



February 16, 2016

Sen. Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
Joint Way and Means Committee
900 Court St. NE, S-211
Salem, Oregon 97301

Rep. Peter Buckley, Co-Chair
Joint Way and Means Committee
900 Court St. NE, H-272
Salem, Oregon 97301

I write to day to request support for the pilot General Assistance program proposed in House Bill 4042. This program would be an effective tool to further the likelihood of success of other state programs, such as the State Rent Assistance program through Addictions and Mental Health/Oregon Health Authority.

As a recipient of two State Rent Assistance grants, our agency works with individuals who have long histories of homelessness due to psychiatric disability. They have not accessed any of the benefits available to them when they first enter our program. We move them into permanent housing using state or federal funds. At that point, it will take several months for them to secure federal Social Security disability benefits. We often have to help them secure social security ID, photo ID, birth certificates and other documentation in order to apply for SSI or SSDI. They are part of the presumptive Medicaid disability determination.

General Assistance during this period could be a significant tool promoting success of the “housing first” programs. It is a significant hardship for the individuals to have no source of funds, and it is not feasible nor sustainable to anticipate that non-profit organizations like ShelterCare have access to an adequate supply of other private resources to support these individuals during the wait for enrollment.

Please support the General Assistance program.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Ban
Executive Director
ShelterCare

ShelterCare is a private non-profit 501C-3 Corp. Federal ID# 23-7115003