



Dear Senate Committee and guests,

Do Good Multnomah is proud to support **SB 496** which amends the allowable purposes of Emergency Housing Account to include account moneys to be used for grants to assist pets of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Do Good Multnomah works closely with the Portland houseless community by providing multiple styles of housing for houseless Veterans and civilians. Whether a Veteran participant (or civilian participant) lives in a Do Good congregate shelter, motel shelter, village, or permanent support housing, all Do Good housing options allow for pets.

Over the years of serving the community, Do Good has found that a key component to increasing participant mental, physical, and spiritual health is directly correlated with owning a pet. Multiple participants over the years have been living with little hope, unmet mental health support, and isolation from community. A pet can make all the difference. Do Good has assisted numerous participants in adopting pets to improve their overall wellbeing and engagement in the community. From kittens, to snakes, to large and small dogs alike, participants begin to thrive and engage in case management, community activities, and housing searches when they bring an animal into their lives.

Time and time again, when participants hear that Do Good will shelter them and accepts their dog, cat, or small critter (guinea pigs, birds, snakes, rats) the response is tears and gratitude. As many shelters in the Portland Metro area will not allow pets, space is very limited (and competitive) for those who live with pets.

For our houseless community members who are female identifying and/or in the LGBTQI community, their physical lives often depend on having a companion animal. Living on the streets is often dangerous and unpredictable, creating a very intense bond between owner and pet. Dogs in particular, protect those living in tents from theft, physical violence, and sexual assault. The bond between owner and pet is so intertwined that houseless individuals would rather risk frost bite and potential death than abandon their animal if a shelter will not accept their pet. SB 496 can help prevent folks from having to choose their life over the life of their pet(s).

This grant opportunity could positively impact hundreds of lives with the potential of ongoing support for animal care, pet supplies, food resources, etc. Please support our vulnerable community members and their pets.

Sincerely,

*Shannon Troy*

Senior Director of Operations

Do Good Multnomah

