

PROJECT HOMEKEY

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Project Homekey?

Project Homekey is a State program created to rapidly expand housing opportunities for persons experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness. Project Homekey offers the opportunity for public entities, in partnership with the private sector, to develop a broad range of housing types, including converting existing buildings to permanent housing for the target population. More information can be obtained here: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/homekey>

Where is the Project Homekey site in Lassen County?

The Project Homekey site in Lassen County is at a site, commonly known as the “Old Hospital,” located at 560 Hospital Lane in Susanville. This site will be converted into fifteen (15) units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and will be referred to as the “Diamond Mountain Living Center.”

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

For the purpose of this Homekey Project, “Permanent Supportive Housing” is permanent housing that is linked to onsite or offsite services that assist residents in retaining housing, improving their health status, and maximizing their ability to live and, when possible work in the community.

How will the Diamond Mountain Living Center be funded?

ColWest Investments, LLC and the County of Lassen jointly applied to the State of California Housing & Community Development Department (HCD) for Project Homekey Funding in July 2023. Funding was awarded to rehabilitate and operate the property. The total Homekey award amount from the State was \$2,917,454.00 and includes a Capital Award of \$2,416,660.00 and an Operating Subsidy of \$500,794.00. Additional State funding, including Lassen County’s Permanent Local Housing Allocation, will be used to fund ongoing supportive services.

How was this site identified and selected?

On May 23, 2023, Lassen County Health and Social Services (HSS) presented information to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors (Board) on the Homekey Program. The Board directed HSS to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for potential Homekey Projects. HSS did so and received two proposals, including one from ColWest Investments, LLC, for the Diamond Mountain Living Center. On July 11, 2023, the HSS and ColWest Investments, LLC presented information on the proposed project to the Board, and the Board directed staff to move forward with applying for Homekey funds for the project. The site received preference points in the application to the State for being within half (1/2) a mile from public transportation and within two (2) miles or less of each of the following: health care, a grocery store, a library, a pharmacy, employment services, and a public park.

Who will manage and operate the Diamond Mountain Living Center?

ColWest Investments, LLC; Sierra Desert Properties Inc; and the County of Lassen will be operating, managing, and providing services, respectively.

How much do residents pay for the units?

Residents pay 30% of their monthly income toward rent upon signing a tenancy lease.

Who will live at the Diamond Mountain Living Center?

The Diamond Mountain Living Center will have fifteen Homekey Units. All units are for people who are experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness. Ten of the units are specifically for young adults, 18-24 years old. Additionally, there are income limits: ten of the units are for households with incomes equal to or less than 30% of the Area Median Income, and five of the units are for households with incomes equal to or less than 50% of the Area Median Income. The most up to date income limits can be found at: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/income-limits>

How will residents be chosen?

A Coordinated Entry process will be used to prioritize individuals and households for the Homekey units. Coordinated Entry is a process through which a standard assessment is used to assess, prioritize and match people experiencing homelessness to housing opportunities efficiently and consistently. Individuals and families who complete the Coordinated Entry assessment are placed on a Coordinated Entry List and prioritized for services based on vulnerability. When Homekey units are available at the Diamond Mountain Living Center, potentially eligible individuals will be referred to the program from the Coordinated Entry List.

What background checks will prospective residents be subject to prior to occupancy?

Criminal background checks will be conducted on household members ages 18 and over to verify eligibility for residency. Convictions directly related to the safety of other residents, employees, neighbors, or the property will cause denial of tenancy. In determining whether a criminal conviction is directly-related, staff will consider the nature and severity of the crime, the amount of time that has passed since the criminal conduct occurred, and any positive changes made since the conviction.

What plans are in place to ensure that this project is a safe environment for residents and the neighborhood?

There are a number of improvements planned that will provide safety at the property. All exterior walkways, parking lots, and common areas will be lighted with dusk to dawn lighting. The exterior of the buildings and the interior hallways will be under surveillance 24 hours a day. There will be no exterior access doors to any units; all residents will have to enter the building through a locked outside door to gain access to their unit doors. Additionally, supportive services staff will provide regular support to residents. If residents or neighbors experience any issues related to safety, they can address them by bringing them to the attention of either property management staff or supportive services staff, who will then work to resolve the issues.

What services will be provided on site?

Residents will be assigned a County staff person who will provide ongoing case management. Staff will work to develop a trusting relationship with residents and will provide onsite supportive services through home visits. Supportive services are services necessary to help program participants obtain and maintain housing. Examples include peer support, employment assistance, educational support, connection to health care, transportation assistance, and activities that promote a sense of purpose and community participation. Staff will use a variety of proactive and creative strategies to engage participants in supportive services, but participation will not be condition of residency. In delivering services to participants, staff will use the most appropriate techniques or best practices, based on participants' unique needs. For services that are not provided on site, staff will assist residents in securing their preferred method of transportation to services.

How does this fit in with the County's previous efforts to develop permanent supportive housing?

This project is a separate effort than the County's recent efforts to explore possible housing sites through the Lassen County Housing Feasibility Study. The Diamond Mountain Living Center was a site proposed in response to the County's RFP for Homekey Projects. The site met the Homekey requirements and was approved for the application process by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors.

What type of local outreach was conducted related to Project Homekey?

There were three public presentations (5/23/23, 7/11/23, and 7/25/23), a public notice for the RFP, social media outreach, and news coverage. Additional updates and opportunities for feedback will be posted at: <https://www.lassencounty.org/dept/housing-and-grants/public-notices>

How does this project benefit Susanville Lassen County?

This project not only meets a significant need, by providing affordable, supportive housing to young adults in Lassen County, but it also improves an old, dilapidated building in the community. ColWest Investments, LLC has a history of rehabilitating old buildings in Lassen County and in doing so improving the communities those buildings are in.

Who can I contact with more questions?

For any additional questions regarding the Diamond Mountain Living Center, please contact:

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OR

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