

HB 2100 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Michelle Deister, Budget Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/8, 6/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines “culturally responsive organization,” “culturally responsive services,” and “culturally specific organization” as related to Housing Authorities Law.

Requires the Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD) and the Oregon Housing Stability Council to consider advice on housing and community service programs from persons who have experience housing instability; Tribes; Community Action Partnership of Oregon; continuums of care; local governments; nonprofit organizations; homeless services providers; culturally specific organizations; housing providers; veterans’ services organizations; and other entities identified by HCSD by rule.

Requires HCSD to administer federal programs with advice from the Oregon Housing Stability Council. Federal funds for housing stabilization must, to the extent consistent with federal law, be allocated statewide in a manner proportionate to a needs-based and geographically based formula. Stipulates that 25% of the moneys deposited in the County Assessment and Taxation Fund are dedicated to the emergency housing assistance program for assistance to veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Establishes the 19-member Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities charged with identifying and investigating potential changes in Oregon’s funding structure to address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Authorizes the Task Force to consult experts, form subcommittees or advisory committees, conduct field investigations, hearings and other meetings, receive testimony in any form or format, request or require production of documents and other evidence. The Task Force is required to meet no less than monthly until January 31, 2022. HCSD is required to provide staff support to the Task Force. Specifies that HCSD must provide a third-party facilitator to assist the chairperson or co-chairs with the facilitation of meetings and the operations of the Task Force. A member of the Task Force is not entitled to compensation, but in the discretion of HCSD may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses or provided a stipend. The measure requires the Task Force to submit a report to a committee of the Legislature by January 15, 2022. The Task Force sunsets on July 1, 2022. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Task Force expenses

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to data provided by the National Council on Homelessness (2020), Oregon’s rate of homeless individuals is one of the highest in the nation, with 15,876 individuals who are homeless on a given night, or an average of 37.9 per 10,000 people in the general population. According to Oregon Housing and Community Services, Oregon ranks fourth highest in the nation for youth experiencing homelessness and chronic homelessness. A 2019 study by the Oregon Community Foundation found that Black and Indigenous Oregonians are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, with a share of the homeless population that is more than three times higher than these groups’ representation in the general population.

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The health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as individuals and families displaced by last year's wildfires, underscores the need for safe shelter, housing, and supportive services to meet the needs of a growing homeless population. The community action agency network, established initially under the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, has served as Oregon's centralized delivery system for federal antipoverty programs, including services for individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. State and federal moneys for various housing stabilization programs flow through nonprofit, community action agencies, or CAAs, which have geographically defined services areas throughout the state.

House Bill 2100 clarifies Oregon Housing and Community Services' role and responsibilities in administering federal antipoverty programs, including the Emergency Housing Assistance Program and State Homeless Assistance Program. It requires the agency to consult with specified entities in grant administration, and clarifies that eligible grantees must demonstrate culturally responsive services to best serve the needs of diverse client populations, including communities of color. It establishes the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities to address racial disparities in the provision of and access to homeless services programs across the state.