

Oregon Housing and Community Services' Citizen Input Appendix for the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan

This document summarizes the citizen participation and consultation process for the Five-year 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan for the State of Oregon, including findings from public meetings, focus groups, expert interviews and comments submitted through the public comment period.

Process Overview

The public participation and stakeholder consultation process for the Consolidated Plan integrates findings from numerous recent sources including:

- Community conversations led by OHCS about housing and homeless services in Coos Bay, The Dalles, Hood River, Klamath Falls, McMinnville, Medford, North Bend, Ontario, Pendleton, Redmond and Tillamook—over 300 residents and stakeholders participated in these April and May 2015 events; and
- A stakeholder survey (179 participants) and a community survey (663 participants) fielded by OHCS for the development of the Consolidated Plan.

The community conversations and OHCS surveys fielded for the Consolidated Plan development are supplemented by other relevant recent resident and stakeholder research. This includes:

- Resident and stakeholder focus groups, online and telephone surveys, and interviews conducted in January through April 2015 in support of the State of Oregon Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, or AI (referred to as the 2015 Oregon Nonentitlement Resident Telephone Survey in this section);
- Findings from surveys and focus groups conducted with farmworkers in support of the Oregon Human Development Corporation's 2013 Farmworker Service Agency needs assessment; and,
- Resident and stakeholder outreach and client surveys conducted for the development of needs assessments by regional community action organizations and counties in 2014 and 2015.

Participant Profile

Nearly 1,000 Oregon residents and stakeholders from across the state participated in public input and stakeholder consultation opportunities to inform development of the Consolidated Plan.

Community conversations. The OHCS community conversations were conducted across the state in 10 communities representing the state's geographic and demographic diversity: Coos Bay, The Dalles, Hood River, Klamath Falls, McMinnville, Medford, North Bend, Ontario,

Pendleton, Redmond and Tillamook. The conversations included two meetings in each location: a partner forum and a community event. The forums included a partner roundtable where members of the continuum of care, public safety, health and human services, domestic violence prevention and services, youth, homeless services, elected officials and faith community discussed the priority needs for housing and homeless services. For the community meetings, some cities hosted a panel of local housing and service experts, while others had community conversation and screened the film *American Winter* followed by a discussion about priority needs. Participants in the dialogues included nonprofit leaders, representatives of the private housing market, interested residents, and local housing and human service agency staff.

OHCS Partner Survey. The nearly 200 stakeholders who responded to the OHCS Partner Survey represent professionals working across the housing, human services and community development spectrum in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The respondents provide services across the state of Oregon, serving the needs of diverse low income and special needs populations—seven in 10 serve families; 50 percent provide housing or services to persons with disabilities; one-third serve veterans and more than half work with persons experiencing homelessness. Other populations served include elderly (35%), youth (47%) and special needs populations such as survivors of domestic violence; Limited English Populations; migrant or seasonal farmworkers; pregnant and parenting women and teens; individuals released from corrections or under criminal justice system supervision; foster families; and youth aging out of the foster care system.

OHCS Community Survey. Respondents to the 2015 OHCS Community survey are predominantly renters (51%) and one in 10 does not have a permanent place to live. All household sizes are represented: 15 percent live alone and 15 percent have households of five or more members. Nearly one in five respondents have a household income of less than \$20,000 and an additional 20 percent have incomes of \$20,000 up to \$30,000. Participating residents are geographically dispersed across Oregon; responses were received from 21 of the state's 36 counties. About 25 percent of respondents live in Portland, 18 percent in Bend and nearly 60 percent in the balance of state.

Housing and Economic Context

This is the state's second Consolidated Plan cycle since the Great Recession (December 2007-June 2009), and the impacts of the financial and mortgage crisis are still felt. As in many states, the extent of recovery varies, with some communities experiencing strong growth while others continue to lag behind. The same is true for the state's low and moderate income residents. From Oregon's coastal communities north to the Portland area, across Central Oregon and to the south and east, many stakeholders and residents describe an urgent need for affordable housing. The specific nature of the affordable housing need ranges from a lack of units affordable to a specific low income population to units that are unsafe or need repair. Other barriers to housing are not linked to a physical unit but a household's background, particularly those with poor (or no) rental histories, bad credit or past convictions; others need emergency assistance or case management or other supportive services to maintain housing. More than 70 percent of stakeholders report an increase in demand for their organization's services in the past year.

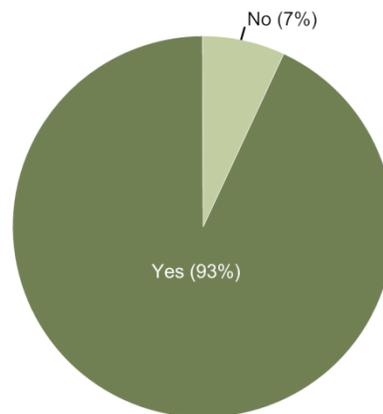
In surveys and community conversations, stakeholders and residents described their local housing market and conditions. Most described changes in housing markets driven by increased demand for rental housing—a finding consistent with stakeholder and resident consultation for the 2015 AI.

