

Submitter: Molly Goulet  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Re: Support for POPs 501 (Shelter); 502 (Re-Housing) and 504 and 505 (Homelessness Prevention Resources) in the OHCS Budget

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support Policy Option Packages 501, 502, 504 and 505, the Homelessness Shelter, Re-Housing, and Prevention Packages in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These POPs will provide ongoing emergency rent assistance and community-based and culturally specific services designed to prioritize prevention of eviction and homelessness in communities across the state, as well as continuity of shelter and re-housing services and supports.

Cuts to any of these programs will lead to more unsheltered homelessness in our communities, and more trauma for struggling Oregonians. Continuing these programs will save lives and support communities.

I work with individuals facing eviction in my law practice, and many of them tell me they fear dying if evicted because of the difficulty of re-entering the housing market. It just makes sense, economically and ethically, to keep people from being homeless. In Eugene, my unhoused neighbors often struggle to get back onto the bottom rung of the ladder, socially, but these programs can open doors for them.

With one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness in the nation, and the highest rate of youth homelessness, Oregon must prioritize funding to strengthen our network of shelter, rehousing assistance, and responsive and supportive services to help our neighbors who have been forced by our housing crisis to live outside.

Prevention resources, including emergency rent assistance, legal assistance, and supportive services, must be adequate to keep more people from falling into homelessness in the first place.

Please support:

Policy Option Package 501: Please maintain shelter and supportive services operations. The ongoing shelter system is critical to providing stability and shelter during extreme weather conditions. Services connect vulnerable populations to vital services that help them transition into stable housing. \$217 Million

Policy Option Package 502: Please support re-housing supports. This program provides up to 2 years rental assistance and supports to help people find housing and re-establish stability after experiencing homelessness. \$188 Million

Policy Option Packages 504/505: Please replenish funding for proven eviction prevention programs provided by local community organizations that understand local needs, including community action agencies and culturally specific service

providers. \$173.2 Million

Emergency rent assistance to prevent homelessness: \$109 Million is the minimum amount of rent assistance necessary to prevent evictions over the next two years. These funds are distributed by community action agencies and community-based and trusted organizations across the state.

Homelessness prevention services: \$63.2 Million to support housing navigation services, landlord tenant education and outreach, legal services, tenant supports, eviction prevention, tenant advocacy, and rapid rehousing services for tenants who get displaced.

We have the opportunity to reduce generational poverty, support our vulnerable community members, and efficiently reduce epidemic of homeless in our state with these programs.

This is urgent. Our lawmakers must act now to protect our communities, support our providers, and ensure every Oregonian has a stable framework to build their future.

We urge your strong support of these Policy Option Packages. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Molly Goulet