



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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Department of Human Services Report to the Legislature on Runaway and Homeless Youth Oregon Revised Statute 417.799

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is submitting this report to the legislative committees on child welfare in accordance with ORS 417.799 Runaway and Homeless Youth.

This report is intended to provide a status of the system of services and supports DHS has developed for runaway and homeless youth and share the advice and information the advisory committee has provided to DHS. The report will also highlight program updates and success stories.

Program Overview

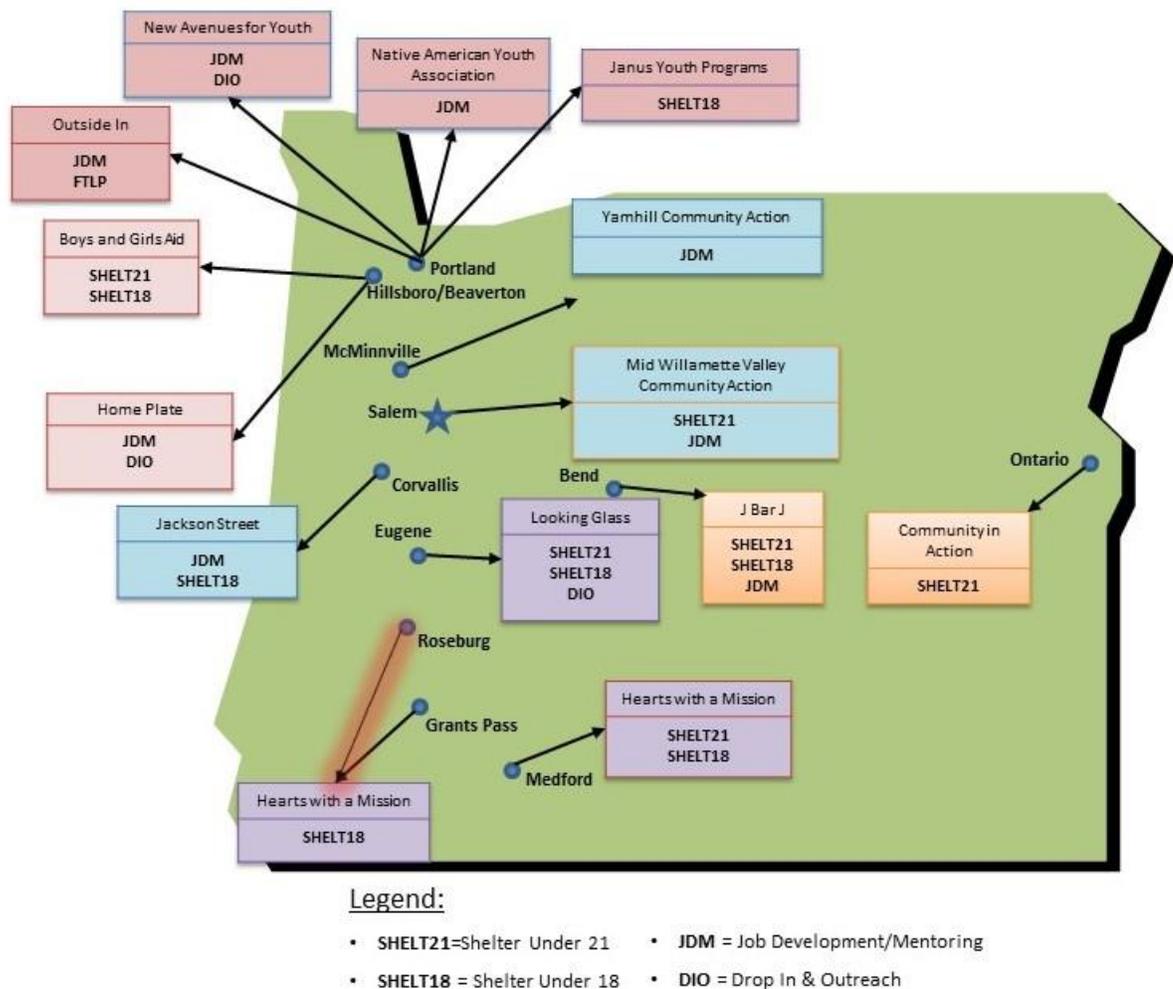
Oregon's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program began under the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) in 2005, however OCCF was abolished in 2011 and the responsibility for the coordination and delivery of services to runaway and homeless youth was transferred to DHS.

