



Preventing and ending homelessness with the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program

We can help prevent and end homelessness. The Legislature should commit \$50 million this biennium for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program to impact thousands of families and take a stride forward in meeting the needs of people with housing instability.

Oregonians are tough, resilient and driven. When provided an opportunity we are able to get back on our feet, and it all starts at home. Home is where hope and growth take root. Safe, stable, and affordable homes improve health, increase safety, grow local economies, and help kids succeed in school.

Often times Oregon families experiencing homelessness need a temporary bridge to a brighter future. When escaping an abusive relationship we need a place to get back on our feet and make a plan – emergency shelters are that place. When we suffer a temporary job loss and have to choose between paying the grocery bill or the rent – emergency rent assistance can help fill a gap. Or when applying for multiple apartments, all with \$30 to \$50 per person application fees, additional assistance can be the difference we need to provide stability for our children.

The economic recovery has not reached everyone. Tens of thousands of Oregonians experienced homelessness in the last school year—over 21,000 of them were school-aged children, a record level. 1,120 of those kids lived in Salem, 1,382 in Beaverton, 1,364 in Medford. Nearly one in seven students in Lincoln County had no stable home at some point during the year. Students in small towns and rural communities face the highest rates of homelessness.

The Legislature should act to ensure a base level of funding of \$50 million for the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) this year. EHA is a flexible tool to provide short-term assistance to prevent and end homelessness, and SHAP is used to provide emergency shelter.

EHA and SHAP are critical and effective programs that help community members remain in stable homes and are foundational to our state's success. EHA and SHAP are allocated to community partners in all counties in the state by formula to help fill the gaps that community agencies and volunteers can't, and meet the most pressing needs in each community.

When every Oregonian is able to tap into their deep well of ingenuity we all are better off. Homes provide everyone with an opportunity to succeed in life. To prevent and end homelessness for Oregonians we need additional resources. The Legislature has an opportunity to make an immediate improvement in housing opportunity in every part of Oregon by expanding funding for EHA and SHAP this year.