



**Re: Support for POPs 501 (Shelter); 502 (Re-Housing) and 504 and 505 (Homelessness Prevention Resources) in the OHCS Budget**

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Katie O'Brien, and I am the executive director at Rose Haven, a day shelter in Portland, OR serving more than 4,000 women, children, trans and non-binary people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

I am writing in strong support of Policy Option Packages 501, 502, 504 and 505, the Homelessness Shelter, Re-Housing, and Prevention Packages in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These POPs will ensure continuity of emergency rent assistance and community-based and culturally specific services designed to prioritize prevention of eviction and homelessness in communities across the state, as well as continuity of shelter and re-housing services and supports.

While Rose Haven is not reliant on government funding, we assist thousands of Oregonians each year in navigating resources for shelter, housing and homelessness prevention. Today's resources help many and still do not meet current need; the idea of providing less support is daunting. It will have a direct effect on lives of people we serve, leading to more unsheltered homelessness in our communities, and more trauma for Oregonians who are struggling.

With one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness in the nation, and the highest rate of youth homelessness, Oregon must prioritize funding to strengthen our network of shelter, rehousing assistance, and responsive and supportive services to help our neighbors who have been forced by our housing crisis to live outside.

And we must ensure that prevention resources, including emergency rent assistance, legal assistance, and supportive services, are adequate to prevent more people from falling into homelessness in the first place.

**Please support:**

**Policy Option Package 501: Please maintain shelter and supportive services operations.** The ongoing shelter system is critical to providing stability and shelter during extreme weather conditions. Services connect vulnerable populations to vital services that help them transition into stable housing. **\$217 Million**



**Policy Option Package 502: Please support re-housing supports.** This program provides up to 2 years rental assistance and supports to help people find housing and re-establish stability after experiencing homelessness. **\$188 Million**

**Policy Option Packages 504/505: Please replenish funding for proven eviction prevention programs** provided by local community organizations that understand local needs, including community action agencies and culturally specific service providers. **\$173.2 Million**

1. **Emergency rent assistance to prevent homelessness: \$109 Million** is the minimum amount of rent assistance necessary to prevent evictions over the next two years. These funds are distributed by community action agencies and community-based and trusted organizations across the state.
2. **Homelessness prevention services: \$63.2 Million** to support housing navigation services, landlord tenant education and outreach, legal services, tenant supports, eviction prevention, tenant advocacy, and rapid rehousing services for tenants who get displaced.

Continuing these programs will save lives. Rose Haven works closely with marginalized community members, and we know firsthand these how critical this funding is to our guests. We can't afford to wait. Our lawmakers must act now to protect our communities, support our providers, and ensure every Oregonian has a stable framework to build their future.

We urge your strong support of these Policy Option Packages. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Katie O'Brien, Rose Haven