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Summit County and Breckenridge extend Lease to Locals program through 2022

Program aims to convert 100 short-term lease bedrooms to long-term lease bedrooms for locals in the community

Summit County and the town of Breckenridge have extended the Lease to Locals program through the end of 2022 as officials hope to unlock more affordable bedrooms for local employees.

The county and town announced the extension of the program Wednesday, March 16. Since its inception in October, Lease to Locals has converted 54 bedrooms, offering housing to 57 local workers in Breckenridge and unincorporated Summit County, which means any area in the county outside of town limits.

The program provides monetary incentives to property owners, who convert short-term rentals into longer leases for local workers. Property owners can receive up to \$20,000 per property depending on how many rooms they open up and for how long they rent them out.

The county and the town of Breckenridge originally budgeted \$1 million in total for the program, which started as a six-month pilot. So far, \$443,700 of those funds have been spent, meaning there was room for the program to continue past its original end date, Summit County Housing Director Jason Dietz said.

County and town officials heard from many property owners who said they would have participated in the program had they known about it earlier, Dietz said. They also heard from property owners who are interested in participating in the program throughout the spring and summer when they aren't leasing out units during the busy ski season.

“Because there was a lot of interest and we ended up unlocking a lot of bedrooms that weren’t previously there ... and we only spent a little less than half the budget, we decided to keep it open moving forward,” Dietz said.

When the program originally started, Dietz said the goal was to open 100 bedrooms to locals in the community, which officials knew was a lofty goal with the original six-month timeline. Dietz is hopeful the extension will allow the county and Breckenridge to meet that 100-bedroom goal.

In the months since the program began, county and town officials have found themselves learning many lessons and changing aspects of the program to meet community needs, Dietz said.

Landing Locals, the housing marketplace that county and town officials use to operate the program, plans to start a matchmaking service for property owners and future tenants. The town and county are also looking to expand the program to offer master leasing, which gives small, local business owners the ability to enter into leases with property owners that will house their employees.

The county and town also increased some of the incentives for long-term leases, Dietz said. According to [Landing Locals](#), a homeowner can make up to \$8,000 for a seasonal lease, which lasts at least five months and ends before Oct. 31. Long-term leases allow property owners to make up to \$20,000

“A lot of people opted for the long-term incentive over the short-term incentive, which we were happy to see but didn’t necessarily expect to see,” Dietz said.

Even with its success, the program is intended to be a short-term solution while county and town officials continue to build affordable housing projects.

County and town leaders may decide to extend the program into 2023 after seeing how well it goes for the rest of the year, Breckenridge Town Council member Dick Carleton said in a Facebook Live event Wednesday.

“I wish we had a silver bullet to the housing problem, but we don’t” Carleton said. “All of these programs try to move the needle.”

The program is only open to property owners with short-term rental licenses and tenants who work at least 30 hours a week in Summit County. It’s also only offered for properties located in unincorporated Summit County or Breckenridge town limits. People who are interested in leasing or renting can visit LandingLocals.com/summitco to get started.