



OHCS' Draft 2021-2023 Legislative Agenda Preliminary Stakeholder Survey Results

Background

Following a series of webinars to introduce OHCS' draft 2021-2023 legislative agenda, a survey was open to stakeholders to gauge support for and gather feedback on the proposed legislative concepts and investment requests. A robust survey, it provided space for high level, general feedback on the overall agenda approach as well as "in the weeds" feedback specific to concept development and eventual implementation. OHCS is readily using preliminary analysis and results of the survey to inform decisions on legislative concepts and investment requests that were "on the bubble" or placeholders. In addition, OHCS anticipates further detailed analysis of this valuable stakeholder feedback to be useful for months to come as they frame up additional stakeholder conversations and eventually move into implementation planning.

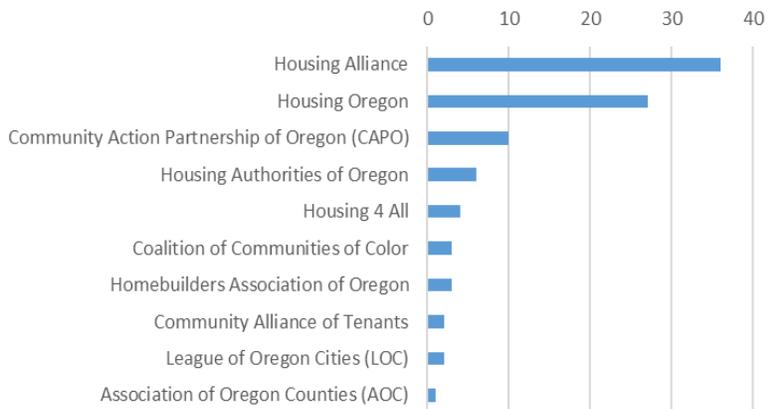
Respondents

80 surveys were submitted with 58 being completed in full. In addition to general overarching feedback questions, respondents could self-select areas of interest to respond to more specific questions. The survey was split into three primary programmatic sections—Housing Stabilization, Homeownership, and Affordable Rental Housing—with a fourth section to catch three legislative concepts that have potential Agency Wide application. Participation levels in these four areas was surprisingly consistent with completed survey sections from 36, 35, 31, and 35 respondents respectively for these four sections.

70% of the respondents were commenting as a representative of an affiliated organization. Of those respondents, 32 out of 56 self-identified as culturally specific or responsive providers with 20% serving Latino/a or Hispanic communities and 15% serving Black or African American communities.

In addition to 13 organizations providing services or representing stakeholders at a statewide level, there was organizational representation from all 36 Oregon counties. Of the 30% individual respondents, 16% identified as not white and 10 counties were represented. Among both those commenting as individuals and as a representative of an affiliated organization, there was a large response by those who self-identified as being part of Housing Alliance and Housing Oregon.

Survey Respondent Coalition Affiliation



Preliminary Summary

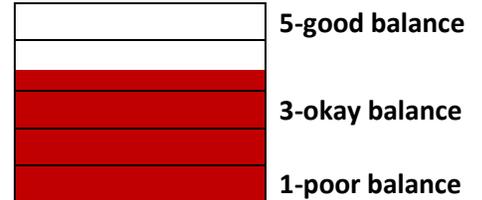
On the following pages is a summary of preliminary results from the survey. Specifically responses to the overall agenda approach, as well as the quantitative questions asked within each of the programmatic sections. These questions were on support of concept, potential for positive impact in your community, and a question that forced people to rank/prioritize the investment requests.

Proposed Agency Investments Overall

Striking the right balance: All proposed investments

Survey question: OHCS strives to work across a housing continuum, which ranges from ending/preventing homelessness to stable, affordable homeownership. On a scale from 1-5 with 1 being a poor balance and 5 being a good balance. Are OHCS' recommended new investments striking the right balance in meeting the foreseeable needs of Oregonians across the housing continuum in the next biennium?

70% of respondents felt OHCS is striking an okay balance in meeting foreseeable needs of Oregonians across the housing continuum in the next biennium with an average response of 3.3.