Increased demand for affordable rental housing. By far, the majority of stakeholders’ characterizations of the most significant changes in local housing markets related to an increased demand for rental housing, and affordable rental housing in particular. Stakeholders associated the increased demand with several factors, including foreclosures shifting households into the rental market; lack of product for first-time homebuyers; stricter lending requirements for homeownership overall (e.g., size of down payment, credit scores); flat or falling household income; and population growth. Nearly all respondents to the OHCS Community Survey had either personally experienced or knew someone who had difficulty finding affordable housing in the past five years.

Figure 1.
Have you or someone you know had difficulty finding housing that’s affordable in the past five years?

Note:
n=658.

Source:
BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Community Survey.



Rising cost of rental housing and low vacancy rates. The increased demand for rental housing has resulted in very low vacancy rates in some areas, increasing rents and increases in the number of applicants for a given unit. In many places, HUD’s Fair Market Rents have not kept pace with the rental market.

Other barriers to obtaining housing. Histories of foreclosure, eviction, bad credit and previous criminal convictions or probation create significant barriers to households seeking rental housing. This is exacerbated in communities with tight rental markets, as private landlords can quickly fill units with applicants that meet their credit and income standards.

Barriers to maintaining housing. Health crises and challenges with transportation, wages and child care put economically or socially vulnerable households at risk of losing their housing.

Housing, Community Development and Public Services Needs and Priorities

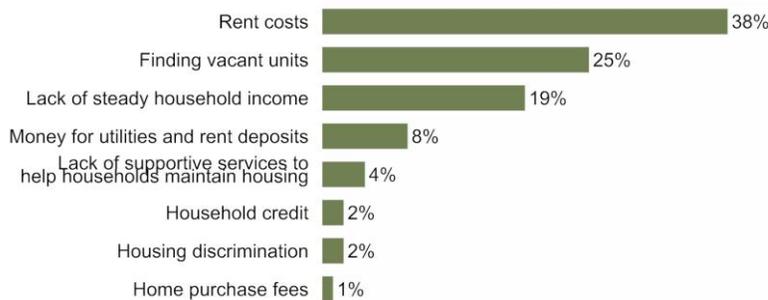
As described above, demand for affordable housing exceeds supply in most parts of the state. Stakeholders and residents described barriers to finding and maintaining housing, and the types of housing programs and other services most needed in their community. A more detailed

description of needs and priorities for those experiencing homelessness is presented after this section.

Barriers to finding and maintaining housing. Stakeholders and residents identified the factor they believe is the most significant barrier to finding and maintain housing.

Stakeholder perspective. Respondents to the OHCS stakeholder survey identified the most significant barrier residents of their community encounter when trying to obtain or maintain housing. Rent, finding vacant units and lack of steady household income comprise the top three barriers.

Figure 2.
Most Significant Barrier to Finding and Maintaining Housing: Stakeholders



Note: n=165.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

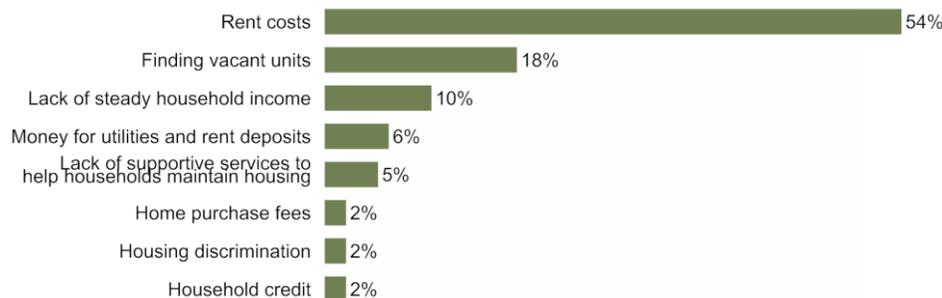
Stakeholders described their reasoning for selecting the factor they considered the most significant barrier to finding and maintaining housing. Common themes include rental markets with very low vacancy rates, insufficient affordable housing stock, lack of steady household income or wages that have simply not kept pace with rent increases. Move in costs (e.g., first and last month’s rent, security deposit, utility connections) can be prohibitive for low income households, including those with housing subsidies. For stakeholders serving low income special needs populations, such as homeless or clients with mental illness, housing market challenges are exacerbated by needing to pair housing with supportive services or by market prices that exceed fair market rents for housing subsidies. Stakeholders in coastal areas shared that their housing market is in “crisis”—low income renters being asked to pay \$2,500 cleaning deposits and some landlords taking advantage of vulnerable tenants, particularly Spanish speakers.

