



MEDFORD

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

TO: Ways & Means Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
FROM: City of Medford
DATE: March 2, 2023
Re: SB 5511 inclusion

The City of Medford urges the legislature to include in SB 5511, the budget for the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department, ongoing direct allocations of funding to help local governments address and prevent homelessness.

The cities in Oregon individually and along with the Oregon Mayors Association and the League of Oregon Cities have worked hard in the last three years to advocate for new ideas to prevent homelessness, bring new resources to the table, and work with legislative leaders to find and advocate for funding.

Homelessness is at a crisis level in Medford. A record 158 residents were in emergency shelters and 191 in transitional housing. Based on data received from the CoC, 1,466 people accessed emergency shelters across all county-wide sheltering programs, including shelters, the urban campground and hotels. Medford residents, 773 in 2021 and 1,251, per recent Point-In-Time Counts, were found to be unsheltered, in emergency shelter or in transitional housing. Medford has developed a Homeless System Action Plan - a comprehensive strategy to address homelessness and housing instability in Medford, Jackson County, and throughout the Rogue Valley, and has dedicated vast resources, but we cannot continue without the state's help.

Since 2019, Medford has committed roughly \$19.6 million in local resources to address the impacts of homelessness in its community, including:

- A place for people to sleep (shelter and transitional housing) at \$11,905,335;
- Outreach and services at \$5,809,740;
- Development of permanent support housing and affordable housing at \$1,232,310;
- Prevention assistance at \$479,102;
- Planning efforts at \$145,000.
- Another significant investment that the city does not track financially is the abundance of city staff time dedicated to addressing homelessness in each of these categories.

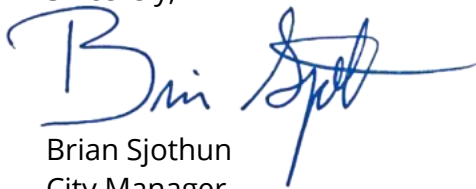
The City has developed a strong collaborative of local homeless services providers that is cultivating operations models at the Navigation Center, Urban Campground and Project Turnkey that provide trauma informed services and create a trauma informed environment

and culture. Peer-to-peer support is a strong service delivery tool used at each site, not just by the primary operator, but also by other nonprofits that provide services, onsite. Collaborations and partnerships with behavioral health providers is also strengthening the level of de-escalation and crisis intervention services provided at each site. The City has made tremendous progress leading the charge of standing these projects up and building the framework for healthy and collaborative operations. However, without additional, consistent funding streams, these projects and programs are not sustainable.

We urge the legislature and OHCS to develop now sustainable funding for the state's Future. Medford will use funds to support operations for established houseless programs. The City's community partners are requesting sustainable operations funding to meet the rising demands of services provided at Project Turnkey, Navigation Center and Urban Campground. The request is for \$3.5 million per year for operations at the three project sites.

The regional cost of homelessness far exceeds the need for resources – we ask for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Sjothun". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Brian Sjothun
City Manager