

2021 Legislative Agenda



As Oregon communities move towards an equitable recovery, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) brings forward a robust 2021 Legislative Agenda to address the housing needs of all Oregonians and support recovery across the state. OHCS seeks more than \$350 million in state general fund and bond resources to address housing challenges across the spectrum, from homelessness to affordable rental housing to homeownership. Our agenda follows Governor Brown's lead and [Oregon's Statewide Housing Plan \(SWHP\)](#).

The SWHP includes **six priorities** reflecting OHCS focus areas that address pressing housing needs and tap into opportunities to support housing stability for all. Each of piece of our policy agenda is connected to one or more of these priorities.



EQUITY & RACIAL JUSTICE



HOMELESSNESS



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING



HOME OWNERSHIP



RURAL COMMUNITIES

Housing Stabilization

Restructuring Oregon Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

\$7 million

IDAs are a matching savings account for low-income Oregonians. Changes in the federal tax codes have made it increasingly difficult to sell the IDA tax credit. The tax credit is set to expire in 2022 and **SB 82** will change the credit to a general fund allocation following the expiration.



Modernizing Oregon's Homeless Response System

To address the rising crisis of homelessness, OHCS seeks to modernize housing stabilization funding by codifying outcomes-oriented contracting, establishing new funding partnerships and providing uniform standards for culturally specific and responsive services. **HB 2100** would also affirm Community Action Partnership of Oregon as the delivery system for key federal antipoverty programs but expand access to state and federal homeless assistance resources.



Providing Energy Assistance

\$5 million

OHCS energy assistance programs are about 5 times oversubscribed, meaning we can only serve a fraction of those who are eligible. This investment would assist with past-due utility bills and help avoid post-COVID shutoffs.



Improving the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

\$1.2 million

These resources will give Oregon accurate, statewide data that tracks outcomes for Oregonians experiencing homeless and housing insecurity. It also allows for data-driven decision making.



Providing Long Term Rental Assistance

\$4.5 million

Following the lead of the Governor's Racial Justice Council, OHCS seeks resources to **establish a pilot rental assistance program for at-risk youth**, particularly those exiting foster care, to prevent homelessness for young Oregonians.



OHCS helped nearly **150,000**

Oregonians keep the lights on in 2020 by assisting with utility bills.

Increasing Access to Landlord Guarantee Programs



HB 2101 amends the Housing Choice Landlord Guarantee Program (HCLGP) and the Rent Guarantee Program (RGP) to make it easier for landlords to access the programs. It removes the requirement for landlords to obtain a small claims judgment before applying for HCLGP funds. The bill removes the lifetime RGP landlord cap, allowing landlords to accept multiple tenants. Caps on back rent payments would also be removed to incentivize landlord participation.

Fixing Energy Program Statutes



SB 81 fixes the naming convention in statute for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Providing Down Payment Assistance



\$10 million

Existing Down Payment Assistance (DPA) funds are not sufficient to increase homeownership rates, especially for communities of color. This fund will help increase available programs and lenders in rural communities. By paring this DPA with OHCS lending, this investment will help OHCS modernize our mortgage lending programs to serve more Oregonians and provide administrative efficiencies to allow these resources to reach more Oregonians.

Developing Homeownership and LIFT



\$10 million for Homeownership & a soft set aside of \$20 million for LIFT Homeownership

This investment would create a flexible funding loan program for homeownership development, including co-op models. Program details will be informed by the Governor's Racial Justice Council and development partners.

OHCS will continue investing in the Local Innovation Fast Track (LIFT) Homeownership program while piloting this new, more flexible homeownership development program. The LIFT investment is listed under the Affordable Rental Housing Division.

Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership



\$2 million

SB 79 amends the Homeowner Assistance Program (HOAP), making technical fixes and affirming that HOAP can be strategically utilized to increase homeownership in BIPOC communities. These changes were developed by the Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership and were included in HB 4003 (2020 Regular Session). OHCS is also seeking more funding for staff to provide technical assistance and outreach to BIPOC communities.

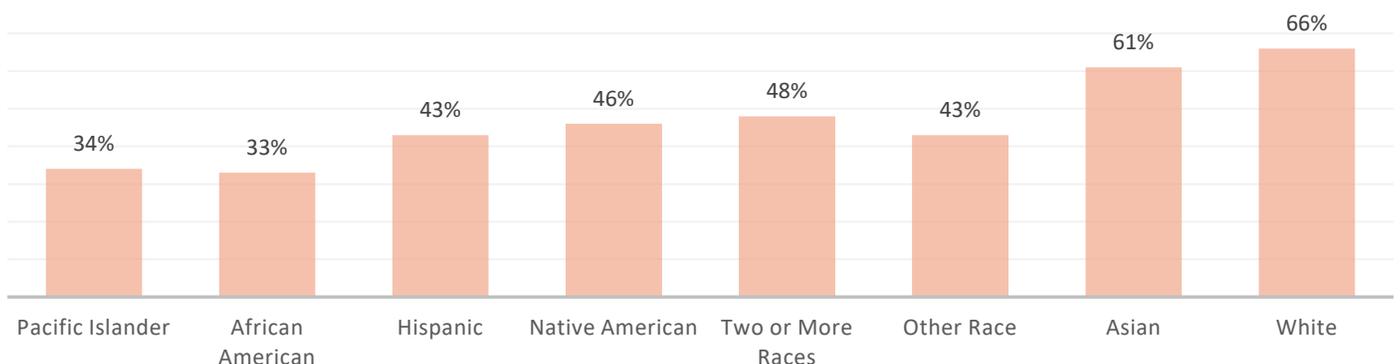
Updating the Manufactured Housing Program



\$6 million

This proposal continues funding for programs established by HB 2896 (2019), including resources for homeowners to decommission/dispose and replace their homes and bridge loan funding for park preservation. **HB 2099** makes programmatic updates that improve program longevity and allow resources to be retooled for disaster recovery.

