

HB 2100 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Housing

Prepared By: Claire Adamsick, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/2, 3/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Housing and Community Services Department to study laws related to housing and to report findings to interim committee of Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2022.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces measure. Authorizes the Housing and Community Services Department to administer federal anti-poverty programs with advice from the Housing Stability Council and requires department to distribute funds statewide based on need-based formula.

Directs department to administer the Emergency Housing Account to assist homeless individuals and individuals at risk of becoming homeless, including through the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP). Requires department to consult with specified entities in the administration of grants for EHA and SHAP.

Requires that a successful grant application under the EHA or SHAP demonstrate that the applicant is a culturally responsive organization or is engaged in a process to become a culturally responsive organization, and which engages with culturally specific organizations and local homelessness planning efforts. Clarifies that funded projects must align with federal strategies as well as culturally responsive best practices in ending homelessness, including best practices unique to rural communities. Authorizes department to review a funding framework for EHA and SHAP that includes ongoing funding for existing grantees.

Allows department to expend administrative funds to direct statewide policy on homelessness. Requires that program funds be allocated statewide to community action agency service regions, coordinated within and based upon the needs in each region.

Requires that 25 percent of Emergency Housing Account funds are dedicated to assistance for veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Allows up to 20 percent of EHA or SHAP moneys to be used for local initiatives, pilots, or programs, including but not limited to direct funding for culturally specific organizations, support for homeless youth and families, or addressing racial disparities in homelessness. Clarifies that changes to EHA and SHAP as provided by this Act are operative July 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND:

According to data provided by the National Council on Homelessness (2020), Oregon's rate of homeless individuals is one of the highest in the nation, with 15,876 individuals who are homeless on a given night, or an average of 37.9 per 10,000 people in the general population. According to Oregon Housing and Community Services, Oregon ranks 4th highest in the nation for youth experiencing homelessness and chronic homelessness. A 2019 study by the Oregon Community Foundation found that Black and Indigenous Oregonians are

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disproportionately represented in the homeless population, with a share of the homeless population that is more than three times higher than these groups' representation in the general population.

The health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as individuals and families displaced by last year's wildfires, underscores the need for safe shelter, housing and supportive services to meet the needs of a growing homeless population.