



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 16, 2020

Dear Local Elected Officials:

Thank you for your partnership in protecting Californians during this unprecedented moment in our state's history. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic stress has forced all of us to work harder than we ever thought possible, moving faster than is typical in government.

In that spirit, I am writing today to alert you to a time-sensitive and urgent opportunity to address homelessness in California. There is perhaps no group as vulnerable to COVID-19 impacts than those experiencing homelessness – between underlying health conditions many experience, coupled with an inability to shelter at a home they don't have, our neighbors experiencing homelessness are deserving of our greatest protective efforts.

When the pandemic began, we moved quickly, hand-in-hand with local partners to protect the homeless. Together we stood up Project Roomkey, and this effort has resulted in almost 16,000 leased hotel and motel rooms under county control, providing safe shelter to more than 14,200 homeless individuals to-date.

Now, we have a unique opportunity to take this to the next level – to purchase hotels, motels, and other types of innovative solutions to provide safe, stable housing to people experiencing homelessness using \$600 million in funding from the budget the state just approved, thanks to the partnership of the California State Legislature. This is Homekey, and we welcome you to be a part of it.

Today, we are releasing a Notice of Funding Availability to acquire, rehabilitate, and operate these types of buildings, with the goal of thousands of new interim and permanent housing placements purchased by local governments by December 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. It's not just hotels and motels – Homekey can also include the acquisition of other assets or innovative approaches, modular



shelters, and vacant multifamily apartment buildings, for example. Counties, cities, and other public agencies can apply, beginning today, to access grants for these acquisitions. More information can be found at this link: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/homekey.shtml>, or by emailing [Homekey@hcd.ca.gov](mailto:Homekey@hcd.ca.gov).

Homekey reflects our shared values, including dedicated pots of funding for various regions in furtherance of geographic equity goals. Homekey prioritizes cost control, speed, and social service enhancements as key criteria. And Homekey acknowledges and prioritizes racial equity because homelessness disproportionately impacts Black and Latino communities across California.

To be successful, we have to move quickly. The first tier of projects will be fast tracked for awards during the first 30 days. A consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of General Services will be required prior to applying to make sure you receive the technical assistance necessary to submit a proposal. I hope your jurisdiction will pursue a Homekey implementation, and that we can work together to end homelessness in California.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California