

**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****
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NeighborWorks Lincoln Augments Team in Response to Housing Crisis

LINCOLN, NE – Nebraska's capital city is facing a stark housing shortage and one of its largest nonprofit developers is retooling to be part of the solution. NeighborWorks Lincoln announced today that Leslie Coleman will be joining its ranks as chief operations officer in mid-April. The senior leadership position will be filled a month after Charlie Wesche was promoted to the organization's chief of staff role, and comes on the heels of the release of its 2022-24 strategic plan late last year. Established in 1986, NeighborWorks Lincoln has historically functioned as a niche developer of for-sale affordable housing for low- and moderate-income Lincoln families, but has taken a more aggressive stance, beginning in 2020, as evidenced by the following milestones:

- Hired Wayne Mortensen in July 2020 to serve as its new chief executive officer.
- Between 2020 and 2023 created four new roles – financial services administrator, real estate director, real estate associate, and chief of staff – and now has its largest team (12 FTEs).
- Expanded its board of directors while decreasing the overall age by 12 years and doubling female (58%) and non-white member participation (37%).
- Incorporated Nebraska's first citywide community land trust (CLT), which facilitates perennial affordable housing through land leases.
- Approved its new strategic plan in late 2022 that calls for more involvement in workforce, mixed-income, and multi-family housing.
- Increased its access to working capital by 200% and attracted \$2.1Mn in federal (ARPA) support.

Leslie Coleman joins NeighborWorks Lincoln after five years as the chief executive officer of NeighborWorks Home Solutions (NWHs) in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where she helped achieve an "exemplary" rating from NeighborWorks America. Prior to that, Coleman served as the chief operating officer at NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska (NWNEN) in Norfolk, and managed the housing division of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. In her new role, Coleman will spearhead organizational compliance and program evaluation. Leslie is a native of Falls City, Nebraska, and attended Northeast Community College.

Charlie Wesche continues six years of service with NeighborWorks Lincoln in the newly-created position of chief of staff. In addition to his ongoing responsibilities as the real estate director, Wesche will play a larger role in organizational strategy, development, and team performance. He previously worked as a middle school science instructor at Lincoln Public Schools and managed his own home renovation contracting business. Charlie is a native of Laramie, Wyoming, and graduate of Hastings College.

QUOTABLE:

"Leslie and Charlie bring an array of practical abilities and mission-fit to a roster of team members and partners that have us bullish about our ability to serve the City of Lincoln at a higher level." CEO, Wayne Mortensen

"Working for an organization that has a significant economic impact locally while being part of housing policy and innovation dialogue nationally is exciting." COO, Leslie Coleman

"The Board made a series of strategically impactful decisions on the premise that we wanted the organization to play a larger role in solving Lincoln's systemic housing challenges." President, Eric Gerrard

"Creative solutions like the community land trust are fundamental to Lincoln being able to get ahead of persistent housing trends." Chief of Staff and Real Estate Director, Charlie Wesche

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The mission of NeighborWorks Lincoln is to improve lives by expanding affordable housing opportunities and strengthening neighborhoods.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:

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PICTURED: (left) Coleman, (right) Wesche, (below) Officers Eric Gerrard, Wayne Mortensen, and Adelle Burk

