

House Bill 2456

Sponsored by Representative REYNOLDS (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Modifies emergency housing assistance program and state homeless assistance program to provide services and assistance to school-aged children experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Changes "unaccompanied homeless youth" to "youth experiencing homelessness" for purposes of certain programs. Modifies eligibility requirements for applicants for grants from homeless youth services enhancement program and host home project program. Makes programs permanent.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to youth experiencing homelessness; amending ORS 458.650 and sections 1, 2 and 6, chapter
3 531, Oregon Laws 2021; and declaring an emergency.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

5 **SECTION 1.** ORS 458.650 is amended to read:

6 458.650. (1) The Housing and Community Services Department shall administer the Emergency
7 Housing Account to assist homeless individuals and individuals who are at risk of becoming
8 homeless, through means including the emergency housing assistance program and the state
9 homeless assistance program. Notwithstanding subsection (3)(a) of this section, the state homeless
10 assistance program shall serve individuals experiencing homelessness, especially unsheltered
11 homelessness, without respect to income.

12 (2) The Oregon Housing Stability Council shall develop a policy for the use of program funds
13 with the advice of:

- 14 (a) Persons who have experienced housing instability;
15 (b) Tribes;
16 (c) The Community Action Partnership of Oregon;
17 (d) Continuums of care, as defined in 24 C.F.R. part 578;
18 (e) Local governments;
19 (f) Nonprofit organizations;
20 (g) Homeless services providers;
21 (h) Culturally specific organizations;
22 (i) Housing providers;
23 (j) Veterans' services organizations; and
24 (k) Other entities identified by the department by rule.

25 (3) The policy under subsection (2) of this section shall direct that program funds shall be used:

26 (a) To provide to low and very low income individuals, including but not limited to individuals
27 more than 65 years of age, persons with disabilities, agricultural workers and Native Americans:

- 28 (A) Emergency shelters and attendant services;

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (B) Transitional housing services designed to assist individuals to make the transition from
2 homelessness to permanent housing and economic independence;

3 (C) Supportive housing services to enable individuals to continue living in their own homes or
4 to provide in-home services for such individuals for whom suitable programs do not exist in their
5 geographic area;

6 (D) Programs that provide emergency payment of home payments, rents or utilities; or

7 (E) Some or all of the *[needs]* **services or assistance** described in subparagraphs (A) to (D) of
8 this paragraph.

9 **(b) To provide the services and assistance described in paragraph (a) of this subsection**
10 **to school-aged children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12, or their families, who are**
11 **homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.**

12 *[(b)]* (c) To align with federal strategies and resources that are available to prevent and end
13 homelessness, including the requirement of providing culturally responsive services and using
14 evidence-based and emerging practices effective in ending homelessness, including practices unique
15 to rural communities.

16 (4)(a) The council shall require as a condition of awarding a grant that the organization dem-
17 onstrate to the satisfaction of the council that the organization:

18 (A) Has the capacity to deliver any service proposed by the organization;

19 (B) Is a culturally responsive organization or is engaged in a process to become a culturally
20 responsive organization;

21 (C) Engages with culturally specific organizations; and

22 (D) Supports local homelessness system planning efforts.

23 (b) Any funds granted under this section may not be used to replace existing funds. Funds
24 granted under this section may be used to supplement existing funds. An organization may use funds
25 to support existing programs or to establish new programs.

26 (5) The department may expend funds from the account for:

27 (a) The administration of the account as provided for in the legislatively approved budget, as
28 that term is defined in ORS 291.002, for the department in support of directing a statewide policy
29 on homelessness that ensures use of evidence-based and emerging practices, service equity in fund-
30 ing and local planning processes.

31 (b) The development of technical assistance and training resources for organizations developing
32 and operating emergency shelters as defined in ORS 197.782 and transitional housing accommo-
33 dations as described in ORS 197.746.

34 (6) The department shall utilize outcome-oriented contracting processes and evidence-based and
35 emerging practices for account program funds, including evidence-based and emerging practices for
36 serving rural communities.

37 (7) Twenty-five percent of moneys deposited in the account pursuant to ORS 294.187 are dedi-
38 cated to the emergency housing assistance program for assistance to veterans who are homeless or
39 at risk of becoming homeless.

40 **SECTION 2.** Section 1, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, as amended by section 1, chapter 42,
41 Oregon Laws 2022, is amended to read:

42 **Sec. 1.** (1) As used in this section, [*unaccompanied homeless youth*] **“youth experiencing**
43 **homelessness”** means a person who is at least 14 years of age but not more than 24 years of age,
44 who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and who is homeless.

