



DAWN MEGLI-THUNA/Acorn Newspapers

**UPGRADES**—Many Mansions has been approved \$120,000 from the City of Thousand Oaks' annual Community Development Block Grant funding. The money from the federal government will be used to install new shingles and security cameras at its Richmond Terrace apartments.

# Federal funds come through after all

## ■ Money benefits affordable housing, social services

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Despite concern last year over talk of cuts, Thousand Oaks has again received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the federal government to support low-income housing and social services in the city.

At its June 19 meeting, the City Council approved a spending plan for \$580,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds that it will submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which administers the program, for final approval.

The \$580,000 in CDBG money that Thousand Oaks received in May is actually 4 percent more than it received in 2017, and enough so that no grant applicant will go home empty-handed.

Housing-related projects will receive \$377,000, including \$200,000 to help Senior Alliance for Empowerment (SAFE) rehabilitate 25 coaches in five different mobile home parks and \$120,000 to aid Many Mansions in replacing exterior wood shingles and installing security cameras at Richmond Terrace, a low-income apartment complex on Warwick Avenue.

"I cannot begin to tell you how appreciative the residents have been who have (in the past benefited) from these grants," said Kathryn Goodspeed, president of SAFE, before reading a letter from one of the past recipients.

"This rain season I had no rain dripping in my house," the letter read. "My late husband would be very proud of my new roof."

Both Goodspeed and Jim Wolf, also of SAFE, thanked senior analyst Caroline Milton and city housing coordinator Lynn Oshita for working to ensure that all CDGB funds go to worthy recipients.

"Of course there are a lot more needs than there are resources to fill the needs. However, the budget . . . is 100 percent directed to individuals in need," Wolf said, noting how SAFE serves some of the city's most at-risk seniors.

Habitat for Humanity Ventura County is getting \$57,000 toward its Preserve-A-Home program, which it will use to fix up five

single-family homes owned by low-income families.

Social services grants for 2018 total \$183,700, \$83,700 from HUD plus another \$100,000 the city sets aside annually from its Social Services Endowment Fund.

One of the local agencies most concerned about cuts to CDBG funding was Senior Concerns, which runs Meals on Wheels in the city, delivering hot lunches and meals to homebound seniors in Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park.

In the end, the nonprofit was granted \$20,000 in HUD money this time around, more than any other nonprofit on the list.

Andrea Gallagher, president of Senior Concerns, said Meals on Wheels would need to drastically scale back operations if it did not receive CDBG money. Last year, the program served about 90 seniors weekly.

"The City of Thousand Oaks has provided vital support for Senior Concerns' Meals on Wheels Program for many years," Gallagher told the *Acorn* in an email. "We are truly grateful for

— Please See Page 12

## CDBG

From Page 5 —

this continued partnership with the City as it helps ensure we can meet the needs of a growing population of homebound seniors by providing freshly prepared, nutritious meals 365 days per year."

To ensure transparency and impartiality, the city leaves the decision regarding CDBG grants to its Social Services Ad Hoc Committee, a nine-member group appointed by the City Council that meets to review each application before taking a final vote in April.

Thinking at the outset it had less to spend, the committee originally approved 23 of 25 applications for grant money. But at last week's council meeting, staff said the larger than expected CDBG allotment meant the city had the funds to give \$1,668 each to the two applicants left out in the cold: Conejo Youth Employment Services and Women of Substance, Men of Honor.

The former assists vulnerable youth with job-search preparation, while the latter provides assistance to youth transitioning out of foster care.

Representatives from each organization came to the June 19 meeting to advocate on behalf of their programs, with the council ultimately agreeing with staff's recommendations.

Some other beneficiaries of this year's round of social service grants: Lutheran Social Services, emergency assistance (\$15,910);

## IN A NUTSHELL

### Helping those who help

Among those nonprofits receiving Community Development Block Grant funding this year (amount):

Senior Concerns (Meals on Wheels)	\$20,000
Lutheran Social Services	\$15,910
Long Term Care Senior Ombudsman	\$15,000
Westminster Free Clinic	\$14,500
Conejo Free Clinic	\$13,626
County of Ventura RAIN program	\$8,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$87,036</b>

Long Term Care, Senior Ombudsman (\$15,000); Westminster Free Clinic, health equity program (\$14,500); Conejo Free Clinic, medical program (\$13,626); and the County of Ventura, RAIN Facility (\$8,000).

As in the past, around 20 percent of the CDBG budget, or \$116,000, is slated for program administration, money used mainly to help pay for salaries of city employees directly involved in administering the grant. About \$14,000 of the \$116,000 pays for the city's portion of the fair housing contract Ventura County has with the Housing Rights Center. The center provides information and assistance for all county residents regarding tenant-landlord issues, renting issues, owner rights, eviction issues and other

housing questions, Oshita said.

Despite this year's healthy allocation, Councilmember Joel Price, who regularly attends National League of Cities conferences on behalf of Thousand Oaks, warned that the CDBG program remained on the chopping block.

"Those funds are under attack and they have been under attack in Washington for the last several years," he said at the meeting.

"That we still have it this year, that we actually ended with a little bit more than what we anticipated, and are now able to include those two previously not-funded recipients at least to some level, I hope that's helpful. This is really a great thing," Price added.

Reporter Becca Whitnall contributed to this article.