



FULLERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT *PRESS RELEASE*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2026 **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes **PHONE:** (657) 706-3774

Fullerton School District Awarded \$525,000 Grant to Expand Student-Built Tiny Home Project

FULLERTON, CA – Fullerton School District has been awarded a \$525,000 Innovation Grant from the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to expand its [Tiny Home Project](#), an innovative program where middle school students design and build code-compliant homes for District families experiencing homelessness.

FSD is one of just six districts selected for the grant, funded through OCDE's [Innovation Funding Initiative](#) to support promising ideas that can be replicated across Orange County schools. The three-year grant will expand the Tiny Home Project through June 2029, funding tools, materials, technology and student learning opportunities, while also supporting services that connect participating families with ongoing resources.

The District will mark another milestone in the program's rapid growth when it completes its third student-built home and celebrates with a ribbon-cutting on May 22.

"This program blends career technical education, core academics and real-world community impact – giving students the opportunity to apply their learning in ways rarely seen at the middle school level," said Jeremy Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Instructional Support, whose team spearheads the program. "We're incredibly grateful to the Orange County Department of Education for recognizing and investing in this work."

Launched in 2022 as a post-COVID innovation, the program grew out of a "Shark Tank"-style competition within the Innovation team, led by Pablo Diaz, Director of Innovation and Instructional Support.

Under the guidance of woodshop teacher Mucio Vidales, eighth-grade students in the Construction Academy at Nicolas Junior High School design and construct 192-square-foot tiny homes that provide temporary housing for FSD families.

Through hands-on experience in framing, electrical, plumbing, flooring, painting and solar energy systems, students strengthen skills in literacy, mathematics, and college and career readiness while applying their learning to real-world construction projects.

– *MORE* –

Each home is fully furnished and includes a kitchen, bathroom and living space, with a significant portion of funding for materials provided by the Phelps Foundation, the Fullerton Education Foundation and other community partners. The first home opened in May 2024, followed by a second in May 2025, with the third now nearing completion.

The grant will fund tools, personal protective equipment and sustainable building materials, along with technology such as Computer-aided design (CAD) software, certification opportunities and a CNC machine for precision construction. Funding will also support field trips, industry mentorships and professional development, as well as essential appliances and furnishings for each home. In addition, a social services assistant and a case manager will help connect families with resources and ongoing support.

“This initiative reflects the very best of what public education can be,” said Interim Superintendent Chad Hammitt, Ed.D. “Our students are not only gaining valuable hands-on skills as they explore future career pathways, but they are also using those skills to directly support families in need. We are proud to partner with OCDE to expand a program that is making a real and lasting impact in our community.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

051126_TINYHOME1: A Nicolas Junior High advanced woodshop student participates in construction as part of Fullerton School District’s Tiny Home Project, supported by a \$525,000 Innovation Grant to expand the program serving families experiencing homelessness.

051126_TINYHOME2: The three-year grant will expand the Tiny Home Project through June 2029, supporting tools, materials, technology, student learning opportunities and services for participating families. Pictured is the interior of one of the fully furnished Tiny Homes.

Video of one of the Tiny Home builds is available [here](#).

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