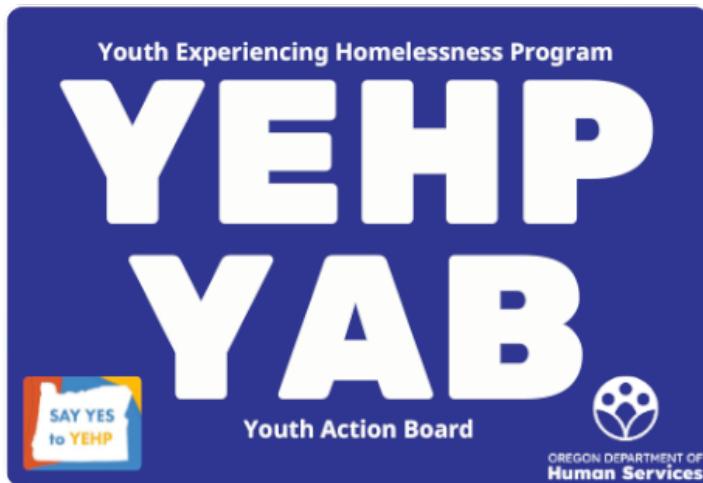


# Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

## Youth Action Board

### 2025 Quarter 4 Report



Tina Kotek, Governor

Supporting well-being for everyone in Oregon

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## Executive summary

Working alongside the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP), the YEHP Youth Action Board (YAB) plays a vital role in amplifying youth voices, bridging the gap between youth and services, and advancing initiatives that support young people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness across Oregon. This quarterly report documents the progress of the YEHP YAB in creating positive change within youth-facing services across Oregon, recognizing the YAB's accomplishments and challenges in the ongoing journey towards stability for Oregon's youth.

In Q4 2025 (Oct. 1, 2025, through Dec. 31, 2025), the YAB made progress in increasing the board's capacity, expanding partnerships, legislative pursuits, and uplifting youth voice. The YAB successfully completed its first completely youth-led recruitment cycle, bringing the board to nine active members in eight counties, representing almost all major regions of Oregon. Engagement increased, with average meeting attendance rising by 14% from Q3 2025, demonstrating board members' strong commitment to the work.

The YAB informed SSP staff about the significance and potential outcomes of authentically engaging with youth during the ODHS Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) Policy Analyst Hours, made improvements to the YEHP audit focus group process to facilitate conversations with youth receiving services, contributed to hiring decisions in YEHP interview panels, and more. The YAB also strengthened existing partnerships through work with the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC), ODHS social media, and Maslow Project.

From a staff perspective, the recent availability of direct deposit for monthly board member payments was a major operational improvement, addressing a long-standing request from youth to increase accessibility and timeliness for members' monthly payments. Challenges centered around onboarding new members, scheduling conflicts for meetings with partners, and coordinating plans for an in-person engagement. These challenges are currently being addressed to ensure opportunities for YAB members are accessible and tailored to the unique needs of board members.

The YEHP YAB is excited to continue to strengthen partnerships, work on the YAB's official recommendations, gather client feedback from YEHP's grantees, and more in Q1 2026.

## Membership and demographics

In Q4, the YAB completed its recruitment cycle to expand the board from six to nine board members. The first group onboarding session was held in late October, and by mid-December, three candidates had completed their trial month, evaluations, and accepted offers to join the board. One candidate did not move forward, and work is underway to determine next steps.

The following table lists the details of the nine active members as of Dec. 31, 2025.

**YAB member demographics**

Member code	Age	Race/ethnicity	Location	Member since
YAB001	18	Pacific Islander	Lane County	July 2023
YAB002	20	French, Hispanic, African American	Lane County	June 2023
YAB003	20	White	Jackson County	October 2024
YAB004	20	Latino, White	Multnomah County	October 2024
YAB008	23	White	Deschutes County	October 2024
YAB009	17	Native American, White	Coos County	November 2023
YAB011	18	White	Coos County	October 2025
YAB012	17	White	Linn County	October 2025
YAB013	21	Hispanic, Latino	Crook County	October 2025

## Funding

The board operates on a \$120,000 biennial budget from YEHP's general funds. Each quarter, expenditures are expected to equal approximately \$15,000, as shown below:

Max Capacity: 10 youth \* Max Hours: 10 hr/youth = 100 hr/month

Hourly Wage: \$50/hour \* 100 hr = \$5,000/month

\$5,000 \* 3 months = \$15,000

The following is the actual breakdown of budget spent this quarter, organized by month:

Month	Total hours worked	Total expenditures
October 2025	58.55	\$2937.50
November 2025	94.75	\$4647.50
December 2025	80.75	\$4037.50
<b>Quarter 4 expenditures total:</b>		<b>\$11,622.50</b>

Excess funding may go towards special projects allowing board members to exceed 10 hours of work per month, board member travel costs for future in-person events, or other board-related expenses.

