



Oregon

Governor Kate Brown

Housing and Community Services

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Report to the 80th Legislative Assembly: Rent Guarantee Program Report

September 11, 2020

In 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed [House Bill 2724](#), which enacted the Rent Guarantee Program (RGP)¹. The program provides incentives and financial assistance to landlords that rent or lease to low-income households with high barriers to attaining housing, by guaranteeing payments to landlords for unpaid rent, eviction and property damage costs. The maximum payment amount per landlord is \$5,000, of which up to \$2,000 may be unpaid rent.

The program is currently operating without designated administration funds and is using other funds to supplement OHCS' administrative oversight of the program. The program received a one-time general fund allocation for landlord payments of \$125,000.

In 2019, the Oregon Legislature passed [House Bill 2006](#), to support or develop programs that build on successful strategies that help individuals obtain and retain housing. Tenant education services for low-income tenants, including the Rent Guarantee Program, was identified as one of these strategies. OHCS has dedicated \$65,000 to this effort of which \$55,000 is allocated for landlord payments and \$10,000 is allocated for limited administrative funds to cover the costs of tenant education materials, restricted to a cost of \$10 per student. These additional funds are being used to expand the program into counties that are not currently covered by the program. Providers responding to the current Request for Application will be selected this month.

Progress

The program is operated by 10 providers that cover 17 counties throughout the state.² Providers communicate and perform outreach to landlords to increase their willingness to rent to tenants who have rental barriers, such as poor credit history, eviction history or criminal history or have been a ward of the state, but have gone through the program's tenant readiness education course.

Tenant readiness education includes topics on:

- a) Landlord/Tenant Law
- b) The Application and Screening Process
- c) Understanding a Rental or Lease Agreement
- d) Personal Finance, Budgeting, How Credit Reports are Used
- e) Energy Conservation
- f) Fair Housing Rights and Responsibilities
- g) What Makes a Good Tenant and Communicating With Your Landlord
- h) Barriers to Obtaining Housing

¹ Appendix A – RGP Factsheet

² Appendix B – Program Provider List



- i) Tips for Moving In and Moving Out
- j) Care and Maintenance of Your Unit and Maintenance Responsibilities
- k) Termination Notices
- l) Recovering your Deposit

Since the inception of the program, 2,142 tenants have completed tenant readiness education and 1,905 were provided Rent Guarantee Certificates. Currently, 94 guarantees have been issued for the program and 46 households have had stable housing for 12 months, while only 6 landlords have submitted requests for assistance. The remaining households are still actively participating in the program.³

The COVID pandemic has significantly impacted the ability to deliver the tenant education component of this program. Due to social distancing requirement throughout the state, many providers have been unable to hold in-person education classes and currently no online platform for this education is available, which has halted the program's activity.

HB 2006 also identified additional strategies such as technological innovations and other education, services or resources that will help low-income individuals and families find and access available housing. OHCS is dedicating a portion of these dollars to Transition Projects to address the need for an online platform of tenant readiness education. Transition Projects provides the Rent Well curriculum that is used by six of the program's 10 providers and is developing an eCourse platform for both mobile devices and personal computers that would allow Rent Well to create fully engaging and interactive eCourses, helping to mitigate the delivery of these services during the COVID pandemic and beyond. Roll out of this web and mobile project is expected by March, 2021.

Challenges

HB 2724 included two restrictions within the program. One was that "Financial assistance paid under the program to a landlord is limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per landlord." The second was that "...unpaid rent is limited to a maximum of \$2,000 per eligible tenant". These restrictions were originally included as a way to showcase that Rent Guarantee funds would not be abused by landlords; however, the program is vastly different than the Housing Choice Landlord Guarantee Program, for which this program was modeled. Provider engagement at the beginning of the tenancy and continued case management throughout the first year, along with the requirement of the tenant readiness education are significant markers for tenant success and low claim rates.

These restrictions reduce the number of landlords that are available to the program and restrict the amount of funds that could be used for unpaid rent. With rents for a 2 bedroom unit exceeding \$1,000 in many communities, having a restriction on the amount of rent that could be a part of a landlord's request increases the likelihood of eviction, while restricting the total a landlord could ever receive to \$5,000 reduces the pool of landlords willing to take a chance on

³ Appendix C - Rent Guarantee Program Dashboard

multiple tenants with high barriers to housing. For improved use and efficacy of this program, removal of these restrictions is critical. OHCS will introduce a legislative concept during the 2021 legislative session that will propose removing these restrictions and increase landlord participation with the program.

The program currently operates without administrative funds. Providers deliver tenant education with trained staff in areas with enough space to teach up to 20 individuals at a time, as well as print extensive materials that tenants may use for years to come. Providers also outreach to landlords and execute agreements, while providing ongoing case management to tenants. In addition, administering, reporting and monitoring of the program requires staff time by OHCS. This program would benefit from a biennial allocation of administrative funds to be shared with providers.

