

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) Host Homes

House Bill 2544 Report

Self-Sufficiency Programs
Oregon Department of Human Services

September 20, 2022

Executive Summary

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2544, enabling Oregon Department of Human Services' Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) to award two-year funding to youth-serving organizations for new and expanded long- and short-term housing programming called Host Homes. The intent of this funding is to improve school attendance, participation in mentoring and access to services and supports for youth experiencing homelessness.

Since the passing of the bill, YEHP has worked to strengthen the state's Host Home network and identified eight organizations, which collectively serve 12 Oregon counties, to receive funding from the \$1.8 million investment. Despite some early delays in the funding process, YEHP expects progress to begin soon.

Because Host Home contracts were finalized just prior to this report, data from the project is not yet available. Instead, this report includes demographics and success stories from local partners with existing Host Home programming.

Host Home Demonstration Project Overview

House Bill 2544 included a \$1.8 million investment to create a Host Home Demonstration Project. A Host Home Project is defined as a project that facilitates an arrangement under which an unaccompanied homeless youth resides in the home of a private individual, pursuant to the terms of a contract between the private individual and the youth, for free or at below-market rent.

The legislation provides for projects establishing short-term hosting arrangements (defined as lasting less than six months) and long-term arrangements (defined as lasting six months or more). The legislation also gives ODHS authority to award two-year grants to youth-serving organizations that meet specific criteria and can demonstrate their ability to expand or establish Host Home Projects.

Implementation Update

Project Timeline

July - September 2021	September 2021 - July 2022	July - September 2022	September 2022 - September 2023
Project inquiry submitted and accepted Project charter and plan developed Project team assembled	Hiring begins for Policy Analyst 3, Limited Duration Host Home project forums Oregon Network of Host Home Organizations expanded Youth Leader payment logistics completed Funding recipients determined; forwarded to Office of Contracts and Procurement (OCP), and Department of Justice (DOJ) for edits and approval	July - OCP approved contracts < \$150K First contracts billed for approved Host Home providers August - DOJ approved contracts > \$150K First contracts billed for additional Host Home providers September - House Bill 2544 report submitted	Yearly - ODHS submits status report to the legislature Quarterly - Billing for approved Host Home providers Quarterly - Funded providers report data to YEHP Monthly - Facilitate Host Home Network meetings Ad-hoc - Youth Leader payments distributed
Planning	Execution	Monitor & Control	Ongoing

Host Home Project Forums

In September and October 2021, YEHP hosted four virtual Host Home forums. The forums provided information about the components included in House Bill 2544 and gathered input to inform the creation of Host Home programming. Interested parties were also encouraged to submit written comments outside of the forums.

Oregon Network of Host Home Organizations

In October 2021, YEHP assisted Host Home providers in creating and expanding the Oregon Network of Host Home Organizations, which connects host home providers across the state. The network's vision is to enable organizations to learn from each other, advocate together and determine special projects associated with Host Homes. Member organizations meet monthly. Their projects have included:

- Mapping of organizations
- Licensing and background check navigation
- Establishing consistent standards for Host Homes

Grant Awards

In February 2022, YEHP opened submissions for Host Home programming applications. In March 2022, applications were reviewed, and organizations were notified of their awards. YEHP received \$1.957 million in requests for Host Home funding – \$157,000 more than the \$1.8 million cap. YEHP elected to fully fund all projects of eligible applicants, using set-aside program funding for the biennium.

YEHP awarded grants for Host Home programming to the following community-based service providers:

- A Family for Every Child (Lane County)
- Alternative Youth Activities (Coos County)
- Christians as Family Advocates (Lane County, focusing on the coastal portion)
- Hearts with a Mission (Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lincoln Counties)
- J Bar J Youth Services (Deschutes County)
- Kindred Partners (Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties)
- Northeast Oregon Compassion Center (Baker and Union Counties)
- Second Home (Clackamas, Lincoln, Multnomah and Washington Counties)

Implementation Challenges

High workload in the ODHS/Oregon Health Authority Office of Contracts and Procurement (OCP), coupled with some contracts' legal review needs, have resulted in unexpected delays to funding distribution for Host Home projects.

In addition, House Bill 2544 included project deliverables that needed to be included in the agreements. As a result, OCP determined that the Host Home funding would be more appropriately distributed through contract agreements rather than as grants. This determination created an unanticipated challenge since work cannot begin until the

contract has been executed. In the case of a grant, work can begin prior to grant execution.