In 2015, the legislature directed DHS to enhance services for runaway and homeless youth, appoint an advisory committee and begin making annual reports related to the program. In 2018 DHS transferred the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHY Program) from the Child Welfare Program to the Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP), where it is still located.

The 2019-2021 budget for the RHY Program is roughly \$3.154 million. RHY services fall into three categories and are provided by 13 unique providers through 24 grants. The service categories are below:

- Overnight shelter services
 - Serving unaccompanied minors 18 years old and under
 - Serving unaccompanied minors and young adults up to age 21
- Drop in day facilities and outreach services
- Job development & mentoring services

The map below illustrates the availability of RHY services throughout Oregon, provides the name of grantees, and specifies which services they provide:



Homeless Youth Advisory Council

The Homeless Youth Advisory Council (HYAC) is charged with advising DHS regarding policies and procedures that address statewide planning for the delivery of services to runaway and homeless youth and their families. HYAC holds meetings every other month and both agendas and meeting minutes can be found [here](#)¹.

In December 2019, the HYAC reviewed and finalized several documents including the [HYAC Charter](#) and the [HYAC Strategic Action Plan to Build a Statewide Services System](#). The action plan captures the advice and actions that HYAC feel are needed to enhance RHY services in Oregon.

In December 2019, the HYAC began planning a one-day symposium which will occur in March 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the symposium will be to

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/CHILDREN/Homeless-Youth/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

analyze available services, identify service gaps, encourage collaboration in local plans and educate providers and partners on the needs of runaway and homeless youth.

The current membership of the HYAC is below:

Agency / Representation	Member Name
Beaverton School District – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison	Lisa Mentasana
Boys and Girls Aid/Oregon Alliance for Children’s Programs	Vera Stoulil (Co-Chair)
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Second Home Initiative – Director	Jennifer Pratt
Hearts with a Mission – Executive Director	Kevin Lamson
Higher Education Coordinating Commission – Community Colleges and Workforce Development	Jennifer Denning
Home Plate Youth – Executive Director	Bridget Calfee
Maslow Project – Executive Director	Mary Ferrell
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	Tricia Frizell
Oregon Alliance	Royce Bowlin
Oregon Department of Education – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program	Dona Bolt
Oregon Department of Education – Youth Development Council	Cord Bueker
Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Abuse Hotline / Sex Trafficking	Jamie Broadbend
Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Welfare Program	Adrienne Clark
Oregon Department of Human Services – Self-Sufficiency Programs	Matt Rasmussen (Co-Chair)
Oregon Health Authority – Health Systems Division: Young Adult Services	Lev Schneidman
Oregon Health Authority – School Mental Health Specialist	Mikah Rotman
Oregon Housing and Community Services	Connor McDonnell
Oregon Youth Authority	Emilly Charles

Program Update

Understanding Oregon’s Homeless Youth Population

Estimating the size of Oregon’s homeless youth population is challenging and there is not a state-wide data collection system or reporting mechanism. RHY has engaged in two efforts to help address this issue: joining the Oregon Housing & Community Services (OHCS) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) review team and the statewide homeless youth services and housing assessment.

The OHCS HMIS review team resulted from a 2019 budget note and RHY joined in an effort to support Oregon in achieving better data collection for homeless populations. The budget note requires OHCS to inform the legislature of options for implementing a statewide HMIS capable of tracking outcome data for homeless individuals.

The RHY program entered into a grant agreement with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) for assistance with the following:

- Conducting a statewide needs assessment of the continuum of housing and service needs for youth experiencing homelessness, including existing interventions, utilization, and gaps via a proposed regional system modeling;
- Providing recommendations and a roadmap for building the optimal system for young adults experiencing homelessness in Oregon, including financial modeling for additional housing and services interventions across the continuum.

CSH is a leader in the youth homelessness world, as they provide technical assistance for a variety of initiatives – including the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). They are currently working with Oregon’s first and only YHDP recipient, Clackamas County. They have worked with other recipients in the past, including the State of Washington’s Office of Homeless Youth and their Balance of State Continuum of Care.

CSH will deliver a comprehensive statewide needs assessment and recommended next steps in the form of a five-year roadmap for housing and support services for youth experiencing homelessness.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and to support the ongoing efforts of our providers to serve homeless youth, the RHY program distributed additional \$10,000 grants to our RHY providers.

