

House Bill 3420

Sponsored by Representative HOYLE, Senator GELSER; Representative OLSON

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Directs Housing and Community Services Department, with advice of State Housing Council and in collaboration with Community Action Partnership of Oregon and Department of Human Services, to develop, implement and administer Housing First Program for purpose of providing housing assistance, case management and support services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness by utilizing continuum of care.

Creates Housing First Program Fund. Continuously appropriates moneys to Housing and Community Services Department.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to assistance for persons experiencing homelessness; and declaring an emergency.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:**

5 (1) **Many Oregon communities engage in planning that manages the condition of**
6 **homelessness rather than planning to end the condition of homelessness.**

7 (2) **Efforts to manage homelessness in the past several decades have involved public and**
8 **private solutions that focus on providing individuals and families who are experiencing**
9 **homelessness with either emergency shelter or transitional housing, or both. While such**
10 **efforts provide critical access to temporary housing and services for individuals and families**
11 **in crisis, these efforts fail to address long-term needs.**

12 (3) **Ending child homelessness in Oregon is a goal that is urgent and achievable through**
13 **the provision of a continuum of care for children and their families. Efforts to end child**
14 **homelessness must be coordinated across traditional areas of practice and governmental**
15 **structures to provide the most effective network of support and opportunities for children**
16 **who are experiencing homelessness and to ensure that resources are distributed effectively**
17 **and strategically. Stakeholders and state agencies that provide services to children, including**
18 **but not limited to the Department of Human services, must collaborate to develop and im-**
19 **plement practices that reduce the number of children and young adults who experience**
20 **homelessness while in, or after leaving, the child welfare or juvenile justice system.**

21 (4) **The Housing First Program established under section 3 of this 2015 Act is an alter-**
22 **native to current approaches to dealing with homelessness that is intended to be more**
23 **cost-effective and to reduce the length of time that individuals and families experience**
24 **homelessness.**

25 (5) **Oregon will benefit from different approaches to care for individuals and families ex-**
26 **periencing homelessness, ranging from current approaches that address the short-term,**
27 **critical needs of such persons to the Housing First Program that addresses the long-term**
28 **needs of these persons.**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

SECTION 2. As used in sections 1 to 3 of this 2015 Act:

(1) “Continuum of care” means an approach to provide housing assistance, case management and support services that meets the specific, noncritical needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness after initial, critical housing needs have been met and as these persons move toward the goal of stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency, with the ultimate objective being to end homelessness and to prevent a return to homelessness for these persons.

(2)(a) “Homelessness” means:

(A) Living in one of the following conditions:

(i) Lacking a fixed, regular, adequate and habitable nighttime residence; or

(ii) Having a primary nighttime residence that is:

(I) Housing shared with another person due to loss of housing or economic hardship;

(II) A motel, hotel, travel trailer as defined in ORS 801.565 or campground, due to lack of alternative housing;

(III) An emergency or transitional shelter;

(IV) A public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including but not limited to hotels for persons receiving welfare benefits and transitional housing for persons with mental illness;

(V) An institution that provides temporary residence for individuals who have been or will be institutionalized under the laws of this state;

(VI) A public or private place that is not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings; or

(VII) A car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station or other similar setting not intended for human habitation.

(B) Being migratory and living under one or more of the conditions listed in subparagraph (A)(ii) of this paragraph.

(C) Being released from a jail, a prison, the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system, a mental health facility, a facility for persons with developmental disabilities, a residential addiction treatment program or a hospital, with no subsequent residence identified or provided and lacking the resources and support to obtain housing.

(b) “Homelessness” does not mean being imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to state or federal law or to sharing housing due to cultural preferences, voluntary arrangements or traditional networks of support.

SECTION 3. (1) The Housing and Community Services Department, with the advice of the State Housing Council and in collaboration with the Community Action Partnership of Oregon and the Department of Human Services, shall develop, implement and administer the Housing First Program for the purpose of providing housing assistance, case management and support services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness by utilizing a continuum of care.

(2) The continuum of care utilized by the program must include, at a minimum, the following:

(a) Crisis intervention and short-term stabilization;

(b) Screening, intake and needs assessment;

(c) Housing assistance that is not time-limited and not contingent on compliance with support services;

1 (d) Case management; and

2 (e) Support services provided through community-based social service, educational and
3 health care programs and entities, as necessary to make possible the success of participants
4 in avoiding homelessness on a permanent basis.

5 (3) In consultation with the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, the Housing and
6 Community Services Department shall contract with community action agencies described
7 in ORS 458.505 that the department determines are eligible to implement the continuum of
8 care in the area served by the community action agency.

9 (4) The contract between a community action agency and the Housing and Community
10 Services Department to implement the continuum of care shall, at a minimum, provide that
11 the community action agency shall:

12 (a) Provide screening, intake and needs assessment to identify individuals and families
13 who are eligible to participate in the Housing First Program based upon likelihood of success,
14 need and other factors as set forth in rules adopted by the department;

15 (b) Assist eligible participants to obtain housing and to enter into standard lease agree-
16 ments for housing;

17 (c) Provide case management and support services as appropriate to make less likely a
18 state of homelessness or a return to homelessness for participants; and

19 (d) Provide information to the department as identified in rules adopted by the depart-
20 ment to ensure that the continuum of care is being implemented and that the objectives of
21 the program are being achieved.

22 (5) In implementing the Housing First Program and to the extent possible, the State
23 Housing Council, the Housing and Community Services Department and the Department of
24 Human Services shall:

25 (a) Prioritize state and federal funding opportunities that support efforts to reduce and
26 end homelessness through the continuum of care implemented by the program;

27 (b) Identify and implement initiatives and other programs that:

28 (A) Increase the supply of rental housing needed to meet the demand for housing for
29 individuals and families who are experiencing or may experience homelessness; and

30 (B) Increase the availability of employment opportunities for individuals who are experi-
31 encing homelessness;

32 (c) Train homelessness specialists and place them in centers that are easily accessed by
33 individuals and families experiencing homelessness; and

34 (d) Contract with a state institution of higher education to research and document the
35 costs of homelessness in this state, including but not limited to the costs incurred by law
36 enforcement agencies, courts, jails and hospitals responding to situations involving individ-
37 uals and families experiencing homelessness, for the purpose of obtaining recommendations
38 on how best to allocate public funds to prevent and end homelessness.

39 (6) The Housing and Community Services Department, in consultation with the Commu-
40 nity Action Partnership of Oregon, shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this
41 section.

42 **SECTION 4.** (1) There is created within the State Treasury, separate and distinct from
43 the General Fund, the Housing First Program Fund. Interest earned by the Housing First
44 Program Fund shall be credited to the fund.

45 (2) Moneys in the Housing First Program Fund shall consist of:

1 (a) Amounts donated to the fund;

2 (b) Amounts appropriated or otherwise transferred to the fund by the Legislative As-
3 sembly;

4 (c) Investment earnings received on moneys in the fund; and

5 (d) Other amounts deposited in the fund from any source.

6 (3) Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the Housing and Community
7 Services Department to carry out the provisions of sections 1 to 3 of this 2015 Act.

8 (4) The department may use moneys in the fund to pay the administrative costs associ-
9 ated with the fund and with carrying out the provisions of sections 1 to 3 of this 2015 Act.

10 **SECTION 5.** In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropri-
11 ated to the Housing and Community Services Department, for the biennium beginning July
12 1, 2015, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$_____, which may be expended for pur-
13 poses of implementing and administering the Housing First Program established under sec-
14 tion 3 of this 2015 Act.

15 **SECTION 6.** This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
16 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect
17 on its passage.

18 _____