- *“A lot of low income people in this area have poor credit. They are unable to pay for their bills (like medical) and incur collection fees and so forth. Then when they do find a house/apartment that they can afford there is an extra deposit or extra month's rent to pay due to poor credit.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“A lot of people are coming out of corrections/recovery and it is difficult to access transitional housing. Criminal histories and debt to previous housing authorities making people ineligible for housing.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*

- *“As our clients are slowly squeezed out of the rental market, I hear them complain that they could barely afford utilities and basic needs as it was, then the landlord raised the rent beyond their means. They were forced to move in with friends, family, or any other temporary housing.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Lack of affordable housing due to vacation rentals. People are buying second homes in destination and recreation areas. In Hood River we have 8-12% vacation housing. These were the more affordable homes. Hood River is 440 housing units short. Apartments were turned into condos.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“People are willing to put up with awful situations because the landlord will accept them.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Rent costs have increased far more than wages have increased. Few jobs above minimum wage available in Polk County and rents are beyond affordable for minimum wage earners.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Section 8 is too restrictive: would be nice to rent a room with Section 8 funding (more flexible funding options such as HOPWA, Home at Last guarantee program <\$5,000 repairs, etc.) Section 8 won’t allow rental from family members, this is especially important for persons with disabilities.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*

Resident perspective. An even greater proportion of residents (54%) than stakeholders chose rent costs as the most significant barrier to finding and maintaining housing in their community.

Figure 3.
Most Significant Barrier to Finding and Maintaining Housing: Residents



Note: n=649.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Community Survey.

When asked to explain why the barrier they selected was most significant, residents shared stories ranging from how rent increases have impacted them personally to the challenges they have getting into a unit (i.e., saving for deposits, utility hook ups, etc.).

- *“Affordable housing does not seem to exist in Central Oregon anymore.” (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*

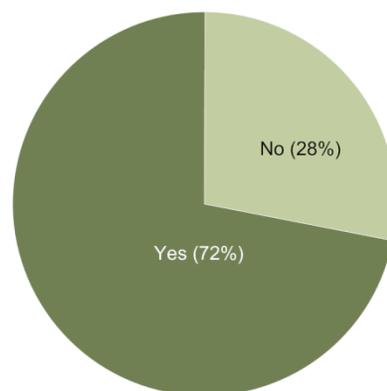
- *“Almost all my friends have moved either to different areas of the state or out of state altogether because of the housing cost. An apartment that used to be \$650 a month is now \$950. Another friend of mine ended up living in a trailer in my drive way for 6 months because she couldn't even find a room to rent that she could afford her budget was \$650 a month! That should get you more than a room. After she left I had four other people approach me within two days to move into the trailer. It has no bathroom, no water, no appliances—only light and a space heater and people are offering \$100 a week. People are desperate.” (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *“Income requirements by landlords. Even in so called low income housing there is an income requirement that the tenant earn 2½ to 3 times the rent. At rents of \$850+ that means a tenant must earn at least \$2,125 per month or \$13.28 per hour (figured at 2½ times rent). Many single parent families do not earn these wages. I was told that to rent from one apartment complex—I was \$30 under the required monthly income—I must have six months of rent in my savings account or \$5,100. Add to that the costs of moving into an apartment and families must have close to \$8,500 if they earn marginally under the earnings requirements. It takes a so-called low income apartment and prices it for only those who are not low income. It makes renting an apartment impossible if you are truly low income.” (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *“Smaller rural communities in Oregon have little to no multifamily housing units. Those that do, are frequently properties that are older and in poor condition, even if they were originally built with government funding. Without housing, communities cannot grow, even when there are job opportunities. And with an aging housing stock, health considerations need to be taken into consideration.” (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*

Demand for assistance services. Overall, 72 percent of respondents to the OHCS Partner Survey stated that demand for their organization or agency’s services had changed compared to last year. Of those experiencing a change in demand (116 respondents), 86 percent reported increased demand for their services in the past 12 months.

Figure 4.
Has demand for your agency's services changed over the past 12 months?

Note:
 n=162.

