



April 1st, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of prioritizing homelessness and eviction prevention in the state's budget. My name is Hannah Alzgal and I serve as the Housing Justice Policy Coordinator for Unite Oregon. Unite Oregon is a statewide organization led by people of color, immigrants, refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty who are building towards a unified movement for justice. I am writing on behalf of thousands of our members to please maintain Oregon's investments in homelessness prevention and homeless shelters, in line with Governor Kotek's recommended budget:

\$109.7M to prevent evictions and homelessness through emergency rental assistance to Oregon tenants

Over 2,000 families face eviction proceedings every month, with evictions now one-third higher than pre-pandemic levels. With Oregon facing a 140,000-unit housing shortage, over 80% of evictions are because tenants cannot afford the ever-rising cost of rent. Emergency rent assistance for households facing eviction is a lifeline that prevents homelessness and creates stability for our neighbors and our communities.

\$63.5M for essential homelessness prevention services across the state

These funds support housing navigation, landlord-tenant education and outreach, legal services, eviction prevention, and rapid rehousing services.

\$217.9M to maintain the statewide network of state-funded homeless shelters and rehousing services (HB 3644)

Funding will keep shelters open for the next two years, and HB 3644 establishes a standing program that will coordinate shelter funding and strategy going forward.

We know firsthand from our communities that these essential services are desperately needed to create stable living. When we gathered for our annual action summit this past summer, our membership decided on our 2025 legislative priorities and the rising costs of rent ranked number one under their housing concerns. We run a referral system for

those who have tried finding anywhere possible to support them with groceries, rent, medical expenses, school, and other essential costs of living. 75% of all referrals we make are for support with rental assistance to prevent eviction and displacement, with most requests coming from communities of color who are already working full-time.

Oregon's housing supply crisis will take years to resolve. In the meantime, low-income renters face the constant threat of losing their homes as rents continue to climb. Rent assistance, homelessness prevention services, and the shelter network must be part of Oregon's 2025-2027 budget, in order to maintain the homes, the stability, and the very lives of thousands of our neighbors who would otherwise face eviction and homelessness.

Sincerely,
Hannah Alzgal, Housing Justice Policy Coordinator
Unite Oregon