

ORS 417.799 Report

September 11, 2024

Oregon Department of Human Services

www.oregon.gov/odhs

Executive Summary

Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) submits this report to the Legislature in accordance with ORS 417.799 Runaway and Homeless Youth. The report is intended to provide a status update related to the system of services and supports ODHS has developed for youth experiencing homelessness. The report will also highlight program updates and success stories.

Program Overview

Oregon's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program was established in 2005 and administered by the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF). In 2011, OCCF was terminated and responsibility for the coordination and delivery of services to youth experiencing homelessness was transferred to ODHS.

In 2015, the Legislature directed ODHS to enhance services for youth experiencing homelessness, appoint an advisory committee, and begin making annual reports related to the program. In 2018, ODHS transferred the program from the Child Welfare Division to Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP), where it remains.

In 2022, ODHS changed the program name to the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP), following a recommendation from the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC).

YEHP partners with impacted youth, community organizations and state agencies to help youth secure housing and to prevent homelessness among youth across the state.

YEHP Funding

HB2001 and HB5019

The 2023 Oregon Legislative Session saw two main bills pass – HB2001 and HB5019 – that increased investment in housing and homelessness services across the state. These bills allocated \$18,750,000 in additional YEHP funding for youth homelessness services and housing supports.

The funding includes:

- \$12,500,000 for shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services and mental health or substance abuse services, and transitional (medium-term) housing options.
- \$6,250,000 for the continuation or expansion of Host Home projects for youth.

These bills also allowed for the hiring of additional staff. While the program historically operated with just one staff person, HB5019's provisions permitted the hiring of positions to support the program's rapid growth. It should be noted that all awarded positions were designated as Limited Duration (LD) by the Oregon State Legislature. New LD staff were hired on the following schedule:

- PA3 (extended LD staff who was hired in 2021)
- OPA2 (hired August 2023)
- HSM2 Manager (hired February 2024)
- PA2 (hired August 2024)
- PA2 (hired September 2024)
- OPA3 (reclassified by DAS to administrative support level and unhired)

Currently, only two staff positions are permanent and were established prior to the implementation of HB5019:

- OPA3 (hired May 2024)
- AS1 (vacant and in hiring process, previous staff promoted to PA2)

Other Funding

In 2023, HB3395 was also approved, incorporating provisions for housing assistance aimed at low-income college students. This allocated \$4,000,000 to ODHS for extending financial aid to non-profit organizations to accomplish this. Additionally, it included a position to oversee the administration of these funds and other housing-focused initiatives.

As of August 2024, \$1,700,000 has been awarded to College Housing Northwest (CHNW) to support their Affordable Rent for College Students (ARCS) program. This program provides housing with rental assistance to students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity within CHNW's properties. Additionally, it offers financial support for temporary housing within the Lolo Pass Hotel for up to 28 days for students awaiting enrollment in the ARCS program.

Outcomes for ARCS in 2023 were positive: six students successfully obtained degrees or certificates and 12 transitioned to the "standard" ARCS program. Only 4 students disenrolled from school or training due to extenuating circumstances. 87% of ARCS students remaining enrolled in school or achieving a credential.

The remaining \$2,300,000 has also been awarded to CHNW but is currently under ongoing review by the Department of Justice (DOJ). YEHF is working diligently with both CHNW and the DOJ to ensure these funds can be legally expended within the allotted timeframes.

YEHF-funded Core Services

Geographic Allocation of Requests and Awards:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Requested (rounded)</u>	<u>Awarded</u>
Southern	\$8,975,268.00	\$4,050,000.00
Mid Valley	\$15,932,820.00	\$5,825,000.00
Metro – Tri County	\$26,797,516.00	\$4,925,000.00
NW Oregon	\$1,933,872.00	\$500,000.00
Oregon Coast	\$1,283,750.00	\$1,240,000.00
Central/Gorge	\$3,987,044.00	\$2,260,000.00
Eastern	\$1,964,400.00	\$700,000.00

**Regional breakdown can be found on Page 2 of the [Youth Housing Needs Assessment](#).*

Category Distribution - Requests and Awards:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Requested (rounded)</u>	<u>Awarded</u>
Prevention	\$17,548,834.00	\$4,850,000.00
Emergency/Crisis	\$6,397,666.00	\$3,050,000.00
Medium-Term	\$15,656,815.00	\$4,350,000.00
Culturally-Specific	\$6,359,804.00	\$600,000.00
MH/SA (Mental Health/Substance Abuse)	\$1,526,617.00	\$400,000.00

Host Homes	\$13,384,934.00	\$6,250,000.00
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The names and geographic locations of current YEHP-funded providers can be found in the [YEHP GIS Map](#) and on [the program webpage](#) under Contracted service providers.

