

# State of Oregon

## Homelessness Response Framework

### Background

Oregonians in every part of the state have been clear: our state is in crisis and demands urgent action. According to the 2023 Point in Time Count, approximately 20,000 people are experiencing homelessness across the State of Oregon, and this is likely an undercount. Since her inauguration on January 10, 2023, Governor Kotek has taken bold steps to meaningfully prevent and reduce homelessness across the State of Oregon. She has:

- Declared and is successfully implementing a Homelessness State of Emergency:
  - [Set and exceeded specific goals](#) in the first year of her administration to rapidly expand the state's low-barrier emergency shelter system, rehouse people experiencing homelessness, and prevent people from becoming homeless statewide;
  - Built an emergency response infrastructure to meaningfully reduce homelessness across Oregon; and,
  - Renewed the homelessness state of emergency for another year with new goals to maintain an outcomes focused homelessness emergency response and begin to plan for a recovery phase so the state can continue to meaningfully reduce homelessness even after the state of emergency has ended.
- Directed outcomes-oriented implementation of \$500 million invested to reduce homelessness during the 2023-2025 legislative session:
  - Worked with the legislature and partners to secure \$500 million across the 23/25 biennium to reduce homelessness; and,
  - At the end of the biennium, the Governor's Office will report on the outcomes achieved with these \$500 million.
- Improved the State of Oregon's delivery of homelessness funding:
  - [Evaluated all state homelessness](#) programs to identify opportunities to improve and coordinate the state's delivery of homelessness and housing funding; and,
  - Refreshed the inter-agency council on homelessness to drive improvements to the state's delivery of homeless services in a coordinated way that breaks down unnecessary silos in state government.

## Strategic Pillars (2024)

Through the implementation of the homelessness state of emergency, legislative investments to reduce homelessness, and the Governor's Office evaluation of all state homelessness programs, the Governor has refined and expanded her homelessness initiatives. Across all these initiatives, the State of Oregon will:

- **Outcomes:** Set clear outcomes and goals to reduce homelessness, and transparently report on progress towards those goals at the end of the biennium;
- **Racial Equity:** Center racial equity by evaluating outcomes by race and ethnicity, and by adjusting program and budget implementation to improve outcomes;
- **Administrative Improvements:** Reduce unnecessary administrative burden for partners delivering homeless services;
- **Population-Specific Action Plans:** Develop and implement population specific plans to improve housing outcomes for youth, and people exiting carceral settings;
- **Tribal Sovereignty:** Across all strategic pillars, consult and collaborate with the nine federally recognized and sovereign tribes in Oregon; and,
- **Coordination:** Across all strategic pillars, break down silos in State government, coordinate across relevant agencies, and coordinate with local and regional partners to maximize homelessness reduction.

### Pillar 1. Statewide Homelessness Outcomes

The Governor's Office will convene partners, including different levels of government, to align how we are defining and reporting homelessness outcomes to increase transparency about outcomes being achieved statewide, regardless of the funding source. In addition, the Governor's Office will work with state agencies to expand the outcomes-oriented focus of the homelessness emergency to all state funded homelessness programs so the State of Oregon can transparently establish goals at the beginning of each budget cycle, and report on the outcomes achieved with state resources by:

- A. Aligning how outcomes are defined (cross-jurisdictional): The Governor's Office will work with jurisdictional partners at the local and regional level to make sure we are defining key outcomes (shelter capacity, re-housing, and homelessness prevention) in the same way;
- B. Reporting statewide outcomes (cross-jurisdictional): The Governor's Office will convene a conversation with jurisdictional partners to explore how we can collaborate on reporting equity focused homelessness outcomes associated with local, regional, and state resources to increase public transparency about the impact of the homelessness response system statewide;
- C. Setting outcomes for state investments (2023/25 biennium): The Governor's Office will report on the goals and outcomes achieved with all homelessness resources invested this

biennium to expand the outcomes-oriented and equity focus of the homelessness emergency across state homelessness programs;

