



## California Human Development

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Construction to begin on Sonoma County's first affordable farmworker family housing complex**

Ortiz Family Plaza in Santa Rosa to help fill critical need for affordable homes

Santa Rosa, CA (May 23, 2016) – An affordable housing development to meet the needs of Sonoma County's changing farmworker population is coming soon to Santa Rosa. California Human Development (CHD), Integrity Housing, and Phoenix Development Company announce the closing of financing for the 30 unit Ortiz Family Plaza to be located in Santa Rosa's Larkfield-Wikiup region. Construction is set to begin early next month.

“Ortiz Family Plaza will provide the men and women who harvest Sonoma County's bounty with clean, safe and affordable homes to rest and raise their families,” says Christopher Paige, CHD's chief executive officer. “Moreover, it will provide stability for work-authorized farmworkers who play a crucial role in the Sonoma County economy. These are much-needed affordable homes for people who live here year-round and whose children are growing up here.”

A 2015 survey by the Sonoma County Health Department shows the profile of county farmworkers is changing, with nearly 90% now living in Sonoma County permanently. It shows farmworkers spend up to 60% of their income on rent and it identifies affordable housing as a critical need. A subsidy from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) allows Ortiz Family Plaza to help fill this need by capping rents for farmworker residents at 30% of income.

“Ortiz Family Plaza offers a significant solution to the lack of affordable housing in Sonoma County” says Efren Carrillo, chair of the Board of Supervisors. “Many of those who work the vineyards and fields of our county live in crowded, substandard conditions. It's a problem to be solved and Ortiz Family Plaza offers an important step forward.”

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In development since 2009, Ortiz Family Plaza involves a wide combination of support from federal, state and local government, as well as private foundations, businesses, and individuals.

“This is one of the more complicated financing structures we’ve encountered,” says Loren Brueggemann, president of Phoenix Development Company. “However, with all of the funders being committed to success, we were able to push through obstacles.”

The nearly \$11 million complex is financed with USDA Rural Development loan funds; Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) funds; federal and state tax credits purchased by City Real Estate Advisors; tax exempt bonds issued by California Housing Finance Agency; and contributions from: Marv Soiland; American Ag Credit; Community Foundation Sonoma County’s Mayflower Fund, Paul Hobbs Winery Fund, and Anonymous Fund; the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation; and Jackson Family Wines & Enterprises. Construction financing is through Exchange Bank; USDA and California Community Reinvestment Corporation are the permanent lenders. Additionally, Sonoma County PMRD is credited with providing deferral of entitlement fees to permanent loan and expeditious permitting.

“We are pleased to help enable construction of critically needed homes for farmworker families,” says Kathleen Kane, executive director of CDC. “As noted in the County’s 2014 Housing Element, there were 2,672 children from year-round migrant families in the school system countywide during 2012-13, with the largest concentrations in three areas, one of which is the north county. Ortiz Family Plaza will provide the stable and safe living environment that is a key to their health and wellbeing, and an important factor in their ability to perform to their potential.”

To be located on a long vacant 1.78-acres parcel at 5360 Old Redwood Hwy, Ortiz Family Plaza will feature two-story buildings creating 30 two-bedroom, one-and-a-half bathroom apartments. The buildings will encircle a community center with laundry facilities, a management office, kitchen, covered patio, BBQ/picnic area, a playground, community gardens, and a teen recreational area. Onsite services such as English as a Second Language, citizenship workshops, financial literacy classes, health services outreach, mentoring programs, computer classes, education and nutrition programs will be offered.

Ortiz Family Plaza is being developed by and will be managed by California Human Development, Integrity Housing, and Phoenix Development Company. The complex is named in honor of CHD founder George Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz is a leading advocate for farmworkers throughout Northern California and a longtime Sonoma County resident.

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