



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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### \$1M GRANT TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME HOMEBUYERS, TENANTS

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce a \$1 million award from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to assist first-time home buyers and provide rental assistance to low-income tenants.

The award is one of 16 HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) grants across California, which awarded a total of \$9.9 million to assist with a variety of home ownership, rental and rehabilitation opportunities. The funds will be used to provide down payment assistance for low-income homebuyers, as well as rental deposit assistance and short-term rental assistance.

"The housing market in Santa Cruz County presents an enormous challenge for working families," said Julie Conway, Housing Coordinator for the County of Santa Cruz. "These funds will be used to help secure and maintain stable housing, and in some cases allow families to purchase their first homes."

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states to fund a wide range of housing activities. It is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

"We are proud to provide this assistance to cities and counties to create a larger inventory of affordable homes for their residents," said Ben Metcalf, California's director of Housing and Community Development. "The HOME program serves as a one-stop-shop for a wide variety of grants and loans for hard-working homeowners and renters."



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The awards comes as the County and its community partners renew their focus on preventing and ending homelessness with the assistance of local property owners. The *All-In* Landlord Partnership has just initiated a "100 Day Dash," through which the partners hope to increase overall landlord participation in the Section 8 program while expanding an existing landlord web portal ([www.sczlandlordportal.org](http://www.sczlandlordportal.org)), improving services offered to landlords willing to rent to homeless individuals and families, and organizing property "spruce up" events in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity.

Of the \$1 million award, approximately \$610,000 will augment the County's first-time homebuyer programs by providing down payment assistance for buyers who make 80 percent or less of area median income. Approximately \$365,000 will be used for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program.