- D. Outcomes-oriented budget development (25/27): The Governor’s Office and OHCS will work with partners to develop the Governor’s Recommended Budget (GRB) for housing and homelessness to make certain we do not lose ground on the state homelessness response. To achieve this, the Governor’s Office and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) will work with partners to determine the “current service level” budget of state funded homeless services in the state, the associated outcomes of those investments, and the specific impacts if they are not maintained. Any new programs or program expansions that may be included in the GRB will have clear associated outcomes;
- E. Data collection improvements: The State of Oregon will explore creating a standardized practice of consistent data collection, storage, and analysis for state programs serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to improve data quality and reporting reliability related to homelessness outcomes, including establishing a coordinated data infrastructure to deliver on outcome reporting, tracking and coordinated data analysis;
- F. Data sharing improvements: The State of Oregon will set up infrastructure and data-sharing agreements between primary state agencies working to reduce homelessness (OHCS, OHA, and ODHS) to support reliable and community informed data analysis and data-informed decision making in a way that protects personally identifiable information (PII); and,
- G. Culturally specific provider capacity: Culturally specific providers are critical partners in advancing equitable outcomes in Oregon. In addition to implementation of the culturally responsive organization set asides in core homelessness programs, the Governor’s Office will develop recommendations to support the capacity building of culturally specific organizations (CSOs) to administer state homelessness programs funded by the 25/27 budget.

## **Pillar 2. Core Program Improvements**

### Shelter and Transitional Housing

This project will work to stabilize and improve the state’s emergency shelter and transitional housing systems which are critical infrastructure to serve people experiencing homelessness by:

- A. Maintain operations of shelter beds created and supported by the state via the homelessness state of emergency and other state investments allocated by the legislature to prevent shelter closure during the 2023-25 biennium;
- B. Developing a program framework to create a housing focused state shelter program. This program framework should increase transparency in the system and reduce administrative burden of providers currently braiding multiple state funding sources to operate existing shelters. The program development process should explore different levels of funding for different levels of services, including a strategy to connect people exiting state institutions with state-funded shelter and/or transitional housing, including assessing

feasibility of including the category of recovery housing, and track housing focused outcomes; and,

- C. Assessing current geographic and population specific inequities in the emergency shelter and transitional housing systems to inform potential legislative action to increase shelter and transitional housing capacity.

### Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

This project will work to stabilize and improve the state's permanent supportive housing system, which is a housing type intended to serve people who have experienced or are at risk of chronic homelessness, by:

- A. Working with other public funders of permanent supportive housing to align key outcome metrics for PSH;
- B. Developing a program framework to create a tiered permanent supportive housing program at the state that provides different levels of funding for different levels of services, explores scattered site PSH opportunities, includes a strategy to connect people exiting state institutions with state-funded supportive housing, tracks housing retention outcomes, and improves the process of connecting people with the type of PSH that is most in alignment with their needs, including culturally specific PSH. This program framework should also explore an integrated behavioral health PSH model as one of the program tiers that is a true step down from licensed behavioral health settings. Finally, the program framework should explore alignment of potentially overlapping state programs (PSH and behavioral health housing); and,
- C. Assessing current geographic and population specific inequities in the supportive housing systems to inform potential administration of additional supportive housing resources allocated by the legislature for the 25/27 biennium.

### Re-housing

This project will build on the state's first re-housing program administered by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to serve two key subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness more effectively by:

- A. Creating the two following distinct re-housing programs:
  - People experiencing chronic homelessness: Support local coordination of the homeless services, behavioral health, and health care systems to provide needed wrap around services to people experiencing chronic homelessness; and,
  - People experiencing short-term/economic homelessness: Support local coordination of workforce employment boards and homeless services system, including employment supports as an eligible use to help reduce the risk that a short experience of homelessness will become chronic.

### **Pillar 3. Population Specific Action Plans**

These population specific action plans align with broad populations served by the state across various systems of care and institutional settings. Within these populations, there is immense

diversity, and it will be necessary to have culturally specific strategies to effectively improve the housing outcomes of lgbtqia+ people, Black and brown people, and Indigenous, Native American, American Indian, or tribal people. Separately, all aspects of these initiatives will be informed by tribal consultation, recognizing the sovereignty of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon.

