



Oregon TANF Alliance
Strengthening Families, Protecting Children

To: Joint Subcommittee On Transportation and Economic Development

From: TANF ALLIANCE

Date: March 24, 2019

Re: HB 5512, Housing for Families and Children

Co-Chairs Manning and Gomberg, and members of the committee:

The TANF Alliance requests the committee's support for Housing and Community Services Department goal to address family and children homelessness through a joint funding ask with DHS. Policy Option Package 108 will increase coordination and new investments with between (\$14 million) and the Department of Human Services' Family Self-Sufficiency program (DHS POP 122 for \$6.5 million) to house Oregon children and their families with the greatest need.

The TANF Alliance is a coalition of service providers, policy experts and advocates committed to improving the lives of families across our state. We advocate for policy changes and sufficient resources to make the program work for these families to succeed.

Too many Oregon families are in crisis. Whether due to poverty, illness, abuse, or addiction, these families typically need stable housing before they can begin recovery. TANF helps these families meet their most basic needs and helps parents return to work through employment training and support services. In 2017, TANF benefits were provided to 23,661 families in Oregon.

To be eligible for TANF, a family must be at rock bottom. In 2017, the median family income in Oregon for a family of three was \$77,000 (or \$6,416 per month) and the FPL for that same family was \$20,420 (or \$1,702 per month). To qualify for TANF, a family of three had to be at or below 37% of the FPL, or \$616 income per month. The monthly benefit level for a family of three receiving TANF was \$506. In this current housing crisis, families who qualify for TANF are struggling to find and stay in stable housing.

The lack of available housing for families in crisis is well known to TANF Family Coaches around the state. DHS staff in Ontario, Lebanon, and Clackamas all said in conversations with the TANF Alliance that no matter where a TANF family lives in Oregon, they are facing severe barriers to finding housing.

This \$14m from the OHCS budget in partnership with \$6.5m from DHS will help serve the parents who need a chance to stabilize their lives and to protect their children from more expensive services in the future. The coordination between OHCS and DHS will provide a no-wrong door approach that is crucial for families in crisis. It will help to connect families wherever they ask for help.