressed. In this case, the permanent housing is a development with 25 efficiency studios and 50 one-bedroom apartments, all fully furnished. Amenities include a shared computer training room, laundry room, fitness center, indoor bike storage and a common gathering room.

“We’ve always been supportive of permanent supportive housing as a solution to end chronic homelessness,” said Fred Hash, director of business development at Great Lakes Capital Fund (GLCF), the syndicator of the LIHTC property.

The complex is located about a mile from the Richard L. Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center. It’s on the site of a 19th century ironworks foundry that was demolished in the early 1960s. The lot sat vacant for nearly a half-century, and then the land was donated for affordable housing by the city of Indianapolis. That meant it required a cleaning of the environmental contaminants

“We’ve always been supportive of permanent supportive housing as a solution to end chronic homelessness.”

left over from the factory before construction.

Once it opened, it began serving veterans. Dennis Quinn, senior vice president of GLCF and president and CEO of Building Blocks Non-Profit Housing Corporation, a development entity, sees Lincoln Apartments as a great way to address veterans’ needs. “We want [Lincoln Apartments] to be holistic, not just housing,” he said.

Part of that comes with physical and mental health services, as well as links to job training and opportunities. One of the main goals of Lincoln Apartments is the reintegration of the veterans into the community. “What all of this is about is getting [veterans] back on their feet and gainfully employed again,”

said Mark Wester, vice president of contracts and agreements for Medallion Management Inc, the property manager. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) case managers

also work with Lincoln Apartments residents to explore what type of services they need.

“No one deserves to be homeless,” said Deborah Walls, community residential program manager for Volunteers of American of Indiana, the volunteer coordinator at the complex. “We’re very encouraged that Lincoln Apartments supports veterans.”

That isn’t all. Development partners hope that the successful collaboration between the public and private entities in building Lincoln Apartments will lead to more permanent supportive housing developments for veterans in the area. “It’s the first of its type in the city of Indianapolis,” said Quinn. “But hopefully not the last.” ❖

<b>LEAD DEVELOPER</b> <b>BUILDING BLOCKS NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION</b>	<b>CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT</b> <b>INDIANA 7TH</b>
<b>CATEGORY</b> <b>VETERANS, HOMELESS</b>	<b>RENTAL HOMES</b> <b>75</b>
<b>FINANCING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$12 million in low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) allocated by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCD)</li> <li>\$10 million in LIHTC equity syndicated by the Great Lakes Capital Fund, from Fifth Third Bank, Huntington Bank and several Indiana community banks</li> <li>\$500,000 HOME loan from the city of Indianapolis</li> <li>\$500,000 Affordable Housing Program award from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, through the National bank of Indianapolis</li> <li>\$300,000 in soft loans from the IHCD</li> <li>\$282,000 in deferred developer fees from Building Blocks Non-Profit Housing Corporation</li> <li>\$250,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</li> </ul>	