



**HOUSING
ALLIANCE**

www.OregonHousingAlliance.org

EHA and SHAP: Critical Tools to Prevent and End Homelessness

**Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
February 25, 2016
Senate Bill 5701 Relating to State Financial Administration**

Co-Chair Read, Co-Chair Girod, and members of the Subcommittee,

The Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than seventy organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the base on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members, as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices from residents to local jurisdictions to non-profit housing developers and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We ask your support for an \$8 million dollar allocation to the Emergency Housing Account (EHA), and \$2 million for the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)—a total of \$10 million to help more Oregonians achieve and maintain housing stability.

EHA is a flexible tool to provide short-term assistance to prevent and end homelessness, and SHAP is used to provide shelter and supportive services that residents need to be successful in obtaining housing. These programs can provide emergency rent assistance, help with deposits or application fees, and emergency and transitional shelter. EHA and SHAP are particularly important because they offer communities the flexibility to meet the varied needs of housing-insecure Oregonians, from survivors of domestic violence to veterans to families with children. Funds are allocated to local community partners in all counties in the state by a formula to help fill the gaps that other funds cannot, thereby meeting the most pressing needs in each community. The \$10 million increase will provide a much needed and significant infusion into our overwhelmed community response network.

As housing costs rise and vacancy rates drop, these forms of assistance are more important than ever in helping families find homes and remain housed. The Legislature has heard compelling testimony from community members who have lost or are at risk of losing their homes. We know that these testifiers are a miniscule fraction of the tens of thousands of Oregonians who experience homelessness each year, including 20,000



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school-aged children in 2015. This proposed increase in EHA and SHAP funds will give us more front-line resources to help ensure that fewer Oregonians have to worry about finding a safe and secure place to sleep at night.

On behalf of the Housing Alliance, I urge your prompt consideration and strong support of additional funds for EHA and SHAP so that we can strengthen housing opportunity in communities throughout the state. Thank you for your service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Byrd". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Janet Byrd

On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance



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Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
A Home for Everyone Multnomah County
Alliance of Family & Housing Success
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
City of Eugene.
City of Portland
Clackamas County
Coalition of Communities of Color
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Common Ground
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Energy Project
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corporation
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Hacienda CDC
Coalition of Housing Advocates
Housing Development Center
Housing Works
Human Solutions
Impact Northwest
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
JOIN
Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Metro
Momentum Alliance
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Open Door Counseling Center
Oregon AFSCME Local 3135
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Law Center
Oregon Opportunity Network
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters of the Road
Sponsors, Inc.
Street Roots
Transition Projects
Urban League of Portland
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services



We can help prevent and end homelessness. \$10 million added this year for the Emergency Housing Account (\$8m) and State Homeless Assistance Program (\$2m) will impact thousands of families.

Oregonians are tough, resilient and driven. When provided an opportunity we are able to get back on our feet. But it all starts at home. Home is where hope and growth take root. Homes improve health, increase safety, grow local economies, and help kids succeed in school.

Often times Oregon families experiencing homelessness need a temporary bridge to a brighter future. When escaping an abusive relationship we need a place to get back on our feet and make a plan – emergency shelters are that place. When we suffer a temporary job loss and have to choose between paying the grocery bill or the rent – emergency rent assistance can help fill a gap. Or when applying for multiple apartments, all with \$30 to \$50 per person application fees, additional assistance can be the difference we need to provide stability for our children.

The economic recovery has not reached everyone. Tens of thousands of Oregonians experienced homelessness last year—20,000 of whom were school-aged kids, a record level. 971 of those kids lived in Salem, 1,380 in Beaverton, 1,206 in Medford and 526 in the counties of northwest Oregon. Seven rural districts throughout the state see more than 15 percent of their students experiencing homelessness.

The Legislature should ensure an additional \$10 million goes to the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) this year. EHA is a flexible tool to provide short-term assistance to prevent and end homelessness, and SHAP is used to provide emergency shelter.

