

Submitter: Lynn Hager
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

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:

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.

Cuts to any of these programs will lead to more unsheltered homelessness in our communities, and more trauma for Oregonians who are struggling. Continuing these programs will save lives and support communities.

My family has lived in Oregon for decades and we are struggling to remain stable in our current barely affordable housing. We are worried about the many kids at our 13 year old son's school that are housing unstable or homeless. This number grows every year along with the tents on our NW PDX Street. We are one illness or job loss from not being able to afford our rent and worry we will have to move yet again, upending our son's life to be able to afford housing, groceries, and his insulin for his Type One Diabetes. I work in the mental health field and hear stories like mine every day. My clients are despondent, especially as home prices rise and wages remain the same.

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

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.

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.

Thank you for your time,
Lynn Hager, LCSW