Striking the right balance: program specific call outs for changes in proposed investment levels (#) = number of discrete comments		
Decrease investment emphasis	Mixed feedback	Increase investment emphasis
<p><i>There were no programs called out exclusively to disinvestment; any that were in one comment, were encouraged to increase investment in another.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Development Account (4) • Preserving homeownership vs. Expanding homeownership (2) • AWHTC (2) • SOAR (2) • Energy Assistance (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homeownership development/inventory (11) • Expand homeownership, including with DPA (11) • Manufactured housing preservation (5) • Rent Assistance (4) • Preservation of affordable rental housing (2) • Manufactured housing replacements (2) • Foreclosure prevention (2)

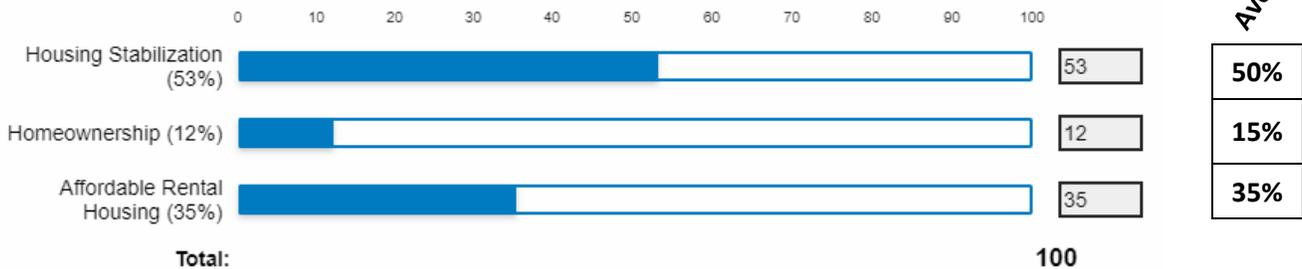
Additional frequent comments on how OHCS can improve the balance:

- **Racial equity:** Ensure investments across spectrum are used to dismantle racism and address racial disparities; direct investments into culturally responsive organizations and communities of color.
- **Rural:** Increase investments in rural areas, concern over disproportionate focus on urban areas.
- **Coordination:** Improve coordination for fund timing and with local jurisdictions; target state bond funding to those areas in the state where local governments are unable to issue bonds.
- **Homeownership:** Concern about disinvestment in homeownership and that these investments will negatively impact state tools for both preserving and expanding homeownership.
 - *Of the 56 respondents who provided written comment, 18 provided comments specific to needing to increase investments to maintain and expand homeownership.*
- **Data:** Need to fully understand how many people are served and the outcomes of these programs, especially as funding resources become increasingly constrained.

“OHCS is striking the right balance, unfortunately the need so far outstrips the resources that these recommendations won’t even scratch the surface of the problem.”

Striking the right balance: General Fund Investment Requests

Survey question: Considering only our new investment requests that rely on General Funds, are we striking the right balance in investments across the housing continuum? Percentage of total general fund requests are shown below, move the bars to show what percentage of our general fund investment request should go to each category area.



Approximately half of respondents left the General Fund investment requests as they are currently proposed. When considered in total, **the average allocations across respondents show that OHCS’ proposed balance between programmatic areas aligns with stakeholders overall—with the exception of a slight shift to decrease Housing Stabilization investments and increase Homeownership investments.** Indeed, of the 40 respondents that changed the investment request levels, 23 decreased the amount going to Housing Stabilization, while 20 increased the amount going to Homeownership.

“I agree that direct assistance to help stabilize the most vulnerable Oregonians is critical at this time—along with high-touch engagements to help folks access available federal and state resources. At the same time, we need to maximize opportunities to stabilize vulnerable renters and homeowners, while working to address our state’s well-documented shortfall of available units for rent and sale at an affordable price point.”

Additional frequent comments on General Fund investments

- **Fund flexibility:** Use General Funds for activities that are hardest to fund through other means, such as federal resources, bonds, local investment. If COVID-related new resources become available for certain programmatic areas, shift investment requests to those not as federally supported.
- **Housing inventory:** Supply of housing is a struggle throughout Oregon, this includes inventory for homeownership opportunities, affordable rental housing, as well as shelter and transitional housing for the most vulnerable. Creation of new supply, as well as preservation of current supply is an important investment right now.
- **Homeownership:** Mixed feedback on the role OHCS should play in promoting homeownership, responses ranged from focusing on homeownership as a tool for stabilizing families and addressing historic disparities, to letting the market handle homeownership to better focus on housing stabilization and affordable rental housing development. In addition, there were a few questions around where foreclosure and homeownership preservation fits into these investments.
- **Manufactured Housing:** Concern that manufactured housing, with investment requests “on the bubble,” is not being adequately supported as an affordable housing preservation strategy.