Outcomes Measuring and Homeless Management Information System

Understanding the importance of outcome measurement for assessing service effectiveness and making necessary adjustments, YEHP adopted reporting within the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in 2023.

With the adoption of HMIS, YEHP grantees are now required to provide their data through this system – which includes both demographic details and outcome measures. YEHP continues to realize and navigate the complexities involved in modifying a large-scale data reporting system, particularly when reliant on external partners for almost all data components. YEHP has been working diligently to build relationships and support the coordination of data access, delivery, and evaluation.

Outcome Measures Integration:

After months of planning, the HMIS system now integrates outcome measures based on the West Coast Convening Framework. These outcomes include:

- Housing: Program exits to safe and stable housing settings.
- Education: Increases in enrollment, completion, academic advancement, and motivation.
- Employment: Growth in job-related skills and employment at living wage jobs.
- Self-Sufficiency: Development of life skills, including financial literacy and personal safety.
- Well-being: Management of physical health needs and social connections.

Adaptations and Support:

YEHP has faced several hurdles during this transition:

- Training and Setup: Some YEHP grant recipients had to be set up and trained in the HMIS system, often in partnership with local Continuum of Care (CoC) HMIS leads.
- Modifications for Existing Users: Some grant recipients who were already using HMIS had to make modifications to capture YEHP-funded data.
- Learning Curve: All YEHP grantees have had to learn how to input and manage YEHP-specific outcome measurements.

Coordination and Collaboration:

The coordination efforts have expanded rapidly as YEHP collaborates with various partners:

- ORRAI Coordination: YEHP started and continues ongoing coordination with the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics, and Implementation (ORRAI) to ensure that data is safely stored within secure parameters. This collaboration includes creating a data dashboard that will visually represent the demographics and outcomes of youth receiving services from grantees.
- County Collaborations: Oregon has multiple instances of HMIS, each requiring specific entities

to support and access the data. YEHP's coordination efforts include:

- Multnomah County Department of Human Services for Multnomah County.
- Clackamas County Health, Housing, & Human Services for Clackamas County.
- Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) for Lane County, Washington County, Jackson County, Central Oregon, and the Rural Oregon Continuum of Care.

Ongoing Efforts:

This sort of data collaboration is not only a new venture for YEHP, but for SSP as a whole, and thus YEHP is expected to continue refining the process to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness. YEHP has taken several steps to support this work:

- Training and Office Hours: Provision of training and YEHP office hours allows grantees to ask data-related questions.
- User Guide: Work is underway to create a User Guide for grantees to refer to when inputting YEHP HMIS data.

Once fully implemented, the HMIS system will:

- Enable more rapid access to data.
- Enhance understanding of demographics.
- Reduce redundancy in reporting for youth-serving agencies.
- Allow YEHP to utilize existing reporting structures in HMIS, avoiding the need for separate reports.
- Help identify duplicate data and ascertain the total number of youth served within an organization, not just under a specialized grant.

The most recent survey of information from direct requests to grant recipients indicates that from July 1, 2023, to May 1, 2024, 6,974 youth were supported through YEHP-funded services, with the expectation that this number includes duplicated counts.

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee

The Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC) plays a role in advising ODHS on policies and procedures essential for statewide service delivery to youth facing homelessness. YEHAC convenes quarterly meetings, and its meeting agendas are accessible on the [YEHP website](#).

Program Structure/ Main Activities:

ODHS is asked to appoint an advisory committee to achieve the primary objectives of:

- Advising on Policies and Procedures
- Assisting YEHP in coordinating statewide planning for services.
- Information Sharing
- Providing YEHP with updates on the status of existing services.
- Make Recommendations
- Offer recommendations for service improvements and additional support.