YEHP introduced direct deposit as a payment option for YAB members. This change addresses a long-standing request and offers significant benefits, including faster processing, reduced risk of lost or stolen checks, and avoids mail delays. Timely access to payments helps youth cover expenses, reinforcing YEHP's commitment to building stability for youth with lived experience.

## Data

Multiple surveys have been developed for board members to gain insight into individual members' personal accomplishments, education, careers, housing, communities, and overall well-being. Survey completion for an individual board member starts with their onboarding and will be repeated every 6 months for the duration of their membership with the board, ending with an exit survey at the time of their resignation. These data will provide a clearer picture for YEHP staff and partners, demonstrating trends and the impacts of authentic youth engagement for both organizations and youth participants alike.

Collaboration is ongoing with members of the Research Analyst team to create a data dashboard for different aspects of these surveys. It is expected that data will be ready to be included in reports during Q1 2026.

## Reoccurring meetings

### Full group

- **YAB Regular Meeting**, every other Sunday from noon - 1:30 p.m.

### Assignment/volunteer based

- **YAB Newsletter Meeting**, every Sunday from 11 a.m. - noon, as needed
- **Youth Leadership Curriculum (YLC) Workgroup**, new schedule TBD
- **Oregon Direct Cash Transfers (DCT+) Core Meeting**, first Wednesday of each month from 1-2 p.m.

Schedule and attendance of regular YAB meetings in Q4:

Date	Time	Meeting type	Attendance
10/05/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting	5/6   83%
10/19/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Youth-Led Meeting	5/6   83%
11/02/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting	10/10   100%
11/16/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting	8/10   80%
12/14/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Youth-Led Meeting	9/10   90%
12/28/2025	Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Youth-Led Meeting	9/9   100%

## Ongoing work

During Q4, the YAB advanced several initiatives that contributed to YEHP's work and/or elevated the voices and experiences of youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon. The following points outline key areas of work in progress.

- **YEHP YAB newsletter:** The YAB publishes a youth-led newsletter every other month featuring YEHP and YAB updates, program information, and resources for youth statewide. By the end of Q4, three editions were published and distributed to an email list of 37 youth, service providers, and community members. The next edition of their newsletter can be expected in February 2026.
- **Legislative recommendations:** The YAB affirmed existing recommendations to align language and age range consistency throughout YEHP Statutes, as proposed by the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC). In addition, the YAB developed a new recommendation to secure two dedicated seats for youth with lived experience on the YEHAC. These efforts ensure youth perspectives inform policy decisions and that youth with lived experience are involved in conversations that directly impact them. Currently, the YAB is awaiting an update to determine if the recommendations are moving forward in an upcoming short session.
- **YEHP audits:** The YAB facilitates virtual focus groups with clients of YEHP-funded programs to gather feedback for YEHP's evaluation of these programs, which will ultimately allow service providers to make improvements that their clients are directly communicating a need for. Two focus groups have been facilitated by YAB members so far, with dozens more upcoming in 2026.

## Partnerships

The YAB aims to establish and maintain close partnerships with YEHP's internal and external partners to further uplift youth voice throughout programming. In Q4, the YEHP YAB advanced several key partnerships:

- **Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC):** In October, two YAB members presented a partnership proposal to YEHAC, which was positively received and ultimately agreed upon by YEHAC members. In December, the YAB returned to YEHAC to discuss partnership logistics and next steps. The YAB also proposed a recommendation to add two seats to YEHAC for youth with lived experience, addressing the current lack of youth representation on the committee. The recommendation was approved by YEHAC.
- **ODHS social media:** The YAB and ODHS social media established an approval process for content and the YAB began developing their first post: an introduction to the YEHP YAB.

The YAB will create the content, and the ODHS social media manager will format it for accessibility and branding. Their first post is expected for publication in Q1 2026.