EHA and SHAP help community members remain in stable homes and are foundational to our state's success. EHA and SHAP are allocated to community partners in all counties in the state by formula to help fill the gaps that community agencies and volunteers can't, and meet the most pressing needs in each community.

When every Oregonian is able to tap into their deep well of ingenuity we all are better off. Homes provide everyone, especially children, with an opportunity to succeed in life. To prevent and end homelessness for Oregonians we need additional resources. The Legislature has an opportunity to make an immediate improvement in housing opportunity in every part of Oregon by adding funding for EHA and SHAP this year.



EHA

Provides state funds to supplement effective existing local programs and/or to establish new programs designed to prevent and reduce homelessness

Allowable Uses of Funds:

- Homelessness prevention and short term rent assistance
- Rapid re-housing (help with applications, deposits, etc)
- Emergency shelter
- Transitional housing
- Supportive in-home services
- Data collection
- Can be used flexibly to fill gaps to supplement existing funds or create new programs.

SHAP

Provides state funds to help meet the emergency needs of homeless Oregonians by providing operational support for emergency shelters and the supportive services directly related to them. Helps community response networks fill the gaps in their systems, and meet the needs that agencies, faith based networks, and others cannot.

Allowable Uses of Funds:

- Emergency shelter operations
- Shelter resident support services
- Data collection

Distribution of Funds

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) distributes funds to designated lead agencies – typically through counties or community action agencies -- according to a formula based on factors such as the number of people who are homeless or at-risk of being homeless in a geographic region. The lead agencies are responsible for coordinating with partners and establishing area plans for use of the funds.

HOUSING IN THE HEADLINES

STATEWIDE

“If affordable housing were more available, the number of homeless families would drop, wherever they are in the state” - speaking to the 9% increase in students facing homelessness. - [The Oregonian](#)

CENTRAL OREGON

“The lack of housing might be dire in Central Oregon, but the situation is even more so for those who experience mental illness.” - [The Bulletin](#)

BENTON COUNTY

“[M]any of the homeless ‘went to school here, have families here and grew up here...A lot of them work minimum-wage jobs and can’t afford housing...Then there are around 200 homeless kids who sleep in cars every night” - [Albany Democrat-Herald](#)

CLACKAMAS COUNTY - OREGON CITY

“Oregon City residents remain homeless after parts of two large apartment complexes had to be evacuated due to landslide dangers.” - [The Oregonian](#)

CLATSOP COUNTY

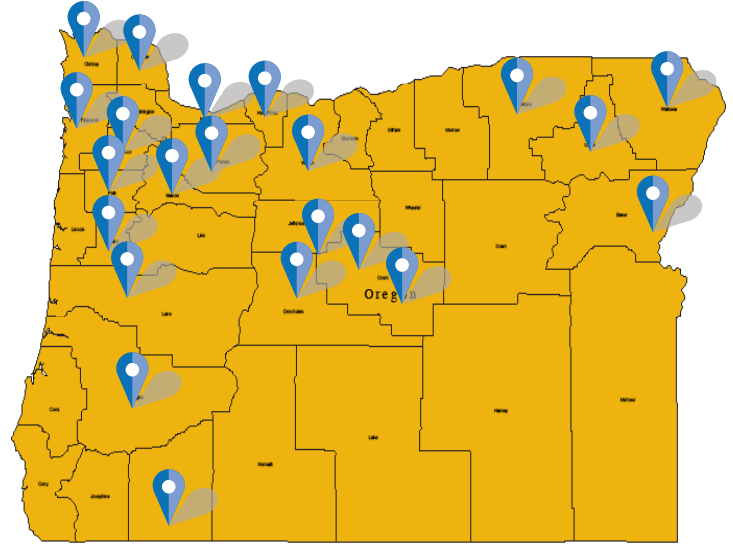
“The challenge I run into, day after day, week after week, is, there’s not a vast amount of affordable housing that I can put veterans into [even with housing assistance]” - [The Daily Astorian](#)

