



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

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Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development



The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) urges you to support Senate Bill 814. The bill came from work on the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness and has three main focus areas related to the Long Term Rental Assistance Program at Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS):

- A technical fix to ensure that youth who were in OYA placements and facilities are eligible for the program.
- An expansion of program eligibility to youth at risk of becoming homeless to allow service options further upstream to prevent homelessness.
- Bring OYA officially to the table with OHCS, other state agencies, and partners to assist in the planning of program funds.

At least 14% of youth who were committed to OYA since October 2022 have already experienced some period of homelessness. And 100% of youth who leave OYA custody have a criminal record and very few, if any, have a rental history. Those factors put justice involved youth at increased risk for housing instability and homelessness. Studies show that unstable housing increases the risk for recidivism for individuals already involved in the justice system.

(Citation: [Why Housing Matters for Successful Reentry and Public Safety | HUD USER](#))

The period of transition out of a state system is a challenging time, and having sustainable housing allows a young person to focus on other stabilizing actions such as full-time employment, healthcare needs, and prosocial activities. The technical fix and the clarifications in the bill will reduce some of the inherent risk at the point of transition for youth when their commitment to OYA ends. If they are more stable, with sustainable housing as the foundation, they are more likely to connect and stay with jobs, education and positive community connections, which increases public safety.

Please support SB 814 to help the Long Term Rental Assistance program be more responsive to the needs of OYA youth.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Martin
Legislative Coordinator