



For Immediate Release

**IFF and Community Leaders Celebrate Completion of New Affordable,
Accessible Housing Development in Park Forest**

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Access South Cook to take place Thursday, August 27 at 10am

Chicago, IL (August 27, 2026) – IFF, a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant, and developer, is proud to announce completion of Access South Cook, an all new construction, accessible, affordable housing development in the Village of Park Forest. Access South Cook marks the tenth distinct project developed by [Home First](#), IFF's in-house development group. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, August 27 at 10am to mark this milestone and celebrate the collaborative efforts that made this development possible.

"IFF believes that everyone deserves the right to safe, affordable, high-quality housing, and for more than a decade, Home First has been committed to making this a reality for people with disabilities by developing affordable, accessible, community-integrated homes," said Kirby Burkholder, IFF CEO. "Access South Cook is a tangible investment in Park Forest and the quality of life for all its residents and is an example of what is possible when passionate partners commit to a shared vision."

For more than two decades, Access South Cook has been conceptualized with the Village of Park Forest's desire for more residential development, and in late 2021, IFF approached the Village about the potential for a development. Since then, IFF and the Village have partnered to bring this new development to life.

"When people talk about affordability, housing is often the first word mentioned," U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) said. "That is why projects like Access South Cook in Park Forest are so important. With the collaboration of federal low-income housing tax credits, and resources from state, private, and nonprofit organizations, this space has been transformed into 44 new rental units for families and individuals. Not only will these homes help lower the cost of rent for local residents, but they will ensure people with disabilities have more options for accessible, quality housing."

"Nearly one in four households in Park Forest have at least one person living with a disability, many of whom feel the weight of paying medical and other expenses along with rising housing costs," said Kristin Faust, Illinois Housing Development Authority's executive director. "Access South Cook is a strong example of what happens when state and local governments work together to respond to the housing needs of Illinois' most vulnerable. IHDA is proud to have supported the construction of these new apartments to help those with disabilities live full, independent lives in the place they call home, and bolster the Village of Park Forest's plan to build a stronger, more connected community."

Featuring 44 rental units (24 one-bedroom units and 20 two-bedroom units), a shared green space, and a community building, Access South Cook is located on the Park Forest village campus near retail businesses, government offices, banks, a prairie garden, restaurants, and a farmers' market. The residential units feature central air-conditioning, in-unit laundry, high-quality cabinetry and flooring, energy efficient appliances and lighting, and all first-floor apartments are fully accessible. Additionally, the site features landscaping that complements the natural prairie grass across the street at Village Hall

(more)

and includes state-of-the-art storm water features for the first time in Park Forest. A time lapse of the construction can be viewed [here](#).

“ComEd and IFF share a commitment to creating affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient living spaces, especially for income-eligible individuals and people with disabilities,” said Ajit Apte, ComEd’s senior vice president of Customer Operations. “The energy-efficiency measures installed – like high-performance windows, HVAC, lighting and appliances – are expected to save nearly 800,000 kilowatt hours of electricity, thus reducing utility bills. These upgrades also qualified for nearly \$230,000 in incentives, helping offset costs for building managers and residents.”

Access South Cook is owned and developed by IFF. The project architect is WJW Architects, and the general contractor is Blackwood Group/Crane Construction. Financing partners include the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Illinois Department of Human Services, ComEd, First Merchants Bank, PNC Bank, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, and IFF equity.

“At PNC, we believe strong communities are built when everyone has access to stable and affordable housing,” said Scott Swanson, PNC regional president for Chicago. “Access South Cook is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when mission-driven organizations, public agencies and the private-sector come together around a shared vision. This development will provide high-quality, accessible homes that empower residents to live independently while remaining connected to the community they call home.”

Since 2011, Home First has been tasked with establishing new models of housing for people with disabilities. This has included revitalizing vacant or underutilized properties that create new models of community integrated, affordable, and accessible housing. Over the past 15 years, Home First has developed more than 320 units of accessible, affordable housing across the state of Illinois.

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About IFF

IFF is a nonprofit community development financial institution that champions nonprofits to shape more equitable and vibrant communities through community-centered lending, development, and real estate consulting. Since 1988, IFF has been working at the intersection of facilities and finance and has provided more than \$1.9 billion in flexible, affordable financing to nonprofits serving a variety of sectors in order to increase their financial stability and programmatic offerings. Headquartered in Chicago, IFF serves the Midwest from regional offices in Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Learn more at iff.org or follow IFF on LinkedIn, Facebook, or X @iffcdfi.