

From: [Ann Craig](#)
To: [JISS Exhibits](#)
Subject: Emergency Shelter Testimony
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:44:55 PM

Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020,

Good News:

- **Jackson Street Youth Services has stayed open** to serve homeless youth and has followed all COVID guidelines. Youth in our care are safe and thriving. **CARES act funding has helped** and has allowed us to operate needed services and add hazard pay for staff. We've been doing everything we can to reduce youth homelessness in our region. Before COVID, we had invested in projects that will significantly impact our mission and we are still poised to launch those initiatives.

Challenges:

- With school out, **many youth are isolated and at a higher risk of being kicked out, running away, and being victims of human and sexual trafficking**. We are good at being flexible but economic uncertainty for our supporters, higher costs, and **state funding uncertainty** put us at risk of losing stability and our recent investments. We need to be able to continue to advance our initiatives for the long-term for better outcomes for youth: safety, well-being, permanent connections, education and employment.

What we are doing as a response:

- With new federal funding, **we've increased outreach efforts** and are staffing in anticipation of our referrals to increase as Oregon continues to open and especially before school reopens this fall.
- **We can lead to improving outcomes for youth in Oregon**. We have a project collaboration with PSU for a certification curriculum for RHY Case Management for better and more consistent staff training which we will share state-wide.
- **The City of Albany has just approved our application for renovation and expansion of our youth shelter in Albany**. We want to continue with our plans to renovate and expand capacity from 10 beds to 16 beds as quickly as possible.

How you can help

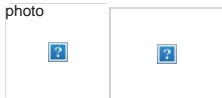
- For all of Oregon RHY, **please avoid cuts to Runaway and Homeless Youth** (RHY) programs and their partners such as Schools, Child Welfare, and Juvenile Justice. We were advocating for increases before COVID, and I understand now may not be the time for that, but cuts would really set us back.
- For all of Oregon RHY but especially rural communities, including Benton and Linn, **please ensure Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) have at least 10% allocated to specifically to youth**. I am the chair of Rural Oregon Continuum of Care's (ROCC) RHY Workgroup, and youth shelters were not awarded any of the last round of COVID ESG funds due to a historically adult homelessness focus. It's tragic to not have youth programs widely included in these awards. *ROCC is 26 mostly rural counties.
- For Linn County and Albany specifically, we were planning on applying his recent Spring to OHCS for expanding our Albany Shelter but that funding understandably ended up getting re-routed to support social distancing for adult shelters. We have the opportunity now to make this shelter a better space and serve more youth. We purchased the house and property in December and the city of Albany just approved our plans and permit for the renovation. We are ready to go but don't have the funding. If there is any shelter expansion funding on the table, we really need it. Even before COVID, Oregon already was suffering from the highest rates of youth homelessness in the U.S. **We can't have the immense problem of youth homelessness be overlooked. Can you allocate OHCS or other funding to support capacity for expansion for Jackson Street's Albany House?** *Linn County has one of the highest numbers of unaccompanied homeless youth within the ROCC rural counties with 154 during the FY 18-19, only Josephine county topped that with 155.

Thank you for your time,

Ann Craig
Personal cell phone: 541-829-1850
Home address: 13615 SE Kuehn Rd, Milwaukie OR 97222

--

photo



Ann Craig (she/her)
Executive Director
Jackson Street Youth Services

541-360-0866 | www.jacksonstreet.org

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#)