

# VISALIA TIMES-DELTA

---

## Big plans for housing

February 14, 2023

By: Sheyanne N Romero



### **Self-Help awarded millions by state for affordable housing projects in Visalia, Tulare**

California is projected to see the construction of 2.5 million homes — with one million affordable homes — by 2030.

To meet that goal, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the first funding awards under a new streamlined application process to accelerate local housing development. Tulare and Visalia were among the 58 California communities to receive the state's allocation of more than \$825.5 million to build 9,500 homes.

The funding will support a combined 137 units at Tulare's Santa Fe Commons II and Visalia's Rancho Colegio.

“As we demand more housing to be built at the local level, it is incumbent upon the state to reimagine and modernize our approval process,” Newsom said. “State applications that were once redundant and overly bureaucratic are now streamlined to ensure projects are not stalled in an endless bureaucracy that favored process over production.”

This round of funding is projected to benefit roughly 187,500 people over the total lifetime of all the state projects combined.

## **Homes on the horizon**

Self-Help Enterprises, a Central Valley-based community development organization, was awarded \$13,768,709 for Visalia's Rancho Colegio project.

"This funding is extremely important for the Rancho Colegio project and Self-help Enterprises' ability to provide additional affordable housing opportunities for working families in Visalia," said Marlene De La Garza with Self-Help Enterprises. "This funding will allow us to apply for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for the project, which will allow for private investment in the project and will complete the funding required [for construction]."

The multifamily development project is an 80unit complex of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units on the southeast corner of Court Street and Esquivel Avenue. The rents will range from \$400\$1,000 and include a 2,500-square-foot community building with a laundry room, computer lab, and space for on-site services, including an afterschool program, exercise classes, adult education, and youth STEM programs.

The project is being developed in partnership with Colegio De La Tierra, a farmworker education non-profit.

Rancho Colegio will also provide residents with "amenity-rich housing at an affordable rent" and gives low income, working families housing stability, De La Garza said.

The state's award will support 39 of the 80 units, according to California Department of Housing and Community Development officials.

Self-Help Enterprises are also managing Tulare's Santa Fe Commons II project. The organization was awarded \$2,413,494 for the project.

The complex is on West Street, between Pleasant Elementary School and Tulare Western High School.

Santa Fe Commons will have units dedicated to agricultural worker families and low-income and unhoused residents. The complex will also hire afterschool coordinators for residents with children.

The two- and three-story apartment complex will be Self-Help's first allelectric project. Seven electric vehicle charging stations will be on site, and "a whole lot of solar to keep utilities low for residents," Self-Help Project Manager Miguel Arambula told the Times-Delta in September.

The state funding will support 15 of 57 Santa Fe Commons II units, according to CDHCD. Unit prices range from \$200 to \$1,100, depending on income.

## **A 'smart one-stop shop'**

The money is part of a new funding approval process that eliminates the need for a developer to submit multiple applications.

The first round of the new Multifamily Finance Super Notice of Funding Availability (Super NOFA) has already received more than \$3.5 billion in developer requests – a sharp contrast to years under subscription.

"The California Multifamily Super NOFA transformed a once burdensome and lengthy funding application process into an accessible and smart onestop shop that will get more housing built faster," said Lourdes Castro Ramírez, Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency

Secretary. “This results in new homes for struggling working families, veterans, farmworkers, and people exiting homelessness.”

Last year, California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) combined state-funded multifamily housing programs to make them accessible to more communities, more equitable in serving the lowest-income Californians, and more targeted toward achieving better outcomes in health, climate, and household stability.

The application process to receive state housing funding was previously “needlessly complex and time-consuming,” which led to delayed projects and extra costs, according to state officials. What once required four separate applications has been narrowed down to one submission.

“California will continue to act with urgency to find new, innovative solutions to fast-track housing development,” Ramírez said

**“As we demand more housing to be built at the local level, it is incumbent upon the state to reimagine and modernize our approval process”**

**Gov. Gavin Newsom**