Overall impression



Survey question: Considering the full agenda together and given the current circumstances, how do you feel overall about OHCS’ draft 2021 legislative agenda?

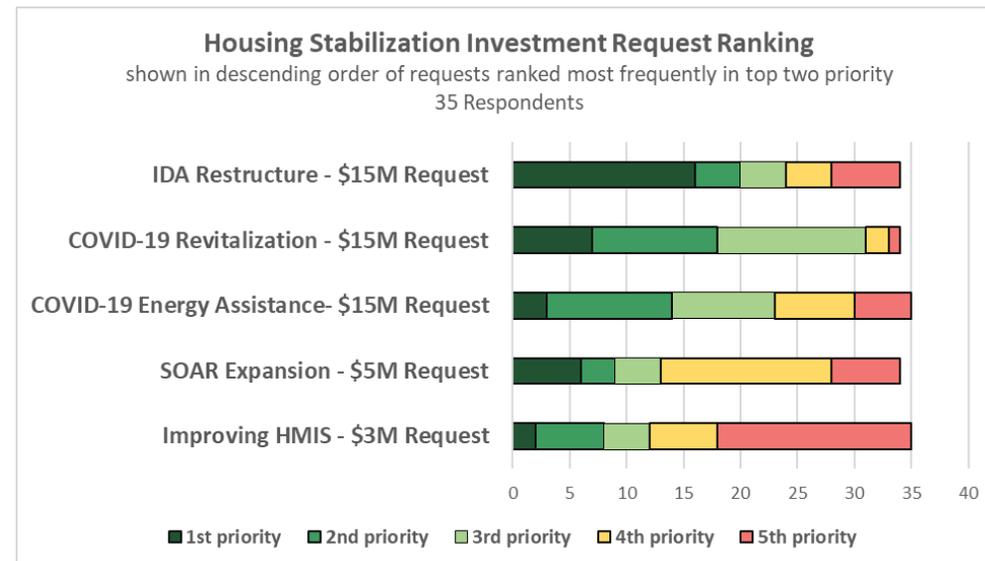