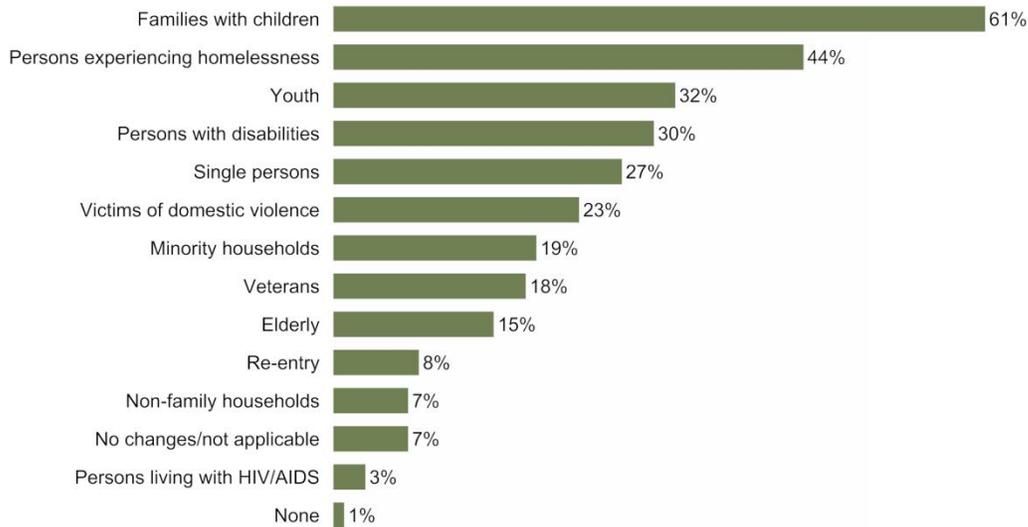
Source:
 BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.



By far, the greatest proportion of stakeholders (61%) reported that they are serving families more often, followed by persons experiencing homelessness, youth, persons with disabilities and single persons (Figure 5.) When asked which populations (if any) they’re serving less, nearly

half of participating stakeholders have not seen a decrease in any populations served. About 20 percent are each serving fewer elderly, HIV/AIDS, veterans and 10 to 16 percent are serving fewer single persons, re-entry populations, non-family households and youth.

Figure 5.
Which population are you serving more often?



Note: n=162.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

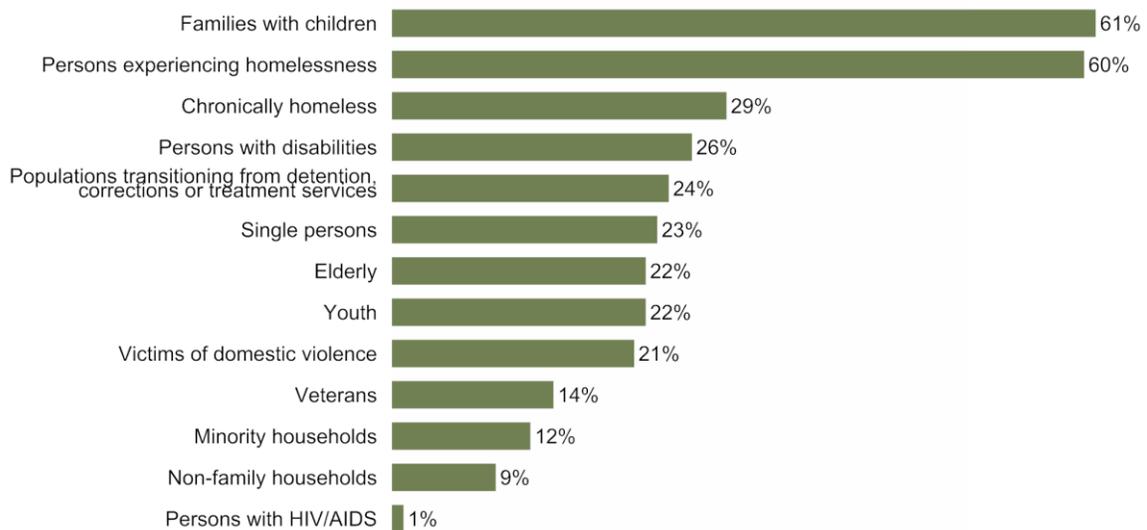
Stakeholders attributed the increase in demand for programs and services to a range of factors. These include wages not keeping pace with the cost of housing, policy changes (such as Affordable Care Act implementation), lingering or delayed impacts from the recession, and demographic trends (i.e., aging Baby Boomers).

- *“Continued unemployment, lack of good paying jobs, lack of affordable housing, high rental move-in costs.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“During the recent push and resourcing from the VA to eliminate Veteran homelessness we have seen an increase of veterans served and single adults served.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“More mentally disabled are trying to move into independent living arrangements rather than remain in group homes or supervised environments.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“New employment opportunities have helped decrease the SNAP and TANF population. Additional Case Management staff has added to the success of reducing the TANF caseload.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“The aging of the population, people with disabilities living longer, plus our area is the most service-rich, so migration to our area.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

- *“We have many veterans returning from the war in Afghanistan; we have many individuals and families who have lost their homes due to foreclosure; and we have seen many applicants who have recently relocated to Jackson County.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

Populations most in need of housing and services. Three in five stakeholders identified families with children and persons experiencing homelessness as the populations most in need of housing assistance and/or services. Persons who are chronically homeless, persons with disabilities, and individuals re-entering the community after detention, corrections or treatment services, single persons, elderly, youth and victims of domestic violence are the populations considered most in need of housing and services by at least one in five stakeholders.

