



Valley Housing Fund Partner Support Program

Purpose

The Valley Housing Fund's (VHF) mission is to work collaboratively to create and support affordable and accessible housing opportunities to strengthen the Gunnison Valley community. The VHF Board of Directors has identified *creating new affordable housing* as its primary goal through 2025, and has allocated \$200,000 to its Partner Support Program for 2023. The board intends to allocate a similar amount through 2025, pending annual budget approval.

VHF recognizes the essential role of private funding in affordable housing projects and has a strong history of providing this support to our partners to assist local housing developments move to completion.

Regardless of the project, all community housing developments face financial headwinds. Private funding, even on a small scale, offers many benefits to overall project success:

- Infusing private dollars into affordable housing allows projects to happen *faster* and *better*, creating well-rounded developments with a community perspective in mind. Improvements can be made such as adding amenities like washer/dryers or gathering spaces, improving architectural character to better fit into the existing neighborhood, adding additional ADA or aging-in-place modifications, or upgrading energy efficiency throughout each property.
- Private funding allows for responsiveness to local needs by relaxing some of the “strings” that are typically attached to government-funded projects, such as strict income requirements.
- Securing local, private financial support can unlock additional dollars that would otherwise be unavailable without local matching funds.
- Large scale government funding is scarce and highly competitive, and is often reserved for major developments that aren't always appropriate for the current market or local community.
- Every affordable housing project requires a complex funding structure, and having various players come to the table makes affordable housing development possible.



Criteria for Consideration

The Valley Housing Fund is accepting applications for grant funding and low-interest loans to develop affordable and community housing projects in Gunnison County. Typical awards are a maximum of \$100,000, although other amounts may be considered.

1. **Project Readiness.** Funding is typically awarded for projects with entitlements in place, and not for pre-development costs. Land must be owned or under contract, and in most cases the project should have passed the Sketch Plan phase. Project readiness will be discussed in your pre-application meeting, as each affordable project has its own unique hurdles.
2. **Community Need.** The project must be in line with local priorities, as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment and/or adopted through the OVRP Regional Housing Roadmap. Decisions about housing type, for sale or ownership, and AMI requirements should be evidenced through relevant local data.
3. **Livability.** Designs should make efficient use of space to maximize usage while providing an enjoyable place to live. VHF favors projects with high LEED ratings, Green Points, or HERS (Home Energy Rating System) scores, as well as ADA accessibility and/or the ability to easily modify to accommodate aging-in-place.
4. **Income Mix.** Developments that provide housing for a mix of incomes interspersed throughout are preferred. However, VHF will consider monochromatic developments that are essential to the larger valley wide plan.
5. **Protection of Long-Term Affordability.** Deed restrictions, workforce restrictions, master leases, income requirements, or other methods must be in place to protect VHF investments in affordability. For sale homes must be eligible for regular mortgage financing for residents.
6. **Feasibility.** The project shows a high probability of success, both financially and organizationally. The cost per unit (both overall and for VHF's investment) will be considered.
7. **Leveragability.** VHF prioritizes projects where its investment can be leveraged for additional project funding.



Process

1. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. If you are interested in applying, you will have a preliminary conversation with VHF to determine eligibility and timing of funds. *Please contact Executive Director Lauren Koelliker at lauren@vhfund.org or 970-901-9032 as soon as you anticipate a funding request (even if you aren't ready to apply) as this information assists in VHF's budgeting process.*
2. Based on the preliminary conversation, an applicant will receive an invitation to apply for a grant, low-interest loan, or combination. The application will be completed by the applicant.
3. The Partner Support Committee will review each application, and the applicant may be contacted for additional information.
4. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. The applicant will be notified of award decisions within 60 days of applying.
5. Applicants will be notified if their request was approved or denied, or if more information is requested by the board. If approved, funding will typically be distributed within one month, per terms set forth in the award contract.
6. Recipients are required to publicize VHF support in line with terms set forth in the contract. Recipients are also required to submit periodic project updates and a final report upon project completion. If the project is delayed or does not meet the agreed upon timeline stated in the funding contract, an extension may be requested or the funds must be returned to VHF.