



Oregon
Community
Brokerages

January 30, 2025

To: Sen Pham, Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Community Brokerages
Re: Support for SB 444, increasing accessible housing units in new builds

Chair Pham and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we provide case management services to nearly 8,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people with what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that shape lives.

We all flourish and maximize our independence when we get to choose where and with whom we live. For many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, that ability to choose is severely restricted by the lack of available accessible housing within their communities. SB 444 would direct change and set Oregon on a course to increase the production of accessible units included in new housing development. OCB supports this bill and steps to increase available accessible housing stock.

Our service system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is built within and relies upon our communities. When Oregon closed its institutions housing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we invested in and built a service system in our communities. Support Service Brokerages were established around the year 2000 at the closing of Fairview Training Center, one of Oregon's last institutions. We were created to help navigate the community and build resources.

When people cannot find housing in their communities, it is costly to the system as well as to individuals. In Oregon, we primarily support people to live in the homes and places they choose, with the people they choose. The services are custom designed and built to fill in the gaps in each person's abilities and resources, to support all of their unique needs in combination with natural or unpaid supports. This support model works when people can be housed in their communities. Without accessible, affordable housing options, people with disabilities who want to move from their family home or are unable to stay in a family home are often forced to leave their communities. When people with

disabilities are forced to move from their communities, they typically require more assistance with daily living. We increase need for funded support by taking away the people and spaces that know them, know their abilities, and know how to fill in the gaps. What was a need for a little more help becomes a need for a lot more help. That is costly to the person, and it is costly to the Oregon state budget.

When we do not have enough accessible housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, they are stuck. Without housing options, they are more susceptible to predatory landlord behavior. People also end up staying in sticky situations with housemates or in locations that are not working or not safe for them. People with IDD need housing options to ensure that they can make the changes they need to stay safe and healthy.

We ask for your full support for SB 444 and are grateful for the opportunity to provide our context and observations. Creating more accessible housing is vital for our community and all communities.