

# DRAFT

## SUMMARY

Directs Department of Education to establish pilot program in which certain school districts make one-time distributions to families of students to assist with unpaid rent, past-due utilities or move-in expenses.

Modifies eligibility requirements for organizations that may receive grants from unaccompanied homeless youth grant program.

Extends higher education tuition and fee waivers to current or former homeless youth.

Extends independent residence facility eligibility to current or former homeless youth.

Directs Department of Human Services to submit to interim legislative committees recommendations for legislation to reduce numbers of youth experiencing homelessness.

Appropriates moneys to Department of Human Services for certain homeless youth programs.

Takes effect 91 days following adjournment sine die.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to youth homelessness; amending ORS 350.300 and 418.475 and section 1, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021; and prescribing an effective date.

**Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

## EVICTION PREVENTION AND RAPID REHOUSING PILOT PROGRAM

**SECTION 1. (1) The Department of Education shall establish a pilot program to assist school districts in preventing student homelessness.**

**(2) The department shall distribute moneys under this section to:**

**(a) The five school districts with the largest number of**

1 **kindergarten through grade 12 students experiencing homelessness;**  
2 **and**

3 **(b) The five school districts, exclusive of the school districts de-**  
4 **scribed in paragraph (a) of this subsection, with the largest percentage**  
5 **of kindergarten through grade 12 students experiencing homelessness.**

6 **(3) School districts may use moneys received under this section to**  
7 **make one-time housing assistance distributions when:**

8 **(a) A student’s family is facing eviction for nonpayment of rent due**  
9 **to an emergency or financial setback;**

10 **(b) A student’s family is or has been homeless and cannot qualify**  
11 **for housing due to past-due rent or unpaid utility bills; or**

12 **(c) A student’s family is or has been homeless, qualifies for housing**  
13 **and requires financial assistance with move-in expenses.**

14 **(4) A student’s parent or guardian may apply for assistance under**  
15 **this section by providing the school district with the following infor-**  
16 **mation:**

17 **(a) A brief description of the financial hardship that is preventing**  
18 **the family from obtaining or retaining housing;**

19 **(b) The name and address of the family’s landlord, utility provider**  
20 **or prospective landlord and the amount of unpaid rent or utilities or**  
21 **the amount of move-in expenses for which financial assistance is**  
22 **sought; and**

23 **(c) Documentation of ability to pay the rent or utilities going for-**  
24 **ward.**

25

26 **UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH GRANT PROGRAM**

27

28 **SECTION 2.** Section 1, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, is amended to  
29 read:

30 Sec. 1. (1) As used in this section, “unaccompanied homeless youth” means  
31 a person who is at least 14 years of age but not more than 24 years of age,

1 who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and who is  
2 homeless.

3 (2) In addition to any other scholarships or grants, the Department of  
4 Human Services may award two-year grants to organizations that provide  
5 services to unaccompanied homeless youth.

6 *[(3) An organization is eligible to apply for a grant under this section if  
7 the organization has an existing grant with the department to provide services  
8 to unaccompanied homeless youth.]*

9 **(3) The department may award a grant under this section to an  
10 organization that:**

11 **(a) Has an existing grant from the department to provide services  
12 to unaccompanied homeless youth;**

13 **(b) Has an existing contract with the department to provide services  
14 to unaccompanied homeless youth and the department has determined  
15 that the organization is capable of expanding to provide services in  
16 additional communities;**

17 **(c) Is a nonprofit organization or a coalition of nonprofit organiza-  
18 tions that the department has determined is capable of meeting the  
19 grant program requirements; or**

20 **(d) Is a new entity that the department determines is capable of  
21 meeting the grant program requirements.**

22 (4) Grants awarded under this section may be used for any of the follow-  
23 ing:

24 (a) To increase the accessibility of any of the following programs and  
25 services to unaccompanied homeless youth:

26 (A) Shelter facilities;

27 (B) Outreach;

28 (C) Culturally specific services; and

29 (D) Mental health or substance abuse services; and

30 (b) To create or strengthen partnerships with host home programs and  
31 other transitional housing options.

1 (5) The department may adopt rules to administer the grant program de-  
2 scribed in this section.

3  
4 **TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS**

5  
6 **SECTION 3.** ORS 350.300 is amended to read:

7 350.300. (1) Notwithstanding ORS 341.290, 352.105 or 353.050, a current  
8 [*foster child*] or former foster child, **or a current or former homeless**  
9 **youth**, under 25 years of age who is enrolled in courses totaling one or more  
10 credit hours at an institution of higher education as an undergraduate stu-  
11 dent shall have the amount of tuition and all fees levied against the student  
12 waived if attending an institution of higher education for purposes of pur-  
13 suing an initial undergraduate degree.

14 (2) A student who is a current foster child or former foster child is enti-  
15 tled to waiver of tuition and all fees under subsection (1) of this section until  
16 the student has received the equivalent of four years of undergraduate edu-  
17 cation.

18 (3) As a condition of receiving a tuition waiver for an academic year, a  
19 current foster child or former foster child must complete and submit the Free  
20 Application for Federal Student Aid for that academic year.

21 (4) A waiver of tuition and all fees under subsection (1) of this section  
22 may be reduced by the amount of any federal aid scholarships or grants, an  
23 award from the Oregon Opportunity Grant program established under ORS  
24 348.205 and any other aid received from the institution of higher education.  
25 For the purposes of this subsection, “federal aid scholarships or grants” does  
26 not include Chafee Education and Training Grant vouchers (P.L. 107-133).

