

Del Norte County is Awarded Homekey Funding

October 2, 2020



Governor Gavin Newsom announced Sept. 28 that Del Norte County received \$2.4 million in the third round of awards for Homekey. The \$600 million program purchases and rehabilitates housing, including hotels, motels, vacant apartment buildings and other properties, and converts them into permanent, long-term housing for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Heather Snow, Del Norte County Department of Health and Human Services Director, said the agency has been renting rooms on behalf of needy clients for years and has been occupying a local motel at full capacity for over the past six months to protect vulnerable individuals from COVID-19.

Snow said Homekey funds will allow the department to work with partnering agency Rural Communities Housing Development Corporation (RCHDC) to purchase the motel and convert it from interim to permanent housing, adding 30 units to the local affordable housing inventory.

“This project will end homelessness for approximately 16% of Del Norte County’s homeless population, as identified in the 2019 Point in Time Survey,” Snow said. “The department will work with RCHDC to

develop a tiered rent approach for the tenants, to promote self-sufficiency and strengthen financial sustainability.”

Snow added through on-site management and ongoing linkage to supportive services, individuals will receive the support they need to maintain permanent long-term housing in the community.

Del Norte County Supervisor Lori Cowan said she has been working for the past four years with community partners to address the need for housing in the community and advocating for a solution.

“This is a solution,” Cowan said. “We still have a lot of work to do together to take care of our residents, and this is a big step in the right direction.”

Del Norte County Sheriff Erik Apperson, who has also been working closely with the DHHS for several years to tackle homelessness, wholeheartedly supports the Homekey initiative to purchase a local motel and convert it to permanent housing.

“This project is a huge win. Increasing our housing inventory with this award will help us meet the needs of our community and significantly reduce local homelessness. We can’t just wish homelessness away. We have to formalize some sort of response to it,” Apperson said.

Governor Newsom announced Homekey in June, and in July made \$600 million in funding available. Of that, \$550 million will be provided to cities and counties by California’s direct allocation of the federal Coronavirus Aid Relief Funds, with an additional \$50 million provided by the state to supplement the acquisition and provide initial operating funds.

Awards will be announced on a weekly basis through October 2020. Eligible projects that did not receive funding will be placed on a waiting list in case additional funding is made available.

To learn more about the Homekey funded projects, go to bcsh.ca.gov/homekey.