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Call for Operators: State-Licensed Childcare Providers Invited to Lease and Operate Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square

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Mount Carroll, IL – Economic Growth Corporation (GROWTH) invites state-licensed childcare operators to submit proposals for leasing and operating an early childhood development center within its Shimer Square campus. To access the full Request for Proposals, interested operators can visit www.ShimerSquare.com or contact Beth Payne at bpayne@growthcorp.org or (309) 794-6711.

As part of GROWTH's ongoing revitalization efforts at Shimer Square, the early childhood development center aims to create jobs and meet the increasing demand for quality childcare services for families residing within a 30-minute radius of Mount Carroll. Focused on creating a nurturing environment conducive to learning and development, the center will cater to children aged 0-5, with the operator offering a variety of childcare programs and services. Spanning approximately 5,000 square feet, the facility will include classrooms with optimal staff-to-child ratios, a kitchen area, bathrooms, office space, and an outdoor play area.

To ensure the center adheres to the highest standards of care and education, GROWTH seeks proposals from experienced state-licensed childcare operators to lease and operate the facility. Interested operators are encouraged to attend a pre-proposal meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at 203 E Seminary Street, Mount Carroll. During this session, operators will have the opportunity to tour the campus and the site of the new construction facility, which will soon break ground, and engage with GROWTH representatives.

Key details regarding the proposal process are as follows:

- **Proposal Submission Deadline:** Proposals must be submitted electronically to Beth Payne, Senior Vice President, at bpayne@growthcorp.org, no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 24, 2024. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- **Facility Specifications:** The newly constructed facility will start construction in the next 30 days and will span approximately 5,000 square feet and includes classrooms, a kitchen, bathrooms, office space, and an outdoor play area.
- **Lease Agreement:** The selected proposer will enter into a lease agreement with GROWTH and its wholly owned subsidiary, Shimer Square NC, LLC. Lease terms will be negotiated.

"We're encouraged by the resounding support for an early childhood development center within Shimer Square," said Brian Hollenback, President/CEO of GROWTH. "Our efforts align with local, state, and national priorities. We recognize the vital role that childcare plays in supporting families and fostering

the healthy growth of communities and the development of young children. By partnering with an experienced childcare operator, we aim to establish a center of excellence that creates vital jobs while also meeting the diverse needs of working families living within 30 minutes of Shimer Square."

"We are committed to partnering with operators who share our mission of job creation and community-focused dedication, aimed at providing high-quality childcare services and fostering a nurturing environment where children can thrive," stated Beth Payne, Senior Vice President for GROWTH.

About the Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square

Part of GROWTH's endeavor lies in the inclusion of a much-needed early childhood development center. In response to community demands, GROWTH diligently pursued funding opportunities, resulting in a significant grant of \$800,000 awarded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Community Services (OCS) through its Community Economic Development (CED) program. This grant, announced in October 2022 by former U.S. Congresswoman Cheri Bustos, underscores the importance of Shimer Square's revitalization on a state and national scale, emphasizing the creation of jobs and increased access to early childcare services.

Building on their collaborative efforts, GROWTH and the City of Mount Carroll conducted a comprehensive feasibility study in 2023 to explore the viability of integrating an early childhood development center within Shimer Square. The results strongly demonstrated the urgent need for such facilities within the region, further fueling the ongoing revitalization efforts.

The findings of the market study, which overwhelmingly supported the initiative, have been made available to the public. An executive summary showcasing the demand for an early childhood development center can be accessed at ShimerSquare.com. The complete Feasibility Study is available upon request, subject to the signing of a non-disclosure agreement.

To learn more about Shimer Square, visit www.ShimerSquare.com. For additional information about GROWTH, visit www.EconomicGrowthCorporation.com.

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