

HB 2456 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Prepared By: Claire Adamsick, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 1/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands uses of Emergency Housing Account funds to include services and assistance to school-aged children or their families who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness. Modifies statutory language “unaccompanied homeless youth” to “youth experiencing homelessness” to describe a person between the ages of 14 and 24 who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and who is homeless. Allows Housing and Community Services Department to award grants to organizations providing evidence-based services for youth experiencing homelessness in underserved areas. Requires grant applicants to describe supplemental funding that will be used to cover proposed program costs. Expands the use of grant moneys for eligible host home projects to include funding for continued operations. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, on a given night in 2022, 17,959 Oregonians experienced homelessness. Of that number, more than 1,066 are youth between the ages of 14 and 24, and over half of youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon are unsheltered. The Voices of Youth Count program at the University of Chicago reports that in addition to unmet food and shelter needs, youth experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to numerous threats, including lack of treatment for mental health or substance use disorders, and increased risk for being physically assaulted, or committing suicide. Many factors increase a young person’s odds of experiencing homelessness, including being Hispanic or Black; being a single parent; or being LGBTQ, with LGBTQ youth having more than twice the risk of experiencing homelessness than their cisgender or heterosexual peers.

In 2021, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2544, which allocated \$4.4 million to the Department of Human Services for two-year grants to expand host homes and existing shelter and support services for youth experiencing homelessness. The Department of Human Services describes a “host home” as a safe environment offered by local community members in private homes that provide temporary housing for youth experiencing homelessness. The grant programs established by House Bill 2544 sunset June 30, 2023.

House Bill 2456 expands the uses of Emergency Housing Account funds to include services and assistance to school-aged children or their families who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.