- **Maslow Project:** The YAB continued collaborating with Maslow's youth advisory group to explore accessible alternatives to [NN4Y's Youth Action Leadership Certificate](#) in the Youth Leadership Curriculum (YLC) Workgroup. Monthly joint meetings had low attendance, prompting efforts to revise the schedule to align with participants' availability. A new schedule is being determined and will be finalized in early 2026.

## Highlights and challenges

### Highlights

- **Increased attendance and engagement:** The YAB demonstrated a significant increase in participation compared to the previous quarter. Average meeting attendance rose from 78% in Q3 to 89% in Q4. This trend suggests stronger youth commitment supported by the enhanced onboarding process, youth-led meetings, and increased opportunities for meaningful involvement in decision-making.
- **Professionalism training by former YAB member:** A former member returned to lead a session on professionalism with a focus on job applications and interview strategies. Drawing on her personal experience and current role as a case manager, she provided practical guidance on communication, professional behavior, and interview preparation. This training strengthens transferrable skills like communication, self-advocacy, and confidence, which are essential for YAB responsibilities and future career opportunities.
- **College acceptance for current YAB member:** One board member announced their acceptance to University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business with a full-ride scholarship. Having served on the YAB for over two years, this member has demonstrated leadership and initiative, exemplifying the long-term impact and outcomes that YEHP aspires to see for all members.

### Challenges

- **Onboarding new members:** With three youth onboarding, Q4 presented challenges in bringing new members up to speed on policies, procedures, and past initiatives. Additional support will continue in Q1 to ensure new members are up to date.

- **Scheduling and availability for additional meetings:** Many YAB members navigate work, school, and other personal commitments that limit weekday availability, reducing participation in meetings with partners who strictly revolve around a business week schedule, such as the YLC Workgroup with Maslow Project. YEHP's partners are highly encouraged to utilize flexible scheduling when working with the YAB, but not all organizations are able to commit to evening or weekend availability. YEHP will continue to work with partners and the YAB to find realistic solutions to scheduling issues.
- **Coordination for in-person meeting:** YAB members value in-person connection, as demonstrated by YAB feedback from the Point Source Youth Innovation Summit in January of 2025. Scheduling complexities and barriers around statewide travel for members have delayed planning, however, YEHP is exploring options to overcome these barriers to prioritize an in-person opportunity for the YAB. The YAB has expressed that in-person work encourages team building and serves as motivation to increase their impact for youth across the state.

## Accomplishments

There were several significant projects or initiatives that were completed in Q4, highlighting the steady progress the YAB demonstrates through their work.

- **YEHP YAB expansion:** The YAB successfully completed a recruitment cycle, interviewing eight applicants after developing the interview process and scoring criteria from the ground up. Four candidates entered a month-long probationary (or "trial") period following onboarding, with three advancing to full membership. This brings the board to nine dedicated members in eight counties across Oregon.
- **YEHP audits:** The YAB continued to partner with YEHP to facilitate focus groups with youth receiving services from YEHP grantees as a part of YEHP's new audit process. After facilitating a couple focus groups, the board decided to revise focus group questions to capture authentic experiences from clients, providing YEHP with more actionable insights for program evaluation and improvement. YAB members emphasize that this work allows them to empower other young people to use their voices and make a change, which is deeply meaningful work and a major accomplishment for the YAB.

- **ODHS YEHP hiring panel:** YAB members participated in hiring panels for three YEHP permanent staff positions: Operations and Program Analyst 2, Program Analyst 2, and Program Analyst 3. They were actively involved in scoring applicants and sitting in on interviews, ensuring youth perspective informed the staff selection process.
- **Presentation at SSP Policy Analyst Hours:** A current board member collaborated with the Strategic Youth Engagement Coordinator to develop and lead a presentation titled *“Engaging with the Youth Action Board in Policy and Practice”* during YEHP’s SSP Policy Analyst Hours. The session highlighted the YAB’s history, purpose, and work, offered strategies for organizations to authentically engage with youth, and shared examples of how uplifting youth experience has advanced YEHP’s initiatives and created more accessible services for youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon.

## Trainings

In Q4, the YAB participated in several relevant training sessions. This section includes details about each training and their significance to board members and their work, as written directly from board members who participated in the training session.

