

# ORS 417.799 Report

## Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP)

Oregon Department of Human Services  
September 15, 2025



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF  
**Human Services**

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## **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 and Background**

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.

## **Funding**

### **2023 – 2025 Biennium Funding Summary**

During the 2023–2025 biennium, YEHP received a significant increase in funding—through multiple short-term, one-time investments allocated during the 2023 legislative session. These funds were available through June 30, 2025.

Additional ongoing funding sources included an ongoing General Fund Base Budget allocation, a Child Welfare (CW) pass-through, and a single ongoing federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

- \$12,500,000 – Core Services funding via 2023 House Bill (HB) 5019 (General Fund)
- \$6,250,000 – Host Homes funding via 2023 HB5019 (GF)

- \$4,000,000 – Low Income Housing for College Students via HB3395 (GF)
- \$4,562,972 – Program Base Budget (GF)
- \$600,000 – SSBG (Federal Funds)

A substantial one-time funding investment enabled the hiring of essential staff to support two major grant programs. However, all new positions were classified as Limited Duration (LD), with employment ending on June 30, 2025. Positions were hired over the course of the biennium, with the final two Program Analyst (PA) being hired in late 2024.

## 2025 – 2027 Biennium Funding Summary

### Policy Option Packages (POP)

As previous investments were one-time in nature, it was necessary to submit Policy Option Package (POP) to sustain the current service level.

YEHP initially submitted two POPs for consideration in the 2025–2027 legislative session:

- **Core Service Maintenance (\$19,707,205):** This package would sustain current service levels by continuing core and host home services grant support, extending the Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) pilot, and converting previously awarded LD positions to permanent status.
- **Service Expansion (\$8,200,000):** This package proposes expanding core services both geographically and programmatically, as well as increased funding for the DCT initiative.

The Core Service Maintenance POP was ultimately included in the Governor’s Recommended Budget (GRB) for the 2025–2027 legislative session. The Service Expansion POP, however, was not advanced.

The Core Service Maintenance POP request amount for core services (\$17.8 million) was shaped by the decision not to request funds for the following previously supported areas:

1. One-time funds reported by grantees during the 2023–2025 biennium were not renewed.
2. Flexible YEHP base budget program funds – previously used to exceed the legislative allotment for core services – were excluded from the request.
3. Mental health grants were deprioritized in favor of focusing on core service delivery.

The 2025 legislative session resulted in the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 5526, which allocated the full \$19,707,205 to sustain YEHP and its initiatives. This funding will

support permanent staffing, direct cash transfers, and core services grants to local youth-serving organizations, ensuring continued assistance for youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon. The investment aims to maintain existing service levels while addressing the growing needs. The service funding breakdown includes:

- \$22,797,617 – Program Base Budget (General Fund)
  - \$12,950,000 – Core Services funding
  - \$5,350,000 – Host Homes funding
  - \$240,000 – Direct Cash Transfer (DCT+) funding via SB5526
  - \$4,257,617- Other initiatives (Additional DCT+, Youth Action Board, Child Welfare Collaboration, Grantee Audits, additional youth-driven initiatives)
- \$1,000,000 – Philanthropic Funding for DCT+ Youth Payments (OF)

## **Federal Funding Challenges**

### **State Program Level**

Federal funding changes have impacted state and local programs supported by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and Social Services Block Grants (SSBG). Decreased federal allocations have created significant challenges for state and local agencies, forcing many programs to reduce services and limiting critical support for vulnerable populations. As a result, there is increased reliance on state and local funding to fill these gaps, placing additional strain on already constrained budgets.

Since its initial creation, YEHP has received \$600,000 in federal SSBG funding. However, due to federal funding modifications this year, SSBG is among the streams under consideration for removal. In the previous biennium, this award supported core services grants, but YEHP is unlikely to be able to rely on this funding source moving forward.

### **Service-Provider Level**

Federal funding impacts have also been felt by Oregon's youth-serving agencies this year. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) grants represent the largest federal funding source for youth homelessness services, historically supporting shelter, outreach, transitional housing, prevention, and maternity group homes. However, delays in grant releases—which exceeded five months—combined with new and modified requirements, have created significant challenges for many local and national agencies.

These grants initially allowed only a 14-day application window, which was later extended to 21 days following a lawsuit. Additionally, Street Outreach Programs (SOPs) were eliminated as a standalone funding opportunity. Historically, SOPs funded mobile teams that connect with unsheltered youth to build trust, provide crisis response, and

link them to services. New federal grant requirements include mandatory memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with law enforcement, curriculum promoting marriage and two-parent households in certain settings, a prioritization of family reunification even when potentially unsafe, and the prohibition of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts.

