



# Oregon

Governor Kate Brown

## Housing and Community Services

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### Report to the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Assembly: TANF Housing Pilot Program

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The 2019 Legislative Session brought Oregon Housing and Community Services historic levels of funding towards preventing and ending homelessness. Included in this budget was a one-time allocation of \$10.5 million to implement housing stabilization services to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) households. [House Bill 2032](#), provided broad discretion on the program design, however, stipulating that there would be up to four pilot projects administered, with at least one in a rural and one in an urban area and that there would be tracking and reporting of the success of the pilot program in preventing homelessness or providing housing to TANF families who were homeless.

During the second 2020 Special Legislative Session the legislature was required to make a number of budget adjustments to address the challenges that arose after the adjournment of the 2019 Legislative Session, these adjustments were included in [SB 5723](#). They primarily consisted of actions needed to rebalance the ODHS's budget and a very limited number of items approved in response to the agency's requests for funding to address budget needs or issues that began to emerge after the adjournment of the 2019 legislative session. Adjustments helped cover the cost of temporary steps taken by ODHS to help agency clients and help providers deal with impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of the pandemic's effect on caseloads and associated costs would not be quantified or actionable until later in the fall of 2020.

Among other efforts, steps to rebalance the ODHS budget included the elimination of the TANF Housing and Education and Training pilot projects that were authorized in HB 2032 and the reduction of the General Fund by \$14.0 million and replacement with the TANF Federal Funds from the pilots. The TANF Housing Pilot Program ended before its expected launch date of June 2020 due to the passage of SB 5723.

#### ***Overview of TANF Program Development***

Through a joint partnership, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) would have launched the *TANF Housing Pilot Program* in 2020. The TANF Housing Pilot Program would have operated in the following four geographic regions Tri County Metro, Southern Oregon (Jackson and Josephine), Central Oregon (Jefferson, Crook, and Deschutes, and Southeast Oregon (Grant, Harney and Malheur) and would have focused on families with dependent children ages 0-18. The selected service providers would have included the voice of eligible families in the design and development of the program in their community. The pilot service providers would have been expected to



provide system-wide housing navigation services that would build relationships with landlords, property owners and other housing service providers, identify available housing units and identify community barriers to housing access and strengthen the community's capacity for addressing these barriers. In addition, TANF families would have received in-depth case management services that would assist them with the application process when looking for housing, guide them with subsidized housing opportunities, connect them to tenant readiness classes and culturally specific services before and after placement in permanent housing. TANF families would have been provided payment assistance for rent, security deposits, application fees and other expenses related to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. Payment assistance would have been limited to up to four months and program service providers would leverage local partnerships for other funding sources to provide long-term housing assistance.

The TANF Housing Pilot Program was committed to using a data driven model to increase housing stability among TANF eligible families and meet their family focused needs. As well as, creating closer coordination between OHCS, ODHS, community partners and local organizations that offer wrap around services. OHCS in consultation with ODHS, identified areas with the highest need including families unstably housed or experiencing homelessness, families with a severe cost burden, refugee families, families of color, and families with vulnerably (age less than 5 and/or 16-18) aged children.

With input from the Oregon Housing Stability Council, OHCS and ODHS developed a framework for the delivery of the funds through a Request for Application. Interested parties in the target regions would have been able to apply for these funds through a competitive process, which was projected to be released in mid-April 2020. Extensive engagement was scheduled to occur with community partners during March and April before the release of the RFA to introduce the project and bring interested parties together to answer questions and brainstorm opportunities for program development. Community partners invited to these sessions included Coordinated Care Organizations; Community Action Agencies; Public Housing Authorities; Continua of Care; Early Learning; State, County and local governmental entities, as well as those with lived experience. An evaluation team of OHCS and ODHS staff would have reviewed applications. Awards were projected to occur early-June 2020.

For more details on TANF program development and planned roll out please reference the [Oregon Housing Stability Council Meeting Packet](#) from February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