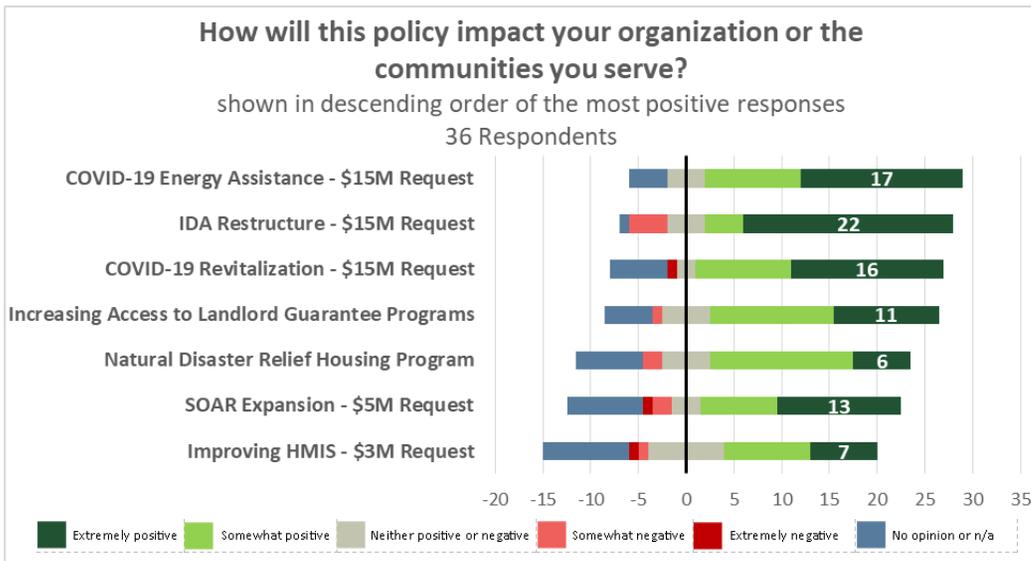
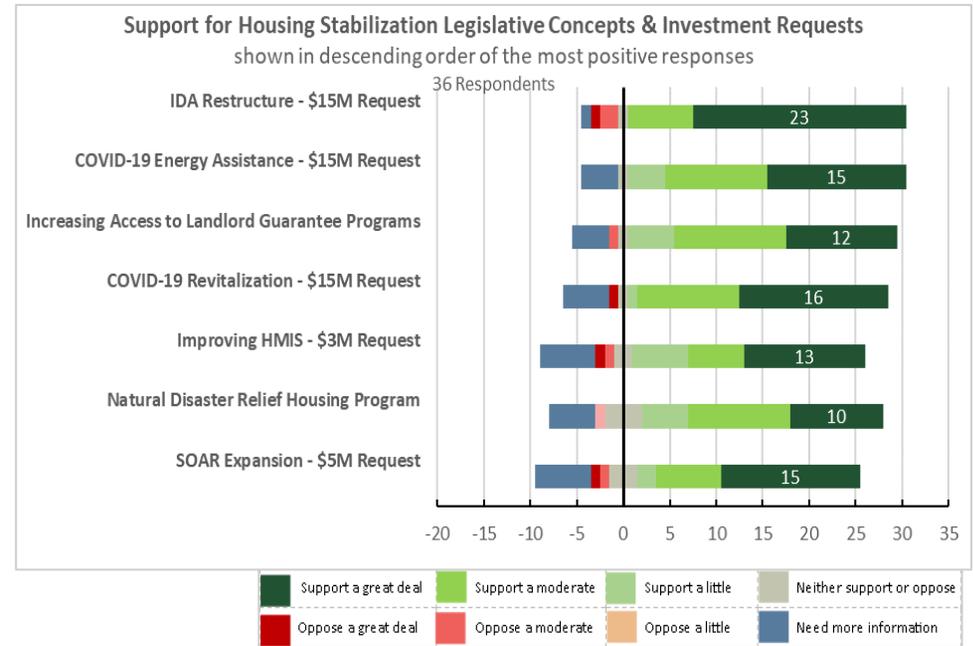
52% of respondents were overall “happy” about OHCS’ draft 2020 legislative agenda. An additional 30% were neutral and 17% were a bit on the “sad” side.

