

My name is Corianne (Corrie) Etheredge from Northwest Family Services—a non-profit that services the tri-county area and Marion county. I'm speaking today in support of SB 282—extending the repayment period and moratorium.

Since July, I've been working on two separate COVID rent relief programs in Clackamas County—one that serves youth under age 24 and one that serves communities of color & other historically underserved populations, as others have shared I can echo that the BIPOC community has been especially impacted, so I'll focus on sharing my perspective on working with youth. I've also been working with homeless youth on a related program—so I can also echo what previous speakers have shared about the barriers that face unhoused populations and the importance of this work as part of preventing further homelessness.

When I get a new call, I complete a general housing screening. One of the questions we ask is "Have you ever had a housing crisis before?" The majority of the people I'm screening surprisingly say "No" this is the first time they have had to ask for help. The others often say "Yes, I've been homeless before and I've worked so hard to get where I am—I do not want to be homeless again" For both of these situations, there is fear about what comes next.

Many of the youth I serve lost income due the pandemic as they did not have seniority—they were the first to be cut—or often had jobs in the service industry where we've seen an immense impact from the pandemic. Since joining these programs, I have seen that the incredible need for assistance. I have not been able to keep my voicemail clear. As soon as I clean out the voicemails, it fills up again. We need time to contact each of these households.

Once I reach out to someone, I coach them through notifying their landlord (if they haven't already) that they need more time to pay or connect with assistance. We need time to coordinate this communication and work out a plan. Then there are 10 plus documents that we need to prepare or gather. We need time to get this documentation. Further, these individuals and families are not just behind on rent—they have been juggling other essential bills. We need time to help connect with other resources and supports to get back on their feet.

I have a growing list of households that are reaching out for assistance. We need time to get the money out the door to help the tenants (and the landlords).