

## **Landrieu: Outreach center 'a dream factory'**

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LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — An Acadiana area social service agency that plans to create a mixed-use, mixed-income housing development in downtown Lafayette may be getting \$280,000 in federal dollars.

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu recently toured the Acadiana Outreach Center, a nonprofit group that aids the homeless and operates a day shelter, a women's and children's shelter and job training center.

Landrieu has earmarked money for the center in a federal highway and housing spending bill that she says is very likely to pass.

The center plans to purchase a 15,000 square-foot brick former warehouse, and, using a combination of federal funds, grants and private funding sources, expand the building upward to create rental space for low- to moderate-income individuals and families.

If approved, the federal money will be used to complete a feasibility study, develop a financing strategy, acquire the property and assist with architectural designs.

Valerie Keller, the center's chief executive officer, says the bottom floor of the building may be converted to commercial space for art galleries, day care services and job training.

Architecture students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are creating designs for the project, Keller said.

"I really believe in what's going on here," Landrieu said after touring the Outreach Center campus Thursday.

Often, the center sees citizens, especially women and children, who cannot afford housing in Lafayette. The housing development, called the Lofts at Olivier, can fill that gap in services and invigorate the entire neighborhood, Keller said.

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