As a result, these modifications have already been felt locally, with three long-standing federal Transitional Living Program (TLP) organizations being unable to complete applications with the shortened application window and updated requirements. If these three programs were awarded at the maximum federal amount, as has historically been the case, this will result in a loss of up to \$3.15 million for just Oregon TLP in the current grant cycle.

Going forward, tight deadline and new rules may prevent those programs — especially rural or small providers — from applying, risking major service gaps if funding is lost. YEHP funding is likely insufficient to continue program operations for providers who lose RHYA funding, at least at the same capacity. Providers may be forced to choose between federal funding and core values like youth-centered, trauma-informed care.

## **YEHP-funded Core Services (2025-2027)**

While the 2025 Legislative Session brought an exciting continuation of permanent funds it will remain a tight fiscal landscape for the program. Previously mentioned Federal constraints have led to a small, but necessary, recalibration of YEHP's Core Services grant awards.

YEHP's Core Services Maintenance grant program is implemented through awards to local community-based organizations across a variety of program types and legislatively supported services. As part of its POP YEHP requested—and received—\$17.8 million for Core Services grant investments. In addition, YEHP has committed \$500,000 from its base budget, bringing the total amount of awarded grants in the current biennium to \$18.3 million. To maintain service momentum gained during the previous biennium—and in alignment with governmental directives—grants were, with few exceptions, awarded to the same providers for the same service-types. There were funding-ceiling reductions made to host home programming, but it remains the highest funded initiative even with these modifications.

### **Awards by Service-Type (2025-2027):**

<b>Service-Type</b>	<b>Awarded</b>
Outreach / Drop-In	\$4,650,000.00
Emergency / Crisis	\$3,350,000.00
Medium-Term	\$4,250,000.00
Culturally-Specific Supports	\$700,000.00

Host Homes	\$5,350,000.00
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### Awards by Geographic Location (2025-2027):

<b>Region</b>	<b>Awarded</b>
Southern	\$3,650,000.00
Mid Valley	\$5,425,000.00
Metro – Tri County	\$4,625,000.00
NW Oregon	\$500,000.00
Oregon Coast	\$1,390,000.00
Central/Gorge	\$2,060,000.00
Eastern	\$650,000.00

*\*Regions based off the [Oregon Youth Housing Needs Assessment](#) (page 2).*

As of this report, YEHP has completed all \$18.3M in grant amendments, which are currently in the creation and review process by the Office of Contracts & Procurement, the Department of Justice, and individual grant providers.

YEHP engaged service providers in the administrative rulemaking process to further clarify the grant programs authorized under ORS 417.802 and ORS 417.803. The resulting rules are published in Chapter 461 of the Oregon Administrative Rules, specifically in Divisions 197 and 198. Statutory and rule references, along with supporting materials, are available on the YEHP website to ensure transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders.

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.

## YEHP Program Staff

The passage of SB 5526 provided YEHP with ongoing positions to support the full implementation of the program. Without this funding, the team would have been reduced to one Policy Analyst and one Administrative Support staff member. While the positions are classified as “new,” they were previously limited duration (LD) roles. As a result, the team structure remains largely consistent with the previous biennium, and nearly all positions are already filled by existing staff.

- Human Services Manager 2
- Operations & Policy Analyst 3
- Operations & Policy Analyst 3 (new)
- Operations & Policy Analyst 2
- Program Analyst 3
- Program Analyst 2
- Program Analyst 2

- Administrative Specialist 1

## Data and Outcomes

Youth homelessness is a significant concern in Oregon. According to 2024 Federal Point in Time count data, Oregon has the second highest rate of unsheltered homelessness among unaccompanied youth, nationally. This is an improvement from the previous year, in which it had the highest rate. Oregon has the seventh highest rate of youth experiencing homelessness overall. This is also an improvement from the previous year, in which it had the fourth highest rate. A 2021 study on youth homelessness in Oregon estimated that approximately 8,300 young people were experiencing homelessness and in need of supports.

These numbers only begin to scratch the surface, as many young people are not captured in official counts due to limited access to services or fear of disclosing their housing instability. Recent and upcoming federal changes to homelessness response systems and funding structures have already led to significant adjustments in Oregon's programs. These shifts could have lasting impacts on youth experiencing homelessness, or youth who will soon be at-risk of homelessness—many of whom face these challenges due to safety concerns and circumstances beyond their control.

YEHP believes that youth outcomes go beyond housing placement alone. Youth experiencing homelessness face numerous challenges, including generational poverty, trauma, mental and physical health needs, and limited social support. Because of this, YEHP's outcome measures are designed to look across a broad range of domains: housing, employment, education, self-sufficiency, and overall well-being.

