



Sybil Hebb
Director of Legislative Advocacy
621 SW Morrison, Suite 1450
Portland, OR 97205
P: 503.936.8959
shebb@oregonlawcenter.org

**Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony in Support of HB 5006 and Policy Option Packages 504 and 505 in OHCS Budget
April 16th, 2025**

Re: Support for Homelessness Prevention Resources in the OHCS Budget (HB 5011 and POPs 504 and 505)

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

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, I am writing in strong support of Policy Option Packages 504 and 505, the Homelessness Prevention Package in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These POPs will allocate \$173.2 million to ensure continuity of emergency rent assistance and community-based services designed to prioritize prevention of eviction and homelessness across the state.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Helping families maintain safe, stable housing is a critical part of our work. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy. As vacancy rates have plummeted and housing has become less and less affordable across the state, our clients have increasingly struggled to maintain stability for themselves and their children.

When asking our client communities about their biggest concerns for themselves and their families, the threat of homelessness and losing their housing stability is far and away the biggest fear. This fear is based in reality - in 2024, there were more than 2,000 eviction filings every month. Every filing represents an Oregon household, a family on the brink of losing everything. This rate is more than a third higher than pre-pandemic levels, and shows no sign of slowing down.

In almost every community across the state, Oregonians are rent-burdened and vacancy rates are extremely low. Affordable housing is disproportionately difficult to find and maintain for communities of color, single women with children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Households with children are [twice as likely](#) to face an eviction threat as other households, and Oregon has the nation's [highest rate](#) of unsheltered child homelessness. A recent Harvard study found that the sudden loss of a home due to eviction is not only a risk associated with poverty, but is a [cause of poverty](#).

Solving our homelessness crisis is deeply challenging, but it is not impossible. There are evidence-based prevention solutions already in place to keep thousands of families, seniors, and hard-working Oregonians out of homelessness. **Connecting people to eviction protection and homelessness prevention services such as navigation services and legal assistance is a proven**

The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.



Sybil Hebb
Director of Legislative Advocacy
621 SW Morrison, Suite 1450
Portland, OR 97205
P: 503.936.8959
shebb@oregonlawcenter.org

approach to ensure people can stay housed. When we can prevent evictions, we can turn off the pipeline into homelessness.

Preventing eviction is 5–10 times cheaper than letting someone fall into homelessness and trying to rehouse them later. Beyond cost, prevention also avoids trauma, job loss, school disruption, and health risks that come with homelessness.

We urge you to prioritize the critical and proven safety net continued by POPS 504 and 505. Please invest \$173.2 million to continue homelessness prevention and eviction intervention services and legal assistance, which are making a difference for thousands of Oregonians and stemming the tide of homelessness in our communities.

Our lawmakers must act now to protect our communities, support our providers, and ensure every Oregonian has a stable framework to build their future.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.