### Youth

This project will strengthen programs serving youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including improving the housing outcomes of youth who are transitioning out of state institutions or systems of care by:

- A. Creating equitable housing outcomes for programs serving youth and families with children;
- B. Analyzing existing release practices and exits from state youth programs or facilities to inform recommendations to change release practices to improve housing outcomes;
- C. Develop a method and coordinated standards for tracking housing outcomes for youth exiting or transitioning out of state carceral settings or aging out of foster care, which may include any necessary coordination with local or regional entities for data collection and data governance, collection, and reporting on housing outcomes;
- D. Implementing a “housing plan” as part of transition procedures for each youth exiting state institutional settings or aging out of foster care;
- E. Developing a plan to improve housing outcomes of youth transitioning out of state institutional settings, which may include changes to release practices, changes to release policies;
- F. Developing a plan to improve housing outcomes of youth transitioning or aging out of foster care which may include changes to program practices and/or policies; and,
- G. Maintaining the on-going services funded through youth programs administered during the 23/25 biennium, including Emergency Housing Account (EHA) for youth, youth experiencing homelessness program (YEHP), long term rental assistance for youth (RAY). Explore aligning potentially duplicative elements of these youth focused programs; and,

### Adults exiting the criminal justice system

This project will improve the housing outcomes of adults exiting the criminal justice system by:

- A. Creating equitable housing outcomes for adults exiting the criminal justice system;
- B. Establish a method and coordinated standards for tracking housing outcomes for adults transitioning out of the criminal justice system, which may include any necessary coordination with local or regional entities for data collection;
- C. Analyzing existing release practices and exits from carceral settings or facilities to inform recommendations to change release practices to improve housing outcomes;
- D. Implementing a “housing plan,” which would explore viable housing opportunities ahead of release or discharge as part of release procedures for each adult exiting the criminal justice system;

- E. Developing a plan to improve housing outcomes of people exiting the criminal justice system which may include additional changes to release practices, changes to release policies; and,
- F. Explore changes to the “Valid with Previous Photo” program to allow for DMV to issue IDs with current photo or to provide other opportunities for an updated photo to adults exiting the criminal justice system immediately upon release or discharge to reduce barriers to accessing housing.

### Veterans

This project will improve the housing outcomes of the veteran population by:

- A. Assessing who is eligible for veteran services funded through either federal or state sources, if veteran status is defined differently across state programs, and if eligibility requirements preclude participation in any of the ODVA-administered programs;
- B. Explore expanding the ODVA Incarcerated Veterans services to additional ODOC facilities, including anticipated housing outcomes associated with the recommended investment level;
- C. Assess the feasibility of tracking housing outcomes and connections to other state and federal veterans’ benefits for veterans housed in state-funded housing;
- D. Develop a plan to include set-asides for veterans, including women, LGBTQIA+, and formerly incarcerated veterans, in state-funded shelters or housing.
- E. Explore a program that provides one-time funding or grants to incarcerated veterans prior to release with existing housing related debt to reduce barriers to accessing housing and improve housing outcomes; and,
- F. Analyze existing successful veteran permanent supportive housing and transitional housing to inform the development of a veteran specific strategy within the permanent supportive housing program framework above.

### **Pillar 4. Cross System Alignment**

#### People experiencing homelessness on state owned or managed property

This project will result in consistent policies and practices related to people experiencing homelessness on state owned or managed properties to improve connections to homeless services and housing by:

- A. Developing a framework for consistent policies and practices across state agencies that own or manage land regarding how to connect people engaging in survival activities on the land or property to services such as housing, navigation, or street outreach.

#### Behavioral health, health and housing, and homelessness systems alignment

This project will support system-wide integration of behavioral health, health, and homelessness systems by:

- A. Analyzing the status quo of state contract requirements of Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) and Community Mental Health Programs (CMHPs) to understand current requirements to provide health and behavioral health services to people experiencing homelessness where they are in the housing to homelessness continuum;
- B. Analyzing the status quo of CCO, CMHP, and Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) practices to identify promising practices to support expansion of provision of health and behavioral health services to people experiencing homelessness where they are in the homelessness to housing continuum;
- C. Analyze best practices of local and national strategies that maximize billable services to provide health and behavioral health services to people experiencing homelessness where they are on the homelessness to housing continuum;
- D. As part of the homelessness state of emergency (EO 24-02), working with multi agency coordinating groups (MACs) that we stood up as homelessness response infrastructure to identify high priority shelters or transitional housing to pilot enhanced coordination with CCOs for the purpose of providing health and behavioral health services on site (e.g., medical respite model). Identify how those supports and services can be paid for, including exploring how to maximize Medicaid reimbursement; and,
- E. As part of the Homelessness State of Emergency (EO 24-02) implementation, develop a Behavioral Health and Homelessness pilot to support local alignment of behavioral health and homeless services to support re-housing households with behavioral health needs.