

ANALYSIS

Department of Human Services Youth Homelessness

Analyst: Gregory Jolivette

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, in the amount of up to \$1,400,000 over 30 months, to support youth homelessness system improvement.

Analysis: In November 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a new source of funding dedicated to youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness. Youth Experiencing Homelessness grants are intended to support selected communities in either improving an existing response system for youth homelessness or establishing and implementing a new youth homelessness response system. More specifically, the grants will fund, for example, efforts to build capacity for Youth Action Boards, collect and use data on at-risk youth and youth experiencing homelessness; and improve coordination and administration of homeless assistance projects. The funds cannot be used to provide housing or services to youth. Eligible project activities include planning and partnerships; data; coordinated entry; and racial and gender equity. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations; city, state, or county governments; and tribal governments and tribally designated housing entities. Applications are due February 15, 2024. No match is required, but the provision of a 10% match will increase the likelihood of receiving the maximum grant of \$1.4 million. As such, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is proposing a match, using some of the funds in its base budget.

DHS is seeking the maximum award for planning and partnership (\$400,000), and data (\$300,000) activities; however, the grant award for these categories is doubled for applications that cover the entire geography of the state. The request is for authorization to apply for up to \$1.4 million over 30 months. DHS proposes to administer the funds through its Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP), which awards and oversees grants and contracts to organizations serving youth who are experiencing homelessness. If the grant is awarded to Oregon, DHS plans to use the funds to hire two limited-duration positions at a cost of about \$700,000 to do the following: (1) support greater youth involvement in program design and delivery; (2) provide technical assistance to providers that lack the administrative capacity or depth of expertise to secure grants and other funding opportunities related to youth homelessness; and (3) improve data collection and tracking. If additional funds become available, sub-grants could be made to local Youth Action Boards (YAB) to support compensation of YAB members commensurate with best practices.

YEHP has a 2023-25 legislatively adopted budget of \$29.3 million (\$28.7 million General Fund, \$600,000 Federal Funds), and supports two permanent full-time permanent positions and six limited duration positions. Most of the YEHP funding—\$24.2 million General Fund—was provided on a one-time basis to implement legislation enacted during the 2023 legislative session. HB 5019 provided \$6.25 million General Fund on a one-time basis for grants to organizations operating host home projects; \$12.5 million General Fund on a one-time basis for grants to support expanded access to shelter facilities; and \$1.2 million General Fund for five limited duration positions. HB 3395 provided \$4.2 million on a one-time basis and one limited-duration position to administer one-time affordable housing support to low-income college students.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Committee on Ways and Means approve the request.

Request: Authorization to apply for a grant up to \$1,400,000 for youth homelessness systems infrastructure from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) requests authorization to apply for HUD's Youth Homelessness System Improvement grant (YHSI). The grant opportunity was posted on November 8, 2023, and the application deadline is February 15, 2024. The ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP), within Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP), would administer the grant. YEHP anticipates notification of the award by May 2024, with the grant period running from June 2024 through December 2026. The grants are designed to create and build capacity for Youth Action Boards to collect and use at-risk youth data to inform policy and to improve the administration of homeless assistance projects to better serve youth.

With the 2023 grant cycle, all SSP's youth service providers have begun entering data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which will allow for aggregated, standardized reporting on demographics and outcomes. HMIS is a local information technology system – required by HUD when Federal Funds are used - to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Each Continuum of Care in the country is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. Oregon has multiple instances of HMIS software – Lane County and the Tri-County area each has one, and the rest of the state reports into a system overseen by Oregon Housing and Community Services. If awarded, YHSI grant funds would be used to strengthen data consistency across the HMISs within Oregon by hiring an HMIS data coordinator position. This work is being coordinated with Oregon Housing and Community Services. Grant funds would also be used for one Operations and Policy Analyst 2 position to enhance youth input and engagement by leveraging the already established Youth Action Boards.

The budget framework for the grant is estimated to be \$1.2 million with \$0.7 million for the two limited duration ODHS positions, and related Services and Supplies costs (Information Systems Specialist 7 and Operations and Policy Analyst 2), along with \$0.5 million for training, capacity building, technical assistance, and additional funding for Youth Action Boards. YEHP is a relatively small program within ODHS, although the program has been increased through one-time investments approved as part of House Bill 5019 (2023) and House Bill 3395 (2023). If awarded, this grant will allow the program to build on recent investments made by the Legislature. The Department anticipates including state funds as part of the supporting infrastructure for the grant application to enhance the competitiveness of the application. The supporting funds are within the existing budget. There is no matching requirement or maintenance of effort. ODHS would return to the Legislature to receive the needed Federal Funds expenditure limitation and position authority if funds are awarded.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of the Director

500 Summer St. NE, E-15

Salem, OR 97301-1097

Voice: 503-945-5600

Fax: 503-581-6198

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Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St. NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem OR 97301

RE: Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Youth Homelessness System Improvement (YHSI) Grant Application Permission

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self-Sufficiency Programs respectfully requests permission to apply for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s [Youth Homelessness System Improvement \(YHSI\) Grant](#). The YHSI grant will allow Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) to develop and implement systems infrastructure to better address youth homelessness in Oregon.

ODHS requests permission to apply for federal grant funds up to \$1,400,000. Specifically, YEHP intends to request up to \$700,000 total for the categories of "Planning and Partnerships" (\$400,000) and "Data" (\$300,000). The proposal has the potential to be doubled, as maximum amounts will be doubled for applications that cover geographic areas in two or more [Continuums of Care](#) (CoC) or if the proposal covers the entire geography of a state. Thus, YEHP could be awarded up to \$1,400,000.