2023/2024 YEHAC Membership:

Agency/ Representation	Member Name
Oregon Department of Human Services – Self Sufficiency Program - YEHP	Adam Jenkins
Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Welfare	Rosemary Lavenditti
Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Welfare	Stacey Mahler
Oregon Health Authority	Kathleen Burns
Oregon Youth Authority	Laura Ward
Oregon Housing & Community Services	Anabel Hernandez-Mejia
Oregon Department of Education – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program	Lexi Neemann
Youth Development Oregon	Paul Sell
Higher Education Coordinating Commission	Stephanie Solomon
Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services – Homeless Youth Continuum	Caitlin Campbell
Clackamas County Housing & Community Development	Carlos Benson Martinez
Rural Oregon Continuum of Care	Brooke Matthews
Oregon Alliance	Vera Stoullil
Youth360	Kitia Chambers (co-chair)
Hearts with a Mission	Kevin Lamson
J Bar J Youth Services	Eliza Wilson
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization	Ellen Parker
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon – Second Home Program	Jennifer Hale
Jackson Street Youth Services	Kendra Philips-Neal
Youth Empowerment Shelter	Livia Christensen

References / More Information: [2015 HB 2232](#)

Youth Engagement and the YEHP Youth Action Board (YEHP YAB)

YEHP remains committed to a youth-led process where young people collaborate closely with the program. Currently, YEHP is engaged with six youth from multiple geographies of the state, including Portland Tri-County, Mid-Valley, Oregon Coast, and Southern Oregon. Two previously involved youth have moved on due to positive outcomes- one hired by YEHP and the other received a Fellowship opportunity on the East Coast.

This group, known as the “YEHP YAB,” may adopt a new name as additional members join. Efforts are underway to expand the YEHP YAB’s membership in both the number of young leaders involved, as well as a diverse geographic coverage and demographic and experiential makeup.

YEHP YAB members come from varied backgrounds and have different experiences with navigating

homelessness. They are compensated as professionals for their invaluable contributions. Meetings are held at least monthly, and YEHP staff collaborate with YAB members in the following ways:

- Participation in YEHP Hiring Panels
- Review of grant applications
- Provision of feedback on program-specific documentation

In August 2024, YEHP hired a Strategic Youth Engagement Coordinator to provide focused support for the YEHP YAB. Previously, supporting the YAB was just one part of staff responsibilities. In this role, the coordinator will prioritize providing essential structural support and facilitating learning opportunities and training, as well as connecting with youth boards statewide, and assisting in the establishment of new youth boards in areas looking to create them.

Throughout this year, the YEHP YAB has been making steady progress in addressing its structural needs. This progress includes the development of a YEHP YAB Manual for prospective and current members that outline the group's mission statement and shared goals, as well as outlining clear roles for YEHP staff and YAB members. Efforts were made to create youth-friendly documents and provide clarity on the responsibilities and expectations of YAB membership. Ongoing work aims to further define how the YEHP YAB contributes to policy and funding decisions, and to establish procedural guidelines for proposing changes, making recommendations, and being called upon to provide feedback to YEHP and other agencies.

Direct Cash Transfer Programming

Direct Cash Transfer Plus (DCT+) pilot:

YEHP has continued to implement a pilot initiative called Direct Cash Transfer Plus (DCT+), designed for individuals aged 18 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness and seeking housing. DCT+ is a poverty alleviation strategy that provides consistent financial support to identified youth, addressing their specific needs, and helping them transition out of homelessness. The pilot includes payments over a 24-month period and is set to conclude in January 2025.

Oregon's DCT+ pilot is being implemented across urban, rural, and suburban regions, including:

- Metro Multnomah County: \$1,000 per month to 74 individuals, optionally accompanied by support from the Native American Youth Association.
- Rural Clackamas County: \$1,000 per month to 11 individuals, optionally aided by AntFarm Youth Services.
- Suburban Deschutes County: \$1,000 per month to 35 individuals, optionally assisted by JBarJ Youth Services.

Basic Eligibility	1st Prioritization	2nd Prioritization	3rd Prioritization
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18-24 years old• Connected to or coming into CBO Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleeping somewhere not fit for habitation + interest in getting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2SLGBTQIA+• BIPOC• Pregnant or Parenting• Returning citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Length of time in shelter or TLP• Length of time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> housed • Unstably housed (overpopulated housing, TLP, couch-surfing, shelter, motel, etc.) + interest in getting housed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (formerly incarcerated) • Undocumented • DV/IPV history • Trafficking survivor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unstably housed • Length of time sleeping somewhere not fit for habitation
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An Oregon Direct Cash Transfer Handbook and Youth Guide were created and can be furnished upon request.

