

Testimony for Legislative Days

Good morning, Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Gamba, and members of the Housing and Homelessness Committee.

My name is Matthew Vorderstrasse, and I am the Executive Director of the North Bend City/Coos-Curry Housing Authorities. I appreciate the opportunity to share insights as a representative of the Sustainable Shelter Work Group.

Why the group's work matters

Our work matters because Oregon stands at a critical juncture in addressing homelessness. The Sustainable Shelter Work Group has tackled the complexities of building a system that moves beyond temporary fixes, focusing on sustainable solutions. Homelessness is not just about the lack of shelter but the absence of pathways that connect individuals to stable, permanent housing. By rethinking shelter systems and integrating them with housing production and supportive services, we are designing a framework that ensures every shelter bed becomes a gateway to long-term stability, addressing the root causes of homelessness.

How the new configuration will change the way we work

The proposed regional coordination model is a game-changer. By aligning funding, outcomes, and local expertise, this approach empowers communities to innovate and respond flexibly to their unique needs while maintaining accountability. For example, my organization's collaboration with shelters and service providers under this model ensures a seamless transition from emergency shelter to Permanent Supportive Housing. This alignment will reduce administrative burdens, allowing us to focus more on delivering impactful, equity-driven solutions tailored to rural and underserved communities. Additionally, integrating housing developments with wrap-around supportive services ensures that individuals and families receive the comprehensive care they need to achieve stability.

What's still missing

Despite this progress, the critical link between shelter systems and housing production needs to be strengthened. A sustainable system must ensure that every shelter bed is connected to pathways leading directly to affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing. By integrating shelter systems into a broader housing continuum, as seen in models where Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and braided funding support both shelter operations and housing production, we can build self-sustaining systems. These systems create pipelines from emergency shelter to transitional and permanent housing, ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

To achieve this, we must align state funding and policies to prioritize such integrated models. By bridging gaps between emergency stabilization and long-term housing solutions, we can empower communities to address homelessness holistically while reducing reliance on state resources over time.

Thank you for your time and commitment. I welcome any questions.