Additionally, the RHY Program represents DHS on OHCS’s Statewide Homeless Populations Task Force formed in response to COVID-19.

Runaway Multi-Disciplinary Workgroup

In December 2019, the Child Welfare program began exploring how to best respond when youth runaway from state-approved foster placements. As a result, a multi-disciplinary workgroup was created to assess the state’s systemic response to children and youth who have run away or are missing, and how the response should be tailored to address specific youth and their unique circumstances. The RHY program participates in the workgroup and provides expertise on runaway and homeless youth resources and services.

Website Updates

In November 2019, DHS created a new [Runaway & Homeless Youth webpage](#) to ensure information is available about homeless youth services in Oregon. This site provides information and data to the community, as well as resources for youth and service providers.

Fostering Youth to Independence initiative

In July 2019, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced Foster Youth to Independence (FYI), where Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) partner with local Child Welfare offices to request Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) for eligible transition age youth and former foster youth for a period of 36 months. In September 2019, a formal partnership between local Child Welfare and SSP offices was established to ensure DHS is prepared to proactively partner with PHAs.

This effort has yielded four FYI involved counties and several other counties are in the planning stage. HUD, with input from Oregon partners, created FYI and Family Unification Program (FUP) resource pap, which can be [found here](#)². This is an interactive tool meant to enable Oregon FYI/FUP stakeholders to assist in outreach for the programs.

Success Stories

“We opened the Grants Pass Shelter in October of 2016. District wide data on homeless students demonstrates significant improvements over these past three years. Chronic absenteeism for homeless middle school-aged children has decreased from 50% to 36% and for high school-aged students from 67% to 50%.

During this same time period, high school dropout rates among homeless youth went from 20% to 9%. Whereas the Grants Pass School district has lower graduation rates than the state average for non-homeless youth, Grants Pass School District exceeds the state average for homeless youth who do graduate from high school. Superintendent Kolb attributes improvements in these outcomes in large part to the presence of Hearts with a Mission in this community.”

-Hearts with a Mission

“Troy” and “Simon” are brothers, 13 and 11 years of age, that began coming to the Drop In mid-summer. At the time they were living at a campsite with their dad. For the next while the boys would come visit the Drop In for their daily needs while staff at HOME and ARCHES would do case management with the dad. Troy and Simon became heavily involved at the Drop In by playing games with staff, going to camp with the Gladiators police-mentor group, and taking part in the youth-run Field Day as well consistently accessing resources such as clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies.

At first their dad was hesitant to split up the family, but he eventually decided to enroll the boys at Taylor’s House shelter for their safety. Dad works closely with staff to ensure

² https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__hud.maps.arcgis.com_apps_webappviewer_index.html-3Fid-3Da89ecda1c8464f33b9d7ab135d43ed0f&d=DwMFAG&c=7gilq_oJKU2hnacFUWFTuYqjMQ111TRstgx6WoATdXo&r=Pd1mlY_Pg-Q0JbhEkolDTjzWP4Szawb6pkk3_nt1BNknKMOcDfdqeSJixiDNRM7U&m=KsW6m-Z9EuxAZtE6BvNN1Up_liaUzTv7PPla8nsD4Pw&s=IngA7-w3vjN5IQtdUGT-7LWxpYbk85vuFpTz8OPPL-A&e=

that the boys are getting everything they need and visits them nearly daily. Often, he comes to Taylor’s House for dinner or to take the boys out to the park after school. It’s an honor to be trusted with his children and to serve as a temporary alternative to the trauma of living on the streets. We are confident that together HOME and ARCHES can help the family reunify in their own place someday soon.”

-HOME Youth & Resource Center, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency

“[A youth] first connected with our Outreach Center and Engagement Coordinator at the end of this school year, she had been sleeping at a friend’s house for about three months after having to leave her previous housing accommodation. She presented as caring and very dedicated. She shared that it was important for her to continue her education in efforts to not become a burden to others. She maintained 2 jobs during the summer. With her efforts, and the short-term financial intervention, she was able to secure her own apartment and get it furnished within the first month of moving in. She has maintained her first apartment for 5 months and continues to successfully accomplish other goals. She continues to present in a very humble manner. As she says, “I don’t want to use resources that other people need more than me”. Her plans of going back to school to be a pediatrician continue to be on track. She is a wonderful young lady that is motivated and navigating her way through the real world.”

-New Avenues for Youth

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