



February 12, 2025

TO: Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf and members of the Joint Committee On
Addiction and Community Safety Response

FROM: Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Jessica Pratt

RE: Support SB 782

Dear Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 782 and to give you a snapshot of the projected statewide budget need for county deflection programs.

County boards of commissioners are the Local Mental Health Authority, with the duty to administer Oregon's mental health policies, provide oversight and accountability for our state-county shared services and ensure coordination between local human services system partners.

Counties partner with the Oregon Health Authority to provide behavioral health services and supports that help our communities thrive and reduce avoidable hospital stays and encounters with law enforcement and the courts.

We are grateful to the Governor for including deflection program funding in her recommended budget, to the Co-Chairs for scheduling this hearing and to Senator Nash and Representative Levy for sponsoring SB 782.

Senate Bill 782 highlights the need to change the funding floor established during the short session to account for a biennium of program operation in counties that received the minimum amount of funding and also the need to increase the

one-year grant amount to *all* participating counties to account for two years of operations and projected actual operational costs.

AOC is in the process of collecting data from all participating counties on the funding needed to maintain current required program operations in 2025-2027 and the funding needed to maintain the full program infrastructure established in the planning and implementation phase.

With 16 counties responding so far, the projected average increase to maintain the minimal infrastructure that satisfies HB 4002 is 223%. For counties that received funding at or near the current funding floor, the average needed percent increase for a biennium of operations is 269%, and for our larger population counties the average needed increase is 209%. This minimal infrastructure is only coordination of local partners (the District Attorney, local law enforcement, local behavioral health and county government), case management and data tracking of program participants, staff training, equipment and supplies and grant administration.

Core operational costs *not* included in this scale up calculation are: needed law enforcement training and short term housing supports to improve unstably-housed participants' ability to comply with deflection requirements. To be clear, law enforcement training and housing supports are allowable expenses and are integral elements of many programs across the state. In order to maintain the integrity of these programs and the outcome data collected by the CJC, these elements will also need to be maintained in the next biennial budget.

Additional deflection program needs identified by responding counties were primarily for a spectrum of shelter and housing supports such as rent assistance, sober living, residential treatment, detox, and Crisis Stabilization Centers.

It is important to note that most, if not all, counties, are only able to offer deflection in very limited areas due to resource constraints.

AOC will continue to collect projected budget needs from the remaining 12 deflection programs and come back to this committee with a sound statewide dollar amount to fund the actual operational costs for all county deflection programs.

We look forward to continuing this conversation with you in the coming weeks. Thank you for partnering with AOC and counties to serve all of Oregon.

Jessica Pratt
Legislative Affairs Manager
Association of Oregon Counties