

March 2nd, 2021

House Committee On Housing
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2100 (-1 Amendment)

As you know, ending the housing crisis requires us to work across systems, agencies, and jurisdictions to address all of the factors that continue to make housing unaffordable for thousands of Oregonians. Continued siloing of funds from the state to address homelessness threatens that.

Carving funds out of Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)/State Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) for OHCS to directly contract with local organizations will limit local coordination of not only EHA/SHAP funds but also other funding sources that Multnomah County braids together to create not just programs but systems of support to respond to homelessness, including Federal, other State and Local funds. In Multnomah County the State funds leverage millions in local resources. This local strategy will be disrupted without a consistent, formula-based funding model from the OHCS. Likewise, long term planning complex solutions will be at risk.

However, we do agree that using Culturally Specific Community Based Organizations to provide services to end homelessness is critically important to long term solutions. As well as expanding stakeholders that advise OHCS and the Housing Stability Council. However, direct contracting with those organizations is not necessarily the most effective way to achieve those outcomes, at least in Multnomah County, where we directly contract with multiple culturally specific organizations, and subcontract to still more.

We use our ability to bring local resources, and braid funds - in particular local funds - to enhance those organizations' capacity to provide services by making up, for example, insufficient indirect rates and program staffing supports that often fall short of needs, in state funding allocations. We would urge HB2100 to ensure that direct contracting through the state is not the first or only strategy for expanding culturally specific services, but is instead is a tool that is used only if local jurisdictions are unwilling or unable to reach culturally specific contracting goals established for EHA/SHAP funds.

Currently Multnomah County Contracts with a number of Culturally Specific Community Based Organizations to braid funding to provide people a single point of entry. For example the [Native American Youth and Family Center](#) (NAYA) a nonprofit organization that works to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families in partnership with the community through cultural

identity and education. By braiding funding, we leverage state and federal funding in NAYA's contract to create a centralized coordination hub of services. Here are some examples of programs that the County contracts with NAYA.

- Future Generations Collaborative for Maternal Child Health Promotion
- Domestic Violence Services Navigation at the Gateway Center
- Youth Violence Prevention Services
- COVID-19 Community Health Worker Culturally Specific
- Community Services for Older Adults
- Mobile Housing Team - Rapid Rehousing for Homeless Families
- Homeless Youth Services
- SUN School Services
- Youth Gang Prevention Services
- Adolescent Health

Multnomah County has intentionally worked to contract with local community based organizations in strategic ways so that individuals have a single door to receive services. NAYA is one example of this; there are many more.

HB 2100 has many good elements and we support OHCSs desire to end homelessness in a racially just manner. We ask that local input, local control and collaboration continue to be central to the allocation process, allowing for local communities to develop unique, regional solutions to address homelessness in their communities that can have long lasting impacts on ending homelessness.