

Submitter: Meredith Cook
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,
Oregon's state budget should prioritize reducing the number of houseless individuals in the state. By focusing on the houseless issue, policies and budgets can also address three major issues concerning Oregonians: mental health, substance abuse, and affordable housing. Funding needs to go directly to cities and counties, so that they can deliver resources to their specific programs.

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Oregon should expand funding to grow the behavioral health & substance abuse workforce and build more community-based health services to reach people in all areas of the state, from big cities to rural towns. Funding should include crisis response teams and "warm lines" for non-emergency calls, mental health first aid training to first responders, suicide prevention training for communities, and funding assistance for treatment.

Affordable Housing & Temporary Shelters

Oregon must expand the emergency rent assistance and eviction prevention resources at the community level to keep people in their current homes. Resources need to be expanded to support building more affordable, permanent housing such as rezoning efforts, reducing "red tape," and prioritizing medium and high density housing. Funding must include the quick expansion of temporary shelters for recreational vehicles, campgrounds with tents or sleeping pods, tiny house villages, micro-apartments with shared kitchens, as well as other group living or housing arrangements.

Thank you for supporting these critical issues facing our most vulnerable Oregonians.
-Meredith Cook, Beaverton

Resources:

Oregon Values and Beliefs Center Survey Results

<https://oregonvbc.org/homelessness-oct22/>

2023 Fair Shot Agenda <https://www.fairshotoregon.org/>

Unite Oregon <https://www.uniteoregon.org/action-agenda-2023>