27 (5) As used in this section:

28 (a) “Former foster child” means an individual who, for a total of six or  
29 more months while between 14 and 21 years of age, was:

30 (A) A ward of the court pursuant to ORS 419B.100 (1)(b) to (e), in the  
31 legal custody of the Department of Human Services for out-of-home place-

1 ment and not dismissed from care before reaching 16 years of age; or

2 (B) An Indian child subject to ORS 419B.600 to 419B.654, under the ju-  
3 risdiction of a tribal court for out-of-home placement and not dismissed from  
4 care before reaching 16 years of age.

5 **(b) “Homeless youth” means a person under the age of 25 who has**  
6 **received services from a provider contracted by the department to**  
7 **provide services to homeless persons, has received services from a host**  
8 **home, as defined by the department by rule, or has been identified as**  
9 **homeless by a school district in this state.**

10 [(b)] (c) “Institution of higher education” means:

11 (A) A public university listed in ORS 352.002;

12 (B) A community college operated under ORS chapter 341; or

13 (C) The Oregon Health and Science University.

14

## 15 **INDEPENDENT RESIDENCE FACILITIES**

16

17 **SECTION 4.** ORS 418.475 is amended to read:

18 418.475. (1) Within the limit of moneys appropriated therefor, the De-  
19 partment of Human Services may establish, license, certify or authorize in-  
20 dependent residence facilities for unmarried persons who:

21 (a) Are at least 16 years of age and not older than 20 years of age;

22 (b)(A) Have been placed in at least one substitute care resource;

23 **(B) Have received services from a provider contracted by the de-**  
24 **partment to provide services to homeless persons;**

25 **(C) Have received services from a host home, as defined by the de-**  
26 **partment by rule; or**

27 **(D) Have been identified as homeless by a school district in this**  
28 **state;**

29 (c) Have been determined by the department to possess the skills and level  
30 of responsibility required for the transition to adulthood;

31 (d) Have received permission from the appropriate juvenile court, if they

1 are wards of the court; and

2 (e) Have been determined by the department to be suitable for an inde-  
3 pendent living program.

4 (2) Independent residence facilities shall provide independent housing ar-  
5 rangements with counseling services and minimal supervision available from  
6 at least one counselor.

7 (3) Each resident shall be required to maintain a department approved  
8 independent living plan consisting of education, employment or volunteer  
9 activities, or a combination thereof, and shall be required to pay a portion  
10 or all of the resident's housing expenses and other support costs. The de-  
11 partment may approve an exception to the requirements of this subsection  
12 for reasons of temporary loss of employment or of other financial support.

13 (4) The department may make payment grants directly to persons enrolled  
14 in an independent living program who, at a minimum, meet the requirements  
15 described in subsection (1)(a) to (c) of this section for food, shelter, clothing,  
16 transportation and incidental expenses. The payment grants shall be subject  
17 to an agreement between the person and the department that establishes a  
18 budget of expenses.

19 (5) The department may establish cooperative financial management  
20 agreements with a person enrolled in an independent living program and for  
21 that purpose may enter into joint bank accounts requiring two signatures for  
22 withdrawals. The management agreements or joint accounts may not subject  
23 the department or any counselor involved to any liability for debts or other  
24 responsibilities of the minor.

25 (6) The department shall make periodic reports to the juvenile court as  
26 required by the court regarding any ward of the court who is enrolled in an  
27 independent living program.

28 (7) The enrollment of a person in an independent living program in ac-  
29 cordance with the provisions of subsection (1) of this section or making  
30 payment grants under subsection (4) of this section does not remove or limit  
31 in any way the obligation of the parent of the person to pay support as or-

1 dered by a court under the provisions of ORS 419B.400.

2  
3 **REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

4  
5 **SECTION 5. In addition to the reporting requirements under ORS**  
6 **417.799, the Department of Human Service’s September 15, 2022, report**  
7 **to the interim legislative committees must include recommendations**  
8 **for legislation to reduce the numbers of youth experiencing**  
9 **homelessness by at least 25 percent over a five-year period. The de-**  
10 **partment shall develop the recommendations under this section in**  
11 **consultation with the Housing and Community Services Department.**  
12 **The recommendations must include descriptions of new programs to**  
13 **address youth homelessness or options for extending access to existing**  
14 **adult programs to youth, together with estimates of additional funding**  
15 **necessary to implement or extend the proposed programs. The report**  
16 **must also include a projected 20-year estimate of cost savings to state**  
17 **and local health, education, corrections and public safety programs if**  
18 **the 25 percent reduction in youth homelessness over five years is**  
19 **achieved.**

20  
21 **APPROPRIATIONS**

22  
23 **SECTION 6. (1) In addition to and not in lieu of any other appro-**  
24 **priation, there is appropriated to the Department of Human Services,**  
25 **for the biennium ending June 30, 2023, out of the General Fund, the**  
26 **amount of \$437,500 for the purpose of awarding grants under section**  
27 **1, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, to organizations described in section**  
28 **1 (3)(b), (c) or (d), chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, as amended by sec-**  
29 **tion 2 of this 2022 Act, that will provide services in communities where**  
30 **services for unaccompanied homeless youth are severely constrained**  
31 **or absent.**

