



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

March 24, 2019

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance in strong support of SB 5512 and investments in the Housing and Community Services Department budget.

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 are urging you to make strong and significant investments in housing opportunity through SB 5512, and the proposals included in the Governor's budget. These appropriations will impact Oregonians' housing stability in the short and long term – they will help provide emergency assistance now, while also investing in our long term community infrastructure through building and maintaining safe, stable, and affordable housing.

### ***Preventing and Ending Homelessness***

- *Emergency Rental Assistance:* Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) currently operates two programs, the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program, which provide emergency rent assistance as well as access to shelter. These critical programs are administered by a network of Community Action Agencies. *The Legislature should invest \$50 million in the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program in 2019-21.*
- *Children and Family Homelessness:* In the 2017-18 school year, over 21,500 kids experienced homelessness at some point during the year. This extreme instability negatively impacts children's ability to learn, classrooms, schools, and communities. We can do more to prevent and end homelessness for kids and families. *The Legislature should invest the \$20.5 million recommended in the Governor's budget to provide rental assistance and support services.*
- *Permanent Supportive Housing:* For individuals who experience chronic homelessness, mental or physical health challenges, or substance abuse disorders, housing with

supportive services, often called permanent supportive housing, is the best and most successful strategy. Permanent supportive housing provides necessary supports for people experiencing a range of challenges, and is a proven, successful model. *The Legislature should invest the \$50 million in general obligation bonds recommended in the Governor's budget to build new, permanent supportive housing units across Oregon.*

#### **Private Rental Market Resources:**

- Today, people who rent their homes are experiencing a wide range of challenges. They may need assistance to better understand their rights as a renter, legal assistance, or help navigating a tight rental market. There are a range of investments that can be made to assist renters and landlords, including education classes, investments in fair housing education, expanding Rent Well classes, navigation services for people with Housing Choice vouchers, and assistance for women and families seeking safety from violence. *The Legislature should invest \$20 million, as recommended in the Governor's budget, to support renters in the private rental market.*

#### **Investing in new, affordable homes**

- *Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing Program:* One of our most needed strategies is to invest in building new, affordable homes – both for rent and for sale. Building new affordable homes creates opportunity for seniors, people with disabilities, families, and people with low incomes in our community to access stability and safety. The LIFT Housing Program has successfully funded rental housing and homes for sale in communities across Oregon. We believe there is significant capacity to expand the LIFT program – housing developers across Oregon are ready with plans and proposals for hundreds of new homes. *The Legislature should invest \$200 million in general obligation bonds to develop new, affordable homes for rent and for purchase.*
- *Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator:* This innovative partnership between local jurisdictions, housing developers, and employers brings together resources to collaborate to build needed housing. Each partner has something to share, and can benefit from working together. The state proposal supports the acquisition, construction, or redevelopment of workforce housing, or the acquisition of land and infrastructure to support workforce housing. *The Legislature should invest \$15 million, as recommended in the Governor's budget, to support developing these partnerships and housing in local communities.*

#### **Maintaining our affordable rental housing stock**

- *Maintaining our existing affordable homes:* Maintaining our existing affordable rental homes to ensure they remain available and affordable is critical. Today, communities across Oregon see a need to maintain affordable rental homes. For smaller rural communities, these rental homes may be the only affordable housing available, and it needs to be available to provide badly needed homes. With additional resource, providers can reinvest in this housing, rehabilitating it for the next generation. *The Legislature should invest \$100 million in lottery bonds to maintain affordable rental housing in our community.*
- *Attainable Rental Market Housing:* An acquisition fund will provide needed resources to help maintain low-cost housing in our communities. Today, we have well-located and low cost apartments, which are not regulated. Recently, many of these homes have

been bought and renovated by investors, who then significantly increase the rent and displace current residents. With a limited investment, the Housing and Community Services Department could create an acquisition fund to help acquire and maintain these homes for current residents. *The Legislature should invest the \$15 million included in the Governor's Budget to create an acquisition fund.*

***Investments in capacity***

- There are many solutions to the housing problems our communities are facing, including many of the investments proposed as a part of the Housing and Community Services budget. These critical and urgently needed solutions require staff to deliver, monitor, and ensure timely implementation. *The Legislature should approve the request for increased staffing included in the Governor's budget.*

Investing in the basics – a safe, stable, affordable home for Oregonians with low incomes – has positive ripple effects across our state. We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits. Kids are able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – instead of worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge your strong support of SB 5512, the investments included in the Governor's budget, and expanded resources for critical programs.

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

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
A Community Together (Lane County)  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton County Health Department  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
CASA of Oregon  
Central City Concern  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Clackamas County  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
Common Ground OR-WA  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Energy Project  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Evolve Property Management  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln 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  
JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Mainstream Housing Inc.  
Metro  
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority  
Momentum Alliance  
NAYA Family Center  
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Nightingale Public Advocacy Project  
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  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Transition Projects  
Urban League of Portland  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services