Figure 6.
Which target population(s) in your community are most in need of housing assistance and/or services?



Note: n=165. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

Most needed housing programs and activities. With respect to the types of housing programs and activities most needed locally, both the majority of stakeholders’ and residents’ top priority is additional affordable rental housing. Because of their relative levels of expertise, the choices for prioritization of housing programs and activities are similar between the Partner and Community surveys, but not identical.

Stakeholder perspective. Figure 7 presents stakeholders’ prioritization for the most needed housing programs and activities locally. As shown, additional affordable rental housing was the first choice of nearly two in three stakeholders, followed by emergency rental assistance. Homebuyer education and foreclosure prevention were considered a priority by the smallest proportion of stakeholders.

Figure 7.
What housing programs and activities are most needed in your community? Stakeholders

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Overall
Additional affordable rental housing	64%	9%	6%	80%
Emergency rental assistance	11%	16%	8%	36%
Long term rental assistance (over 24 months)	5%	16%	12%	34%
Permanent housing	13%	13%	6%	32%
Eviction prevention/rent assistance	10%	10%	11%	30%
Housing case management assistance	10%	8%	12%	30%
Medium term rental assistance (3-24 months)	5%	13%	11%	29%
Security deposit assistance	7%	6%	6%	19%
Energy assistance	5%	6%	5%	16%
Down payment assistance for first time homebuyers	2%	6%	6%	13%
Emergency home repair programs for low income owners	1%	6%	6%	13%
Major home repair for low income owners	1%	1%	9%	11%
Accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities	2%	4%	5%	11%
Homebuyer education	1%	2%	6%	9%
Foreclosure prevention assistance	1%	3%	4%	8%

Note: n=171. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

Examples of the reasons for stakeholder housing program and activities priority choices include need for additional affordable units and stressed the importance of case management/supportive services to help families maintain their housing. Homeless prevention services such as emergency rental assistance are seen as a critical need, as well as deposit and utility assistance.

- *“There is less than a 2% vacancy rate for rental units. This leads to a need for more permanent housing. In addition, while we receive emergency rental assistance, it is never enough to meet the demands within our population.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“I can't say this enough! All of the above is important as a palette of measures that can be used for different people's specific problem. Preventative is most important. If we can prevent people going homeless it is much more cost effective.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“In our rural community, the lack of low income housing that will pass inspections is a large problem. Once a client is able to find housing, case management is a critical piece of the process of helping a household become self-sufficient.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“No emergency housing shelter here, so emergency rental assistance is highest need. Housing Authority waiting lists are about 12 months, so medium-term rental assistance is second. We see a number of households who lose housing assistance due to the family's failure to abide by rental agreement behavior rules and this might be prevented if there were better intervention services available.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

- *“We have a permanent homeless population that is unable to be housed. We really need a variety of emergency, legal shelter year-round and lack transitional, single-occupancy housing options for individuals, and permanent housing for families with mental health and drug addiction issues.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“We have several people that cannot afford a cleaning deposit let alone the first month rent.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

Resident perspective. More than four in five residents selected additional affordable rental housing as the top priority for housing programs and activities most needed in the community. Emergency rent assistance, security deposit assistance, down payment assistance and help with utility and energy bills are all needs identified by at least 30 percent of residents overall.

Figure 8.
What housing programs and activities are most needed in your community? Residents

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Overall
Additional affordable rental housing	81%	6%	3%	90%
Emergency rental assistance	13%	18%	11%	42%
Security deposit assistance	11%	15%	15%	42%
Down payment assistance for first time homebuyers	8%	17%	11%	36%
Assistance with utilities and energy bills	7%	8%	15%	30%
Eviction prevention	7%	10%	10%	28%
Repairs/renovation of affordable rental units	5%	12%	7%	24%
Housing case management assistance	6%	7%	8%	22%
Foreclosure prevention assistance	6%	7%	7%	20%
Emergency home repair for low income home owners	5%	8%	6%	20%
Major home repair programs for low income home owners	5%	7%	7%	18%
Homebuyer education	5%	7%	5%	16%
Accessibility improvements for renters with disabilities	5%	7%	5%	16%
Accessibility improvements for owners with disabilities	4%	4%	4%	12%

Note: n=660. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Community Survey.

Most needed housing-related programs and services. Figure 9 presents stakeholders’ choices for the most needed housing-related programs and services in the communities served. Overall, greatest proportion of stakeholders identified utility and rent deposits (60% of stakeholders), rental assistance (59%) and supportive services and case management (55%) as the most needed housing-related programs and services.

