

**SB 79 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Carrier:** Rep. Meek

**House Committee On Housing**

---

**Action Date:** 05/18/21

**Action:** Do Pass the A-Eng bill.

**Vote:** 8-0-0-0

**Yeas:** 8 - Campos, Fahey, Marsh, Meek, Morgan, Neron, Weber, Zika

**Fiscal:** No fiscal impact

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Claire Adamsick, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 5/11, 5/18

---

**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Authorizes the Housing and Community Services Department to use funds from Home Ownership Assistance Account to offer grants and technical assistance to organizations working to increase homeownership access for low-income individuals and people of color. Allows department to define “persons of color” by rule. Expands eligible grant recipients to include federally recognized Indian tribes.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Expanding the use of homeownership funds for first-time homebuyers, specifically low-income individuals and people of color
- Mitigating cost burdens for prospective homeowners, specifically increased access to loans to cover high down payment
- Measure shaped in part by Joint Task Force Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership policy recommendations
- Home Ownership Assistance Program (HOAP) funds included in policy option budget packages
- Capacity of current housing inventory to accommodate HOAP program goals

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates from 2013-2017, homeownership rates are significantly lower for communities of color in Oregon than for white people. Among Oregonians of color, the homeownership rate is 32 percent for Blacks or African Americans, 45 percent for American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and 41 percent for Hispanics or Latinos, compared to the homeownership rate of 65 percent for whites.

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 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 one of the allowed uses of grants is to fund programs for households with incomes at or below area median income and authorizes OHCS to define “persons of color” by rule.