

My name is Claire Snyder, I am a Black and Hispanic woman who lives in Marion County. In the 35 years that I have lived here, I have seen firsthand, as well as experienced firsthand, the inequitable treatment of those in mental health crisis by law enforcement. So often, law enforcement officers are faced with situations that they are not equipped or trained for that would be better suited for mental health professionals or those trained to deescalate situations that are aggravated by issues other than breaking of laws. In that same vein, our law enforcement in Oregon also has a high presence of officers who hold to racial biases (both voluntarily and involuntarily) that increasingly affect situations with the public at large.

After seeing what CAHOOTS has done in Eugene, Oregon for the quality of care and meeting of needs for its citizens, it is clear that what is in the best interest for cities around the country is to have individuals trained as mobile response, who are able to deescalate, assess, and assist citizens in crisis with better outcomes and a lower risk of racial profiling.

I ask that the Oregon Legislature strongly consider the benefit of this grant for the quality of life of its citizens, the safety of its residents of color, and the well being of those enduring mental health and drug-related crises.