

Ventura College Receives Over \$62 Million to Build Student Housing

In Ventura County, the median gross rent is \$1,854, according to Census.gov (2016-2020). For college students, this can be a crushing obstacle to fulfilling their educational goals. When Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill No. 183 in June, approving more than \$542 million for the construction of affordable student housing, Ventura College was honored to be among the 11 recipients.

The college will receive over \$62 million, which will fund apartment-type student housing to provide over 300 beds in 95 units with rental costs ranging from \$400-\$900 per month.

“Access to affordable housing continues to be an issue that California must address,” said State Assemblymember Steve Bennett (District 37). “Students are particularly impacted, and in this year’s state budget, we were able to direct funding to colleges and universities across the state to help address that impact. I know Ventura College’s new housing will enable hardworking students access to a safe and affordable place to live.”

The funding comes at a critical

time, as 18% of Ventura College students experience housing insecurity, defined as having issues with affordability, safety, quality or housing loss. A student housing marketing and demand analysis created for Ventura College determined that students have experienced increased costs and challenges in finding housing.

A recent study by The Scion Group, a third-party research firm, determined that local market costs have increased an average of 4% annually. These increases, coupled with rising inflation, have significantly limited affordable housing options for students.

All three colleges in the Ventura County Community College District — Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College — received funding through AB 183. Moorpark College and Oxnard College were awarded \$250,000 and \$249,000, respectively, for proposals to research the feasibility and planning of future affordable student housing on their campuses.

The Ventura College housing project will be located on campus property and is expected to break ground in 2023.

Affordable housing is the next big step in providing a holistic approach to combating educational barriers students face. Ventura College already provides student support through its Basic Needs Office, where students are offered referrals to housing, homeless shelters and mental health counseling. The Basic Needs Office also provides food and essential supplies (diapers, toiletries and more), assists students in signing up for CalFresh and offers access to campus shower facilities and lockers.

Locally and nationally, student housing insecurity and homelessness are on the rise. A 2021 national assessment of basic needs insecurity among college students by The Hope Center reported that 48% of students surveyed across the U.S. stated they were housing insecure, while 14% reported experiencing homelessness in the previous year.

“California has made incredible strides in passing AB 183. This funding will provide affordable student housing opportunities and is a game changer in helping students meet their academic goals,” said Kim Hoffmans, president of Ventura College.