

## Analysis

### Item 68: Legislative Fiscal Office for Housing and Community Services Department Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program

---

**Analyst:** Michelle Deister

**Request:** Allocate \$2,000,000 from the Emergency Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department to provide funding for grants through the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program.

**Analysis:** The Legislature established the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program within the Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD) to assist households of lower income that suffer a loss of their primary residence due to wildfire. The program is funded with General Fund, and provides grants of up to \$7,000 per eligible applicant. Other eligibility criteria include applicant annual income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for the previous year, and that the home (which can include a manufactured home, stick-built, site-built, or RV) is considered uninhabitable unless repaired or replaced. The program provides funding for costs that insurance and FEMA do not cover, so applicants have to submit claims to insurance and FEMA, and receive determinations, prior to funds being paid out from the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program.

Legislation to abolish the program -- due to underutilization up to this point -- was approved in the August 2nd Special Session of 2020, with an effective date of May 31, 2021. At the outset of the fires after Labor Day weekend, 2020, HCSD began promoting the program in its external communications. As of Friday, September 11, 2020, HCSD had received 315 applications for \$197,301 in available funding, and had established a wait list in the event that additional funding becomes available.

An additional \$2 million would result in assistance to approximately 314 applicants.

**Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$2,000,000 from the Emergency Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department to provide funding for grants through the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program.

**State of Oregon  
Legislative Fiscal Office**

900 Court St. NE, H-178  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1828



Ken Rocco  
Legislative Fiscal Officer

Paul Siebert  
Deputy Legislative Fiscal Officer

September 12, 2020

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Tina Kotek, Co-Chair  
Oregon Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

**Nature of Request**

On behalf of legislative leadership, the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) requests that \$2,000,000 be allocated from the Emergency Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD) to provide funding for grants through the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program.

**Agency Action**

The Legislature established the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program to assist households of lower income that suffer a loss of their primary residence due to wildfire. The program is funded with General Fund, and provides grants of up to \$7,000 per eligible applicant. As of Friday, September 11, 2020, HCSD had received 315 applications for \$197,301 in available funding, and had established a wait list in the event that additional funding becomes available.

**Action Requested**

Allocate \$2,000,000 from the Emergency Fund to the Housing and Community Services Department to provide grants through the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Program.

Ken Rocco  
Legislative Fiscal Officer