



VANESSA CORNWALL

Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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DATE: February 24, 2025
TO: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
FROM: Vanessa Cornwall, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Officer
RE: HB 3644, Relating to a Statewide Shelter Program

Dear Chair Marsh, Co-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County has the unique privilege of serving as the regional Community Action Agency, the Homeless Management Information System or HMIS Administrator and the HUD designated Continuum of Care. This means we are the regional coordinator for addressing homelessness and poverty across the community.

Kate Budd, Lane County's Human Services Division Manager, appreciated having a seat in the Shelter Framework Workgroup representing regional coordination. This shelter workgroup created a statewide coordinated emergency shelter north star policy document that identified what will be funded, how it will be funded, and the data needed to demonstrate intended impact. The policy document, which led to House Bill 3644 before you, was created in a collaborative, efficient and focused way, working with a diverse group of representatives. This group paved a stable and inclusive path for ongoing state shelter policy and funding far into the future.

One of the greatest strengths of House Bill 3644 is recognition of the value of a regionally coordinated homeless shelter system. Lane County has over 1,000 emergency shelter beds supported by over 20 different privately and publicly funded agencies. With such a large scope of services it is incredibly important that there be a local entity coordinating and funding across those agencies through a 50-thousand-foot lens.

Another strength of HB3644 is the prioritized focus on progressing equity across the shelter system recognizing the BIPOC population is disproportionately affected by homelessness in Lane County and across Oregon. Creating guidelines and outcomes with equity in mind will strengthen the shelter system across the entire state. Requiring shelters to use coordinated entry and homeless management information System (HMIS) to ensure integration with federal systems and data collection is highly supported. Utilizing helps to ensure there a clear and low-barrier access point for community members to access shelter. Use of the HMIS system make sure unduplicated data can be collected and analyzed for data-driven decision making and planning. Collectively this approach aligns well with the already established regional Continuums of Care within the state.



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As a regional coordinator, the timelines specified in HB3644, including the length of the five to six year regional coordinator agreement and the bi-annual regional plan are reasonable. The indicated time periods take into account the need for long-term stability of leadership to build strong systems and extended length of time any planning process takes when 100's of parties are involved.

Finally, the committee is encouraged to amend the "day and night, seven days a week" requirement for shelters, in order to provide financial support to severe weather shelters. In Lane County severe weather shelters are an integral part of our system, sheltering over 1700 unduplicated individuals across 27 nights this current winter alone. These episodic, pop-up shelters are currently funded with OPSS funding and would lose that source if an amendment were not made.

Appreciation and thanks to all who have been involved in progressing this statewide shelter work and moving this important bill forward.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER