



February 11, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Salem Housing Authority, I am writing to express our strong support for the **Safe, Clean and Healthy Capital City** initiative and the request for ongoing funding to sustain this critical investment in Downtown and Northeast Salem.

As the region's primary provider of affordable housing and housing stability services, we see firsthand the intersection between public safety, behavioral health, homelessness, and housing insecurity. The health of our downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods directly impacts the stability of our residents, the success of our housing programs, and the broader vitality of Salem's Capital City.

The Safe, Clean and Healthy initiative aligns squarely with our mission and our daily work. The Salem Housing Authority has had the distinct pleasure of working and with these teams for the success of individuals in our community.

Safe. The expansion of the Homeless Services Team to seven days per week is an essential strategy. Housing stability cannot be achieved without safety and trust. Officers trained in working with unsheltered individuals play a critical role in de-escalation, coordinated referrals, and proactive engagement. Their familiarity with vulnerable populations strengthens cross-system partnerships and improves pathways into shelter and permanent housing. For housing authorities, this coordinated approach reduces barriers to lease-up, improves stabilization outcomes, and supports long-term tenancy success.

Clean. Consistent sanitation and rapid response to unmanaged encampments improve livability for everyone — housed and unhoused alike. Public spaces that are clean and well-maintained support community pride, business vitality, and resident confidence. For affordable housing residents living in and near high-response areas, visible and consistent cleaning services reduce health risks, reduces recidivism and enhance overall neighborhood stability.

Healthy. The REACH co-response model is especially promising. Behavioral health and substance use crises are increasingly driving emergency calls, hospital transports, and destabilizing events that impact individuals before they enter housing — and sometimes after. Embedding mental health clinicians with first responders reflects a modern, evidence-informed approach that prioritizes appropriate care over repeated emergency interventions. By diverting individuals from unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions, this model supports better outcomes while reducing strain on health and emergency systems.

From a housing systems perspective, we expect this pilot to:

- Improve coordination between public safety and housing service providers.
- Increase successful referrals to restorative programs, shelter and supportive housing.

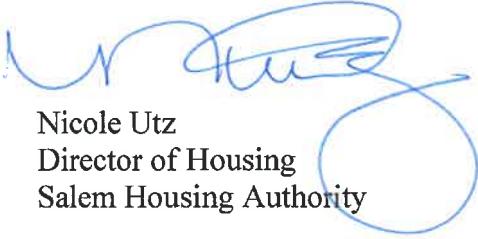
- Reduce repeat crisis calls.
- Support stabilization for individuals transitioning into housing.
- Strengthen community perception of safety and shared responsibility.

Public safety, public health, and housing stability are inseparable. The Safe, Clean and Healthy Capital City initiative represents the type of coordinated, data-driven, cross-sector response that communities across the nation are striving to build and the model is replicable in other communities across Oregon.

We urge continued and direct funding support to ensure this initiative becomes a sustained and integrated part of Salem's public safety and housing continuum of care system.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership in strengthening our Capital City for all who live, work, and seek stability here.

Sincerely,



Nicole Utz
Director of Housing
Salem Housing Authority