In the last calendar year, YEHP-funded programs provided vital services to 4,946 youth, with 85% of those youth successfully linked to public benefits. Additionally, 81% of youth who participated in a Transitional Living Program either gained work skills or became employed—demonstrating meaningful progress toward long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

In addition, 205 new shelter and transitional living beds were created, while sustaining an additional 117 beds. It also supported the onboarding of 5 new youth homelessness support providers and expanded services to 8 additional Oregon counties.

Over the past biennium, YEHP has made focused efforts to improve data collection and better measure the real outcomes of its work. Following a key investment in 2023, YEHP began implementing the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), a nationally recognized platform used by homelessness service providers to collect and manage data. YEHP co-developed a dashboard to allow for the viewing and analysis of this data; however, the process revealed significant data quality gaps. These issues have

hindered YEHP's ability to evaluate outcomes, inform program decisions, and meet reporting expectations.

The development of the dashboard exposed technical and structural challenges that must be addressed to ensure accurate interpretation of the data. To move forward effectively, YEHP will need both immediate and long-term technical capacity, particularly in the areas of HMIS expertise, data validation, and quality assurance. Recognizing the limitations of the current approach, YEHP has been actively exploring alternative strategies to strengthen its infrastructure and position the program to better monitor progress and deliver on intended outcomes.

## **Low-Income Housing for College Students**

Funding from 2023 HB3395, awarded to College Housing Northwest (CHNW), concluded in June 2025. The funding supported Affordable Rents for College Students Plus (ARCS)—a program that provides subsidized housing for college students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity—and helped create interim housing options for students awaiting ARCS enrollment.

ARCS offers rental assistance within CHNW properties and short-term housing through a partnership with the Lolo Pass Hotel, where eligible students can stay for up to 28 days while transitioning into ARCS-supported housing.

Outcomes from the 2023–2024 school year:

- 131 total students supported
  - 100 students received a 50% rental subsidy
  - 31 students received a 100% rental subsidy and additional supportive services
- 60% of participants identified as BIPOC
- 34% identified as LGBTQIA2S+
- 69%% were first-generation college students
- 16 students graduated, including:
  - 8 bachelor's degrees
  - 6 associate degrees
  - 1 graduate degree

## **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 was 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.

Over the course of the last year YEHAC implemented a new governance structure in electing co-chairs who represent our provider community. These co-chairs led the council in making a few recommendations for the department for upcoming legislative sessions including:

- The pursuit of a legislative concept that would update ORS 417.799 and ORS 417.800 to be reflective of ORS 417.802 and ORS 417.803 and consistent in naming the experience of youth across the state of Oregon; updating references of “runaway and homeless youth” to “youth experiencing homelessness.”
- The pursuit of a legislative concept that would update ORS 417.799 and ORS 417.803 to be consistent with the age eligibility (14 – 24) found in ORS 417.802.

YEHAC has also begun exploring a partnership with the YEHP Youth Action Board (YAB) and is expected to further evaluate its organizational structure to more intentionally center the voices of youth with lived expertise. This approach aligns with the department’s broader commitment to elevating client voices and ensuring that programs are shaped by those they are intended to serve.

#### Class of 2025 - YEHAC Membership:

Agency/ Representation	Member Name
Oregon Department of Human Services – Self Sufficiency Program - YEHP	Adam Jenkins (nonvoting/staff) Freya Nehila (nonvoting/staff)
Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Welfare	Stacey Mahler (primary) Crystal Sneddon (backup)
Oregon Youth Authority	Laura Ward
Oregon Housing & Community Services	Dele Oyemaha (primary) Anabel Hernandez-Mejia (backup)
Oregon Department of Education – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program	Lexi Neemann
Youth Development Oregon	Paul Sell
Higher Education Coordinating Commission	Stephanie Soloman

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 Stoulil (co-chair)
Youth360	Kitia Chambers (co-chair)
Hearts with a Mission	Kevin Lamson
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
Integral Youth Services	Bethany Osborne

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

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

YEHP remains committed to a youth-led process where young people collaborate closely with the program. Currently, YEHP is engaged with ten youth from multiple geographies of the state, including Portland Tri-County, Mid-Valley, Oregon Coast, Southern Oregon, Central Oregon, and Eastern Oregon. This group, known as the “YEHP YAB”, has dedicated 650 collective hours to providing input into statewide youth homelessness planning.

