



Salem Police Department • Office of the Chief of Police
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February 6, 2026

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Esteemed Co-Chairs of the Ways & Means Subcommittee,

Please accept this letter in support of the City of Salem's ongoing request for direct funding to ensure public safety around the Capitol Mall area's essential facilities.

For Salem, the public effects of homelessness have been most impactful in the city's core. People experiencing homelessness are drawn to the area for shelter and access to services.

In 2022, my department created the Homeless Services Team (HST), which employs an outreach and proactive policing model in areas where unmanaged campsites pose safety and health concerns. Rather than focusing on arrests, the officers work to understand needs and, in coordination with an array of service providers, connect individuals to resources that will help them get off the streets. Drug addiction and mental health crises are the most common factors the officers encounter at the sites.

The drawback to the approach was the team's limited capacity. The team worked four days a week, leaving gaps in responsiveness to community concerns and in maintaining a consistent presence in the core camping areas.

In late 2025, the Safe, Clean, and Healthy Salem initiative offered the chance to increase the team to four officers and expand to seven-day-a-week coverage. In its first three years, the two-officer team averaged about 1,000 campsite visits annually. With the recent expansion, HST can more quickly address community complaints, increase its outreach efforts, and maintain a consistent presence in the areas of greatest concern.

The Salem Police Department has been an active partner in various responses to address the complex issue of homelessness in our city. The HST model serves as an example to cities across the state that are striving to balance keeping public spaces safe and assisting individuals with limited options toward positive outcomes.

I ask for your thoughtful support in continuing the work to address the complex and unique issue of homelessness our city faces, and to help sustain the positive impacts HST has achieved for our city.

Sincerely,

Trevor Womack
Chief of Police