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# CITY OF LODI

2015 "Wine Region of the Year"

Community Development Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LODI, CA – In an effort to provide stable housing to at-risk families, the City of Lodi announced today that it will partner with local agencies to develop approximately four new, small "Harmony Homes" through a rental-assistance program maintained by the Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin (Housing Authority).

Nearly all funds for the program will be provided by the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant that, if not spent by June 30, 2021, could be reallocated elsewhere in the county or returned to the state.

This hand-up will give families peace of mind, living in a safe and stable home which allows them to better focus on meeting their essential needs – maintaining a job, their health, and caring for their family members – and ultimately to thrive and contribute to their community in greater ways.

Lodi shares in the state-wide shortage of affordable and available rental housing to the lowest income renters (source: <https://reports.nlihc.org/gap>). Confirmed by Lodi social service providers, many renters cannot find affordable rental housing in Lodi. Harmony Homes is a commitment to creating a long-term solution to this problem, rather than a quick fix.

Organizations including The Salvation Army, Lodi House, and the Women's Center-Youth & Family Services have agreed to provide referrals from their pool of program graduates to live in these homes, and to provide on-going support services.

*"I am excited to see another option for individuals who have achieved another level of self-sufficiency. We are looking forward to referring clients who are no longer in addiction, are already employed and managing their own finances, and are ready to step up from our transitional living program to a place of their own,"* shared Major Mark Thielenhaus, Corps Officer, The Salvation Army, Lodi Corps.

As with other rental-assistance programs, residents will be expected to pay rent and follow community rules. The goal being that, when they are ready, they would move out so that a new family may take their place, continuing a cycle of self-sufficiency. Applicants must have employment and verified income to qualify for residency.

*"We are proud to be a partner with the City of Lodi in the development of the Harmony Homes project. Additional affordable housing plays a critical role in preventing homelessness, and the Harmony Homes project is a great example of how our community can come together, create effective solutions and bring hope to people in need,"* stated Russ Hayward, co-chair and founding member of the Lodi Committee on Homelessness.

Kathryn Siddle, of the Lodi Improvement Committee, explains *"The reality is that those who are participating in existing programs are still at risk for repeated homelessness due to the inability to find affordable housing. By providing cost-effective housing, Harmony Homes will offer a sense of place, safety and community and a way to help people live more stable, productive lives."*

The City of Lodi was awarded this grant specifically because it builds new homes rather than

renovating existing ones – addressing the City’s shortage of affordable housing stock.

The project envisions the construction of four detached homes and replacing a lot that is currently undeveloped at 301 E. Lodi Avenue. The City invites residents to weigh-in on this project and to lend their support to the development of this project so that it meets Lodi’s community values in creating high quality of life for all its residents. See opportunities for support below.

The homes will be premanufactured, energy efficient, and built to the same standards and codes applied to residential projects within the City. The homes will have landscaping and open fencing.

Continual upkeep of the project will be maintained, in part, by the residents of Harmony Homes, with remaining support funded and facilitated by the Housing Authority.

In 2018, California’s legislators passed SB-850 with bi-partisan support. This bill allocated \$500 million of the state’s general funds to an existing program known as HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program) and CESH (California Emergency Solutions and Housing).

The project is also seeking volunteers from the community to assist in material donations, landscaping, and home furnishings.

*“I am happy for the people who will occupy them and have done the work to put their lives back on the right path,”* said Mark Armstrong of the volunteer group Take Back Lodi.

The community is invited to send comments and support through an online survey at [www.lodi.gov/1013](http://www.lodi.gov/1013); to attend Lodi Improvement Committee Meeting at 6 p.m. on November 10th (details at [www.lodi.gov/agendacenter](http://www.lodi.gov/agendacenter)), and to participate in City Council meeting on December 2nd on Facebook Live at 7 p.m. ([www.lodi.gov/agendacenter](http://www.lodi.gov/agendacenter)).

For more information, visit [www.lodi.gov/1013](http://www.lodi.gov/1013) or contact the Community Development Department at [housing@lodi.gov](mailto:housing@lodi.gov).

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