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WVFF Board Approves Initial Opportunity Grants, Announces Supplemental Round, and Elects Officers for 2025

WEST VIRGINIA (December 12, 2024) – The West Virginia First Foundation (WVFF) held its annual meeting today, where the Board voted on the Initial Opportunity Grants (IOG), announced a supplemental grant period and elected new officers for 2025.

Earlier this year, WVFF launched the Initial Opportunity Grant (IOG) program to support opioid crisis initiatives. Of the 174 applications received, after intake and scoring, the Board approved funding totaling \$10.4 million and further announced a supplemental round to reach its original goal of \$19.2 million.

Introducing the IOG Supplemental Round

Recognizing West Virginia's value of second chances, WVFF is offering applicants who did not get funded in this first disbursement of the IOG the opportunity to address application deficiencies and reapply for the remaining \$8.8 million. These applicants will receive notice before the end of the year and work with WVFF staff directly on how to meet necessary criteria. All grant-seekers from the initial round whose submissions were not funded are eligible to participate. Applicants must have submitted their initial applications by the original deadline (October 5, 2024).

The supplemental round reflects WVFF's commitment to West Virginia's recovery, resilience, and collaborative spirit in addressing the opioid crisis. It demonstrates the Foundation's understanding of the complexities of grant applications while ensuring the integrity of the funds through rigorous safeguards. This initiative furthers WVFF's mission to combat the opioid epidemic and strengthens its role as a leader in equitable, impactful grantmaking. All who applied for the Initial Opportunity Grant will be notified of status before the end of the year.

"The opioid crisis has left a devastating mark on West Virginia, and we are entrusted with ensuring these funds create real, measurable change," said Jonathan Board, Executive Director of the West Virginia First Foundation. "This process upholds our fiduciary duty, maintains rigorous checks and balances to protect the integrity of the funds and reinforces our commitment to responsible stewardship. We're excited to expand opportunities for applicants through this supplemental round and celebrate those who successfully completed the

application process. These applicants will now have timely access to funding, enabling them to begin making the critical changes needed to address the opioid crisis in West Virginia."

With the initial \$10.4 million in grant funding approved at the meeting, the announcement of \$8.8 million supplemental round, and the direct funding of \$20 million allocated for ACCORN (Accelerated Collaborative Community Outreach and Recovery Network), WVFF is proud to announce nearly \$40 million in total funding commitments made over the past week.

"Our ultimate goal is to save lives and restore families," added Matt Harvey, Chairman of the Board. "This supplemental round ensures that organizations that experienced challenges during the first round have an opportunity to succeed while maintaining the integrity and accountability of the process. This wraps up an incredibly exciting week following the ACCORN announcement, reflecting the hard work and dedication of the WVFF Board and staff to make meaningful change and support our communities in addressing the opioid crisis."

Election of Officers and Completion of Administrative Team

During the meeting, WVFF held its election of officers. These elected officers will lead the Foundation in its mission to transform the state's approach to substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery:

- **Chair:** Matthew Harvey
- **Vice-Chair:** Dr. Matthew Christiansen
- **Treasurer:** Jeff Sandy
- **Secretary:** Dora Stutler

In addition to the formation of the Executive Committee, WVFF announced that its administrative staff is now complete. The team includes:

- **Jessicah Cross**, Chief of Staff
- **Rachel Thaxton**, Director of Support Operations
- **Danin Cather**, Chief Marketing Officer
- **Romeo Tan**, Chief Operating Officer
- **Anthony Woods**, Chief Financial Officer

Looking Ahead

The Foundation's decisions during its annual meeting mark the beginning of a transformative journey for West Virginia. By empowering local organizations and fostering innovative approaches to substance use disorder prevention and recovery, WVFF is paving the way for a brighter future for the Mountain State.

For additional information, visit the Foundation's website at wvfirst.org.

About West Virginia First Foundation: The West Virginia First Foundation (WVFF) is a nonprofit organization established to address the opioid crisis and its lasting impact across the state. Created under the terms of the West Virginia First Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), WVFF was designed to receive and distribute opioid settlement funds. Guided by the principles outlined in the MOU, the Foundation operates as a private 501(c)(3) entity to support prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction efforts. Through strategic funding and community collaboration, WVFF is committed to creating sustainable solutions that improve the health and well-being of all West Virginians. For more information, visit wvfirst.org.