

Submitter: AJ Klausen  
On Behalf Of: Y Vets Housing  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction  
Measure: HB5030

Salem Y Veterans Housing Seeking \$1,000,000 for Wrap-Around Services as New Y Veterans Housing Apartment Complex Sets to Open in January of 2024

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is AJ Klausen, I am a Marine Veteran and President of the Salem YMCA Veterans Housing Board of Directors. I am joined here today by Tim Sinatra, the Marion and Polk YMCA CEO.

The Y Veterans Housing apartments you see being constructed across the street is a historic occurrence. There is no other Veterans Housing developments like it in the state of Oregon. In a unique and one-of-a-kind partnership between the ODVA, Senator Peter Courtney, Senator's Wyden and Merkley, the OHCS and with dedicated board members of the Salem Y, this facility went from being a vision to reality over the last five years thanks in large part to you and this committee. The apartments will be serving Veterans of all stripes including women with children who meet a 60% average medium income with residents moving in January of 2024.

We are seeking \$1,000,000 for three full time staff to provide needed wrap-around services for the first three years of operation to the Veterans living in these new apartments. We believe these services will give the Veterans the best possible opportunity to succeed in our community.

These apartments dedicated to Veterans address the dramatic lack of affordable housing in our community, especially for low-income Veterans.

Homelessness among Veterans is on the rise and the minimum annual wage needed to qualify for a one-bedroom apartment in Marion County is nearly double the average Veteran's pension. Combine that with the fact that 1 in 5 Veterans have a service-connected disability and the need for affordable housing. Offering full-time, on-site staff who are trained to support Veterans will increase the chances for greater success among residents. These Veterans will also benefit from a free membership at the YMCA where they can build friends, be employed and mentor.

We hope to earn your support for this request. We also encourage you to tour the new facility to fully appreciate how special this opportunity is in our community.

For more information:

AJ Klausen, Marine Veteran, Board President of Salem YMCA Veterans Housing—  
503-779-8940

Tim Sinatra, Marion and Polk County YMCA CEO—503-991-2472