



MAYOR'S OFFICE

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April 24, 2021

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, and Co-Chair Rayfield:

In Salem, we're proposing Rescue Plan Act funds to continue critical services in our community and planning ahead for impactful projects to support our community through COVID recovery.

We expect more permanent supportive, affordable, and market rate housing in our community by 2024. In the meantime, with \$1 million in your support, we can use the vouchers we have now to house 170 households and to keep 66 families in transitional housing for the next year, until systems we rely on recuperate from effects of the COVID Pandemic.

We also need your help with our sheltering crisis. As shelters faced the COVID-19 requirements for social distancing to keep shelter residents safe, fewer shelter beds were available to those in need. We have temporary camping in our parks. Campers have also taken up residence on property controlled by the State of Oregon. As funds run out for sheltering, we expect more people to return to the streets, in limbo until the Pandemic recedes or we have more tools to encourage their movement into shelter. With \$28.8 million, we can move more people to safer, more secure pallet housing dispersed throughout our community. Our plan provides water, restrooms facilities and garbage service to each site and leverages our local Continuum of Care funding for street outreach.

City of Salem: Critical Housing Supports for Those in Need

A. Bridging Gap Until More Housing is Available: \$1 million

With the housing market tight already and fewer evictions occurring this last year, finding housing for someone with a Section 8 voucher is challenging. Within the next two years, as we recover from the impacts of the COVID Pandemic and the housing we're building today becomes available, there are still many in need of shelter in our community. We're grateful for the funding support we've received from Oregon Housing and Community Services and the federal government as we build more permanent supportive housing.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Women, minorities, and disabled are encouraged to apply • ADA Accommodations will be provided upon request

- 1. House those with vouchers.** Salem is poised to receive another 98 Section 8 vouchers and 20 designated for veterans, designed to make market rate apartments more affordable. We have 8 unused vouchers now. With a two-year limited duration position to help find rental properties, we could move another 186 households in need into housing.
\$200,000
- 2. Create more housing options.** Entice more landlords into the Section 8 market through outreach and provide landlord subsidy. Voucher pricing is set a year and half behind the escalating prices in our local housing market. To encourage more landlords, we're proposing to subsidize the gap between the voucher and market price for rentals. Taking this action now will also help the smallest of local businesses, our landlords.
\$300,000
- 3. Extend Housing Rental Assistance Program by 12 months.** Salem has been operating a successful Housing First program for almost five years. The Homeless Rental Assistance Program has served more than 300 with a combination of rental assistance and intensive case management for housing stability. Pre-COVID, we were able to move people from the HRAP into Section 8 housing. All in-person services required to get identification and records needed for this transition have been closed or severely limited in this last year. We'd like to extend HRAP participation by 12 months to give participants housing stability while these vital systems a chance to recover and move through the backlog of need.
\$500,000

B. Near-Term COVID Recovery Sheltering Strategy: \$28.8 million

In Salem, we adopted temporary rules as part of our emergency declaration to allow camping in two of our parks. These sites have created safety concerns and other challenges for adjacent property owners, and become public health concerns for those residing in tents more permanently than envisioned in response to the emergency. We've committed to unwinding park camping in early June. As we prepare to move approximately 1,000 campers from emergency temporary tent camping in parks to other temporary sites, we know we need to ensure their safety and security, connect them to services and counseling, and care for the site with garbage service, potable water, and restroom facilities.

- 1. Buy 1,000 pallet homes** (or similar structures) for tent campers. These weather-resistant, hard-walled, lock-able structures will be scattered throughout our community to ensure resident safety. Our local Continuum of Care will be standing up 26 outreach teams to help connect residents to much-needed services, support and case management.
\$2.5 - \$5 million

2. **Provide security and sanitary services to dispersed sites.** To leverage the Continuum of Care funded outreach teams, the City will provide garbage service, potable water, port-a-potties and security to these managed sites. We estimate a little more than \$22,000 to clean each service each site per month or \$264,000 per year.
\$10.6 million

3. **Counsel those in need where they are.** Adding addiction and recovery counselling in the streets to the CCO-funded outreach teams will help get people what they need to transition into more permanent, supportive housing.
\$100,000

Sincerely,



Chuck Bennett
Mayor

cc: Salem Legislative Delegation