

**For Immediate Release**

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CITY OF VENTURA  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
501 Poli Street  
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**Ventura receives \$32 Million from the State of California for an innovative housing project bringing hope, shelter, and support to unhoused and at-risk individuals**

**Ventura, California** – In a groundbreaking announcement on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled a historic \$32,076,607 grant for Ventura during the third round of Project Homekey funding. This substantial allocation is earmarked for the Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura (HACSB), in partnership with the County of Ventura, to facilitate the transformation of a hotel into a permanent supportive housing facility.

"This is the largest Homekey award in the history of both our City and County and will substantially impact our community," said Ventura Mayor Joe Schroeder. "The City Council is committed to addressing our housing crisis while prioritizing the well-being and future of our residents. This achievement marks a significant stride in our continuous efforts to combat the homelessness crisis that our community faces."

The \$32 million Project Homekey grant is earmarked for acquiring and renovating La Quinta Inn at 5818 Valentine Road in Ventura, strategically situated near public transit, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, and recreational amenities. This funding, granted through the State's Project Homekey initiative, will transform the 142-room hotel into 134 permanent supportive housing apartments designed to serve households experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

"The rise in the number of homeless individuals, particularly those without shelter, underscores the need for further efforts to address and prevent homelessness comprehensively," said Jeff Lambert, Chief Executive Officer of the Housing Authority. "We are excited to work with our partners to address the critical issue of homelessness. Housing is essential, and this funding marks a significant stride in the ongoing mission to combat homelessness, one person at a time."

The total project cost, encompassing acquisition and renovation expenses, is estimated at over \$50 million. The Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura led the acquisition and rehabilitation of the facility, providing a sponsor loan of \$1 million. The City of Ventura secured over \$1.5 million from a California Department of Housing and Community Development fee on real estate documents to help purchase the hotel. The city also committed nearly \$1.4 million in HOME-American Rescue Plan funding. The County of Ventura also contributed a \$5.5 million grant for the La Quinta Inn project.

"This landmark grant represents the third successful Project Homekey initiative that our county has undertaken over the course of three years and is a prime example of the success that can be achieved through community collaboration," commented Ventura County Supervisor Matt LaVere. "The ability to continue to invest in resources to address the needs of our unhoused population is invaluable. The County is deeply committed to working with our partners at the State and cities to ensure that we're investing in the infrastructure needs of our entire community and especially of those residents who are most vulnerable."

Based on the 2023 Point-in-Time Count, the County of Ventura has 2,441 people experiencing homelessness, marking a 9% increase compared to the 2022 Point-in-Time Count. During the same period, the overall number of homeless individuals in Ventura decreased by 10%, from 713 to 644.

Permanent Supportive Housing offers stable rental accommodations and essential supportive services, catering to individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or facing other special needs. This transformative model aligns with Homekey's proven approach, empowering public entities at the state, regional, and local levels to acquire, develop, and rehabilitate various housing types, including hotels, motels, hostels, single-family homes, multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, and manufactured housing.

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It also facilitates the conversion of commercial properties and other existing buildings into permanent or interim housing for those in need.

Wraparound services for the Valentine Road project will be delivered with several community partners, including the HACSB, Ventura County Behavioral Health, the Ventura County Continuum of Care, and the Ventura County Homeless Services Agency. Referrals will be channeled through the Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry System (CES), focusing on serving very low-income homeless households. Priority will be given to applicants who reside or work within the City of Ventura.

The development will comprise 134 studio apartments alongside office and community spaces; all centered around a flexible courtyard that serves as a communal gathering place. To ensure the success and well-being of residents, the Valentine Road housing project will be staffed by four property managers, including two residing on-site, six case managers, and maintenance personnel.

The Housing Authority anticipates finalizing the property's acquisition by early 2024, with the first occupants expected to be welcomed by the spring of the same year.

Project Homekey draws from Project Roomkey, initiated in March 2020 as a pivotal component of the state's comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This statewide initiative provides effective housing solutions that combat homelessness and bolster housing stability among vulnerable populations. Its primary aim is to acquire and transform properties into Permanent Supportive Housing, effectively addressing the urgent housing needs prevalent in communities across California.

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### **Quotes from Key Stakeholders:**

- **Bill Ayub, City Manager, City of Ventura**

"About a year ago, employees from the City, Housing Authority, and County gathered in a small room at City Hall with a shared vision of a project that could significantly improve the lives of those in need of support. Witnessing this vision becoming a reality is exhilarating for all of us and a source of excitement for our entire community."

- **John Polanskey, Board Chair with the Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura**

"Affordable permanent housing is the most important step in addressing homelessness. The Housing Authority is committed to working with the City of Ventura and the County of Ventura to make real progress."

- **Jenn Harkey, Ventura County Continuum of Care Program Director**

"This motel conversion project is a creative solution to provide more affordable and supportive housing units in our community. We are excited to partner with the Housing Authority to prioritize highly vulnerable households desperately needing a permanent place to call home."

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