Housing Stabilization Agenda: Stakeholder Feedback

Among the Housing Stabilization investment requests, the **IDA restructure** was shown to have broad support, a high perceived level of potential positive impact on communities, and was ranked the highest priority investment. IDA was also called out throughout the survey as a needed asset building program to help Oregonians be better prepared for crises, and that this stabilizing resource can be especially beneficial to communities of color. One respondent noted, *“COVID has shown, IDA clients are better financially prepared during an emergency.”*

Both the **COVID-19 Revitalization** and the **COVID-19 Energy Assistance** investment requests were also shown to have broad support, a high perceived level of potential positive impact on communities, and was ranked in the top two investment priorities.

The legislative concepts registered a proportionately large number of “need more information” responses. Unfortunately, there was a technical glitch with the likert questions for the legislative concept on increasing statewide **shelter capacity** and no respondent data was solicited. However, the wide mix of qualitative responses show that there is a need for more conversation on this topic with stakeholders.



Homeownership Agenda: Stakeholder Feedback

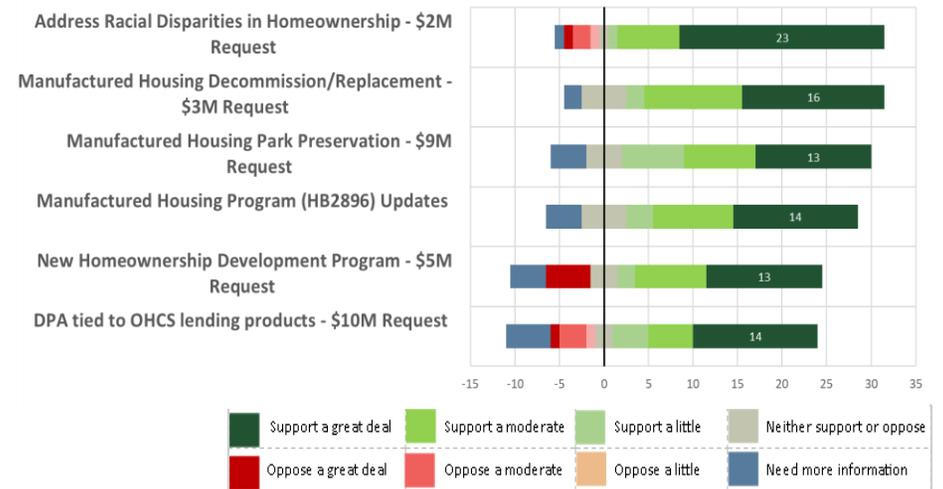
Among the Homeownership investment requests, the **Addressing Racial Disparities** request consistently showed the highest level of support, perceived level of potential positive impact on communities, and ranked as the highest priority investment. Many respondents noted the potential for a more affordable housing market during this crisis and that Oregon needs to “take advantage of the window of opportunity (one that we missed after the Great Recession), to help more low income and people of color achieve the housing and financial stability that comes with first time homeownership.”

The **Manufactured Housing** program updates and investment requests show a high level of support and received numerous comments urging OHCS to continue investment in manufactured housing. One respondent encouraged OHCS saying, “manufactured housing is one of Oregon’s largest sources of affordable housing - let’s lean into that!” When respondents were asked to focus investments in either park preservation or decommission/replacement, respondents were split with 47% and 53% support respectively.

The **Homeownership Development Program** received mixed results in both the quantitative and qualitative responses. Although some respondents acknowledge the programmatic challenges of LIFT Homeownership, a majority of those who commented are very concerned about the decrease in available overall investment through a General Fund replacement program.

Support for Homeownership Legislative Concepts & Investment Requests

Shown in descending order of the most positive responses
35 Respondents



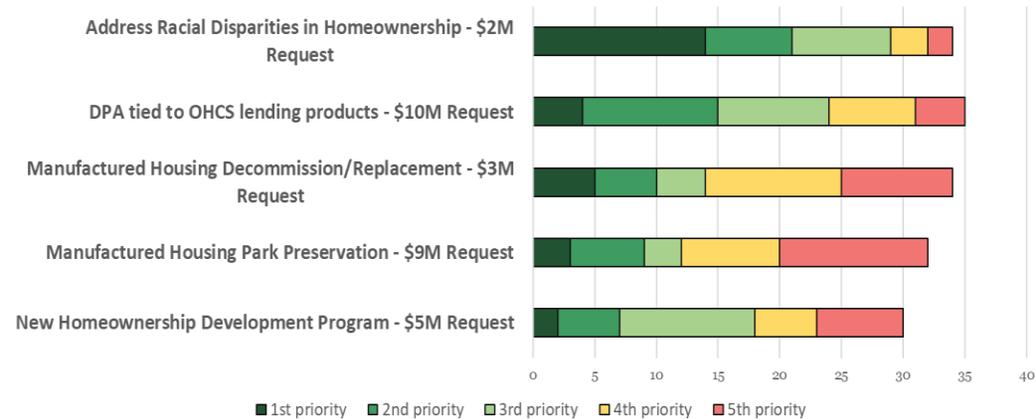
How will this policy impact your organization or the communities you serve?

shown in descending order of the most positive responses
37 respondents



Homeownership Investment Request Ranking

shown in descending order of requests ranked most frequently in top two priority
35 Respondents