YEHP is partnering with Young People to the Front (formerly Lens Co.), a research and advocacy partner specializing in West Coast youth homelessness work. Young People to the Front collects and compiles quantitative data about participants through data capture, email surveys, and in-person conversations. Although data collection is ongoing, the following information has been gathered thus far:

- To date, 107 recipients, or approximately 91%, are reported as being housed.
- Those who completed follow-up surveys (60) have indicated:
 - 63% (up from 51% at baseline) are living in their own place.
 - 11% (down from 25%) are reliant upon friends or relatives for income.
 - 15% (up from 0%) are involved with a youth action board.
 - 18% (down from 26%) are not currently employed.
 - 0% (down from 14%) have more than \$3,000 in credit card debt.

While quantitative data holds importance, we also emphasize the significance of qualitative data. It is particularly relevant to comprehend how cash access influences various facets of a young person's life beyond housing, including mental and physical health, interpersonal relationships, education, and employment opportunities. Success stories are listed at the end of this report.

Direct Cash Transfer as Prevention (DCT-P) pilot:

A Direct Cash Transfer as Prevention (DCT-P) pilot began via the award of a Technical Assistance grant that was the result of a joint YEHP/Connected Lane County (CLC) proposal. Lane County was allowed the opportunity to be one of 8 communities nationwide to receive TA from Point Source Youth.

While DCT+ is designed to assist youth in exiting homelessness, DCT-P is focused on preventing young people from entering the homelessness system in the first place. DCT-P is a community-based approach to DCT that involves a core support provider as the primary organization overseeing the initiative. Other local youth-support agencies can become trained on this initiative, enabling them to refer eligible young people to the core support provider, as well as offer supplementary support to the young people involved.

Eligible youth receive a need-based, one-time payment. The amount is determined through a required housing conversation and budget planning with the youth. Optional supportive programming is provided for 3-6 months. Payments can be delivered in multiple ways, but the

creation of an on-site debit card has been the only format utilized.

As of August 2024, 56 eligible youth have received direct payments, with an average payment of \$2,620. Of these recipients, 45% were referred by a local partner, while 55% were connected via CLC Resource Navigators. Additionally, 59% youth requested further case management support. At the one-month check-in via youth connected via CLC Resource Navigators, 84% felt confident in their housing situation. The formal evaluation of the 8-community DCT-P initiative is being conducted by Johns Hopkins University. This evaluation will capture basic demographics, historical support services, living situations, housing plans, and follow-up success. A draft evaluation report is expected in Fall 2024.

Tuition and Fee Waiver for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

In June 2022, the Oregon State Legislature enacted HB4013, extending tuition and fee waivers for higher education to eligible youth who have either experienced or are presently experiencing homelessness. YEHP has taken the lead on implementing this opportunity. New this year, YEHP:

- Collaborated with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to create and provide access to a YEH-specific eligibility portal.
- Developed and presented training sessions covering the background, eligibility criteria, application process, and utilization of the waiver.
- Created and distributed one-page informational sheets for youth and supportive adults, available in both English and Spanish.

113 applications have been processed into the eligibility portal as of August 2024.

Additional Partnerships

In addition to the aforementioned collaborations, YEHP maintains robust engagement with the following entities:

- Oregon Network of Host Home Organizations
- Multnomah County Homeless Youth Oversight Committee
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) recipients in Central Oregon, Lane, Marion/Polk, and Clackamas Counties
- Oregon Continuums of Care and HMIS Leads
- Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS)
- Tribal Affairs
- We Are Here Oregon Native Employees (WAHONE)

YEHP has started expanding its efforts to educate Self Sufficiency's vast staff network about the needs of young people experiencing homelessness and the programming YEHP supports. This is being done to better inform and integrate youth homelessness best practice within SSP and ODHS staff at all levels—from front line Family Coaches to Management. YEHP is focused on creating pathways for information sharing and access, enabling local SSP staff to make informed decisions and provide the necessary support to the youth and families they serve.

Success Stories

Prevention:

When we met "J", she was a 17-year-old mom of an almost 2-year-old boy. She was not motivated to finish school or get a job. We encouraged her to connect with Klamath Works to finish her schooling through the WIOA program and to also get a job through them. At that time, she had childcare through her mom and sister but shortly after [we] started working with her, she had a falling out with her family and her free childcare came to a halt.

"J" was making plans to move out of her family's home and into her own space when we met her. Along with help from another partner agency, "J" applied for and was approved for a HUD voucher. [We] connected "J" to a rental agency who let her move into a 2-bedroom apartment where she could keep her dog.

