



Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic
Development
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

March 28, 2025

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, and Members of the Subcommittee:

SETA is a non-profit, public service organization dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide free community resources, including our free Tenant Hotline, and we directly serve about 240 renter households every month through combinations of several programs.

SETA is writing in strong support of Policy Option Packages 501, 502, and 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.

Homelessness prevention is the crux of our work, the primary reason we exist as an organization. SETA works with our local communities in whatever capacity we are able to - all people across ideology, income levels, demographics, housing status, and any other identity. **Linked here** is our Hotline data report which showcases that the top reasons renters reach out to us is related to housing affordability and seeking rent assistance.

Oregon renters are the 5th most cost burdened in the nation, and our eviction crisis is growing with more than 27,000 cases filed last year. Approximately 88% of evictions are because tenants cannot afford Oregon's high rents. As housing costs rise, more families are being pushed into crisis. Oregon families are on the brink, and we must act now with real solutions to prevent homelessness.

With one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness in the nation, and the highest rate of youth homelessness, we must also prioritize funding to strengthen our network of shelter, rehousing assistance, and responsive and supportive services to help our neighbors forced to live outside because they have no place else to go.

The impacts of our state's housing crisis fall hardest on specific populations:



- Families with children facing impossible choices between rent and other basic needs;
- Black and Latine renters who encounter discriminatory barriers to securing and keeping housing;
- Elderly Oregonians, who are the fastest-growing group losing their homes.

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

1. **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.
2. **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.

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**

Renters of all demographics will die without financial support, homelessness prevention, and shelter supports. As the State of Oregon looks to the future investments of housing development, we cannot do so while sacrificing the tenants today.

We can't afford to wait. High rents are pushing more and more families into crisis. Our lawmakers must act now to protect our communities, support our providers, and ensure every Oregonian has a stable framework to build their future.



We urge your strong support of these Policy Option Packages. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

If you'd like to connect with me, please reach out to

tmorris@springfieldeugenetenantassociation.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Timothy Morris
Executive Director
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association