

## **Program Related Investments: Loan Boosts Innovative Older Adult Housing**

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On Milwaukee's far northwest side, the Garden Place senior housing development offers an inviting environment that is bundled with living services that help residents maintain their independence. With 57 of its 62 units set aside for low- and moderate-income Milwaukeeans, its underlying message is that older adults can stay in their community as their day-to-day needs change.

The project's developer, **SunStarr Real Estate Group, LLC**, is looking to build on that success with Garden Terrace, an 80-unit development proposed for an adjacent parcel. The majority of the new units will be set aside as affordable living for older adults who need daily living assistance, alongside more independent seniors who rent at market rates.

Keeping the rent affordable requires a mix of tax credits and financing, but the proposed rents can only support a limited amount of debt. A \$400,000 low-interest loan through the Foundation's Program Related Investment (PRI) Fund will help fill that gap.

"It's important to reach out to a population that's underserved," said Scott Stevlingson, SunStarr's chief operating officer. "Aging is an issue that touches just about everybody, so we want to create welcoming, affordable homes for our older adults."

SunStarr has worked on a half-dozen senior living projects throughout the state over the past few years. Based in Fond du Lac, the company was attracted to the area by Milwaukee County's participation in Family Care, a pilot program of the state to give older adults more control over the services they receive. Garden Place was the county's first development to directly target Family Care participants, who can choose from various supportive, personal, and nursing assistance services.

As the number of older Americans swells in the years ahead, communities of all sizes will be challenged to find creative approaches to housing, service delivery, and infrastructure needs, so older adults can have the greatest measure of independence and engagement within the broader community.

The PRI Fund aims to bolster the Foundation's Wisconsin-based funding interests, which include a commitment to older adult issues. Since 1992, more than \$28 million in Alzheimer's and Aging grants have been awarded to nonprofits and government entities. Unlike grants, PRIs offer the flexibility of engaging for-profit partners with charitable aims, and in the case of loans, have the potential for being repaid and replenishing the Fund.

Since the PRI Fund was created in 2001, the Foundation has committed to loans, loan guarantees, and equity investments with a value of more than \$3 million.