



February 13, 2024

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Liz Marquez Gutierrez and I am the Policy Manager at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing and policy advocacy.

On behalf of our members, I am writing in support of SB 1530 to ensure we have investments in rent assistance to prevent homelessness. PCUN is a part of the Oregon Worker Relief coalition where together we have been able to design and implement programs in support of immigrants and refugees who are facing housing instability and eviction amidst this housing crisis. In working with our coalition and partners, we have seen first hand the immense need for housing and rental assistance in our immigrant communities. Oregon is among the states with the most cost-burdened renters in the nation.¹ As a result, Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation.

It's time to ensure adequate investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention, to prevent homelessness in Oregon.

With a sharp spike in high-rent homelessness, it's urgent that you invest in proven prevention strategies that keep Oregonians housed. At current levels of need, the funds previously allocated will be gone by July 2024. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in [Fair Shot's People's Budget](#) which has had a proven track record of keeping working Oregonians safe and stable.

Altogether, this package calls for:

- \$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations.
- \$6.5 million to the Urban League of Oregon for culturally specific housing stability services.
- \$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services for immigrant Oregonians.
- \$2 million for outreach services for residents of expiring affordable housing units.

86% of eviction filings are for nonpayment, against people who have fallen behind on their rent. There are close to 2000 eviction filings a month. The availability of rent assistance for tenants in

¹ [OR Housing: Oregon among states with most cost-burdened renters: Harvard \(koin.com\)](#)

the critical time of need will help ensure that landlords get paid, evictions are avoided, and most importantly, Oregonians stay housed.

The Oregon Worker Relief Home Fund has been a lifeline for many immigrant Oregonians in need and we know hardworking Oregonians are struggling to make ends meet, facing eviction and homelessness. It is ten times less expensive to prevent homelessness than it is to respond to it. The People's Budget investments will keep people housed, while we work towards long-term solutions to end our housing and affordability crisis. PCUN urges you to vote yes on SB 1530.

Liz Marquez Gutierrez
Policy Manager
PCUN