45 (2) In addition to any other scholarships or grants, the Department of Human Services may

1 award two-year grants to organizations that provide services to [*unaccompanied homeless*] youth
 2 **experiencing homelessness.**

3 (3) The department may award a grant under this section to an organization that:

4 (a) Has an existing grant from the department to provide services to [*unaccompanied homeless*]
 5 youth **experiencing homelessness; or**

6 [*(b) Has an existing contract with the department to provide services to unaccompanied homeless*
 7 *youth and the department has determined that the organization is capable of expanding to provide*
 8 *services in additional communities;*]

9 [*(c) Is a nonprofit organization or a coalition of nonprofit organizations that the department has*
 10 *determined is capable of meeting the grant program requirements; or]*

11 [*(d) Is a new entity that the department determines is capable of meeting the grant program re-*
 12 *quirements.*]

13 **(b) Proposes to provide evidence-based services, as described by the department by rule,**
 14 **for youth experiencing homelessness in an underserved area or an area in which those ser-**
 15 **vices are not provided.**

16 (4) Grants awarded under this section may be used for any of the following:

17 (a) To increase the accessibility of any of the following programs and services to [*unaccompanied*
 18 *homeless*] youth **experiencing homelessness:**

19 (A) Shelter facilities;

20 (B) Outreach;

21 (C) Culturally specific services; and

22 (D) Mental health or substance abuse services; and

23 (b) To create or strengthen partnerships with host home programs and other transitional hous-
 24 ing options.

25 **(5) An applicant for a grant under this section must describe how the applicant intends**
 26 **to ensure that other funding, including from federal or local governments or charitable do-**
 27 **nations, will be used to supplement the total cost of the proposed program.**

28 [(5)] (6) The department may adopt rules to administer the grant program described in this
 29 section.

30 **SECTION 3.** Section 2, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, is amended to read:

31 **Sec. 2.** (1) As used in this section:

32 (a) “Host home project” means a project that facilitates an arrangement under which [*an unac-*
 33 *companied homeless*] youth **experiencing homelessness** resides in the home of a private individual,
 34 pursuant to the terms of a contract between the private individual and the youth, for free or at
 35 below-market rent.

36 (b) “Long-term host home project” means a host home project run by an organization that has
 37 a memorandum of understanding or a letter of agreement with one or more school districts and in
 38 which [*unaccompanied homeless*] **participating** youth **experiencing homelessness** [*participants*], on
 39 average during the most recent two years, resided in host homes for a minimum of 180 days, as re-
 40 ported by the relevant school district.

41 (c) “Short-term host home project” means a host home project in which [*unaccompanied*
 42 *homeless*] **participating** youth **experiencing homelessness** [*participants*], on average during the
 43 most recent two years, resided in host homes for a maximum of 180 days, as reported by the relevant
 44 school district.

45 (d) [*“Unaccompanied homeless youth”*] **“Youth experiencing homelessness”** means a person

1 who is:

2 (A) At least 16 years of age but not more than 21 years of age;

3 (B) Not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian;

4 (C) Not in the custody of the Department of Human Services;

5 (D) Not a ward of the state; and

6 (E) Homeless.

7 (2) In addition to and not in lieu of any other scholarships or grants, the department may award
8 two-year grants to organizations that operate host home projects for [*unaccompanied homeless*] youth
9 **experiencing homelessness**.

10 (3) An organization is eligible to apply for a grant under this section if the organization [*oper-*
11 *ated a host home project on January 1, 2021, and*] can demonstrate the ability to:

12 (a) **Continue the operation of existing host home projects;**

13 [(a)] (b) Expand host home projects in communities in which the organization provides services;

14 [(b)] (c) Establish new long-term host home projects in communities that do not have long-term
15 host home projects; or

16 [(c)] (d) Establish new short-term host home projects.

17 (4) Recipients of grants awarded under this section shall work to achieve the following outcomes
18 for [*unaccompanied homeless*] youth **experiencing homelessness**:

19 (a) Improved school attendance.

20 (b) Participation in formal or informal mentoring.

21 (c) Increased access to nutrition, health care, mental trauma-informed support and transporta-
22 tion services.

23 (5) A recipient of a grant awarded under this section shall ensure all individuals of 18 years of
24 age or older residing in the host home who are not the [*unaccompanied homeless*] youth **experi-**
25 **encing homelessness** have an approved background check under ORS 181A.200 and 409.027.

26 (6) A host home is not a child-caring agency as defined in ORS 418.205.

27 (7) The department may adopt rules to administer the grant program described in this section.

28 **SECTION 4.** Section 6, chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021, is amended to read:

29 **Sec. 6.** [(1) Sections 1 and 2 of this 2021 Act are repealed on June 30, 2023.]

30 [(2)] Sections 3 and 5 [of this 2021 Act], **chapter 531, Oregon Laws 2021**, are repealed on Jan-
31 uary 2, 2024.

32 **SECTION 5.** This 2023 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
33 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2023 Act takes effect
34 on its passage.

35