



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 23, 2021

House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Morgan, Vice-Chair Campos, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2163, which will create a long-term rental assistance program for youth experiencing homelessness.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

All Oregonians deserve a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table, particularly during this pandemic.

Oregon has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness¹ in the nation, including youth in the K-12 system, youth exiting the foster care system, and unaccompanied youth. Studies also show that youth who experience homelessness are more likely to experience homelessness as adults. Nationally, youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to be Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. Black students are 2.67 times² more likely to experience homelessness as their white counterparts.

A recent report from Pew noted that youth homelessness is increasing rapidly³ nationwide. Linkages between foster care and homelessness are well known, with one study finding 36% of former foster youth having experienced at least one episode of homelessness.⁴

¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

² <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/YOC-HCYA.pdf>.

³ <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/07/07/a-hidden-population-youth-homelessness-is-on-the-rise>

⁴ <https://www.aecf.org/resources/from-foster-home-to-homeless/>

HB 2163 would seek to transform the outcomes for youth through a long-term rent assistance pilot program that targets one of the primary entry points into adult homelessness. It also seeks to provide stability and support to youth as they transition from childhood to adulthood so they can have access to the same education and training opportunities just like their counterparts who are housed and living with family. Long term rent assistance is an effective strategy to prevent homelessness and provide an opportunity for affordable housing for people with low incomes around the state. HB 2163 would provide \$4.5 million to support youth who are experiencing homelessness with rent assistance.


Long-term rent assistance is an effective strategy to prevent homelessness and provide an opportunity for safe and stable housing. Today, however, existing federal resources are insufficient to meet the need. In 2018, approximately 47,000 households in Oregon received rent assistance through federal tenant based or project based vouchers. These federal programs served one in four households that are eligible for these subsidies, meaning three in four households who are eligible for assistance did not receive it because of a lack of federal resources.

A recent study of long-term rent assistance⁵ provided in Multnomah County found that people who received the assistance experienced: an increase in housing stability; improved financial stability; reduced stress and anxiety and improved mental health; and support to address physical health needs.

Long term rent assistance can support youth to transition to adulthood and access career and educational opportunities, find safety, and receive the support they need.

We urge your support of HB 2163. Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

⁵ https://www.nwpilotproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CORE_LRA-Final-Report.pdf

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Chrisman Development
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
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City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Homes for Good
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Portland: Neighbors Welcome
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC) Oregon
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition