

HB 3970 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Matthew Perreault

Meeting Dates: 6/2, 6/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to jointly submit recommendations for the Governor's recommended budget regarding adequate funding for youth homelessness services. The measure expands eligibility for emergency housing assistance to individuals and families who are pregnant or have young children. The measure creates grant programs to support co-located substance abuse treatment services, workforce apprenticeship and training programs, and staff retention and training programs for youth homelessness service providers, and it appropriates funds to agencies to administer the grant programs.

Detailed Summary:

Budget Recommendations for Youth Experiencing Homelessness Programs (Section 1)

- Requires ODHS and OHCS to collaborate in recommending sufficient funding to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness when developing the biennial Governor's recommended budget.

Emergency Housing Program Funds (Sections 2 & 6)

- Expands the allowable uses of emergency housing program funds from the Emergency Housing Account to include assistance provided to individuals and their families who are pregnant, are between birth and kindergarten-age, or of an age to be enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12.
- Appropriates \$7.5 million General Fund to OHCS for the 2025-2027 biennium to provide grants to eligible individuals from the Emergency Housing Account.

Youth Substance Use Disorder Treatment Grants (Sections 3 & 7)

- Directs the Oregon Health Authority to administer a grant program for qualified youth substance abuse treatment providers who are co-located in facilities already providing services to youth experiencing homelessness.
- Appropriates \$2 million General Fund to OHA for the 2025-2027 biennium to provide grants to treatment providers.

Behavioral and Mental Health Program (Sections 4 & 8)

- Directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish a behavioral and mental health grant program for local workforce boards to increase accessibility of behavioral and mental health services for youth experiencing homelessness, including through apprenticeship and in-house training.
- Appropriates \$750,000 General Fund to HECC for the 2025-2027 biennium to establish the grant program.

In-house Training Grant Program (Sections 5 & 9)

- Directs HECC to provide grants to local workforce boards to promote staff retention and improve outcomes by supporting in-house training for child-caring agencies and contracted nonprofit organizations that provide services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Appropriates \$1.25 million General Fund to HECC for the 2025-2027 biennium to provide grants to local workforce boards.

Emergency Clause (Section 11)

- Declares emergency, effective on passage.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of the measure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP)

The [Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program](#) (YEHP), administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), provides services and resources aimed to reduce the prevalence of homelessness among youth between the ages of 14 to 24. YEHP primarily operates through grants to local child-caring agencies and nonprofit organization that provide shelters, rent assistance, and various wraparound support services for youth between ages 14 and 24 who are experiencing homelessness. The program has grown in recent years as the legislature has directed additional funding and policy goals. This includes [House Bill 2544 \(2021\)](#), which authorized ODHS to award two-year grants to organizations serving youth who are experiencing homelessness to increase accessibility of programs and services to youth experiencing homelessness, and to create or strengthen partnerships with host home programs and other transitional housing options; and [House Bill 4013 \(2022\)](#), which directed ODHS to include recommendations for legislation to reduce the numbers of youth experiencing homelessness by at least 25 percent over a five-year period, as part of an existing report on the system of services and support for runaway and homeless youth required under [ORS 417.799](#). HB 4013 also required DHS to include estimates of additional funding necessary to implement or extend proposed programs to address youth homelessness as a part of the report, and a projected 20-year estimate of cost savings to the state if the state achieved the 25 percent reduction in youth homelessness.

ODHS released a [report](#) addressing requirements of HB 4013 (2022) in November 2022 as an addendum to the [ORS 417.799 Youth Experiencing Homelessness report](#) submitted in September 2022. Appendix A of the [report](#) contains information on the average cost of services for youth experiencing homelessness and the potential cost avoidance based on the 25-percent reduction in youth homelessness.

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and Youth Emergency Housing Assistance (YEHA)

[ORS 458.650](#) directs the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to administer the Emergency Housing Account to assist specified individuals who are or at risk of becoming homeless through means including the emergency housing assistance program. [House Bill 2001 \(2023\)](#) expanded uses of the Emergency Housing Account funds to include services and assistance to school-aged children or their families experiencing or at the risk of experiencing homelessness. OHCS' [Youth Emergency Housing Assistance program \(YEHA\)](#) provides housing-focused services to enhance family stability and school success. These services include, but are not limited to, rent and utilities, hotel stays, security deposits.