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California Awards \$125 Million for Construction of New Housing Units for Veterans, Families

SACRAMENTO – In honor of Veteran’s Day, the Newsom Administration today [announced \\$125 million in grant awards](#) for the sixth round of funding of the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program (VHHP). This latest round of awards allows organizations to construct affordable housing across California to serve veterans and their families, people experiencing homelessness, and seniors.

Governor Newsom appeared today at one of the funded sites – the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus – to discuss the to discuss the significance of veterans and homelessness.

In all, the 12 organizations on the receiving ends of the funding will construct over a 1,000 housing units, including rental apartments, supportive housing, and transitional housing - all located near important amenities and services to support residents.

VHHP finances the development of a variety of rental housing for veterans and their families. The program is administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in collaboration with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA).

“HCD is honored to be a partner and administrator of this program that for the past six years has brought us closer to ending veteran homelessness in California – where we have the largest veteran population in the nation,” Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Director Gustavo Velasquez. “We are not there yet, but this funding certainly helps. Also, state funds for housing of this kind are typically required to stay affordable for at least 55 years, so the housing we fund today will go on to serve thousands of veterans, families and individuals for decades to come.”

The organizations receiving funding will construct and operate 15 properties and work closely with service providers to meet resident and community needs. The locations of the sites range and include Redlands, several parts of Los Angeles, the Central Coast, and the Bay Area. Most of the homes are estimated to be completed within the next three years.

“VHHP guarantees that more housing units are available to veterans experiencing homelessness, and it also ensures that our most vulnerable veterans have a stable future in the communities where they live and the support they need to thrive,” said CalVet Secretary, Vito Imbasciani MD. “I am exceedingly proud of the successful partnership among our departments. VHHP collaboration means we help provide housing and services to our veterans when and where they need it most.”

Several VHHP-awarded organizations have more than one project in the works. The Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) received \$15.5 million for two phases on one site, the largest award in terms of unit count with 245 homes. Their First Street North Apartments were renamed as such after the Los Angeles City Council approved expanding its footprint from 77 to 245 affordable and supportive homes. Fifty percent of the funds awarded will serve veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness, which is required by VHHP.

Little Tokyo is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, said LTSC Communications Manager Tenaya Senzaki, and after years of redlining and gentrification, has been whittled down to just a few blocks.

“This part of town has always been the heart of Little Tokyo,” said Takao Suzuki, Director of Community Development at the Little Tokyo Service Center, of the new apartments. The center’s plans for the mixed-use, transit-oriented development also include more than 40,000 square feet of commercial spaces for legacy small businesses as well as arts and cultural spaces that enhance the neighboring Union Center for the Arts, home to the oldest Asian American theatre group in the country.

Suzuki added, “Because of gentrification, it feels like we have significantly less dedicated spaces for legacy businesses. With the increased anti-Asian sentiment taking place in America due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we feel that having a more positive and visible project is a good way to pay tribute and assert our presence in our community. Telling the story of [First Street North] allows us to weave in a narrative that educates and challenges what we’re going through as a community.”

Eight projects in Los Angeles County will be awarded in this round of funding, totaling more than \$73 million in grant funds and 313 total veteran-specific units built.

The next round of VHHP will be released early 2022 as part of the new streamlined application process, per AB 434, that allows applicants to select more than one funding source and receive awards from those sources at the same time.

To learn more, please view [award list](#) and the [Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program webpage](#).

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The California Department of Housing and Community Development is dedicated to the preservation and expansion of safe and affordable housing, so more Californians have a place to call home. Our team works to ensure an adequate supply of housing for Californians and promotes the growth of strong communities through its leadership, policy and program development. For more information, please visit www.hcd.ca.gov and follow us on Twitter, @California_HCD; Facebook, @CaliforniaHCD; and LinkedIn.