



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 22, 2021

House Committee on Human Services  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Williams, Vice Chair Leif, Vice Chair Ruiz, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2544, which would authorize grants to organizations that provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that already, too many seniors, families, and people who experience disabilities were paying too much of their income towards rent, and were experiencing other forms of housing instability. Today, we know that too many young Oregonians are experiencing housing instability, and for children who are in the foster care system, the transition to adulthood can be difficult. Many foster youth face barriers to renting their own apartment after transitioning out of care, including the increasing cost of housing across our state. In addition, youth face several specific barriers including a lack of rental history, and no one to co-sign for their first lease to build that history. They may also need support to learn the life skills necessary to live independently.

The figures detailing the rate of unaccompanied homeless youth in the State of Oregon are the bleakest in the entire country. With the highest rate of youth houselessness in the country, Oregon saw roughly 3,700 unaccompanied houseless K-12 youth in the 2018-19 school year. Of those homeless youth, 51% were youth of color, up to 40% identified as LGBTQIA+, up to 60% experienced some form of abuse in one of their former homes. Nationally, Black students are 2.67 times<sup>1</sup> more likely to experience homelessness as their white counterparts.

The effects of the last recession foreshadow what is likely to come as a result of the economic fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic. During the Great Recession, the State of Oregon saw a 32% rise in homeless youth, undoubtedly caused by increased financial distress among families, as well as a rise in violence and abuse within a family.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/YOC-HCYA.pdf>.

**Contacts:** Alison McIntosh, amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org; (503) 816-2882  
Loren Naldoza, laldoza@neighborhoodpartnerships.org; (503)226-3001 x104  
[www.oregonhousingalliance.org](http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org)

HB 2544 would work to address the high rates of youth homelessness in Oregon by creating an “unaccompanied homeless youth services enhancement grant program.” This program would disburse \$2 million in two-year grants to organizations that provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth, and \$2.4 million to host-home projects. Grants made under HB 2544 would go to organizations that have a track record of providing assistance to unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, including shelter facilities, mental health clinics, and culturally specific and culturally relevant organizations.

Organizations across Oregon stand ready to assist youth in transitioning to adulthood and accessing career and educational opportunities, finding safety, and receiving the support they need, but not without your help. We urge you to support HB 2544, and secure critical funding for Oregon’s youth.

Sincerely,

Loren Naldoza  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

**Contacts:** Alison McIntosh, [amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org](mailto:amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org); (503) 816-2882  
Loren Naldoza, [lnaldoza@neighborhoodpartnerships.org](mailto:lnaldoza@neighborhoodpartnerships.org); (503) 226-3001 x104  
[www.oregonhousingalliance.org](http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org)

## Housing Alliance Members

*1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
Business for a Better Portland  
CASA of Oregon  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Clackamas County  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
College Housing Northwest  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Action Team  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Development Partners  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
DevNW  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Home Forward  
Homes for Good  
Housing Authorities of Oregon  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Housing Oregon  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization*

*Impact Northwest  
Innovative Housing, Inc.  
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty  
JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Oregon Cities  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Looking Glass Community Services  
Mainstream Housing Inc.  
Metro  
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority  
NAYA Family Center  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Our Children Oregon  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC Oregon)  
Rogue Action Center  
Rose CDC  
St. Francis Shelter  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Think Real Estate  
Transition Projects  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition*

**Contacts:** Alison McIntosh, [amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org](mailto:amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org); (503) 816-2882

Loren Naldoza, [lnaldoza@neighborhoodpartnerships.org](mailto:lnaldoza@neighborhoodpartnerships.org); (503) 226-3001 x104

[www.oregonhousingalliance.org](http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org)