

Desert Sage Health Centers, Inc., Glenns Ferry, Idaho



This summary describes the capital expansion and consolidation efforts of Glenns Ferry Health Center, Inc. dba **Desert Sage Health Centers** (Desert Sage), highlighting the planning, financing, and community impact of its recent \$22.5 million health center capital project. The new facility will expand essential care services to the communities it serves in rural southwest Idaho, where nearly half the population lives below 200% of the federal poverty level.

ABOUT DESERT SAGE

Before [Desert Sage](#) opened its clinic doors in 1982 in Glenns Ferry, Idaho, the rurally-located and medically-underserved counties of Elmore and Owyhee had virtually no access to affordable health care. Now, with three sites across two counties, what began as a select group of residents renting out a small building for one dollar per year has transformed into an multi-clinic community mainstay for health services.

Headquartered in Mountain Home, Idaho, Desert Sage seeks to improve the health of the community and reduce health disparities through high-quality, integrated, comprehensive healthcare that serves the entire family and promotes disease prevention and healthy lifestyles. In 2021, Desert Sage served more than 8,000 patients—of which 617 were migrant seasonal agricultural workers, and 2,246 were racial and/or ethnic minority patients—through nearly 42,000 visits. In addition, Desert Sage’s clinics provide essential obstetrics and gynecology, and dietitian services.

Desert Sage’s service area falls behind the country and the state of Idaho in several social drivers of health categories, demonstrating not only the health center’s critical role in the communities it serves, but the importance of Federally Qualified Health Centers serving rural areas in general. For instance, U.S. Census data indicates 44% of the population Desert Sage serves has an income below 200% of the federal poverty level, compared to 11% for the state. Additionally, 21% of the population under the age of 65 is uninsured vs. 10.5% for Idaho. As of 2021, 88% of Desert Sage’s patient population (for which incomes are known) live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, and 23% are uninsured. Given the extreme need in the rural areas it serves, Desert Sage aims to provide quality, affordable health care to all regardless of ability to pay, and help patients avoid unnecessary trips to emergency rooms or other costlier forms of care.

CAPITAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Desert Sage is planning to construct and furnish a new clinic facility that is 30,800 square feet on a three-acre property across the road from its current location in Mountain Home, Idaho. Once completed, the new clinic will be nearly triple the size of the current building and will continue to operate fully integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services. The new site will allow Desert Sage to not only meet the capacity challenges faced at the previous site, but to also add new clinical support services and evidence-based quality improvement procedures to improve patient health outcomes, as well as hire additional providers to meet the need and serve unmet patients.

Preliminary site development and preparation on the property began in late 2022 and construction is estimated to be completed in early 2024.

PROJECT FINANCING

The total development budget for the proposed clinic is \$21.5 million. Financing included \$6.3 million in New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC), nearly \$600,000 in HRSA American Rescue Plan C8E Grants, and a \$4 million bank loan. Other project funds included the sale of the current building, sale of the project property, and \$7 million in health center cash.

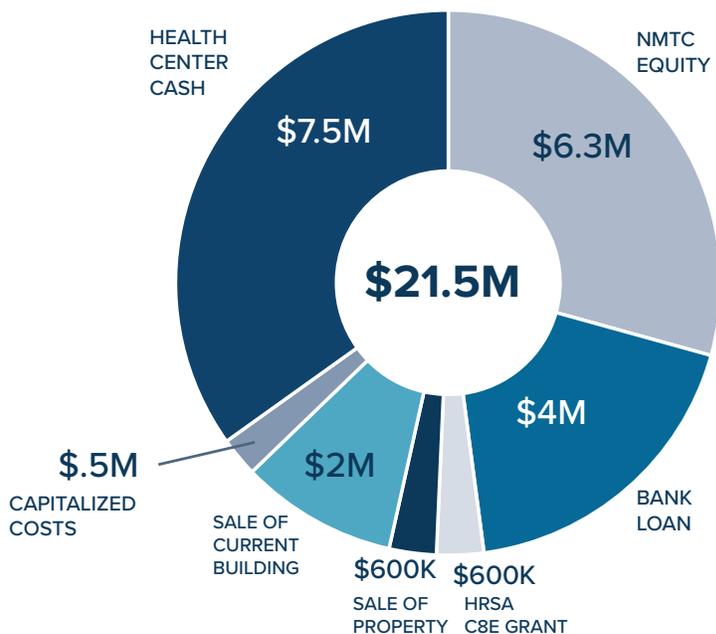
PROJECT DETAILS



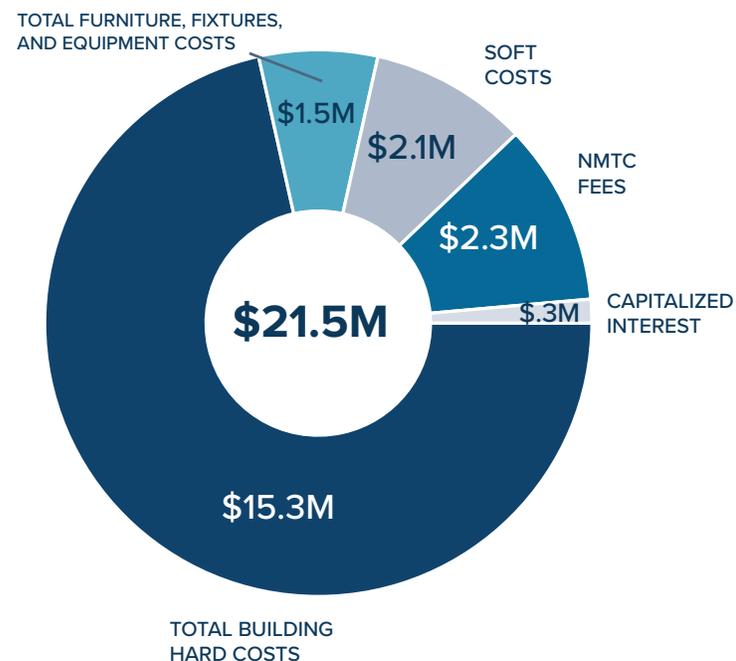
The new clinic will have:

- » **18** EXAM ROOMS
- » **2** PROCEDURE ROOMS
- » **2** DRIVE-THRU EXAM STALLS
- » **8** BEHAVIORAL SPECIALTY OFFICES
- » **8** DENTAL OPERATORIES
- » **1** PHARMACY

» SOURCES OF PROJECT FUNDS



» USES OF PROJECT FUNDS





COMMUNITY IMPACT

Once fully operational, the expanded operations will create approximately 11 immediate new full-time employment (FTE) jobs for the community, including five new medical support personnel, two behavioral health providers, two mid-level providers, and two additional nurses. The new clinic will enable the health center to serve more patients and provide more visits and full-time jobs for the community in the years to come.

With the construction of the new site, the health center’s total number of FTEs is projected to grow from 66 in CY 2021 to 89 in FY 2026. The health center’s total number of patient visits, with medical, dental, and mental health combined, is also expected to increase from 41,772 in CY 2021 to 62,325 in FY 2026. The new clinic is projected to allow the health center to serve an additional 1,900 patients by FY 2026, to nearly 10,000 annually.

By expanding its capacity to serve the Mountain Home community, Desert Sage will be able to extend its reach across its service area and better provide essential health services to those who may not have been able to access them otherwise.

	CY 2021 Pre Project	FY 2026 Projected
Number of Patients	8,062	9,961
Number of Total Patient Visits	41,772	62,325
Permanent Direct Employment	66	89

This resource is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1.285 with 0 percent financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.