Figure 9.
What housing-related services are most needed in your community? Stakeholders

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Overall
Money for utility and rent deposits	22%	14%	23%	60%
Rental assistance	22%	21%	16%	59%
Supportive services and case management	20%	20%	15%	55%
Emergency housing	24%	12%	9%	45%
Placement in new housing (Rapid rehousing)	18%	14%	7%	38%
Apartment search and matching services	8%	10%	12%	30%
Credit counseling and repair for renters	7%	12%	8%	27%
Foreclosure counseling	1%	2%	7%	10%

Note: n=169. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

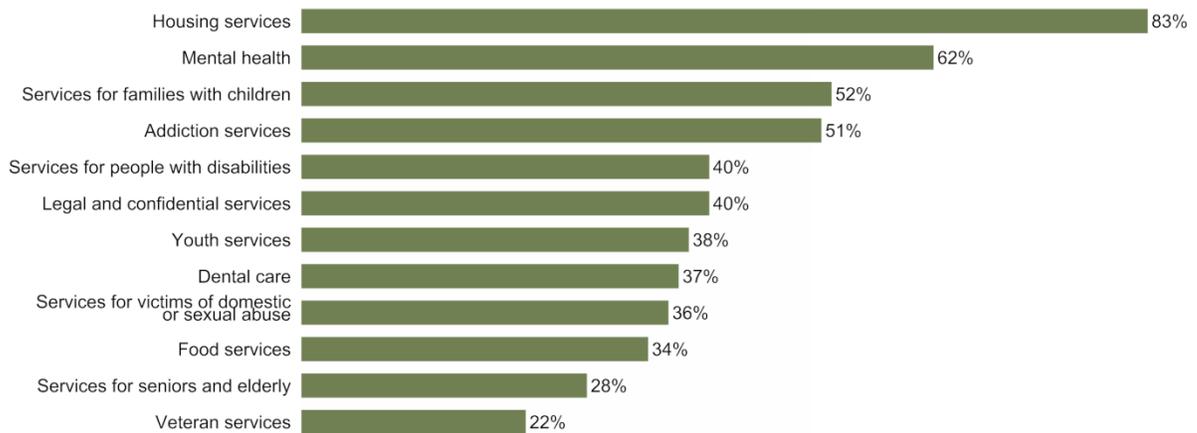
Stakeholders shared their perspectives on the housing-related services they prioritized:

- *“Deposit assistance would be huge for our clients. The next is supportive services with case management, which seems to help a lot of our clients. Even on the Hotline, when clients come in with financial assets, they find it helpful when we sit down with them and troubleshoot their situations. Finally, rental assistance is always beneficial as it can help us get people into a place, or keep them in it.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Bad credit and criminal history is huge barrier and landlords want some guarantee they won't get burned by renters.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Housing assistance is the largest unmet need in our community. Our agency receives as many as 50-60 calls a month for housing assistance and is able to provide help to 6 - 10 households depending on program availability. Case management, is a critical piece of the process of helping a household become self-sufficient.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“I don't think putting more money towards rental assistance programs or apartment search services is the answer. There's just not enough housing (within the FMRs) available. I think we need to build more apartments and negotiate with landlords. Maybe help remodel some apartments, but have the landlord agree to accept a certain amount of people with barriers (poor credit, criminal history, etc.) for a certain amount of years.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“We have had families with 4 or more children not be able to find a place and are living in their vehicle — this should not be happening — if she takes her children to the homeless shelter her family is split up because of the age of her oldest boys — at the time when the family needs the most support we are ripping them apart and not helping to support long term goals of permanent housing, this is a family that was living in an apartment complex for 9 years and it is being remodeled and they are being kicked out — this is not ok.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

Most needed social services. Similar proportions of stakeholders (83%) and residents (85%) named housing services as the most needed social service locally.

Stakeholder perspective. In addition to housing services, at least half of stakeholders identified mental health, services for families with children and addiction services as the most needed social services for low income persons locally (Figure 10).

Figure 10.
Which of the following social services are the most needed by low income persons in your community? Stakeholders



Note: n=167. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

Explanations for stakeholders' determination of most needed social services for low income residents locally tended to focus on services needed to either help residents get housing or to sustain current housing situations.

