

April 16, 2025

Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair  
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

This letter of support is for the funding of the Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center. The project provides 50 much-needed affordable housing units and wrap-around services for its residents and others in the region struggling with poverty.

Both the housing and services are critical for the greater Woodburn area.

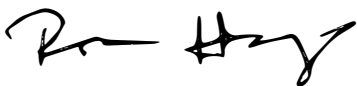
In Woodburn, 13.7% of residents live in poverty. Per capita income in Woodburn is \$22,311, compared to \$35,393 statewide. Children under age 5 comprise 6.9% of the population, compared to 5.4% statewide. Hispanic individuals represent 57% of Woodburn's population, compared to 13.4% of all Oregonians. Fifty-four percent of Woodburn residents speak a language other than English in their home, compared to 15% statewide. Seventy percent of adults in Woodburn are high school graduates, significantly lower than the statewide rate of 91%. Though the need in Woodburn is great; the opportunity to transform the lives of children and families is greater.

I served on Marion and Polk County's initial task force on homelessness. It was apparent that housing needed to be constructed to address the problem. It was also apparent that wrap-around services were needed for a successful housing plan. The Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center provides a successful plan to house people in need. The Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center will also provide the needed services to any regional housing project.

Community Resource Trust currently operates the 180-unit Cornerstone Apartments in Salem. They were the first LIFT-funded program to become operational in the State of Oregon, paving the way for the program to be implemented. They have a resident community health program providing their residents with wrap-around services. They are successfully partnering with multiple organizations in Woodburn to make this program equally successful.

This is why I am writing to support the Greater Woodburn Opportunity Center. It is a well-thought-out, pioneering, and comprehensive approach led by an experienced team and needs your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Hays". The signature is stylized with a large "R" and a long, sweeping "H".

Ron Hays  
Rural North Marion County