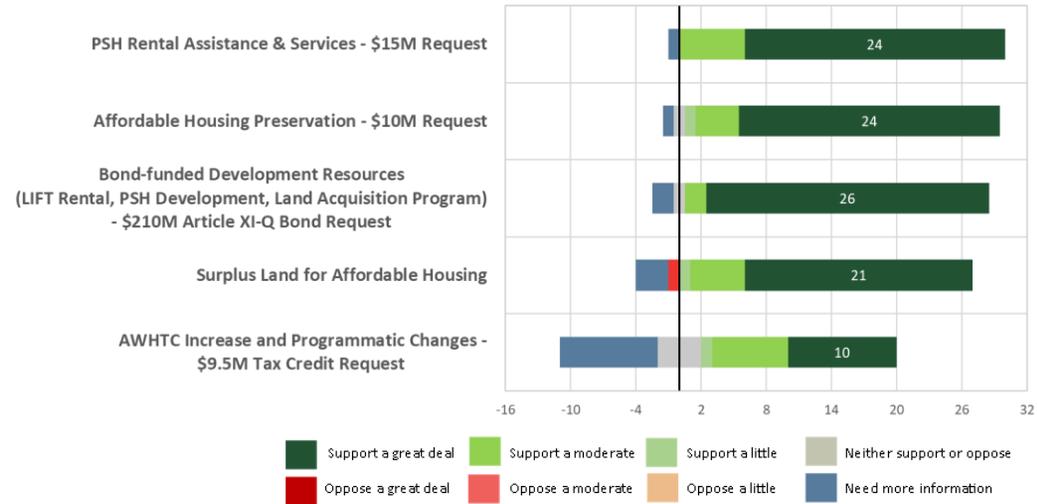
Affordable Rental Housing Agenda: Stakeholder Feedback

The Affordable Rental Housing investment requests had the most consistently positive responses among the three programmatic agendas. In the investment ranking question there were no clear single top priorities shared among respondents.

The exception to this is the **Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit**, which while not generating any opposition did result in a high level of respondents needing more information. It received very mixed responses in the priority investment ranking and most of the comments were questions. 48% of respondents were supportive or strongly supportive of OHCS offering this credit as part of the small project development offering.

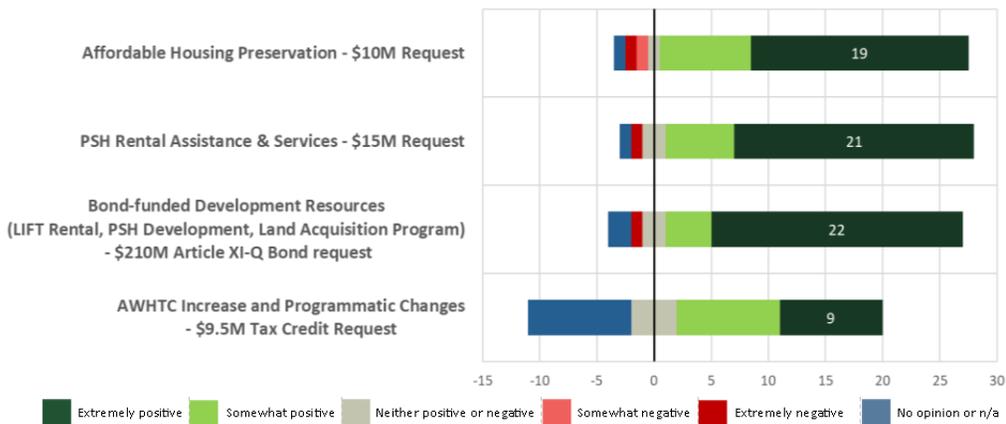
There was broad support for **Bond-funded Development Resources**, particularly to be used for LIFT Rental and PSH Development. Likewise, **Preservation** was widely supported and tied with LIFT Rental for the highest top two rankings. Preservation generated a high number of comments, the majority of them encouraging OHCS to increase the investment request. As one respondent noted, *“This small amount of money statewide will not stretch very far to meet the significant need for it.”*

Support for Affordable Rental Housing Legislative Concepts & Investment Requests
shown in descending order of the most positive responses
31 Respondents



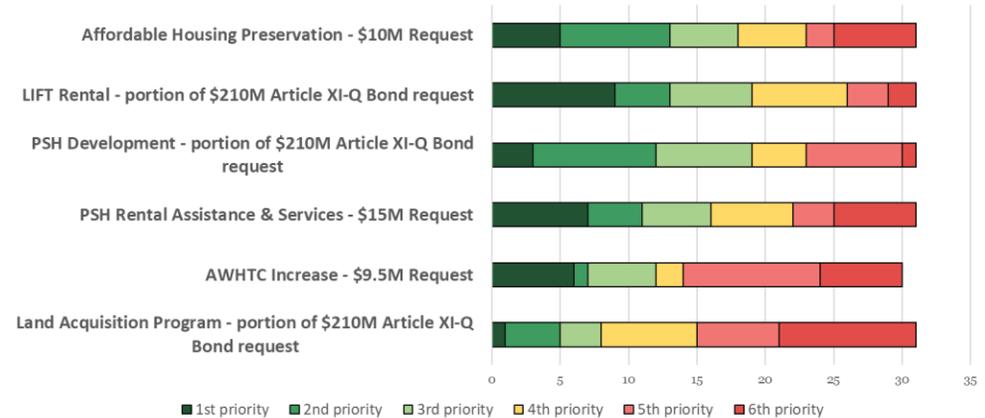
How will this policy impact your organization or the communities you serve?