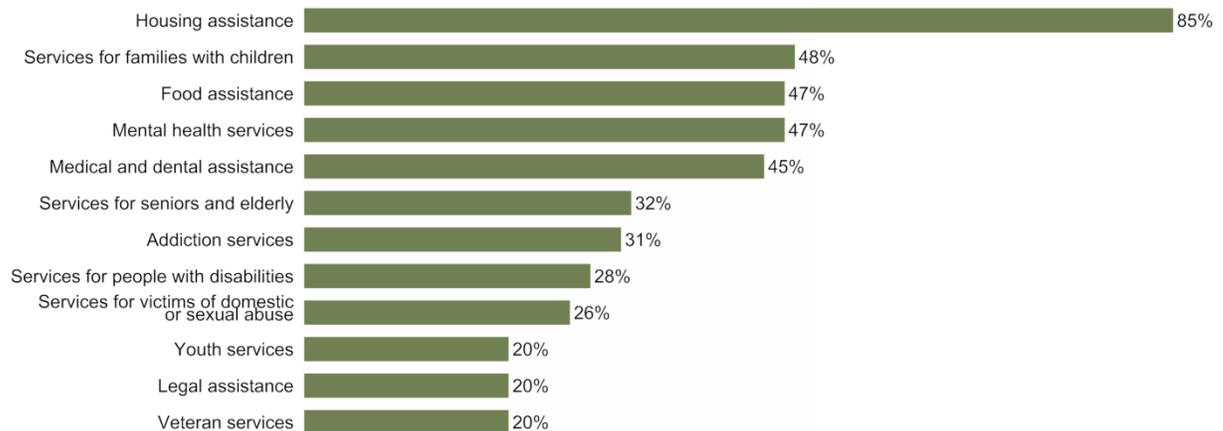
- *“All of these services are really interlinked. Our community no longer has a behavioral health unit that provides inpatient mental health. We also do not have a detox for opiate users.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“I think mental illness is a huge area in Oregon that needs to be addressed. There are a lot of homeless people in Oregon that struggle with mental illness. They run in to the same issues as I've mentioned above... lack of available housing, criminal history. But I think there needs to be more in place to help this population because many aren't capable of maintaining housing on their own. More adult group homes could be a solution, having someone (home manager) to help keep an eye on these individuals. Something other than DHS Seniors and People with Disabilities because I don't think it's easy for someone with mental health issues to navigate that system. I'm a housing coordinator and I've struggled myself trying to understand how that agency can help serve a particular individual that I was working with.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Our area is fortunate to have the VA in White City for veterans' services and there are many local charities that provide food and other services listed. In the words of one of our local*

homeless men, ‘We have a lot of places to go— we can go here for food, there for a shower, there for medical services.... what we need is a place to BE.’ Housing is desperately needed, many need the opportunities for mental health and addiction services once they are stably housed.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)

- *“We are in desperate need of low income housing that has a case management component. Most of our community members who live on the edge of poverty all the time need legal assistance and have no way of obtaining this. Families need to know the services that are available and those services need to be consistent to all families. We have many elderly people in homes that they can no long maintain and they need help with this. We have a large homeless youth population and I believe our Maslow project should have a teen shelter component. Mental Health Services in our area is terrible and we need a complete change of guard in that agency for anything to change.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“There are a significant number of households who have difficulty getting into housing due to addiction or mental health issues. The services are limited making it difficult to assist those in need that are in that situation.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“I’m very rarely able to adequately resolve these three issues —housing, dental needs, and legal advice) for my clients. It’s heartbreaking.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*

Resident perspective. With respect to the share of residents selecting particular social services as most needed in their community, residents’ choices are very similar to those of stakeholders with one noticeable difference. Nearly half of residents (47%) considered food assistance to be most needed, compared to 34 percent of stakeholders. One possible explanation may be that residents are less knowledgeable than stakeholders of existing resources for food assistance (beyond mainstream programs like SNAP). In addition to the social services listed in Figure 11, residents described the need for case management in general; services for single women with no children; transportation assistance; child care; life skills classes; and job training.

Figure 11.
Which of the following social services are the most needed by low income persons in your community? Residents



Note: n=640. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Community Survey.

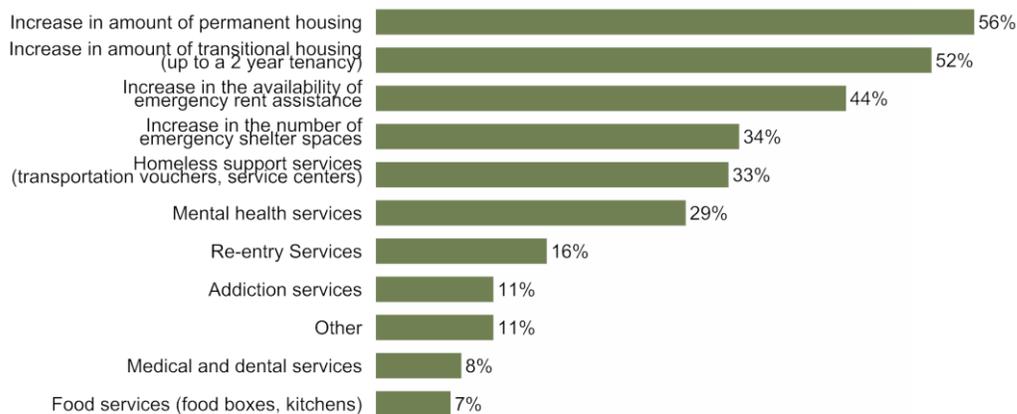
Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Stakeholders and residents provided additional detail related to the needs of persons experiencing homelessness and residents who are at-risk of homelessness.

