

SB 79 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Carrier: Sen. Golden

Action Date: 03/04/21
Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)
Vote: 4-1-0-0
Yeas: 4 - Anderson, Golden, Jama, Patterson
Nays: 1 - Linthicum
Fiscal: No fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Devin Edwards, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates: 2/11, 3/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to use Home Ownership Assistance Account funds to offer grants and technical assistance to organizations working to increase homeownership access for low-income individuals and people of color. Permits OHCS to define “persons of color” by rule.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Racial equity as critical component of statewide housing plan
- Barriers to homeownership, including high down payments and rents
- Culturally specific service capacity in rural and low-income areas
- Access to Home Ownership Assistance Account funds for federally recognized Indian tribes
- Standardization of definitions

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Removes language from underlying bill that expanded OHCS authority to provide grants and loans to individuals for down payment assistance and to provide loans to organizations.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) administers the Home Ownership Assistance Account. Account funds are distributed to organizations that sponsor and manage homeownership programs for households at or below area median income, such as lease-to-own programs, new housing construction, or acquisition or rehabilitation of existing properties.

Senate Bill 79 A expands uses of the Home Ownership Assistance Account to include funding grants and technical assistance for organizations working to increase access to homeownership for low-income individuals and people of color. The measure also directs OHCS to prioritize organizations that offer culturally specific counseling, provide down payment assistance, and maintain partnerships with financial institutions, among other considerations. Finally, the measure clarifies that grants should be used to fund programs for households with incomes at or below area median income and authorizes OHCS to define “persons of color” by rule.