



April 9, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you on behalf of Home Forward and \$50 million in General Obligation, Article XI-Q bonds to build permanent supportive housing across Oregon. Home Forward is a Public Housing Authority (PHA) and largest provider of affordable housing in the state. Home Forward serves more than 17,500 households earning low-incomes in Multnomah County by developing affordable housing, providing supportive services, and administering short and long term rent assistance. The mission of Home Forward is to assure that the people of the community are sheltered.

We believe that everyone deserves a place to call home. In Multnomah County, more than 4,000 people are experiencing homelessness. Although many people experiencing homeless could maintain stable housing if an affordable option was available, some folks experiencing homelessness have complex medical needs or other behavioral health challenges and benefit from wrap around services to support them in maintaining stable housing. Permanent supportive housing is the combination of rent assistance to make the home more deeply affordable and supportive services to promote housing stability for people exiting homelessness. Home Forward has operated permanent supportive housing for many years and we support the state's investment in this effective housing model.

After the legislature invested in permanent supportive housing during the 2019 legislative session, Home Forward applied for these resources in partnership with the Urban League of Portland to create 60 permanent supportive housing units in North Portland along the interstate light rail line. We were pleased to receive \$9 million in capital funds, on-going rental assistance for all 60 units, and funding for supportive services for the North Baldwin Project. The vision for North Baldwin is inspired in part by Urban League's successful Project HAVEN, founded in 2016. Urban League's model provides focused and intensive services to address homelessness in the Black community, a population over-represented in the homeless community yet underserved. Construction is scheduled to start fall of 2021 with residents moving in in fall of 2022.

We appreciate the legislature for taking action to fund permanent supportive housing and provide housing opportunities for individuals and families who have experienced homelessness. Permanent supportive housing is a necessary part of the housing continuum – part of the housing infrastructure we need to end homelessness. Yet, the need is still much greater than the available resources. We urge you to support \$50 million in Article XI-Q general obligation bonds to build more permanent supportive housing, plus the ongoing rent assistance and services dollars needed to operate these projects.

Thank you for your service and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 5505 today. Please contact Taylor Smiley Wolfe, Director of Policy and Planning, Home Forward at 503-957-8760 or taylor.smileywolfe@homeforward.org regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Taylor Smiley Wolfe
Director of Policy and Planning
Home Forward