shown in descending order of the most positive responses
31 Respondents



Affordable Rental Housing Investment Request Ranking

shown in descending order of requests most frequently in top two priority
31 Respondents



Agency Wide Concepts: Stakeholder Feedback

The **Long Term Rental Assistance** concept, that is being developed by the Governor’s Office Housing Policy Advisor Shannon Singleton, received substantial support and was overwhelmingly reported to have a high perceived level of potential positive impact on communities. However, the comments in response to this concept were overwhelmingly ones of concern about the viability of what would necessarily need to be a huge General Fund investment, as well as concerns about the design of the program. One respondent summed up multiple comments nicely saying, *“This is a big lift, one that needs tons of money. How will these limited resources be distributed equitably?”* Finally, multiple comments were emphatic that rental assistance should come from federal funding.

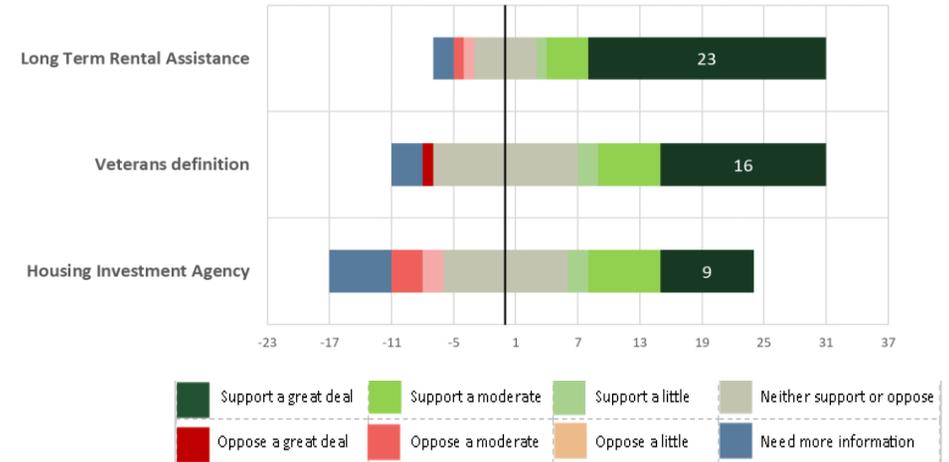
The **Veterans definition** concept, received a mix of positive and neutral responses for both questions. Many respondents noted that they are unsure how this will impact their operations and services. A number of other respondents questioned if the change should be made in statute, rather than in rules.

The **Housing Investment Agency** received the most widespread response to both the support and community impact questions of any concept or investment request considered in the survey. Some respondents were strongly supportive of the need for OHCS to develop revolving loan funds with any generated revenue dedicated to expanding affordable rental and homeownership opportunities. As one respondent noted, *“I think this is so great and so important - we need to get better at leveraging public resources.”* Others expressed deep concern on the potential impact a shift to loans would have on serving the lowest income residents, such as this respondent who noted, *“I am concerned that projects that now pencil, will no longer be able to work because grants will become loans. This could impact development significantly.”* However, the largest number of respondents had questions, expressed confusion, and simply needed more information before being able to express any support or understand impacts in their communities. And finally, numerous comments highlighted the strong desire for additional stakeholder conversations.

NOTE: Because these are not investment requests, survey respondents were not asked to rank these legislative concepts.

Support for Agency Wide Legislative Concepts

shown in descending order of the most positive responses
35 Respondents



How will this policy impact your organization or the communities you serve?

shown in descending order of the most positive responses
35 Respondents

