

# New Capital Studios complex means a second chance for residents

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By [Anthony Green](#) - American-Statesman Staff

For Austin, Capital Studios will be the first affordable housing complex built downtown in 45 years. For people like Dalton Duffie, it means a second chance.

“It was impossible to stay clean and sober when I was living on the streets,” said Duffie, who lives in Capital Studios’ sister complex Skyline Terrace. “Having my own place to live is what made the difference for me and for so many others like myself.”

Residents will start moving into the newly-built Capital Studios in December, but on Tuesday Duffie and others got a sneak peek of the complex, which includes 135 efficiency apartments for single adults making less than \$26,400 a year. Built by Foundation Communities, an Austin-based nonprofit affordable housing group, the apartments at 11th and Trinity streets will rent for \$400-\$650 a month, depending on income.

Duffie has been sober for seven years and works as a store manager for Salvation Army. Duffie, who also sits on the Foundation Communities board, says the on-site support services like substance abuse counseling and financial coaching set Foundation Communities apart from other affordable housing groups.

During the time she lived in a different Foundation Communities complex, Carmen Vasquez was able to enroll in classes at Austin Community College, land a job at a local bank and care for her now 4-year-old daughter. Once her finances improved, she was able to move to a larger place elsewhere.

“While I was sorry to leave such a beautiful place, I was so so proud that I could make room for someone else who, just like me, had struggled so long and so hard to find a place to live and needed help to turn their life around,” Vasquez said.

The funding for the \$20.5 million Capital Studios came from a mix of private investors who received tax credits, a \$4.7 million forgivable loan from the Austin Housing Finance Corporation, and other financing and private donations.

Capital Studios opens as Austin is dealing with rising housing costs that are squeezing some residents out. Last year city voters approved a \$65 million bond to build and repair affordable housing, and last week the Housing Authority of the City of Austin opened up the waiting list for its rental vouchers.

The program provides a voucher that low-income residents can use to pay for part of their monthly rent at any apartment or rental property that will accept it. Nearly 5,800 Austin households receive the vouchers, said Michael Roth, the Housing Authority's admissions director, and another 2,500 will be selected at random out of the people who signed up this month.

By Tuesday, 15,815 applications had been filed.

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