



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### —JACKSON, COTTONWOOD COUNTIES TO BENEFIT FROM \$10,000 GRANT TO STREAMLINE HOUSING SERVICES, REDUCE PUBLIC COSTS—

**St. Paul, MN (June 1, 2012)** A \$10,000 grant will help Jackson and Cottonwood County housing organizations collaborate to meet the area's need for affordable housing. The grant aims to help preserve local affordable housing resources and make the area more competitive for grants for future housing development – all while saving public dollars.

The grant, awarded to the Jackson Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), will assist the Jackson, Windom, and Mountain Lake HRAs in planning for a consortium to coordinate local housing efforts. The consortium would combine the staff functions of all three agencies, streamline procedures, and reduce overall administrative costs, while preserving 204 units of existing affordable housing and maintaining the decision-making authority of each HRA.

With the dip in the economy and several years of federal budget cuts, all three HRAs face the challenge of accomplishing more public service with less public funding. The upcoming retirements of two of the HRAs' three executive directors provided the opportunity to think creatively about cost-saving solutions. Discussions between the three agencies generated the idea of a consortium. Grant funds will be used to plan for combining administrative tasks and consulting with an HRA experienced in creating a similar consortium in Atchison, Kansas.

The \$10,000 grant was made through Minnesota Housing Partnership's (MHP) Sustainable Community Engagement Fund. This fund assists nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and communities outside of the seven-county Twin Cities metro area and Duluth, in becoming strong, successful affordable housing providers. Through financial and technical support from MHP, the Sustainable Community Engagement Fund promotes community efforts to build housing development capacity and integrate affordable housing with transportation, jobs, schools, and family services.

"We see the multi-HRA consortium as a creative, cost-saving way for the three agencies to work together to preserve affordable housing. And we are hopeful that the model will inspire other HRAs across Minnesota seeking to maintain high quality service in an era of declining public resources," said DeeAnna Bakken, of the Jackson HRA.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership, a statewide nonprofit, advances the preservation and creation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people as a means of strengthening communities and families. MHP provides local governments and nonprofit housing organizations access to loans, grants, and technical expertise to plan and construct housing; it also advocates for and educates people on sound housing policies. MHP's work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by **The McKnight Foundation** and **Minnesota Housing**.

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