In August 2024, a Strategic Youth Engagement Coordinator was hired to support the expansion of the YEHP Youth Action Board (YAB). Recruitment for new members began in September, driven by the need to increase demographic and geographic diversity within the YAB. In October, 24 applications from youth with lived experience across the state were reviewed and scored by current YAB members. Seven applicants were selected and onboarded. In November, one newly onboarded member withdrew due to personal hardship, resulting in a total of ten actively engaged youth leaders.

YEHP YAB members come from varied backgrounds and have unique experiences with navigating homelessness. They are compensated as professionals for their invaluable contributions. Meetings are held at least twice monthly, and YEHP staff collaborated with YAB members in the following ways:

- Participation in YEHP Hiring Panels
- Review of grant applications
- Creation and provision of feedback on program-specific documentation
- Participation in national youth homelessness event in Portland
- Establishing collaborative relationships with YEHP stakeholders

- Participation in Rules Advisory Committees for ODHS and OHA
- Official Community Partner for Youth Homelessness, Outreach, Prevention and Education (HOPE) Month

In January 2025, the YAB attended Point Source Youth’s Innovation Summit in Portland. This two-day event brought together young leaders, policymakers, nonprofits, and funders to center youth-led innovations in addressing youth homelessness. YEHP YAB members participated in youth-only sessions on advocacy techniques. The YEHP YAB valued the opportunity to connect in person and network with like-minded individuals. A key takeaway was the importance of including and uplifting youth voices and lived experience in policy discussions, a core advocacy point for the YEHP YAB.

### **A Message from the YAB**

*“We are the YEHP Youth Action Board—a diverse group of young leaders with lived experience of homelessness, working to make support systems more authentic and accessible. Over the past year, we’ve grown as a team, built leadership skills, and shaped policies through legislative advocacy and collaboration. Attending the Point Source Youth Summit inspired our support for Oregon’s DCT+ 2.0 and strengthened our commitment to uplifting youth voices.*

*Looking ahead, we’re focused on expanding partnerships, using technology to reach more youth, and driving change through legislation. Our power lies in authenticity—not in echoing government language, but in offering bold, youth-led solutions that truly connect.”*

In its first full year of existence, the YEHP YAB established a strong foundation by building rapport both internally and with external partners. Members developed and refined professional skills and created a manual articulating their mission, vision, and values. The YAB’s goals include advocating for policy changes, advancing program improvements, and educating the public on how to effectively support youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon.

### **Direct Cash Transfer Programming**

Direct Cash Transfer (DCT+) pilot:

YEHP recently concluded its first Direct Cash Transfer Plus (DCT+) pilot, designed for individuals aged 18 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness and actively seeking housing. DCT+ is a poverty alleviation strategy that provides consistent, targeted financial support to eligible youth, addressing their immediate needs and supporting their transition out of homelessness. The pilot delivered payments over a 24-month period and concluded in March 2025.

DCT+ was implemented across urban, rural, and suburban regions, with participants receiving housing navigation, financial literacy education, and case management support from local community-based organizations.

### What is DCT+

- Provides \$1,000/month for 24 months to 120 young adults experiencing homelessness.
- Built in partnership with Point Source Youth and experts with lived experience.
- Second youth-homelessness DCT pilot in the U.S. (after NYC) and remains largest in the country.
- Wraparound supports: housing navigation, case management, financial coaching.
- Payments administered via paper check, direct deposit, or state-issued EBT card.

### Outcomes

DCT+ was designed to alleviate the financial barriers young people face in securing housing and improving overall well-being, and has demonstrated significant positive impacts in both areas for participating youth.

At the conclusion of the 24-month DCT+ pilot, YEHP conducted an independent exit survey, which received 107 responses. Of those surveyed, 91% self-reported being stably housed at the time of program completion. The impact on youth well-being was overwhelmingly positive, as reflected in qualitative interviews and direct feedback. Many participants shared powerful reflections on how consistent financial support not only brought stability but also significantly improved their sense of self-worth —stories that were both inspiring and, at times, deeply moving.

In addition to an exit survey, YEHP partnered with Young People to the Front (YP2F) a research and advocacy partner specializing in West Coast youth homelessness work. YP2F collected and analyzed participant data through digital surveys, in-person conversations, and other engagement tools. Of the 117 youth who completed the DCT+ pilot, YP2F focused its evaluation on the 63 participants who completed each of the baseline (2 month), 1-year, and 2-year surveys. While this subset does not represent the full cohort, the findings offer valuable insights into the program's impact over time.

