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## \$14M Awarded for 10 New Affordable Housing Projects in San Diego County

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San Diego County is on track to add nearly 1,000 new affordable housing units, thanks to a \$14 million investment from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the San Diego Foundation. This funding aims to ease the growing housing affordability crisis impacting many residents across the region.

Currently, more than one in three San Diegans spends over 30% of their income on housing, highlighting a pressing need for affordable options. The funds will support ten projects scattered throughout the county, from Escondido in the north to San Ysidro in the south,

offering homes to low-income families, veterans, single women, and seniors at risk of losing stable housing.

Among the notable developments is a transformation of a site along University Avenue. An old liquor store and two office buildings will be redeveloped into a vibrant affordable housing complex. Rachel Lozano Castro, director of strategic partnerships and development with the Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA), explained the project's importance. "What once was a liquor store will be transformed," she said. The site has been home to resettled refugees since the 1970s, and the project plans to offer around 150 affordable units aimed at immigrant and refugee communities, with a completion target of 2030.

## Project Scope

PANA's plan includes four floors of three- and four-bedroom apartments, alongside a global market, clinic, childcare facilities, and nonprofit office spaces. This complex will back up to a city park expected to open around the same time, allowing visitors to enjoy international goods such as tea and coffee from the global market. "Park-goers would be able to come into the global market and buy tea and coffee and wares from all over the world," Lozano Castro said. The design reflects input from more than 2,000 residents, ensuring the project meets community needs.

James Howell, chief financial officer of the San Diego Foundation, gave an overview of the broader funding effort. "There's a total of 10, and they span pretty much every area of our region, from as far north as Escondido to as far south as San Ysidro," Howell said. The combined projects will deliver 966 affordable units between late 2026 and mid-2030.

With housing prices up approximately 42% since 2020, the county currently faces a shortage of about 134,000 affordable housing units. Howell expects the first 660 units to hit the market as early as 2027, offering much-needed housing relief to a diverse population.

Lozano Castro emphasized the cultural significance of the PANA project, saying, "This is a place where people have been resettled as refugees since the 1970s, so it's really important for us to center that within the project." PANA is also encouraging community ownership by allowing locals to buy shares in the development, though an additional \$54 million is still needed to complete the project.

The collaboration between SANDAG and the San Diego Foundation demonstrates a strategic effort to tackle the county’s housing crisis by investing in affordable, inclusive housing solutions. As the region grows, these projects will play a crucial role in ensuring residents from all backgrounds have access to safe and affordable homes.