Due to these challenges, most Host Home contract agreements were finalized in August and September 2022. One contract is yet to be finalized.

House Bill 2544 Report Areas

Because Host Home contracts were finalized just prior to this report, there is no assessment data tied to the projects to include at this time. Instead, this report contains information gleaned from the existing Host Home programming of funded organizations. Per House Bill 2544, a second iteration of this report will be provided in September 2023. Funded organizations will report data on new and expanded Host Home programming to ODHS on a quarterly basis to be included in the next report.

Identification and Outreach Process to Youth

Established Host Home organizations typically identify youth through local homeless education liaisons or other school contacts. For organizations with less established Host Home programming, building these relationships with the schools is their first step toward identifying young people in need of Host Home programming.

Information on youth referrals from organizations' implementation plans have included:

- Presentations at local churches
- Hosting tables at local social service and community service events
- Hosting in-person training
- Community Rapid Access Networks
- Direct connections with youth-serving organizations and representatives such as:
 - Wraparound coordinators,¹
 - Juvenile justice, and
 - Treatment providers.

Assessment Data and Other Indicators

As the work for these contracts begins, providers will track the following assessment data and outcomes to determine a youth's needs are being met:

Housing Outcomes

¹ A wraparound coordinator works within in a system such as foster care, special education, juvenile justice, or an intellectual and developmental disability programs to provide case coordination for involved youth with complex mental health issues <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/BH-Child-Family/Pages/Intensive-Services.aspx>

- Percentage of youth who obtain stable housing upon exit
- Location type on program exit

Educational Outcomes

- Percentage of youth who:
 - Achieve academic reconnection
 - Make academic progress

Employment Outcomes

- As applicable, total number of youth who obtain employment

Well-Being Outcomes

Short-term and long-term Host Home programming

- Total number of youth who:
 - Obtain Formal or Informal Mentoring
 - Received increased access to:
 - nutrition,
 - health care,
 - mental health, and
 - transportation

Long-term Host Home programming only

- Percentage of youth who are:
 - Managing physical health
 - Managing behavioral health

Demographic information

YEHP works collaboratively with multiple programs that participate in Oregon's Safe Families Collaborative hosting model. Four programs with Host Home award contracts are also part of this collaborative.

Though not specifically acquired from this project, July 2021 to June 2022 ethnicity and race data provided by the Safe Families Collaborative – which served 151 youth age 12 and older in 13 counties in this timeframe – gives some indication of the demographics new Host Home programming may serve:

- 43% White
- 24% Hispanic
- 13% Multiracial
- 6% African American

- 6% Alaska Native or American Indian
- 1% Asian
- 7% Unknown

Hearts with a Mission, a member of the Safe Families Collaborative, as well as a project contractor, provided additional data across their four geographic locations from this time period:

- Hosting accommodations to 36 youth (ages 16-21) and 1,261 nights of hosting (approximately 18 percent of their total hosting population)

Academic progress

Because Host Home contracts were finalized just prior to this report, and given the recent summer break, there is no academic progress data to report at this time.

Assessment about experience in Host Home projects

While ODHS does not yet have data to share about the funded Host Home projects, the following descriptions of youth with lived experience who were served by funded providers with existing Host Home programming demonstrate the value of the Host Home experience for youth:

“A” is a 16-year-old youth referred by Lincoln County HELP. A was couch surfing as his family conditions are unstable. We were able to match him with a Safe Families host home where he stayed for four months. He was supported to maintain his employment, stay in school and was provided basic assistance with things such as gas, food and clothing. A benefited from the relationships of a full Circle of Support and transitioned from his host home into a rental agreement.

“M” entered a Safe Family host home in 2021 (a day before his 18th birthday). He stayed with the family for about two and a half months at which time he transitioned to our TLP home. For many reasons M did not do well in TLP, and in September, we moved him back in with his host family. Since September, M has worked his way off probation, maintained employment, got his driver's license, and bought a car, sold that car and bought another car, and most importantly he went to court and got a legal stipulation removed and is now able to have contact with his brother.



For additional information:

Contact Roberto Gutierrez
ODHS Government Relations Manager
roberto.gutierrez@dhsosha.state.or.us
971-317-1265