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County Business Assistance Programs Help Medical Career School Expand in Westgate

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Medical Career Institute of South Florida, Inc. (MCI) is expanding its campus and moving to the Westgate community. With the assistance of \$414,000 in financing from the county's Section 108 Loan and Energy Revolving Loan Fund programs, approved by the Board of County Commissioners through its Department of Economic Sustainability (DES), the private school is renovating a 22,000-square-foot building on Shawnee Avenue in unincorporated West Palm Beach.

The total project cost is \$2.3 million, and the county loans will help finance construction and equipment, including the installation of energy-efficient improvements.

The school was established in 2001 in Lake Worth preparing its students for careers in medical care related services. After receiving national occupational education accreditation in 2004, MCI's students were eligible to apply for federal tuition assistance. As a result, the student body has grown substantially, necessitating the move to larger headquarters.

"It is encouraging to see more businesses invest in the Westgate community," said District 7 Commissioner Priscilla Taylor. "This centrally-located campus will provide opportunities for residents seeking education and training specifically for employment in health related services."

According to an analysis conducted by DES, it is estimated that this project will create 16 permanent jobs and 65 construction jobs, with an economic impact of \$6.1 million over a five-year period.

The purpose of the Section 108 Loan Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is to provide a source of gap financing for business ventures that will create jobs and help revitalize communities. DES currently administers \$30 million in three Section 108 loan pools.

The Energy Revolving Loan Fund, developed through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, was implemented to assist businesses with energy efficiency retrofits to reduce utility costs and fossil fuel consumption, while creating and retaining jobs for local residents.

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