Key demographics from the 63 surveyed youth include:

- Race: 42% Native, 27% White, 14% Black, 10% Other Multiracial
- Gender: 54% Female, 28% Male, 18% Trans or Gender Inclusive
- System involvement: 25% had experience with foster care, and 20% had involvement with the juvenile justice system
- Lifetime homelessness: 70% had experienced homelessness for over a year; 16.7% had been homeless for 5+ years

- Age at first homelessness: 75% first experienced homelessness as a minor

Key outcomes from the 63 surveyed youth include:

- Housing stability: 94% of respondents were housed at the time of the exit survey, across a range of housing types.
- Independent living: 77% were living in their own place, up from 55% at baseline.
- Employment: 48% reported being employed, an increase from 40%.
- Unemployment: 9% drop in unemployment.
- Education enrollment: 25% were enrolled in school—a rate that remained stable.
- **Stress reduction:** Youth reported a steady decline in stress levels throughout the program. The most notable improvement was tied to personal purpose, with stress related to “having a purpose in life” dropping by 11%.

The final report from YP2F is available upon request. While quantitative data holds importance, YEHP 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.

#### DCT+ 2.0 (2025-2027)

YEHP has been making plans since March 2025 to launch DCT+ 2.0 in September 2025, with plans to enroll 120 youth across five communities. Suburban, Metro, and reaching further rural communities.

- Multnomah County via Native American Youth Association (20 youth) - Culturally Specific Programming
- Multnomah County via Outside In (20 youth)
- Clackamas County via Ant Farm Youth Services (20 youth)
- Jackson County via Maslow Project (20 youth)
- Deschutes County via J Bar J Youth Services (40 youth)

Point Source Youth (PSY) will again provide technical assistance and independent evaluation is being completed through Johns Hopkins University. The evaluation will include:

- Long-form surveys at baseline, every six months, and six months after the final payment.
- Short-form surveys every two months, except during months when long-form surveys are administered.
- Focus groups with at least five youth participants at baseline, every six months, and six months after the final payment.

DCT 2.0 was made possible in part through additional investments beyond YEHP’s base budget—specifically, a \$240,000 allocation through SB5526 and a \$1,000,000 contribution

directly to YEHP from philanthropic partner Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), the latter earmarked specifically for youth payments in Deschutes County.

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

The Direct Cash Transfer as Prevention (DCT-P) pilot—recently renamed the Targeted Housing Assistance Program (THAP) at the national level—was completed this past year. A joint proposal from YEHP and Connected Lane County (CLC) had previously been awarded, making Oregon one of seven communities nationwide selected to receive implementation technical assistance from Point Source Youth for this initiative.

While DCT+ is designed to assist youth in exiting homelessness, DCT-P/THAP is focused on preventing young people from entering the homelessness system in the first place. DCT-P/THAP is a community-based approach 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 received a need-based, one-time payment. The amount was determined through a required housing conversation and budget planning with the youth. Youth-driven supportive programming was offered for 3-6 months.

At the conclusion of the pilot, 56 eligible youth in Lane County received direct payments, with an average disbursement of \$2,642 per household. 105 total individuals were ultimately supported, as many youth in need were residing with dependents, family members, or others in unstable housing situations. One month after receiving payments, 82% of recipients in Lane County reported remaining stably housed. The [final evaluation](#)—covering all seven participating communities—was conducted by Johns Hopkins University in partnership with Systems Change Partners.

The findings of the evaluation report supported the following conclusions: 1) prevention is achievable, 2) there are key downstream consequences of preventing youth homelessness through the Targeted Housing Assistance Program beyond stabilized housing for young people, 3) tailoring plans and trusting young people is effective.

### **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.

This year, YEHP presented training sessions that covered the background, eligibility criteria, application process, and utilization of the waiver. In addition, one-page informational sheets were updated for both youth and supportive adults, available in English and Spanish.

231 applications have been processed into the eligibility portal as of August 2025.

## **Child Welfare Collaboration**

### **FYI Vouchers**

In October of 2024, YEHP began a partnership with the Youth Transitions Team at Child Welfare to increase information and availability of Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers across Oregon. The goal of this project was to increase understanding and create processes which made accessing FYI vouchers easier for local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and Child Welfare (CW) district offices.

Currently, FYI vouchers are available from HUD through a non-competitive application process, but there is a requirement that longer-term case management services be provided to youth who access vouchers. Due to limited Child Welfare case management capacity in district offices, in order to serve youth with FYI vouchers a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be created with an external partner dedicated to providing services to unhoused youth, such as YEHP grantees.