Since connecting with "J", she has gone from an unmotivated teenager to a motivated, more responsible adult. She obtained a full-time job ... and has really started to build a trusting relationship with her childcare provider. Our next step with "J" is to try to get her a driver's license and then a vehicle so she is not so reliant on [us] for transportation.

We are excited to see how it will continue to grow in the future.

- Hearts with a Mission

Crisis:

We received a call from a local school letting us know they were serving two sisters who were Spanish speaking only and undocumented. The sisters were in the US [and in the city of] Albany on a sponsorship with a family friend. Their mother had been stuck on the other side of the border and their father remained in Honduras, where they were originally from. The relationship with the sponsor became volatile and somewhat abusive and the sisters no longer felt safe. They asked their school if there were any other options and we got involved. These sisters resided with us for over three months while we worked with the ODHS to locate their family and support their mother getting into the US. We participated in a very heartfelt reunion between the sisters and their mother, seeing each other for the first time in two years. They are now reunited, have housing, and are moving forward.

- Jackson Street Youth Services

Medium-Term Housing:

"A", a 20 year old non binary homeless youth, came to Hope House after experiencing trauma through a dysfunctional home life. She was struggling with addiction and wanting to find a safe place to begin to have a better life. She was concerned that she wouldn't be accepted anywhere because she identifies as non-binary. She quickly found safety and acceptance at Hope House that helped her to thrive. Her goals were to find permanent supportive recovery housing, a job, build up a savings and begin the healing process. She was successful at all her goals. Within a short time, "A"'s life skill worker helped her obtain employment, connected her with recovery support and other resources. "A" successfully transitioned into permanent supportive Oxford House recovery housing and is thriving.

- Salvation Army – Jackson County

Host Homes:

One 15-year-old youth was hosted through our host home program while her mother went into a drug treatment program. During this time, the case worker sought opportunities to build upon her skills and strengths which included athletic abilities, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and the

arts. This youth helped to create one of the mural designs as a part of the mosaic installation at Everyone Village. This hosting provided a chance for the youth to have a safer living environment both during and after her placement. This placement helped Safe Families figure out the different steps and processes for successfully placing youth in host homes.

- Christians as Family Advocates

Youth-Specific Housing:

In the spring of 2022 "D" was living peacefully with her family finishing up her third year of college. By that summer, she had been kicked out of her home, was living in a shelter, and was unsure she would be able to finish her degree. Just before the next school year started "D" was brought into the ARCS Plus program, which got her in to her first apartment and provided her with a 100% rental subsidy, giving her the ability to focus on school.

When we first began working with "D", she was timid, apologetic, and often talked about her shortfalls. Specifically, her inability to maintain consistent employment and communicate with others. Today, "D" has been working at a restaurant for over 4 months. At this job, she happily assists customers and interacts with the public, something she never saw herself doing a year ago. Other accomplishments she will gladly tell you about include that she has almost finished her degree, she has a savings account, she has learned how to cook steak and potatoes, and has greatly increased her confidence.

Soon, "D" will begin the transition into paying 50% of her rent via ARCS. This transition gives "D" some anxiety, but at the end of the day she knows that she has put the structure in place that she needs to do this successfully, and she has a supportive team around her that will continue to uplift her.

- College Housing Northwest

Direct Cash Transfer Plus (DCT+)

The power of DCT



The power of DCT

06

[W]ith DCT I can now treat myself to a bed and a bed frame - something I've been trying to figure out money for 1 1/2 - 2 years.



07

Seeing things like the DCT exist and remain in our communities **helps keep me alive**. [It] is medicine to my soul because it reminds me that **there are people that C A R E about and for me** and are working to make sure that I ,and many others in situations like me are, receiving the resources that we need to get our needs/wants met and to **not just survive but to T H R I V E** while I'm/we're here on this tx'otx' (earth).



08

I was in a really bad place prior to getting involved with DCT. I can honestly say I am not sure I would be on this earth today if I didn't have this. I have hope.



March 2024

Direct Cash Transfer as Prevention (DCT-P)

"A" is currently working full-time to support not only himself, but his parent and two younger siblings. He was accepted into a college nursing program but faced significant challenges with paying for his DACA renewal, covering rent and utilities, and having enough savings to attend school. DCT-P was able to provide support for his housing costs and DACA fees and will be helping him to enroll in upcoming financial education courses and additional healthcare training programs. Because of DCT-P, this recipient and his entire family will remain stably housed.

- Connected Lane County



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