Oregon Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 2019



Affordable Rental Housing

Developing Affordable Homes (LIFT & PSH)



\$250 million Article XI-Q Bonds

\$15 million General Fund

OHCS is seeking Article XI-Q Bond resources to support three development programs:

*The Local Innovation Fast Track (LIFT) program addresses the shortage of affordable rental housing in historically underserved communities throughout Oregon. This includes rural areas of the state and communities of color. LIFT Rental (**\$150 million soft set aside**) can support the development of homes for those living at or below 60% of the area median income.

*LIFT Homeownership (**\$20 million soft set aside**) can support homes for purchase for those living at or below 80% of the area median income.

*Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a proven model to end chronic homelessness and stability house those with severe and persistent mental illness. OHCS seeks at least **\$50 million of bond resources for development and \$15 million of general fund** for rent assistance and services for these homes. These additional resources will expand opportunities to PSH access across the state, increasing housing and needed services, including mental health counseling, employment trainings, alcohol/drug treatment, and more. This investment ensures the success of Oregon's PSH program and meeting Oregon's Statewide Housing Plan goal of developing 1,000 PSH homes by 2024.



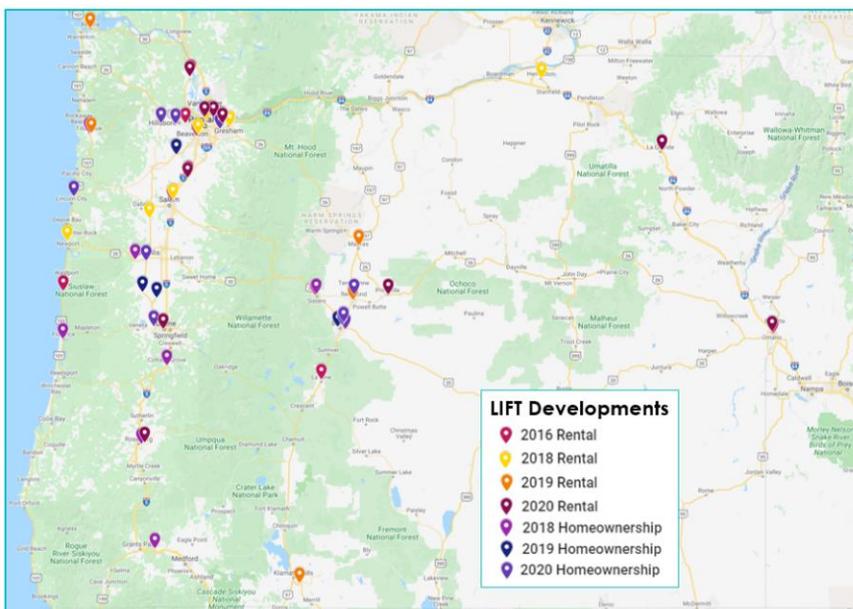
Oregon's Statewide Housing Plan calls for the **development of 25,000 homes**. Less than halfway through the five-year plan, OHCS has **developed 15,863 affordable homes**.

Funding the Land Acquisition Program (LAP)



\$20 million

[LAP](#) provides loans to governmental agencies or non-profits for the purchase of available development property in their community, with at least 60% of the funding used for multifamily rental developments and up to 40% used for homeownership developments. The loan allows land to be purchased quickly, making it easier to secure land for affordable housing. The loan must be repaid within eight years. Once paid, funds revolve back into the LAP account. OHCS is asking for additional funds for this popular program, which can support wildfire recovery.



Updating the Agricultural Workforce Housing Credit (AWHTC)



\$24 million

The AWHTC is used to develop housing for agricultural workers on farms and in communities. **HB 2096** would update the program by making the tax credit allocation more flexible and by creating a separate application process for communities that pair the AWHTC with other development resources. OHCS is also seeking a **\$9.5 million increase** to the chronically oversubscribed program to meet the demand for quality homes for this essential workforce.

Assisting with Broadband



\$6.4 million

As a part of the Governor's broadband package, OHCS will receive funds to help low-income Oregonians pay for internet services.

of homes needed to affordably house Oregonians based on their income

Extremely low-income Oregonians
30% of MFI

141,260

Very low-income Oregonians
50% of MFI

97,128

Low-income Oregonians
80% of MFI

54,431

MFI = Median Family Income

Updating Publicly Supported Housing Preservation (PuSH)



PuSH regulations (HB 2002, 2017) include reporting requirements and a right of first refusal if an affordable housing property owner intends to opt-out of their affordability restrictions and sell their property. A technical error in a 2019 update to the statute (HB 2002) caused an unintended additional 6 months to submit the expiration notice without penalty. **HB 2095** fixes this issue.

Preserving Affordable Housing



\$10 million

Oregon's affordable housing portfolio is aging quickly. Communities are at risk of losing existing housing stock through expiry, physical condition loss, or market conversion. OHCS is requesting resources to address this issue and preserve existing homes.

27% of Oregon renters are spending more than half of their income on housing

*Pre-2020 data

Agency Wide

Updating the Veterans Definition for OHCS Programs



HB 2094 would expand access to Veteran housing programs to include all those identified by the Federal Veterans Administration by allowing OHCS to define "Veteran" by rule. This would only impact OHCS programs funded by the Document Recording Fee.

A recent study found that most Oregon renters are facing financial hardship, with **84% experiencing mental or physical stress due to housing insecurity.**

[Community Alliance of Tenants and Portland State University study](#)

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OREGON HOUSING and COMMUNITY SERVICES