Next Steps

Next steps and recommendations have been identified. They include:

- Select additional providers throughout the state through the open solicitation;
- Remove program restrictions to increase the number of participating landlords with the legislative concept introduced in the 2021 legislative session;
- Seek administrative funds to off-set costs of the program; and
- Continue outreach and education efforts to ensure that landlords and tenants are aware of the Rent Guarantee Program and its benefits to both tenants and landlords.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Rent Guarantee Program Factsheet

Appendix B – Rent Guarantee Program Provider List

Appendix C – Rent Guarantee Program Dashboard September 9, 2020

OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Rent Guarantee Program (RGP)

Program Fact Sheet

Program Summary

The Rent Guarantee Program provide incentives and financial assistance to landlords that rent or lease to low income households by guaranteeing payments to landlords for unpaid rent and for eviction and property damage costs.

CONTACT:

To talk with someone about resources and services in your local area or county, contact your local community action agency at: <https://caporegon.org/find-services/>
Information is also available through <http://www.211info.org> or by call "211".

Services Provided

Landlords who have had a tenant vacate or has been evicted due to non-compliance of a lease/rental agreement within the first 12 months of occupancy may submit a claim for reimbursement for unpaid rent and damages that exceed the tenant's security deposit and up to the limit of the Rent Guarantee Amount.

The maximum Rent Guarantee amount available is \$2,000 for unpaid rent and total financial assistance paid under the program to a landlord is limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per landlord.

Payment of financial assistance is contingent on the landlord's submission of a complete and accurate reimbursement request within 30 days of the date the tenant vacates the dwelling or is evicted, and upon verification of damages by the Program Provider and available funding.

Damages may include:

- Unpaid rent (up to \$2,000);
- Damages beyond the normal wear and tear of tenant occupancy cause by tenant;
- Expenses related to removal of excessive debris left by tenant, including disposal fees;
- Eviction costs include court filing fees, attorney fees, and serving of notice;
- Damages by pets or service animals included on the tenant's rental agreement

Tenant Eligibility Requirements

Participating tenants, must have a total household annual income no greater than 60% of the area's median income for their size of household, must experience specific barriers to obtaining housing (e.g.; have been a ward of the state, poor credit history, criminal history or eviction history), must successfully complete a Tenant Readiness Education course, be residents of Oregon, and may be homeless or unstably housed and at-risk of homelessness.

Tenant Readiness Education

Participating tenants successfully complete a Tenant Readiness Education course that extends over multiple weeks and covers the following areas:

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- Landlord/Tenant Law
- The Application and Screening Process
- Understanding a Rental or Lease Agreement
- Personal Finance, Budgeting, How Credit Reports are Used
- Energy Conservation
- Fair Housing Rights and Responsibilities
- What Makes a Good Tenant and Communicating With Your Landlord
- Barriers to Obtaining Housing
- Tips for Moving In and Moving Out
- Care and Maintenance of Your Unit and Maintenance Responsibilities
- Termination Notices
- Recovering your Deposit

Landlord Eligibility Requirements

Participating landlords must be an owner of a dwelling unit that has entered into a 12-month rental or lease agreement with a tenant and has entered into a Rent Guarantee Program agreement with a participating Program Provider

Program Providers

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) makes funds available to Program Providers who successfully complete a Request for Application and who:

- Have experience providing tenant readiness education sufficient to provide tenant training and certification or current partnership with organization to provide such training and certification;
- Have experience placing persons in low income households into permanent housing;
- Have experience working collaboratively with local landlords and service providers; and
- Demonstrate the organizational capacity to administer the program, including the ability to track data and performance measure outcomes and to timely process requests for payments of financial assistance