### Training 1: Collaboration Through Candid Conversation

“This training taught me that tough conversations are going to happen, especially when people care about the outcome; avoiding conflict usually makes things harder. I thought about my own experiences and learned that different styles, like being aggressive, avoidant, or cooperative, can change how people communicate and work together. I also learned how important it is to create a safe space, actively listen, and remain being cooperative while also being assertive so any disagreement can turn into a productive conversation. I think that applying these skills will help our board because it can allow us to work better with each other, respect different perspectives, and allow us to have an easier time speaking up for youth. If everyone uses these skills, we can continue to foster open discussions and come up with solutions that include every person's ideas and opinions.”

## **Training 2: The Science of Boosting Your Emotional Intelligence**

"I found the science of emotional intelligence training to be very interesting and informative. Emotional intelligence is based on the importance of recognizing yours or other people's emotions and knowing how to understand and manage them. Some ideas for this may include incorporating mindfulness exercises into your daily life such as meditation and or body scans to help acknowledge your self-awareness and self-regulation. You can also learn how to enrich your emotional vocabulary and understanding to express yourself and learn about the emotions in others. Having emotional intelligence skills can also improve your relationships and social interactions within work or school which is very important for yours and others well-being within daily life."

## **Training 3: Professionalism and Job Interview Preparation**

"The YAB welcomed a former YEHP YAB member as a guest speaker to present a training on professionalism in the workplace during one of our board meetings. This training provided insight into how to dress, prepare for, and be interviewed. Behaviors such as speech and personal presentation were reviewed, and YAB members were given specific examples of what 'good' and 'bad' professionalism looks like in the workplace. The style of dress for professional settings was reviewed, specifically the differences between business casual and business professional, and the circumstances under which to utilize each style. The speaker went over the general job interview process, what kinds of questions will be asked during an interview, as well as how to respond to those questions in a professional manner. Members were also reminded of the importance of their online presence and how it could impact their future employment opportunities."

Upcoming training sessions for Q1 include legislative and interpersonal communication training in preparation for an in-person visit to Oregon's Capitol in early 2026.

## **Support for YAB members**

Supporting youth action board members extends beyond professional development. Many participants with current or past experiences of homelessness may require additional personal support to meet expectations and thrive in their roles. YEHP has found that when members feel

supported and empowered to seek help, they engage more actively and find their work to be more meaningful. The following highlights the personal support YEHP provided to YAB members during Q4 2025.

One YAB member leveraged YEHP's existing partnership with DevNW, a YEHP grantee, to enroll in their Youth Financial Foundations course, which will allow them to gain essential financial education and place them on the waitlist for an Individual Development Account (IDA). Through this account, DevNW matches participant savings up to three times, helping participants build long-term financial stability. With free access to this program, this young person will be able to build confidence with managing their personal finances, a valuable skillset for their future stability. All YEHP YAB members have free access to this financial education program as a result of YEHP and DevNW's partnership.

Additionally, YEHP supported a YAB member facing legal challenges related to healthcare access, which resulted in difficulty covering rent after paying out-of-pocket medical expenses. YEHP connected them with 15th Night, a local YEHP grantee, who provided rental assistance and linked them to legal support to address the underlying issue. Addressing this young person's situation will allow them to work towards resolving an issue that has been a stressor for multiple years, giving them the space to contribute positively to their overall well-being, focusing on their personal life and education.

## Youth updates

For this section, YEHP YAB members have been asked to contribute any specific quotes or information they would like ODHS SSP leadership to consider, illustrating the value and/or impact of their participation within the YEHP Youth Action Board.

“Since joining the YAB during the October onboarding, I felt that my confidence participating in youth-led activities has grown significantly, and I have a much greater understanding of what it looks like to work in a peer-focused environment.”

“This position has affected how much positive impact I believe I can make towards my community. If I propose an idea, I am heard and I see the results within the board. I am eager to see how the results of our work perpetuate a positive outcome across Oregon.”

“When we started the hiring process for new members in October, I was able to participate in the interviews and onboarding. To me it felt rewarding to participate and have a voice which affected our group for the better. By allowing the youth board to have oversight when it comes to the board recruitment process, we are then able to have a team that equally shares the values and commitments we abide by.”

## Proposed next steps

### Priorities for Q1 2026

- Coordinate in-person **State Capitol visit**
- Finalize initial youth action board member **data dashboard**
- Uplift YEHP YAB members to **facilitate additional meetings** and training sessions

### Legislative goals

- Continue work on **official recommendations** affirmed and proposed by the YEHP YAB