COLUMBIA COUNTY

“An extremely tight rental housing market in Columbia County has renters facing staggering increases in monthly costs...In some cases, residents opt to buy a recreational vehicle and live in it in parks or even on the streets” - [The Chronicle](#)

CROOK COUNTY

“[A] deep concern of mine is to provide housing for the elderly and working folks. If we don’t, where will they go?... We don’t have affordable housing anywhere in the area.” - [The Bulletin](#)



DESCHUTES COUNTY - BEND

“The fire department is having trouble finding places for fire fighters—it’s not just sort of a lower-income homelessness issue, but we have that challenge as well. I think that the more we raise the alarm that this is a real threat to our town like any other wildfire, earthquake, or economic collapse, this a real threat to Bend, and we have to treat it like that.” - [The Source Weekly](#)

DOUGLAS COUNTY

“The vacancy rate is very, very low...They’re telling us that there’s nothing out there to rent.” - [NRtoday](#)

EASTERN OREGON

“Our school districts reflect Oregon in homeless students. A lack of housing in some cities in Eastern Oregon has contributed to an increase in student homelessness...[E]ven hard-working couples find it increasingly difficult to afford housing in our growing state.” - [East Oregonian](#)

HOOD RIVER COUNTY

“Our anecdotal evidence from people who are leaving is that it’s too expensive to live here and raise a family here,” - [Oregon Live](#)



JACKSON COUNTY - ASHLAND

“Finding housing that is affordable to rent and/or to purchase is a significant issue for many Ashland residents and others who would like to live in Ashland...” - [The Siskiyou](#)

LANE COUNTY

“One of the key factors in the high cost of living is housing...the cheapest housing is often a long way from where the jobs are — in remote rural areas, for example.” - [The Register Guard](#) and [the United Way ALICE Report](#)

MARION COUNTY

“The [Salem] housing authority has noticed the mix of extreme poverty, an increase in rent and low wages having an effect on its clients.” - [Statesman Journal](#)

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

“If the housing and rental market affect every aspect of poverty, including education, youth violence, displacement and gentrification. Without stable housing, all of our approaches to ending poverty and giving people an opportunity at a better life begin to fall in on themselves.” - [Street Roots](#)

POLK COUNTY

“One of the resources we most need in Polk County is housing and transportation.” - [Statesman Journal](#)

TILLAMOOK COUNTY

“[T]he lack of housing ‘absolutely’ threatens the long-term viability of the company [Tillamook Cheese Factory].... Our current employees struggle with not being able to find affordable housing.” - [The Oregonian](#).

UMATILLA COUNTY

“[A Hermiston woman experiencing homelessness...] was told that it would probably take between eight months and two years to get a place. In the meantime, the only local homeless shelter...is reserved for families who meet certain criteria.” - [The Associated Press](#)

UNION COUNTY

“It’s hard to get [low-income] housing [in La Grande] for some reason. “There are a lot of people in (a homeless) situation right now,” Pearson said. “People who have lost their homes or their jobs. There seems to be a heightened number of homeless folks, and it’s not just younger people with children — it’s older people as well.” - [The Observer](#)

WASCO COUNTY

“If we issue 10 vouchers, five or six of them may find a place. We really are at one of the most heightened, challenging positions we’ve been in with regards to our housing market.” - [The Dalles Chronicle](#)

WALLOWA COUNTY

“The lack of local housing at Wallowa Lake Village had reduced the pool of firefighters that lived in that area down to one, which has led to a steep increase in fire insurance premiums.” - [Wallowa County Chieftain](#)

YAMHILL COUNTY - NEWBERG

“We wanted Newberg to be a healthy, vibrant community...And when you have a middle class who can’t afford their homes you do not have healthy or vibrant citizens: the stress of being burdened by your house payment is eventually going to wear down on you.” - [The Newberg Graphic](#)

