

House Bill 3970

Sponsored by Representative LEVY E

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act tells DHS and HCSD to work on recommendations for funding to meet the needs of youth in homelessness. The Act changes the list of people who can get some funding for homelessness. The Act establishes grant programs for youth in homelessness. (Flesch Readability Score: 64.4).

Directs the Department of Human Services and the Housing and Community Services Department to collaborate on recommendations for funding to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Modifies the list of persons who may receive services and assistance funded by the Emergency Housing Account. Establishes grant programs for youth experiencing homelessness.

Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to youth homelessness; creating new provisions; amending ORS 458.650; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

SECTION 1. The Department of Human Services and the Housing and Community Services Department shall collaborate on the development of recommendations for the biennial Governor's budget to recommend sufficient funding to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness, as defined in ORS 417.802, in the next biennium.

SECTION 2. ORS 458.650 is amended to read:

458.650. (1) The Housing and Community Services Department shall administer the Emergency Housing Account to assist homeless individuals and individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless, through means including the emergency housing assistance program and the state homeless assistance program. Notwithstanding subsection (3)(a) of this section, the state homeless assistance program shall serve individuals experiencing homelessness, especially unsheltered homelessness, without respect to income.

(2) The Oregon Housing Stability Council shall develop a policy for the use of program funds with the advice of:

- (a) Persons who have experienced housing instability;
- (b) Tribes;
- (c) The Community Action Partnership of Oregon;
- (d) Continuums of care, as defined in 24 C.F.R. part 578;
- (e) Local governments;
- (f) Nonprofit organizations;
- (g) Homeless services providers;

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

(h) Culturally specific organizations;

(i) Housing providers;

(j) Veterans' services organizations; and

(k) Other entities identified by the department by rule.

(3) The policy under subsection (2) of this section shall direct that program funds shall be used:

(a) To provide to low and very low income individuals, including but not limited to individuals more than 65 years of age, persons with disabilities, agricultural workers and Native Americans:

(A) Emergency shelters and attendant services;

(B) Transitional housing services designed to assist individuals to make the transition from homelessness to permanent housing and economic independence;

(C) Supportive housing services to enable individuals to continue living in their own homes or to provide in-home services for such individuals for whom suitable programs do not exist in their geographic area;

(D) Programs that provide emergency payment of home payments, rents or utilities;

(E) Support for individuals with companion animals, as defined in ORS 401.977, that includes:

(i) Food for both companion animals and their owners;

(ii) Crates or kennels on-site or off-site that are easily accessible to the companion animal owners;

(iii) Basic veterinary services, including behavioral services; and

(iv) Rules of conduct and responsibility regarding companion animals and their owners; or

(F) Some or all of the services or assistance described in subparagraphs (A) to (E) of this paragraph.

(b) To provide the services and assistance described in paragraph (a) of this subsection to [school-aged children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12] **the following individuals**, or to their families, [who] **if the individuals** are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless[:]:

(A) Individuals who are school-aged children enrolled in or of an age to be eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12;

(B) Individuals who are pregnant; or

(C) Individuals between birth and an age eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten.

(c) To align with federal strategies and resources that are available to prevent and end homelessness, including the requirement of providing culturally responsive services and using evidence-based and emerging practices effective in ending homelessness, including practices unique to rural communities.

(4)(a) The council shall require as a condition of awarding a grant that the organization demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department that the organization:

(A) Has the capacity to deliver any service proposed by the organization;

(B) Is a culturally responsive organization or is engaged in a process to become a culturally responsive organization;

(C) Engages with culturally specific organizations; and

(D) Supports local homelessness system planning efforts.

(b) Any funds granted under this section may not be used to replace existing funds. Funds granted under this section may be used to supplement existing funds. An organization may use funds to support existing programs or to establish new programs.

(5) The department may expend funds from the account for:

(a) The administration of the account as provided for in the legislatively approved budget, as

that term is defined in ORS 291.002, for the department in support of directing a statewide policy on homelessness that ensures use of evidence-based and emerging practices, service equity in funding and local planning processes.

(b) The development of technical assistance and training resources for organizations developing and operating emergency shelters as defined in ORS 197.782 and transitional housing accommodations as described in ORS 197.746.

(6) The department shall utilize outcome-oriented contracting processes and evidence-based and emerging practices for account program funds, including evidence-based and emerging practices for serving rural communities.

(7) Twenty-five percent of moneys deposited in the account pursuant to ORS 294.187 are dedicated to the emergency housing assistance program for assistance to veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

SECTION 3. Youth substance use disorder treatment grants. The Oregon Health Authority shall administer a grant program to award grants to qualified youth substance abuse treatment providers who agree to provide services and resources to co-locate staff in facilities that are already providing other services to youth experiencing homelessness, including in licensed child-caring agencies, as defined in ORS 418.205.

SECTION 4. Behavioral and mental health grant program. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall establish a behavioral and mental health grant program. The program shall provide grants to local workforce boards organized under ORS 660.327, or to a nonprofit organization representing the boards, to increase the accessibility of behavioral and mental health services for youth experiencing homelessness by supporting pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities and supporting in-house training for child-caring agencies, as defined in ORS 418.205, and contractors or staff providing services to youth experiencing homelessness.

SECTION 5. In-house training grant program. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall provide grants to local workforce boards organized under ORS 660.327, or to a nonprofit organization representing the boards, for the purpose of supporting in-house training of employees of child-caring agencies, as defined in ORS 418.205, and of nonprofit organizations with existing contracts with the office of the Department of Human Services related to self sufficiency programs, to provide services to youth experiencing homelessness in order to increase tenure and improve outcomes.

APPROPRIATIONS

SECTION 6. Children and youth emergency housing assistance program. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Housing and Community Services Department, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$7,500,000, for deposit into the Emergency Housing Account to provide grants to individuals described in ORS 458.650 (3)(b), as amended by section 2 of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 7. Youth substance use disorder treatment grants. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Oregon Health Authority, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$2,000,000, to provide grants to youth substance use disorder treatment providers as described in section 3 of this

2025 Act.

SECTION 8. Behavioral and mental health grant program. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$750,000, to carry out the purposes of section 4 of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 9. In-house training grant program. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$1,250,000, to carry out the purposes of section 5 of this 2025 Act.

MISCELLANEOUS

SECTION 10. The unit and section captions used in this 2025 Act are provided only for the convenience of the reader and do not become part of the statutory law of this state or express any legislative intent in the enactment of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 11. This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect on its passage.