



## **SB 821:**

*Ensuring our best tool to prevent and end homelessness continues to be effective*

Families need a safe, affordable home to be successful in school and in life. Currently, many Oregonians face housing instability because of 'housing burden,' meaning more than one third of their income goes toward rent. Families in this situation have far less capacity to deal with the unexpected events of life. Vehicle repairs, unexpected medical expenses, job loss or rent increases can place a family at risk of eviction.

For families and individuals experiencing homelessness, the one-time costs associated with finding a home can be prohibitive, and more time without a home increases the difficulty of successfully renting one.

### **The Emergency Housing Account: our most effective tool**

The Emergency Housing Account (EHA) is the state's most effective tool in preventing and ending homelessness. **The key to EHA's ability to be effective is its flexibility.**

There are a wide variety of causes for emergency housing needs. For that reason, our resources must be able to provide a wide range of solutions. Throughout Oregon, EHA helps families to:

- ⬆ Keep their children in school
- ⬆ Maintain or find employment
- ⬆ Access financial counseling, including mortgage and landlord negotiation
- ⬆ Receive critical health and social services through comprehensive case management
- ⬆ Escape situations of domestic violence
- ⬆ Find emergency housing

### **Leveraging Federal funding**

The organizations that utilize EHA also use it to draw down key federal funds. This means that federal funding is contingent on the state providing funds that match specific criteria. These federal requirements can change over time. While EHA funds currently have certain flexibilities, Oregon statute puts sideboards around those restrictions that pose a potential risk to Oregon's ability to access those federal funds.

## **How SB 821 maximizes the impact of the state's EHA investments**

Senate bill 821 does two things:

1. When determining the eligible uses of funds in the Emergency Housing Account, the State Housing Stability Council will have the authority "To align with federal strategies and resources that are available to prevent and end homelessness."
2. Adds a provision that when determining the eligible uses of the EHA, the State Housing Stability Council "will do so with the advice of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon." Because they administer EHA at the local level, CAPO's knowledge and experience preventing and ending homelessness, along with their knowledge of best practices and federal strategies will be valuable to the Housing Stability Council.

### **Community Action Partnership of Oregon**

As the Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO), we support a network of organizations across the state serving struggling Oregonians and the conditions they face every day. Together, we work to improve conditions for kids, seniors and people with disabilities in our communities, and help families build a secure future.