

Regional Early Action Planning Grants (REAP)

2024 Annual Report



February 2025

REAP Grant Annual Report - 2025

County of Del Norte

Overall Context:

The County applied for a REAP 1.0 grant funds later than most jurisdictions. An application was filed in January 2021 and notification was provided to the County in August 2021 of the grant award. The grant agreement was sent to the County on September 8, 2022 and fully executed on September 2022. An extension to the term of the grant was approved on August 15, 2023 that extended the expenditure deadline to December 31, 2024. The additional time was needed to complete the scope of work.

The grant included one sub-recipient, the City of Crescent. Following the execution of the agreement the County and City worked together on a subrecipient agreement that was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on October 24, 2022 and approved and signed by the City Council on November 10, 2022. The term of the subrecipient ended on August 15, 2023. A new subrecipient agreement was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on February 13, 2024, and approved and signed by the City Council on February 20, 2024. The term of the new agreement was from August 16, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

For Del Norte County, the goal of the project was to accelerate housing production which is a primary goal REAP. The lack of permitting software and hardcopy permits located offsite limited rapid and efficient housing production (permit issuance) due to delays associated with establishing a record of building and planning entitlements and locating hard pertinent files. The new software along with the scanning of all building permit files (1960 to present) has removed this barrier allowing staff to facilitate information sharing with the public more efficiently resulting in less time from the first inquiry about a project to the issuance of an entitlement. Furthermore, the addition of electronic plan review software allows a faster alternative to the traditional plan review process and the addition of the tablets allows for real-time and accurate reporting of inspections giving contractors the tools they need to complete their work. The technological improvements provided by the permit software project also support REAPs goal of enhancing data and analytic

capabilities by meeting the objective of improving the County's ability to collect, analyze, and use data to inform housing planning and decision-making.

For the City of Crescent City the project was intended to carry out implementation measures adopted as part of the City's Fifth and Sixth Cycle Housing Element. The overall goal of the REAP grant-funded activities was to increase housing opportunities, feasibility of development, and approval certainty while reducing development processing time by Increasing Zoning Capacity; 2) Promoting Infill Development; 3) Developing Housing checklists/templates; 4) Engaging the Public; 5) Digitization of Planning Files; 6) Assisting in Housing Entitlements including the CEQA process.

Outcomes for the County included the implementation of an online permitting program that aids in the tracking of permits and processing of new applications electronically. The County also added the capability to electronically review construction drawings and added tablets to everyday use to expedite the receipt of inspection results. Quantified outcomes included the scanning of 36,058 building permit files dating from 1960 to the present. Having scanned copies of building permits eliminates the need to go to an offsite location and allows greater searching capabilities to locate permits.
City of Crescent City

Outcomes for the City included having staff and the Planning Commission begin revising the City's subjective design review criteria with the goal of making them objective. However, it became apparent that more effort and time were needed, and this task would become simplified as other rural jurisdictions adopted theirs. Instead, City staff focused on streamlining permitting procedures, resulting in several large affordable housing projects moving forward. These approvals included the application of State Housing Accountability Law, State Density Bonus procedures, and reduction or waiver of parking requirements, all approved on an accelerated process time. As noted above, The City streamlined the approval process for five housing projects resulting in over 263 low to moderate housing units, thereby meeting 103% of the City's 6th Cycle RHNA numbers.

Project Highlights, Best Practices and Recent and Anticipated Achievements:

County of Del Norte

- 1. The implementation of the County's first online building permit program is a major highlight. The ability to electronically apply for a permit reduces the significant time that may be spent using the postal mail service when applicants reside outside of the area. It also provides a convenience to anyone who wants to do business with the County outside traditional work hours. What hasn't been mentioned previously is that the Department has also integrated a credit card payment option into the online permitting. We have used it for three months and each month we have seen an increase in usage.*
- 2. The County hasn't identified any unique activity associated with the project that would not already be included in best practices followed by other agencies.*
- 3. In the long term, the shift from paper to electronic record-keeping either in the way of permit tracking and issuance or permit records will be traced to this project. Seeing the benefits sparks interest in identifying other areas where the same actions may be done. Increased housing production attributed to these efforts will be used to encourage investment by our political leaders to continue and expand on the good results.*

City of Crescent City

The most prominent project highlights were that during this grant program period, an increased interest in developing affordable housing occurred within the City. This followed a long period of time when few new housing projects were being proposed. The City was prepared to process these applications expeditiously in a community that realized there was a critical need for additional housing. The City believes that the City being proactive at the same time as state and federal housing funding became available led to the response for proposed housing. Four of the five housing projects (228 units) are currently being constructed in the City. As the best practice that could be used by other agencies at a local, regional,

state or federal level, the combination of sticks (new housing laws) and carrots (funding for both planning and project development) should be part of any program that is directed to increased housing. A long-term achievement that could result from the overall project is that with the renewed interest in developing housing within the City, others may be enabled to consider doing likewise.

Status of Activities:

Activity Category	General Description	Amount Allocated	Amount Expended	Timing	Status	Regional Impact on Housing
1	Identification of BMPs	\$	\$	8/15/2023	Completed	None at this time.
2	Education and Outreach	\$6,185.00	\$436.45	8/15/2023	Completed	Housing Element Adopted
4	Suballocation of Moneys	\$90,000.00	\$89,913.49	7/31/2023	Completed	Several projects assisted.
5	Technical Assistance	\$99,785.00	\$105,614.70	7/31/2023	Completed	Several projects assisted.
6	Grant Administration	\$ 5,000.00	\$5,005.36	8/15/2023	Completed	None at this time.

Summary of Indicators of Housing Production: Data is taken from the Housing Element Implementation and APR Dashboard provided by the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Housing Production Indicator	Baseline Year 2019	Current Year 2024	Cumulative Change	Notes
Building Permits	83	80	-3	
Certificates of Occupancy	52	88	+36	
Completed Entitlements	71	97	+26	

Additional Information:

Nothing more to add at this time.