Program Funding

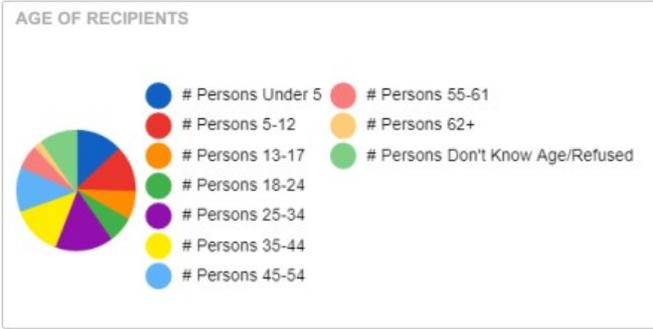
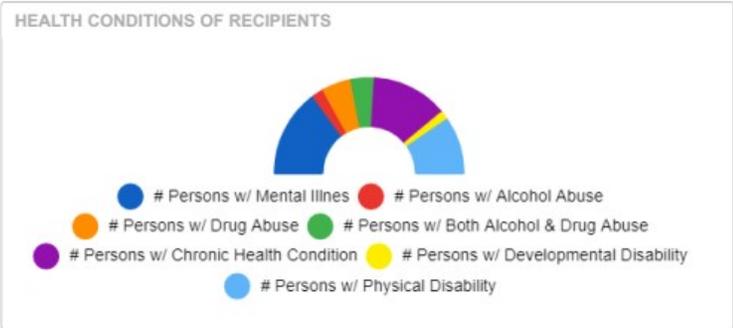
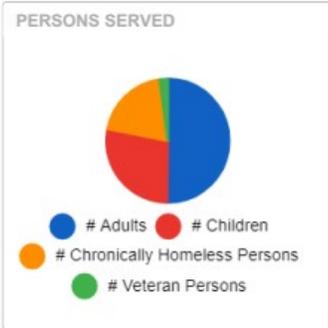
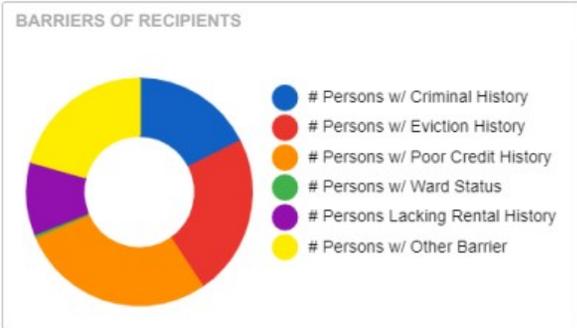
RGP is funded through the legislatively approved state general funds.

RENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM PROVIDERS

Agency	Address	County(ies) to be Served	Curriculum
ACCESS https://www.accesshelps.org/	PO Box 4666 Medford, OR 97501	Jackson	Ready to Rent
CAO (Community Action Organization) https://caowash.org/	1001 SW Baseline St Hillsboro, OR 97123	Washington	Rent Well
CAPECO (Community Action Program of East Central Oregon) http://www.capeco-works.org/	721 SE 3 rd St Ste D Pendleton, OR 97801	Umatilla, Morrow, Wheeler, Gilliam	Better Renter
CCSSD (Clackamas County Social Services Division) http://www.clackamas.us/socialservices/	PO Box 2950 Oregon City, OR 97045	Clackamas	Rent Well
CinA (Community In Action) http://www.communityinaction.info/	915 SW 3 rd Ave Ontario, OR 97914	Harney, Malheur	Ready to Rent
CSC (Community Services Consortium) http://csc.gen.or.us/	250 Broadalbin St SW Albany, OR 97321	Linn, Benton, Lincoln	Rent Well
Laurel Hill Center http://www.laurel.org/	2145 Centennial Plaza Eugene, OR 97401	Lane	Ready to Rent
Transition Projects, Inc. http://rentwell.org/	665 NW Hoyt St Portland, OR 97209	Multnomah	Rent Well
UCAN (United Community Action Network) http://www.ucancap.org/	280 Kenneth Ford Dr Roseburg, OR 97470	Douglas, Josephine	Rent Well
YCAP (Yamhill County Action Partnerships) http://yamhillcap.org/	1317 Dustin Ct McMinnville, OR 97128	Yamhill	Rent Well



RENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM DASHBOARD



RACE OF RECIPIENTS

- # Persons: White: **99**
- # Persons: Black/AA: **16**
- # Persons: Asian: **2**
- # Persons: Alaskan Native: **9**
- # Persons: Native Hawaii/Other P.I.: **0**
- # Persons: Multiple Races: **23**
- # Persons Don't Know Race/Refused: **44**

OTHER RECIPIENT DATA

- # Persons w/ DV History: **51**
- # Persons Fleeing DV: **26**
- # Persons on SNAP: **103**
- # Persons on WIC: **8**

- ### PROVIDER INFORMATION
- Client Level Data
 - Provider TRE Input
 - Provider Request for Assistance
 - Provider/Landlord Agreement
 - Tenant Move Out Tracking
 - Program Manual
 - Client Self-Certification Form
 - RGP Invoice

[CLICK FOR HOME PAGE](#)

TENANT READINESS EDUCATION

- # Persons Referred to TRE: **4,853**
- # Persons No-Show for TRE: **1,742**
- # Persons Completing TRE: **2,142**
- # Persons Given a RGP Certificate: **1,905**
- # Guarantees Issued: **94**
- Current Potential Program Liability: **\$210,000**

CLAIMS

- # Claims Received: **6**
- # Claims Approved: **6**
- # Claims Denied: **0**
- Amount of Claims Paid:: **\$12,655.68**

Percentage of Claims

6%

of Households Stabilized 12 Months

Stable 12 Months: **46**

As of 09/09/2020

