

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Youth Action Board Quarterly Report

Quarter 1, 2026 | January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026

**YEHP
YAB**

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Executive summary

Working alongside the ODHS 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 service providers, and advancing initiatives that support young people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness across Oregon. Established in 2023, the YEHP YAB is a group of youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness working to create meaningful change for youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon through advising ODHS and partners on the priorities and needs of youth with lived experience. The YAB is currently staffed by a full-time Strategic Youth Engagement Coordinator (SYEC). This report serves as a high-level overview of the YEHP YAB’s accomplishments, recommendations, and work in Q1 2026.

Membership

YAB membership remains at 9 actively engaged youth with no shifts occurring this quarter. The current age range of YAB members is 17 to 24 years old. Youth currently reside in seven counties across Oregon: Multnomah, Linn, Lane, Coos, Jackson, Deschutes, and Crook Counties.

Activities and engagement

Meetings

There were six regular board meetings held virtually in Q1, with an average rate of 92% of YAB members in attendance. Regular board meetings are a place for YAB members and the SYEC to share program updates, collaborate, discuss ODHS priorities, and more. Regular board meetings rotate between being led by the SYEC and being led by youth.

Presentations and trainings

YAB members facilitated five presentations, including an “Adulthood in Social Services” workshop, an introduction to the YAB, information about Tuition and Fee Waivers for youth experiencing homelessness, and a summary of the YAB’s 2025 annual report.

In-person opportunities

On March 5th, YAB members gathered in-person in Salem, OR. Here, the YAB met for team building, planning, and developing materials for their work. Youth met with YEHP staff and Claire Seguin, SSP Director, to learn about ODHS structural changes and develop relationships across teams. With assistance and coordination from government relations, the YAB met legislators at the Capitol to form connections based on common interests within their work.

Partnerships

The YAB advanced work with existing partners, including collaborating with Maslow Project on the Youth Leadership Curriculum, supporting the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Advisory Committee (YEHAC) through committee participation, and working with ODHS social media.

In terms of new connections, the Oregon Alliance is sponsoring a YAB member to attend an upcoming conference focusing on youth and families. Additionally, the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Affinity Workgroup requested a presentation by YAB to learn more about their work. Lastly, conversations between the SYEC and ODHS communications suggest a possible media opportunity for the YAB focused on Tuition and Fee Waivers.

Key projects

YEHP YAB newsletter

In February, the YAB published the 4th issue of the YEHP YAB Newsletter. This issue featured an overview of the YAB, resources for youth experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability, and events for youth in Oregon. The YAB Newsletter now has 63 subscribers, gained through YAB members promoting the project to peers, community members, and audiences at their presentations. Increasing the number of subscribers is a priority for YAB in Q2.

YEHP audit focus groups

YAB members work with the YEHP Community and Partner Support Analyst on audits to facilitate conversations with young people who are currently receiving services from YEHP grantees to learn about their experiences with the grantee's programming, staff, and more. Youth-led spaces encourage open and honest communication from clients, fostering a safe space for youth to contribute meaningful feedback towards improving service delivery.

Youth recommendations

In Q1, the YAB wrote a letter of support for the "Say Less for YEHP" concept, which proposes consistent age ranges defining "Youth", and correcting outdated language and references in

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) pertaining to YEHP. The letter highlights inequities associated with the current ORS and outlines how proposed adjustments would better serve historically underserved populations of youth.

It also addresses the YAB's 2025 recommendation to require two seats for youth with lived experience on the YEHAC. After establishing a partnership with YEHAC, it became clear to both groups that youth voice was lacking. The YEHAC has welcomed two YAB members to participate in meetings – but both groups see the value in guaranteed space for youth.

Impact

In Q1, YAB members contributed over 260 hours towards meetings, presentations, training, and projects. Youth who had previously been less engaged in opportunities demonstrated increased participation and interest. According to youth feedback, in-person work opportunities strengthened engagement, improved rapport between YAB members and ODHS, and offered a new perspective to their work.

YAB members also bring a unique understanding of the complexities of youth homelessness in their communities. Their lived expertise allows them to connect with other youth experiencing homelessness in meaningful ways. Through the YAB's outreach, YEHP has been able to connect several youth to supportive services, including housing, across the state. While these stories can be difficult to quantify, they highlight the significant value of YAB members' community engagement and their role in guiding peers towards safety, stability and support.

Success stories

YAB achievements extend beyond collective progress. Authentic youth engagement means highlighting the successes that young people experience throughout their involvement.

One founding YAB member is approaching a major milestone after years of housing instability. After months in an emergency shelter, they have been accepted to college in their preferred community and worked with the SYEC to build a plan to get there. Coordination

between YEHP and several partner organizations led to stable housing being secured in a youth-prioritized complex with a sponsor onboard to support the youth's housing and educational costs. Just weeks away from moving into their own apartment, this young person will soon be able to enjoy some stability to focus on gaining employment and beginning college in the fall.

Another YAB member recently helped a classmate experiencing homelessness connect with YEHP, resulting in the youth securing temporary housing through Looking Glass Community Services' PEER Shelter. The YAB member remains in contact with their classmate, offering ongoing support as they navigate school while working towards stable, permanent housing.

Upcoming priorities

In Q2 and beyond, the YEHP YAB intends to work on several focus areas including administrative needs, outreach, legislative work, and strengthening partnerships.

Specifically, the YAB hopes to:

- Update the YEHP YAB Manual to reflect updated policies and procedures
- Continue collaboration with ODHS social media to increase the public awareness about youth experiencing homelessness and the YEHP YAB
- Build skills in interpreting and analyzing legislation, building a framework to sort high-priority legislation from low-priority legislation for youth experiencing homelessness
- Continue to facilitate client focus groups for YEHP audits, increasing the number of YAB members who are trained in focus group facilitation
- Improve outreach to community partners through the newsletter, inviting guests into regular board meetings, promoting work requests, and more

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