

Housing Policy Agenda:

Housing Stability for Children, Veterans,
and the Chronically Homeless and
Increased Housing Supply for Urban
and Rural Communities

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STATE OF OREGON
Office of the Governor
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Families Experiencing Homelessness

According to the 2017 Point-in-Time Count, 3,500 of the 13,953 Oregonians experiencing homelessness included families with children. Most alarmingly, the majority of those individuals (1,826 or 52 percent) are living without shelter at all.⁸ In addition to the Point-in-Time Count, the Oregon Department of Education estimates that 23,000 children were homeless or at risk of homelessness in some form, including students doubled up with friends and family members during the 2016-17 school year.⁹ The number of homeless students has increased for four straight years, with a 5.6 percent increase from the previous school year. In some counties, more than 10 percent of students are experiencing a form of homelessness.¹⁰

In 2017, 16 percent of the homeless population in the U.S. reported having experienced domestic violence at some point. Oregon had 8,323 requests for emergency shelter in 2017 that could not be met because Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DVSA) shelters were full. A one-day snapshot census of DV programs, completed in September 2017 by the National Network to End DV, reported that in Oregon 53 percent of all domestic violence services were for housing. Oregon currently does not provide enough housing assistance to meet the needs of survivors and their children.¹¹

The National Center for Homeless Education has recognized best practices for helping families that are based upon collaborative partnerships like Governor Brown's Children's Cabinet. The Cabinet is a collaboration between state agencies to provide wrap around support services to families participating in a program with a focused effort to coordinate services within the local community.

8. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2017).

9. In the 2016-2017 school year, 22,541 students in the state were homeless. The definition of homelessness used by the U.S. Department of Education includes individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations, among other considerations. This definition differs from the Point-in-Time count because it is more inclusive than the federal definition used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to define homelessness in the Point-in-Time Count. Approximately 17,000 of the total number of students experiencing homelessness are living in doubled-up situations.



ONE: Prioritize Ending Children's Homelessness:

Increase emergency rental assistance through the state emergency housing account and the state homeless assistance program, protect renters from no-cause evictions, make resource investments to help address outsized rent increases, and build and preserve more affordable homes for children and families.

The current housing market has made it increasingly difficult for Oregon families to provide the basic necessities for their children's futures, including a safe and stable roof over their heads. There is a well-documented need to help provide families with young children safe, stable, better, and more affordable housing options. Housing stability is foundational: it enables families to best engage with children's enrichment, early learning, and other proven activities to help children succeed.

The Governor proposes to

engage in a concerted, focused effort with local government, the private sector, and community partners to build a coordinated, cross-sector strategy to end child homelessness. The major tactics are:

A. Develop 2,200-2,600 units of affordable owner and rental housing, with incentives for family-sized units and tailored services for homeless families, by doubling the current investment to \$160 million of bonding capacity for the Local Innovation and Fast Track Housing (LIFT) Program.¹⁹

B. Dedicate resources to address the homeless crisis by raising funding amounts to \$50 million for Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP). OHCS is working with Oregon's Housing Stability Council and the Community Action Partnership of Oregon to incorporate national best practices and outcome-oriented approaches to build on the success of these resources, and

18. Note: According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, "An end to homelessness means that every community will have a comprehensive response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience." <https://www.usich.gov/goals/what-does-ending-homelessness-mean/>.

19. OHCS estimate based on current LIFT investment experience.



to deliver the most impactful results for homeless individuals and families.

C. Prioritize the 23,000 homeless children currently attending Oregon schools with an intense focus on those students who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Governor Brown's Children's Cabinet, in conjunction with OHCS and the Department of Human Services' Family Self-Sufficiency program, is encouraging interagency partnerships and coordination to support a \$20 million investment of flexible funding to achieve clear and measurable goals to permanently house more families with children.

D. Preserve 400 units of existing, publicly-supported affordable housing by using \$25 million of bonding capacity. This investment is in alignment with data from the Oregon Affordable Housing Inventory and the publicly supported housing preservation program established by HB 2002 (2017).²⁰

E. Acquire at least 800 units in multifamily housing properties that offer rents at or below market rate, but do not currently have rent or income restrictions in place from public agencies, by using \$25 million of bonding capacity to create the "Acquisition of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Investment" fund.²¹

F. Expand the individual development account (IDA) program, which would approximately double the number of program graduates, to help families build assets and find pathways out of poverty by increasing the tax credit cap from \$7.5 million to \$15 million annually.

G. Build on successful strategies to increase low-income renters' access to and retention of private market rental housing, increase the resources to meet the housing needs of domestic violence survivors and their children, and enhance renters' access to legal resources by providing up to \$20 million in investments.

20. OHCS estimate using estimate of \$62,500 per unit. For current 4% LIHTC for preservation – subsidy amounts ranged from \$20k to \$90k per unit.

21. OHCS estimate based on State of Minnesota practices; an ideal scope for loans is 70-80 units; 10-12 projects assumed.