Federal Grant Information

The grant timeframe is a 30-month period from June 1, 2024 to December 1, 2026. HUD is expected to award up to 35 grants. There are scoring incentives available in this grant:

- If the proposal includes supporting infrastructure in 75% or more of a state.

- If the proposer provides a 10% funding match. There is no required match however.

The application due date is February 15, 2024. This opportunity became available on November 8, 2023. The application announcement is [available at this link](#). Funding is appropriated by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103, approved March 15, 2022) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328, approved December 29, 2022). The FY 2022 and FY 2023 Appropriations Acts provided this funding to HUD "to support communities... in establishing and implementing a response system for youth homelessness, or for improving their existing system." If selected, ODHS would be notified by May of 2024.

Background

The housing and homelessness crises in the United States are directly affecting young people, with one in 30 youths (13 to 17 years old) and one in 10 young adults (18 to 25 years old) experiencing homelessness over the course of a year.¹ Oregon projections estimate that nearly 8,300 youths and young adults in the state are in need housing services and supports each year.² Oregon has the fourth highest count of unaccompanied youth, and the highest percentage of unsheltered unaccompanied youth, in the nation.³

National best practice models for youth experiencing homelessness emphasize the cruciality of centering youth voice and perspectives in program design. YEHP has already established a new Youth Action Board (YAB), which will act as an oversight and governance mechanism for the program. A YHSI request would allow for not only intentional support in supporting the work of the YEHP YAB, but also create, support, and align youth-driven work in local communities and provide a structure for youth-determined needs to filter up to the State level.

At present, most communities in Oregon do not have a complete array of youth homelessness services and many young people must travel to other cities or counties to seek services. Newer and modestly sized providers may not have the administrative capacity or depth of expertise necessary to successfully secure grants or funding opportunities relating to youth homelessness. A YHSI request would allow for developing

¹ Chapin Hall (2018). <https://www.chapinhall.org/research/one-in-10-young-adults-experience-homelessness-during-one-year/>

² Corporation for Supportive Housing (2021).

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/43725>

³ HUD (2022). <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

targeted supports and partnerships – intentionally within Oregon’s underserved geographies and demographics.

Standardized data collection and tracking of youth outcomes has been an area of growth for YEHP. Beginning in the 2023 grant cycle, all YEHP service providers have begun entering data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which will allow for aggregated, standardized reporting on demographics and outcomes. A YHSI request would allow for enhancement and customization of HMIS – at both the state and local levels – to achieve better data and the provision of intentional and equitable analysis.

Agency Action

To address these components, YEHP’s YHSI proposal would expand upon the program’s vision and strategies and includes the following components over the thirty-month grant duration:

Enhancing Youth Input and Engagement

- Establish an ODHS staff position dedicated to planning, recruiting, convening, and supporting the YEHP Youth Action Board (YAB).
- Provide coordination between statewide and local YABs to ensure seamless integration of local priorities into state planning processes.
- Support local communities in various stages of initiating new YABs or other similar youth leadership bodies.
- Sub-grant funds to local YABs to support compensation of YAB members commensurate with national best practices.
- Fund an annual youth leadership convening, bringing together emerging and current youth leaders across the state to build knowledge and skills, facilitate connections, and enhance access to power structures.

Strengthening Capacity in Youth Homelessness Programming

- Facilitate or fund local trainings on youth homelessness to support knowledge for providers and advocates newly entering the field.
- Offer targeted program development and technical assistance to local agencies seeking support on youth homelessness programming, both directly by YEHP staff and through contracted technical assistance.

- Allocate funds to organizations that do not currently hold YEHP grants with the purpose of grant writing technical assistance to increase success in future grant-seeking.
- Organize an annual symposium focused on youth homelessness. This symposium aims to increase visibility, share best practices, and identify emerging leaders in communities. (This may be combined with the youth leadership convening above).

Strengthening Data Consistency

- Establish a youth specific HMIS data coordinator position within the ODHS Office of Research, Reporting, Analytics and Implementation (ORRAI) team. This position would manage relationships with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), YEHP grantee organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure timely capture, analysis, and reporting of YEHP HMIS data.
- Coordinate with local CoCs regarding HMIS data and procuring software tools to simultaneously facilitate greater data security and data sharing. This may include procuring and hosting Application Programming Interface(s) that enable access to secure data across CoCs and at the statewide level, and/or supporting data hosting and query costs using state-procured software.

Staffing

If awarded ODHS plans to hire one FTE for Youth Engagement and one FTE for Youth-specific HMIS data coordination, with classifications to be determined.

Agency Request

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) requests permission to apply for up to a total of \$1,400,000 for 30 months in response to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Youth Homelessness System Improvement (YHSI) grant.

Legislation Affected

None. If awarded ODHS will request Federal Fund limitation increase and position authority accordingly in the future.

If you have questions, please contact Matthew Rasmussen at
Matthew.Rasmussen@odhs.oregon.gov.

Sincerely,



Fariborz Pakseresht
ODHS Director

Ec: Amanda Beitel, Legislative Fiscal Office
Gregory Jolivette, Legislative Fiscal Office
Kate Nass, Department of Administrative Services
Mike Streep, Department of Administrative Services
Courtney Rogers, Department of Administrative Services