

SB 893 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Prepared By: Claire Adamsick, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/20, 4/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to modify state’s funding structure based on recommendations from Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities. Allows creation of committees to consider rules and design policy frameworks for programs by federally recognized tribes within Oregon; community action agencies; continuums of care; and culturally specific or culturally responsive organizations. Requires OHCS provide report to committee of Legislative Assembly related to housing on or before March 15, 2024, with recommendations on implementing proposed changes for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, including recommendations for modifying other OHCS homeless service programs as a result of the changes. Allows OHCS to adopt rules for implementing programs and systems intended to prevent and end homelessness, including: development and operation of emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities; homeless system and eviction prevention services; delivery of federal antipoverty programs; investment in data gathering, and individualized and culturally responsive interventions. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

SENATE VOTE: 25-4

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Clarity that measure does not impact current biennium funding to service providers
- Balancing task force request for extended time with need for urgent and concrete actions to address racial disparities in homelessness
- Current agency work in implementing directives of Governor’s Executive Order 23-02
- Shift in contracting process to direct homeless services funding to culturally-specific and culturally-responsive providers

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The stated mission of Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) is to “provide leadership in, and review and set policy for, the development and financing of affordable housing in the state of Oregon.” As the number of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness increases, demand for OHCS services also increases, though the agency’s statutory authority has not always kept pace with legislative directives. Disparities exist among the homeless population in Oregon: the Native population share of homeless counts in 2020 was four times higher than their share of the general population, while Black Oregonians made up three times as much of the homeless population as their share of the population at-large. House Bill 2100, enacted in 2021, directed OHCS to establish the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities to address the state’s provision of and access to culturally responsive homeless services. The Task Force released its report in January 2022 with recommendations on ways to address racial disparities in the homeless population, including: identifying needs of housing-insecure individuals, understanding agency capacity issues, adjusting funding structures, and modifying contracting processes.

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Senate Bill 893 A directs OHCS to modify its funding structure based on recommendations from the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities. It directs OHCS to provide a report to a housing-related committee of the Legislative Assembly about the changes and recommended homeless program adjustments by March 15, 2024. The measure allows OHCS to design policy directed toward federally recognized tribes, community action agencies, continuums of care, and culturally specific organizations, and it gives OHCS the authority to support or develop homelessness-specific programs and systems.