

Nearly 600 Households Have Already Inquired About Hosting a Homeless Family in Their Backyards

Hundreds of people in Multnomah County have officially expressed interest in hosting a family in a county-built granny flat.

Willamette Week, by Rachel Monahan, March 20, 2017, 2:38 PM

Last week, when Willamette Week wrote about a Multnomah County project to build granny flats to house homeless families, one of the questions was whether home owners would want to host them in their backyards.

The answer is yes.

So far, 580 people have signed up for the project that might build as many as 300 small homes in people's backyards. That a huge spike from last Wednesday, when 41 people had signed up.

In no small part, that may be because of a major incentive in the project: The county will cover the cost of the 200 square-foot unit, cost up to \$75,000 a piece, in return for the homeowner agreeing to collect no rent for five years.

Multnomah County is still in the exploratory phase of the project, called A Place for You. County officials are trying out the idea by working to build four granny flats by June 30. It's not clear yet whether the county will expand the project.

"I believe, particularly in this community, that people want to help, but they don't know how," says Mary Li, director of the Multnomah Idea Lab, a policy center at the county, noting the project is still in its infancy. "We may fail, which feels scary to say. But we're going to learn from those failures and figure out what will work."