



## **Board of Commissioners**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### *Lincoln County Receives \$9.75 Million to Develop Affordable Housing for Wildfire Survivors*

July 24, 2025 – Lincoln County has received a \$9.75 million grant to develop affordable housing for survivors of the 2020 Echo Mountain wildfire who are still without a stable, permanent residence.

Jennifer Beckner, grant program manager for Lincoln County Health and Human Services, told the Board of Commissioners during their regular meeting Wednesday, July 23, that the grant and subsequent work to put it to use is a continuation of the recovery work begun by former Commissioner Kaety Jacobson.

The funding comes from Oregon Housing and Community Services through a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant. The state agency received \$422 million from the federal government to support long-term recovery and mitigation efforts in the eight most fire-impacted counties, including Lincoln.

Beckner's presentation during the July 23 meeting was the first of two hearings on the subject – the second will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, August 13, in the Lincoln City area and is specifically geared toward reaching people contacted through the county's Wildfire Resource Navigation program, which has already helped dozens of households find a new home. Approximately 300 homes were destroyed in the September 2020 fire.

That resource navigation program has been led by Gabby Santos.

"[Santos] has been working, boots on the ground, since these fires took place," Beckner said. "She knows these families personally. She's done amazing things to get them housed and living in more secure situations."

Beckner said Santos has identified 11 families, constituting 32 people and 19 pets, that still need housing.

Three types of housing development are eligible under the program: affordable rental housing, affordable homeownership, and property acquisition and/or infrastructure development for planned affordable housing to be completed within three years.

“We are on a tight timeline, but we have a great plan,” Beckner said.

For those who already own property on which they want to site a home, the County will provide references for modular home manufacturers and contractors to install upon delivery, and the grant funding will be used to essentially guarantee those home loans. For those who desire to rent, the County will work with the Housing Authority of Lincoln County to manage acquired rental properties, and rent will be scaled to the renter’s income.

The Housing Authority has already been a critical partner in developing housing that prioritizes wildfire survivors, including the 44-unit Wecoma Place in Lincoln City.

Health and Human Services Director Jayne Romero said the grant funding was flexible, in that once the County has worked with the remaining families of survivors, other low-income families who resided in Lincoln County at the time of the wildfire can also be served with remaining funds.

Health and Human Services is working with consultant Thomas Kemper, another vital partner in local affordable housing creation who has completed projects with the Housing Authority and Northwest Coastal Housing.

“I believe he’s involved in almost every housing project in the community,” Beckner said.

Beckner also had high praise for staff from Oregon Housing and Community Services.

“I’m so impressed with how incredible that organization is,” she said. “For any questions that I have, I can pick up the phone at any time and have someone right there to answer.”

Beckner said she expects the location of the August 13 hearing will be posted to the County website and distributed to media and community organizations by August 1.

For questions, please contact Public Information Officer Kenneth Lipp at 541-265-4100 or [public\\_affairs@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:public_affairs@co.lincoln.or.us).