

Next Up Action Fund
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February 13, 2024
RE: Support SB 1530, Rent Assistance Funding

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee:

My name is Isabela Villarreal and I am the Policy and Communications Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our organization has been around since 2002, and our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We're an organization led by and working with predominantly Black, Indigenous, and youth of color, disabled, low-income, and LGBTQ+ youth, and we work towards ensuring they have stability, opportunity, and the freedom to thrive. Accordingly, we need to ensure adequate investments in rental assistance and eviction prevention are being made to prevent homelessness in Oregon, and SB 1530 is the direction we need to go.

With a sharp spike in high-rent homelessness, it's urgent that you invest in proven prevention strategies that keep Oregonians housed. At current levels of need, the funds previously allocated will be gone by July 2024. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in Fair Shot's People's Budget which has had a proven track record of keeping working Oregonians safe and stable.

Altogether, this package calls for:

- \$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations.
- \$6.5 million to the Urban League of Oregon for culturally specific housing stability services.
- \$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services for immigrant Oregonians.
- \$2 million for outreach services for residents of expiring affordable housing units.

86% of eviction filings are for nonpayment, against people who have fallen behind on their rent. There are close to 2000 eviction filings a month. The availability of rent assistance for tenants in the critical time of need will help ensure that landlords get paid, evictions are avoided, and most importantly, Oregonians stay housed.

Hardworking Oregonians are struggling to make ends meet, facing eviction and homelessness as a result. It is ten times less expensive to prevent homelessness than it is to respond to it. The People's Budget investments will keep people housed, while we work towards long-term solutions to end our housing and affordability crisis.

Please pass SB 1530 in order to ensure that our communities have the resources they need to retain housing, and have a secure present and future.

Sincerely,

Isabela Villarreal
Policy and Communications Director
Next Up Action Fund