



**Mid-Columbia
Community
Action Council**

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council
Serving Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties
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Chair Jama and members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Sarah Kellems and I am the Development and Engagement Coordinator with Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC), which serves Wasco, Hood River, and Sherman counties. I would like to express my support for - and ask you to join me in supporting - Senate Bill 1530.

MCCAC is the lead houseless services provider in our rural Mid-Columbia region and is one of the handful of organizations that received funding from House Bill 4123 to strengthen our region's coordinated houselessness prevention and response system.

We operate the Hood River seasonal warming shelter which is open each year November through March. In recent years, we have expanded from nighttime only to 24/7 shelter operations and through this expansion have been able to better coordinate with community partner organizations, provide case management for shelter guests, and support shelter guests to transition from shelter into long-term housing placements.

We also operate The Annex shelter and transitional housing in The Dalles. Made possible through Project Turnkey, The Annex opened in August 2023 and represents expanded shelter capacity as well as the first year-round shelter for individuals and families in our service area. We coordinate with culturally specific and culturally responsive partners to place clients at The Annex, and we can open additional space in "surge capacity" during severe weather events.

MCCAC provides housing case management and navigation and is also the local administrator of the Oregon Eviction Diversion and Prevention Program (ORE-DAP) which provides critical rent assistance to low-income households facing eviction. In 2022, our MCCAC caseworkers supported 1,000 community members to navigate housing stabilization, resulting in 140 community members who were at risk of eviction not losing their housing and 115 people transitioning from houselessness to long-term housing placements, including 17 seniors and 10 Veterans.

In addition, we provide utilities and weatherization assistance including heating and cooling devices for low-income households. In 2022, we served 3,441 community members through our utilities and weatherization programs, where we again prioritize collaboration with culturally specific and culturally responsive community partners with a particular focus on supporting historically marginalized community members.

To make long-term progress in preventing and eliminating houselessness in our rural region, we need stable and consistent funding to support the programs and services we are currently providing. Senate Bill 1530 would represent one component of the stable and consistent funding that will be required to sustain our work and eliminate houselessness, one person at a time. I hope you will join us in supporting Senate Bill 1530.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Kellems
Development and Engagement Coordinator
Mid-Columbia Community Action Council