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FARM LABOR HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM

The County of San Mateo Farm Labor Housing Loan Program (“Program”) will facilitate the rehabilitation or repair of existing farm labor housing, replacement of existing dilapidated mobile home units, and, if there is sufficient funding, will support the creation of new farm labor housing.

The intent of the Program is to build partnerships and provide resources to enable farmers and agricultural landowners to improve housing and expand housing opportunities for the County’s very low-income farm laborers that are engaged in full-time agricultural work in San Mateo County during the agricultural season. The beneficiaries of the Program will be the very low-income farm laborers that reside in the rehabilitated or new units. The Department of Housing (“Department”) is providing loans to qualified applicants for the rehabilitation or replacement of existing farm labor housing units (“project units”) and construction of new farm labor housing units. The Department is offering a zero-interest loan for qualifying projects. The Program phases, eligibility criteria, loan parameters, performance requirements, and project parameters are detailed below.

Program Phases:

- Phase I: Housing Preservation
 - To enhance the quality of the existing housing stock for farm laborers in San Mateo County, applications in the first twelve months of the program are limited to:
 - Rehabilitation/Renovation projects;
 - Replacing existing dilapidated mobile home units that have been used as farm labor housing at any time in the past; and,
 - Projects to legalize and improve, as necessary to achieve compliance with current code requirements, existing unpermitted units/structures, waste disposal systems, and/or potable water systems.
- Phase II: Housing Preservation & Creation
 - If any unallocated funding is available after Phase I, applications for any farm labor housing projects, including the construction of new housing units, will be accepted.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The project units must be located in San Mateo County.
- The project units must be rented to farm laborers, or farm laborers and their families, that meet the following criteria (“Eligible Farm Laborers”):
 - Very low-income (under 50% of Area Median Income or AMI).
 - In 2024, 50% AMI for a household of one is \$68,550 and for a household of four is \$97,900. The AMI thresholds may be adjusted over time.
 - Derives more than 20 hours per week average employment from on- or off-site agricultural operations within San Mateo County and earns at least half their income from agriculturally related work.
- Rent and utility allowances (based on the Multi-Family Utility Allowance Schedule found at <https://www.smcgov.org/housing/utility-allowance-schedules>) (“Utility Schedule”) for the project units must not exceed 30% of the farm laborer’s gross income with rents not to exceed extremely low rent

amounts (based on HUD's Maximum Affordable Rent Payment Schedule found at <https://www.smcgov.org/housing/income-limits>) ("Rent Schedule") for the duration of the loan.

- All project units must be used as rental housing for farm laborers for the life of the unit.
- All projects must comply with applicable Planning and Building and Environmental Health requirements. This includes projects to legalize existing unpermitted units, which must bring the entire unit and associated structures and infrastructure up to current codes.
- Previous applicants can apply for funding for additional units.

Loan Parameters:

- A zero-interest loan is available for project units that will be rented to Eligible Farm Laborers at extremely low rent amounts (based on the Rent Schedule).
- The applicant is required to contribute at least 10% of the project costs.
- For rehabilitation or replacement units, the maximum loan amount is \$100,000 for each unit.
- For construction of new units, the maximum loan amount is \$250,000 for each of the first 2 units and \$200,000 for each subsequent unit.
- All project units must be rented to farm laborers for the life of the unit.
- Loans will be subject to one of the following three repayment structure options:
 - Model A requires equal-payments over the 30-year loan term. If the borrower provides a rental subsidy and charges a qualifying household below the maximum allowable rent, the total difference between the maximum allowable rent and the rent charged would then be credited towards the required repayment amount.
 - Model B requires a balloon payment of the total loan principal at the end of the 30-year loan term. The borrower would have the option to provide interim payments to reduce the final balance of the loan. If the borrower provides a rental subsidy and charges a qualifying household below the maximum allowable rent, the total difference between the maximum allowable rent and the rent charged would then be credited towards the outstanding principal loan amount.
 - Model C consists of forgiving the full loan principal amounts in equal increments of 20% of the total loan principal amount over the final 5 years of the 30-year term.
- The County will require repayment of the loan principal if the project unit is used for any use other than Eligible Farm Labor housing or if the property is sold during the life of the loan period, unless a specific exception is approved in writing by the Department.
- A deed of trust secured by the Property will be required.

Performance Requirements:

- Rent and utility allowances for renovation or replacement of currently occupied project units may not increase from the date of the program application to one year after occupancy of the project unit.
- Rent and utility allowances for new project units must be agreed to with the County prior to execution of the loan agreement for new units and remain stable from execution of the agreement to one year following the occupancy date of the new project units.
- Following the first year of occupancy, rent may be adjusted based on the Rent Schedule.
- For the duration of the loan, the rent and other housing-related expenses must remain less than 30% of the farm laborer's gross income.
- The Department will monitor, annually, compliance with the terms of the loan agreement and regulatory agreements. Participating owners are required to provide information reasonably requested by the Department to verify compliance.

Project Parameters:

- Participation in the Program is subject to availability of funding and execution of a loan agreement with the County. However, the County reserves the right to prioritize any project that is recommended by the Board of Supervisors, County Executive Office, or other County Department.
- All new units constructed, and all units rehabilitated or replaced with funding from this Program, must be used for housing Eligible Farm Laborers for the duration of the loan, and for farm labor housing for the lifetime of the unit.
- All mobile home replacements will be with new mobile home units or new construction.

- A housing unit can be a single-family home, mobile home, tiny home, or modular building. One unit can house more than one household, for example one modular unit could contain a duplex, tri-plex or bunkhouse.
- All projects must comply with all applicable permit requirements. See [Farm Labor Housing Guidelines](https://www.smcgov.org/media/74306/download?inline=) posted by the San Mateo County Planning and Building Department (<https://www.smcgov.org/media/74306/download?inline=>).
- An interested property owner can initiate consultation with the Department by submitting a letter of interest.
- The Planning and Building Department offers a pre-application inspection for a nominal cost. Potential applicants seeking funds to legalize and improve existing farm labor housing units established without permits are strongly encouraged to obtain such an inspection to obtain a preliminary determination of the project's feasibility and the scope of modifications/improvements that will be required.
- The Department will determine eligibility after receipt of a complete application and completion of the pre-application meeting and site visit.
- The Department will disburse loan funds on a reimbursement basis, up to the maximum amount of the loan, upon receipt of a satisfactory request for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement shall include copies of invoices paid, canceled checks, or other proof that the invoices have been paid. Reimbursement will be for 90% of the invoiced request, to reflect the 10% match requirement. Reimbursement requests will be processed within a reasonable time from the date of receipt of a satisfactory request.

The County reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this Program. Please check the Department of Housing website housing.smcgov.org for updates before applying.

For more information about this program, please contact Alejandro Segura, Department of Housing at asegura@smchousing.org or 650.382.4897.

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