



HOUSING ALLIANCE

March 7, 2019

House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Meek, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2650, which will provide critical investment into our statewide 211info system. HB 2650 will provide critical investment in order to connect Oregonians with assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and accelerate the impact of 211Info by hiring regionally based Community Engagement Coordinators.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation 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 including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

We simply don't have enough affordable and available homes for people who need them in communities across Oregon. People are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. Members of our community are all too often forced to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. During the last school year, over 21,750 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

For many Oregonians, 211info can provide needed and critical information – from a referral to a local emergency weather shelter, to information on food assistance, to rental assistance payments. The requested funding—\$3.2 million for the biennium—would give everyone access to highly trained 211info specialists via phone, text and email at all hours, every day of the year. HB 2650 meets the needs of working families who can't access information during traditional business hours and strengthens communities by providing details on a wide range of resources.

For organizations providing emergency shelter, access to information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for the people they serve is critical. We know in many communities, 211info has become a critical partner in our response to ensuring people do not die of exposure during cold weather because they don't have a safe and warm place to stay that night.

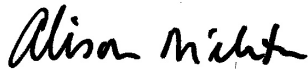
We are excited by the possible investments in locally based community engagement coordinators, who will help to build trust and relationships in rural and underserved areas, creating a stronger resource database and facilitating cross-sector collaborations.

Currently, more than a third of 211info's contacts are turned away because they dial 211 outside its business hours of 8am-6pm weekdays. Expanded service hours will better serve the state contractors who need 24/7 service for their constituents, enable closer alignment with 911, mental health and domestic violence supports, and provide a framework for coordinated entry programs and other innovations. 211info will leverage the additional service hours through more comprehensive data analytics, which provide trends reporting, demographic data and needs identification.

We urge your support for HB 2650, and full funding of 211info in the 2019-21 biennium.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Chrisman Development
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Creswell
City of Eugene
City of Forest Grove
City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
Common Ground OR-WA
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enhabit
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing, Inc
Metro
Mid Columbia Housing Authority
Native American Youth and Family Center
(NAYA)
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
(NEDCO)
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Center for Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Law Center
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Portland Housing Center
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Rogue Action Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Transition Projects
Turning Point
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services