YEHP and CW have been working on developing and finalizing a toolkit, which will include:

- Sample MOUs for PHAs, Child Welfare, and third-party nonprofits to use when detailing the case management and communication needs of the FYI vouchers.
- FAQs on FYI and FUPY vouchers, including information on eligibility, supportive services, and requirements for state and local authorities.
- An Advocacy Guide for local child welfare offices interested in expanding their FYI voucher programs.
- A Housing Services Vocabulary glossary to clarify terminology and language in the low-income housing world for those who may be unfamiliar.
- A one-pager detailing the program eligibility, case management requirements, and program duration to be provided to interested parties.

The documents created through this partnership with Child Welfare are therefore easily digestible, applicable to Oregon's systems and policies, and will provide local child welfare offices with the ability to scale up existing FYI programs and start new programs across the state.

Child Welfare and YEHP are also in the process of creating statewide trainings on a variety of topics that will encourage communication and partnerships with housing authorities and community-based organizations across the state. These trainings include:

- The Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) and resources for unhoused youth across the state.
- Housing navigation as a skill and the specific role of housing navigation in ending youth homelessness.
- How to partner with Housing Authorities and maintaining strong inter-agency relationships to support youth housing needs.

### **Transitional Living Joint Contracting pilot**

Recognizing the need to strengthen housing support for young people ages 18–24—whether involved with Child Welfare or navigating homelessness independently—YEHP and the Youth Transitions Program partnered to explore how joint contracting could expand youth access to transitional living programs.

Their collaboration resulted in the launch of a joint contracting pilot, featuring shared funding across multiple ODHS program areas. This pilot currently supports up to five young adults, including those currently or formerly in foster care, those who have recently exited care, and those experiencing homelessness.

By pooling resources and aligning program goals, this effort ensures more stable funding, covers operating costs, and creates a predictable budget for the local provider—ultimately strengthening housing support for vulnerable young adults across systems.

## **Internal and External Partnerships**

### **Internal**

With ongoing funding now secured, a key priority is to strengthen awareness of YEHP's expanding programs and promote meaningful engagement across local communities. As programming grows, it's increasingly important that the broader ODHS workforce—especially at the local level—is equipped with clear, up-to-date information to help connect eligible youth and families with available supports.

YEHP has started expanding its efforts to educate ODHS' 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 Support Staff, Benefit and Eligibility teams, Family Coaches, Child Welfare Caseworkers, Community Partnership Coordinators to Lead Workers and 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. In just the past six months, YEHP has delivered 13 trainings to more than 1,800 ODHS staff.

In addition to outreach and training, YEHP has focused on improving how internal staff access guidance, resources, and protocols related to its programming. A major step forward has been the launch of a new internal Our Work Link (OWL) page. This intranet resource provides ODHS employees with centralized access to information about the YEHP team, local grant partners, program initiatives, and relevant tools. It serves as a hub for staff to find content and deepen their understanding of YEHP's work more easily. As local ODHS staff often work directly with youth in the community, this improved access ensures they are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to deliver effective, youth-centered support.

## External

YEHP also maintains robust engagement with the following entities. These include, but are not limited to:

### Local

- Oregon Network of Host Home Organizations
- 15<sup>th</sup> Night Network in Lane County
- Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance's Youth and Young Adult Subcommittee
- Clackamas County Housing Services Group
- 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

### State-Level

- Alcohol & Drug Prevention Council
- System of Care Advisory Council
- Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee

## Conclusion

The 2023–2025 biennium marked a period of significant growth, reflection, and resilience for the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP). The past year, in particular, was shaped by substantial uncertainty. YEHP faced the real possibility of a significant (85%) reduction in funding, which created instability not only for the program itself, but also for local service providers and the youth they serve. With previous funding being primarily short-term in nature, the months leading up to the final legislative decisions were marked by concern and limited clarity about future resources. Funding was not secured until June 2024, underscoring the need for long-

term stability to avoid disruptions in critical services.

Despite these challenges, YEHP continued to advance its mission. The program took meaningful steps to better understand and address youth homelessness in Oregon through a more coordinated, youth-informed, and equity-centered approach. These efforts led to expanded access to shelter and transitional housing, the successful continuation and scaling of direct cash transfer pilots, deeper engagement with youth through the Youth Action Board, and stronger collaboration across ODHS program areas.

At the same time, persistent challenges remain—particularly related to data infrastructure and the implications of shifting federal policy. The lessons learned this biennium emphasize the ongoing need for sustainable investment in both services and system-level improvements, ensuring youth across Oregon can access stable housing, support, and opportunities for long-term well-being.

YEHP is committed to building on this foundation by continuing to implement strategic improvements, elevate youth voice, and foster cross-sector partnerships. With continued legislative support and collaboration across agencies and communities, YEHP remains dedicated to improving outcomes and ensuring every young person in Oregon has a path to stability and success.

