



## ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: March 20, 2017  
TO: Ways and Means sub-committee on Transportation and Economic Development  
RE: HB 5012, relating to the financial administration of the Housing and Community Services Department

Lane County residents continue to experience homelessness and chronic homelessness with little relief. The nexus between homelessness and lack of available behavioral health access and the lack of affordable housing is very apparent in our community.

The State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) and Emergency Housing Account (EHA) are the backbone of the so-termed "safety net". EHA and SHAP funds have helped our community bridge these issues by providing services to those most in highest need.

These funds are utilized by Lane County and are passed through to Lane County organizations which provide essential services to sheltering the unhoused, to keeping families stable so their children can attend school. In addition, we directly use these dollars to outreach to and coordinate housing and wrap around services for chronically homeless individuals who are frequent users of County jail and emergency rooms.

Lane County requests that the sub-committee support the agency's ability to assist local governments with this work by approving of \$50M GF for these programs.

Here are several examples of how these dollars are being used locally:

- This year to date we have been able to serve an additional 1315 homeless people who otherwise would have been living outdoors exposed to the elements. Of those 475 are children who without this assistance would endure the trauma of being homeless and would have difficulty focusing on their education. By providing early intervention for unstably housed families and unaccompanied youth we ultimately can keep kids in school with an eye toward graduation.
- We have stood up an additional 120 beds of emergency shelter during this past winter, helped 520 families with rental assistance and served almost 5000 meals.
- EHA/SHAP funds provided housing navigators who assisted as households from our homeless coordinated entry wait list (up to 193 households at a point in time) waiting for openings in our transitional, permanent and rapid rehousing programs. Navigators help participants overcome barriers and assist them in accessing housing, needed resources and support services.
- EHA funds supports a Frequent Users Engagement Project (FUSE) We piloted a project to identify and engage super utilizers of public systems and place them into supportive housing to break the cycle of repeated use of costly crisis, health services, shelters and the criminal justice system. The individuals to be served have complex behavioral health challenges and are the highest users of jails, detoxification, homeless shelters and other crisis service systems.

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