



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 9, 2022

House Committee on Housing  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Morgan, Vice Chair Campos, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 4123, which creates a pilot program for eight communities across Oregon to coordinate between cities and counties to address homelessness.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Unfortunately, Oregon also has one of the highest rates of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, meaning they are sleeping outside, in a tent, or a car. In 2019, Oregon Housing and Community Services commissioned a study of shelter<sup>1</sup> in our state, and found that Oregon is one of four states where more than half of people (61%) experiencing homelessness don't have access to shelter, meaning they are literally sleeping on the street, in a car or in a tent. This high rate is directly due to the lack of availability of shelter in our community. In addition, some people seeking shelter are unable to access it due to barriers in shelter – they cannot stay with their partner or their pet because of shelter capacity or policy.

It is important to note that people of color disproportionately experience homelessness and housing instability due to historic and systemic discrimination in housing and employment, and many other factors. People experiencing unsheltered homelessness are disproportionately people of color, compared to their percentage of the general population. In Oregon, the 2019 Point in Time count<sup>2</sup> showed that while Black Oregonians make up 1.9% of the general population, they make up 6% of people experiencing homelessness who were counted in 2019.

People experiencing homelessness are our neighbors and members of our community.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/ISD/RA/Oregon-Statewide-Shelter-Study.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://public.tableau.com/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services#!/vizhome/2019Point-in-TimeDashboard/Story1>

HB 4123 will support eight communities across Oregon to better coordinate, work together, plan, and address homelessness. This unique approach will include cities, counties, and local homeless service providers.

Currently, many local jurisdictions lack the staff capacity needed to address homelessness. HB 4123 would fund eight sites to pilot this work, with a requirement that the cities and counties included would be able to continue funding the work after the pilot was concluded. HB 4123 will increase the capacity of local governments to work together to address homelessness. Cities and counties who have asked to be included in HB 4123 are making commitments to:

- Sign an inter-governmental agreement with regional partners to manage and facilitate the coordinated homeless response office;
- Establish an oversight board, consisting of members from each participating local government;
- Develop a 5-year strategic plan to identify gaps in their community's homeless services including identifying funding to support ongoing coordination, in collaboration with community partners and existing efforts;
- Commit to continued, sustained funding beyond the first 2 years of state funding;
- Work to incorporate best practices for ending homelessness, and eliminate racial disparities within their homeless service system; and
- Report back to the legislature and OHCS on local progress, opportunities, and challenges to inform future state homeless funding and policy decisions.

These are all critical efforts for local governments to take in order to address our challenges as a community.

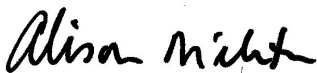
The efforts must also include not only affordable housing providers and homeless service providers, but the efforts must include people who have lived experience with homelessness. People who have experienced homelessness have a unique perspective as to how to fix the systems and structures that both allow homelessness to occur, and how to support people to exit homelessness. Their voices are critical to these discussions.

We know that ending homelessness is possible. To truly end homelessness in our communities, we must have enough housing that is affordable to people with low incomes in our communities, along with strong systems to provide rent assistance, legal supports, and emergency shelter when needed. We have significant work to do to build that system in Oregon. Alone, HB 4123 will not solve these problems, but without local government commitment to solving these challenges, and coordination among cities, counties, and service providers, we cannot do the important work ahead.

We strongly urge your support for HB 4123.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
Business for a Better Portland  
CASA of Oregon  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Clackamas County  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
College Housing Northwest  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Action Team  
Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Development Partners  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Services Consortium  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
DevNW  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Home Forward  
Homes for Good  
Horizon Project, Inc.  
Housing Authorities of Oregon  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Housing Oregon  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Innovative Housing, Inc.

Interfaith Alliance on Poverty  
JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Oregon Cities  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Looking Glass Community Services  
Mainstream Housing Inc.  
Metro  
Mercy Housing Northwest  
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority  
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency  
NAYA Family Center  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Consumer Justice  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Our Children Oregon  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community College  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Housing Center  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Portland: Neighbors Welcome  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC Oregon)  
Rogue Action Center  
Rose CDC  
St. Francis Shelter  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association (SETA)  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Think Real Estate  
Transition Projects  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
West Tuality Habitat for Humanity  
Wishcamper Development Partners