## Success Stories

### Outreach & Drop-In:

*“Oh my gosh! This is such a blessing! Now I can just focus on getting my GED done and then going to college after because my advisor told me I pretty much just need to make it to credit classes when it comes to rent and there will be more help for me when I'm actually taking credit classes! Thank you so much! You have no idea what this means to me and [my kitties], or you probably do because you help people in similar situations a lot probably. I've struggled with homelessness for 8 years and this is the first place where I've been able to stay, without bad roommates, for longer than a year! I've been so nervous that the same patterns will repeat, housing is really hard to get and stay in in Oregon ... I just am so grateful.”*

- Student helped by the Outreach Housing Navigator at 15<sup>th</sup> Night

### Crisis:

*P, a 14yr old male identifying youth, left home due to a conflict with mom which left him feeling frustrated. Having nowhere to go, his McKinney Vento Liaison referred him to Safe Place (SP) and he stopped by after school instead of returning home as was expected. Safe Place worked with P and his family to provide him with safety, shelter, basic needs, and healthy recreation for 6 nights of Basic Center (shelter) programming.*

*During this time, P identified his best friend, his grandparents, and his mother (sometimes) as the supportive people in his life. Staff worked with P to create a plan to utilize these supports to build situational resilience when he is feeling the need for greater connection and discussed how these individuals could provide a safety net if he needed space as an alternative to running away.*

*While at SP, P maintained active participation at school and established connections with a local outreach team. After 6 nights in shelter, P returned home to his mother's house with more natural connections and a plan to utilize his self-identified resources for safety and shelter should he need a break in the future.*

- Boys & Girls Aid Society

### Medium-Term Housing:

*M was referred to ARCS by his community college basic needs hub when they discovered he was living in a tent with 5 other people while pursuing his education. Malik came to the US as a refugee, fleeing religious persecution. He struggles with PTSD and night terrors as a result of the horrific events he has endured to get to where he is today. His goal is to pay it forward as an immigration lawyer and legal advocate for others seeking a brighter future.*

*He is now nearing completion of his AA and is preparing to transfer to a 4-year college, maintaining honor roll standing while working part time. He was able to visit family last summer for the first time in many years and was tearful in sharing how profound the experience was for him. His family, friends, and community are all so very proud of his accomplishments. He feels a personal commitment to succeed knowing he has so many supporting his success; be it through ARCS and CHNW, his school, his co-workers, and friends, in addition to those he left behind.*

- College Housing Northwest

### Host Homes:

*[We] received a referral from a local high school when a student's housing situation became unstable. The youth had been staying with a family member to complete her senior year, while her mother and sister lived out of state. When that arrangement fell through, the school reached out for support. The student spoke limited English, and her mother spoke even less. Staff partnered closely with the school and its translation team to ensure clear communication and care planning. We were able to place the youth with a Host Family where one parent was bilingual, offering much-needed language support and stability. With her basic needs met and a safe place to stay, the youth thrived—excelling in her classes and displaying a noticeably more positive attitude, as reported by her school team. Her goal was to reunite with her mother and sister after graduation.*

*Thanks to the generosity of volunteers, funds were raised to purchase a plane ticket, allowing her to return home. During her stay, the youth built a strong bond with her Host Family, participating in family events and learning life skills like cooking and doing her own laundry. Most notably, she successfully graduated from high school—an achievement she is proud of and that her support team celebrated alongside her.*

- Hearts with a Mission

### **Culturally-Specific Services (DCT+):**

*A Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) trip allowed youth of color to learn about educational institutions that align with their lived experiences and have the resources to support their educational goals. Participants engaged in enriching experiences that celebrated cultural heritage, promoted healing from racial trauma, and created opportunities for meaningful mentorship and personal growth within a supportive community setting. The HBCU trip provided clients and staff with culturally-specific activities designed to affirm Black identities, foster pride, and strengthen connections to historically Black institutions.*

*An incredible success story occurred while we were in Atlanta on our tour. One of our clients was able to reconnect with his sister that he hadn't seen since he was 8. They were able to eat dinner together, grow closer and he got to meet his nieces and nephews for the first time. This student was so inspired by the college campus and atmosphere, he came back to Portland and enrolled in PCC. He starts this summer with the plan to obtain enough credits to transfer to Morehouse in the Spring of 2026.*

*The DC trip was impactful because, we took 3 black men that have never the state of Oregon who have never left the state. We took them to the blackest city. During this trip we saw in live time the changes of our youth and growing their understanding of blackness, more specifically a black man.*

