

# Grant helps homeless veterans

Veterans

Local agency awarded \$280,000 in federal funds

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SANTA CRUZ — A program to help homeless veterans find housing is working so well in Santa Cruz County that the federal government has just awarded more money to assist another 25 veterans.

The local grant for \$280,395 comes from the Housing and Urban Development Department's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program and is part of \$46.2 million allocated nationwide to serve 6,790 veterans.

"HUD invited our agency to apply," said Ken Cole, who heads

the Housing Authority of Santa Cruz County. "We were very pleased to receive notice of the allocation yesterday. HUD rarely moves that quickly and our veterans, particularly disabled men and women who have served our nation, deserve this new resource."

The federal agency already has awarded funds to assist 60 veterans with housing in Santa Cruz County, with all but one "leased up," according to Jenny Panetta of the local housing authority.

The federal program provides a housing voucher and social services to help veterans re-establish them-

selves.

"VA is committed to providing veterans and their families with access to affordable housing and medical services that will help them get back on their feet," said Veterans Administration Secretary Eric Shinseki.

The veterans program is similar to the federally funded Section 8 voucher program. The voucher holder pays 30 percent of his or her monthly adjusted gross income for rent, and the housing authority uses federal funds to subsidize the rent. The landlord agrees to charge a reasonable

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More than 12 veterans live at Redwood Commons on Soquel Avenue.

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## VETS

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rent, which in Santa Cruz County has averaged \$826 for a studio, \$1,001 for a one-bedroom, and \$1,292 for a two-bedroom.

Veterans have four months to find a place and have access to a clinical social worker.

Santa Cruz County is not an easy place to find a rental because of competition from UC Santa Cruz students who live off campus after their freshman year.

"I have another homeless veteran moving in today to fill the building, but may have some openings in August," said Sean Sullivan, manager of Redwood Commons, a 3-year-old development on the Eastside at 1606 Soquel Ave. "We are thrilled to work with the veterans."

More than a dozen veterans live at the 36-unit complex, including five participants in the veterans housing program.

UCSC graduate Dave Resnikoff, who fills the clinical social worker's role, asks that any veteran interested in the housing program attend a meeting 1-2 p.m. Wednesdays at the Capitola Veterans Center, 1350 41st and Brommer Street, Capitola.

To reach Resnikoff, call 408-363-3000, request the San Jose clinic, then ext. 73487.