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OHCS and ODHS partner to support youth experiencing homelessness

(Salem) - Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) recently completed a \$9 million interagency funds transfer to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self-Sufficiency Programs, Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program to support the housing needs of young people across Oregon.

The ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program is tasked with coordinating statewide planning for delivery of services to youth experiencing homelessness under the age of 25. It partners with impacted youth, community organizations and other state agencies to support and fund initiatives and programs within the youth homelessness system.

ODHS will use the \$9 million to support local programs across the state, as well as newer initiatives and supports for youth experiencing homelessness across Oregon by investing in:

- Prevention
- Crisis and long-term interventions
- Youth specific housing initiatives
- Direct cash implementation support
- Job and life skills training
- Wrap around supports
- Host home programs that provide temporary housing for youth

The investment will also support [College Housing Northwest's Affordable Rents for College Students program \(ARCS\)](#), which pays rent for up to one year for 25 college students experiencing homelessness. In addition to housing, each student in the program will receive case management services through New Avenues for Youth and Native American Youth Association that will support them and help them connect with other services they need to thrive and reach their full potential. It also solidifies an agreement between ODHS and ARCS that holds up to 21 housing units specifically for youth at an affordable rate for 25 years.

This type of innovative housing partnership is possible thanks to the interagency funds transfer.

"In Oregon, we do not accept homelessness as a fact of life and the reality is far too many of our youth are living outside as well as in unstable or undesirable situations," said OHCS Director Andrea Bell. "The magnitude of this issue requires our state agencies and local community leaders to bring solutions to the table—it is our collective responsibility to come together and solve the issues facing youth in Oregon. Our investment in supporting young people who are experiencing homelessness is just a small way we can assist in this critical work."

"We all have an interest in a community in which young people have access to stable and safe housing so that they can pursue their life's goals and reach their full potential," said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht. "A young person's experience with homelessness does not always follow a linear path and the supports available to them need to be flexible to meet and support them where they are. It is our responsibility as a community to come together to support young people and provide housing opportunities. When we do this, we will give them the stability and safety they need to learn and grow and help our community thrive. Intentional partnership between state agencies can go a long way when used creatively and this investment will do just that."

In 2021, [ODHS completed the state's first needs assessment](#) focused on youth experiencing homelessness. The assessment estimated that there are over 8,200 unhoused individuals under 25 who are likely to need safe, affordable housing and services to maintain stability. Long-term housing was identified as one of the greatest needs, and based on the assessment, an estimated system cost to meet the need would total approximately \$154 million.

About the Oregon Department of Human Services

The mission of the Oregon Department of Human Services is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

About Oregon Housing and Community Services

Oregon Housing and Community Services provides resources for Oregonians to reduce poverty and increase access to stable housing. Our intentional focus on both housing and community services allows us to serve Oregonians holistically across the housing continuum, including preventing and ending homelessness, assisting with utilities, providing housing stability support, financing multifamily affordable housing and encouraging homeownership.