



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 7, 2023

Senator Aaron Woods
Representative David Gomberg
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means, Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: **Support for HB 5019**

Dear Co-Chairs Woods, Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in strong support of HB 5019. This bill follows through on Governor Kotek's Executive Orders 23-02 and 23-03 providing over \$155 million in homelessness prevention resources for the following:

- Eviction prevention services including rent assistance for 8,750 households;
- Expanding shelter capacity by adding 600 low-barrier shelter beds;
- Rehousing at least 1,200 unsheltered households;
- Addressing homelessness needs for Tribal members; and
- Emergency management response coordination by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. At NWPP, we understand the importance of investing in solutions to homelessness that prioritize permanent housing placements and person-centered services.

As direct service providers, we frequently see the critical and transformative impacts of homelessness response and prevention dollars in our community, and yet we know that these programs must grow in order to meet the level of need and effectively stabilize housing for more low-income Oregonians. We support the recommended investments included in HB 5019 to grow these programs and further expedite urgent coordination between state agencies and local communities to launch emergency responses immediately.

Ensuring that the rollout of these funds is well thought out is critical to addressing the current challenge of housing instability and homelessness in Oregon. As a community-based service provider, we encourage the Legislature to prioritize sufficient funding for community-based organizations - large and small - that distribute rent assistance and provide homelessness services by training, and retaining staffing to take on this work. However, we believe it is critical that you allow culturally specific and smaller organizations closest to the most marginalized communities easy access to these funds, while also allowing them flexibility to deliver services in the way that best meets the needs of those they work with. Lastly, we need streamlined, simple processes for organizations to access the eviction prevention funds and distribute them to tenants and landlords.

We urge the Legislature to support this initial down payment and continue making significant investments to rehouse and prevent homelessness for more Oregonians, build and preserve more housing units statewide, and increase homeownership. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Golino de Lovato
Executive Director
Northwest Pilot Project