- Outside In

### **Direct Cash Transfer (DCT+):**

- *DCT gave me the chance to breath and think clearly in order to heal and transform into the person I am today and put me on the path to become the person I aspire to be.*
- *DCT has helped me pay my bills in a way that feels a little more independent and allowed me to take my little family on one small vacation away from home over the summer after saving what we could from paying bills. We've been able to pay off debts and stay housed for 18+ months in our own apartment. Thanks to DCT, we were able to afford to get our son some of the clothes he needed as he grew. We've been able to feel human enough to afford things. That speaks volumes.*
- *I left sex work, and I was able to focus on healing myself, pay for school expenses, and begin putting the work in starting a small beaded earring and art business*

- *I knew that no matter what happened to me, that I would be able to have a safe place to live and eat every day.*
- *I can eat without missing rent.*
- *DCT has given me a strong sense of purpose, a strong sense of understanding how to manage my money and getting me out of the crisis mode.*
- *DCT Payments have allowed us to be stably housed while figuring out mental health issues, finding my partner stable employment, and caring for our son.*
- *This program has really changed my life and I'll forever be grateful to have been part of it. While in this program I was able to pay off a lot of my debt, I was able to pay my bills on time each month and also with the extra buy my essentials.*
- *DCT has been a very big support to my family. As a single mother it has allowed me to focus on my children and get to know their needs better. It has kept us afloat. The extra cash and support has been a blessing.*
- *The DCT program offered me some financial stability to be able to afford getting into housing and maintaining housing; as well as personal needs until I finished schooling and obtained a well-paying employer.*
- *With the help of DCT I learned to get comfortable and stable and learn more about saving financially. I'm grateful because I don't think I've been able to be that stable in my entire life and I want to strive to work for that on my own now.*

#### **Direct Cash Transfer as Prevention (DCT-P):**

- *I believe that based upon the support myself and my family received from the DCT program. We were given a strong start to living in our own home and because of the support we received. We will be able to fully support ourselves in the future; the time we were given to catch up with expenses. Was invaluable to us and we are grateful to the program for its support.*
- *The DCT-P funds helped me to pay my bills on time when I was dealing with a financial mix up with my employer. It allowed me to get all my needs taken care of so I wouldn't need to go into debt or worry about not having access to basic needs.*
- *DCT-P was incredibly impactful for us in terms of being able to find housing, thanks to the DCT funds we were able to find an apartment and pay for our deposit, first months rent, and still have some left over for some cushioning, we were able to use some of the funding to fix parts of our car, as well as buy some things for our new home like a vacuum, and necessary personal items we had been struggling to get after being homeless for so long, like clothes, and shoes. DCT was the push we needed in order to feel more secure and confident in our ability to utilize these services to stabilize ourselves.*

*Being able to offer DCT-P, a low barrier, quick to access source of funds, for youth facing housing crisis,*

*has relieved so many barriers to providing case management to clients when we launched the pilot.*

*Instead of spending hours trying to cobble together resources from five different agencies, I was able to quickly offer a client a solution that would put the power back into their hands for knowing their needs. The only drawback to this program is that it was a pilot with finite funds. I think DCT as a concept is the direction we need to go toward for the world of youth social services, for both caseworkers and youth participants.*

- Olivia G., Trained Provider (Lane County)

### **Youth Action Board:**

*I wanted to inform the YEHP team and the YAB that I am currently facing a lot of positive change. Hearts With a Mission promoted me to the Transitional Living Program Case Manager for Josephine County. I am super honored and excited for this opportunity, and with it I will be having a larger workload. Along with my promotion, I am attending college at Rogue Community College to get my Associates in General Studies then transfer to Southern Oregon University to obtain a Political Science Degree. **The YEHP Tuition and Fee Waiver** helped me with this path.*

*As excited as I am to share this news, I am worried that with these changes I will not have capacity to continue my membership on the Youth Action Board. While at home and not doing homework, I need to focus on my very active 5-year-old son and husband. I want to express my gratitude for being given the opportunity to be part of this Youth Action Board and all the experiences I have had to learn, grow, and collaborate with not only state employees and processes, but also with youth around the state of Oregon who also have lived experience with youth homelessness. **Being a member of the YAB has empowered me, built my confidence, and given me hope for not only my future, but also the future of our state's homeless youth.***

*I am very grateful to have had this experience with you all. While I may not be a member of the Youth Action Board anymore I still would like to stay in touch. I plan to make a reappearance someday working for the State of Oregon. The YEHP team helped paint this amazing path for my future. **Thank you for believing in me.***

- YAB Member

## **For more information**

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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF  
**Human Services**