

April 15, 2025

Rep. Pam Marsh, Chair  
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for SB 814 - Regarding eligibility criteria for the long-term rental assistance program for youth**

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Members of the Committee,

We write today in support of SB 814, a bill that extends the eligibility for the long-term rental assistance program for youth to include children and youth who are leaving the juvenile justice system, and establishes the Oregon Youth Authority as a stakeholder in designing and funding transitional housing services for justice-involved youth. Multnomah County supports SB 814 because it addresses the critical need for expanded housing access for youth in our community.

This bill is demonstrative of the type of policy improvements that promote system coordination that are critical right now, especially as Multnomah County continues to implement the Homelessness Response Action Plan, which has an overarching goal of reducing homelessness among youth aging out of foster care and people exiting carcel settings.

Multnomah County Juvenile Services Division currently has only four short-term shelter beds to serve youth that are not delinquent enough to be held in detention, yet not dependent enough to be served by child welfare. Only two additional shelters operate in the community for youth, with only one offering longer term, independent housing, with other short-term residential placements in jeopardy due to additional funding constraints. There is no transitional housing for youth leaving Oregon Youth Authority custody. Incorporating the Oregon Youth Authority as a stakeholder in designing and funding this process is essential to meet the needs of our high-risk, high-need youth.

In 2024, Oregon had a rate of 19.9 unsheltered homeless children per 10,000 children. Oregon also has the highest rate of unsheltered homeless families in the country.

According to McKinney-Vento data, in 2021- 2022, 1.9% of all enrolled K-12 students in Multnomah County experienced homelessness, approximately 1,200 total.

We believe that this proposal is an investment in the future of our community, particularly supporting justice impacted youth at risk of becoming homeless. By reinforcing our commitment to at-risk youth through enhanced services and programs, we establish a foundation for stronger, safer neighborhoods and a brighter future for the youth of Multnomah County, and Oregon.

We respectfully urge your support for SB 814.

Sincerely,

Ansley Flores  
Interim Director, Juvenile Services Division  
Homelessness Response System  
Multnomah County Department of Community Justice