Highest priority homeless housing or services. The greatest proportion of both stakeholders and residents selected increase in the amount of permanent housing as their highest priority for housing or services for persons experiencing homelessness.

Stakeholder perspective. Stakeholders identified up to three housing types or services they consider highest priority for persons experiencing homelessness in their area. Half considered an increase in the amount of permanent housing or an increase in the amount of transitional housing to be the highest priority housing types or services for persons experiencing homelessness locally. Emergency rent assistance, emergency shelter and support services were considered a priority by at least one-third of stakeholders.

Figure 12.
What are the highest priority housing types or services for persons experiencing homelessness in your community? Stakeholders



Note: n=167. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.

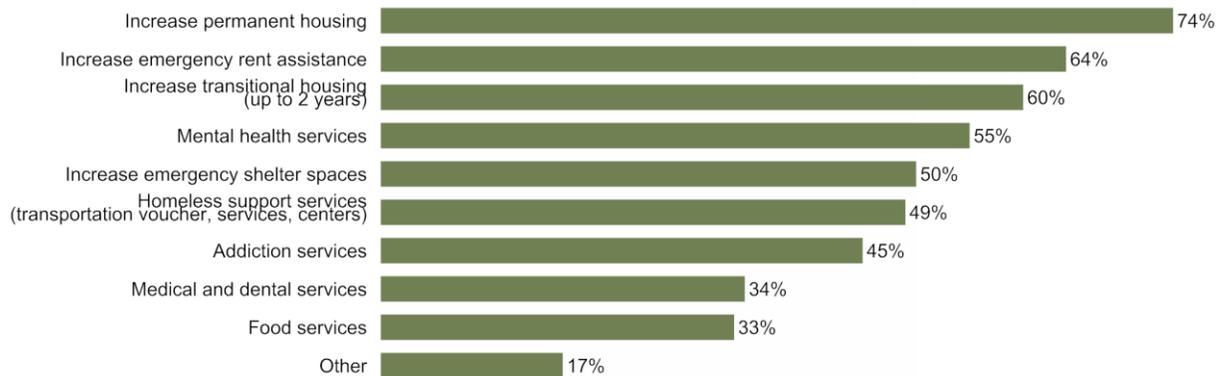
Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

Stakeholders shared their reasoning for the priorities selected, particularly the need for prevention, case management and a lack of emergency shelter options. Because these individuals and families are heterogeneous; one size does not fit all. Examples include the wide range of circumstances contributing to the homeless episode, family composition not “fitting” with program rules, housing policies or funding requirements and so forth. The challenge of housing these individuals and families is compounded by policies in conflict with market realities—FMRs, time limits on case management, and client histories creating barriers to renting in both private and public housing.

- *“Most local emergency rent resource agencies do not offer assistance high enough to cover a full months’ rent. Shelter space for families is grossly lacking to where some families would have to be broken up between several shelters, which is often unsafe and forces a break in cohesiveness and efficacy of families remaining together. Permanent housing is basic need and foundation which often allows individuals to feel they can seek help for mental health, addictions, work and other needs if they are not trapped in simply surviving and solely focused on the next meal and next place of shelter.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“The number of shelter units for families has decreased dramatically within the last several years. Families need a place to be that qualifies them as literally homeless in order to be eligible for the Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing Funds in our community.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“There is a huge lack of available rentals in Lane County. This makes it very difficult to move households into housing quickly. The 30 day limit on case management before a household is housed is unreasonable for our housing market. It takes much longer than this to find a landlord willing to rent to a person who is homeless.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“There needs to be more low-income housing for those with disabilities and living on fixed incomes, as well as families trying to make it on minimum wage. The rental assistance programs we do have still eliminate many people because of Fair Market Rent limits and other eligibility factors. Because of these two things, we still need more temporary shelter beds until more assistance and more affordable housing becomes available.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“Those who are re-entering from prison, jail, or out of crowded living households have a great number of barriers which are deeply rooted. There is a lack of addiction services (inpatient) treatment here so those who do access services also must re-enter from a distance. Both of these populations require transitional housing with support to make a long lasting change.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“We do not have enough Permanent Supportive Housing units, especially units designed specifically for people exiting homelessness. All of the programs we currently have depend on renting units in the private market. This is very difficult for many of our participants. They frequently do not have the skills to live in a unit rented from a private landlord and frequently are evicted making it even harder to house them again in the future.” (OHCS Partner Survey respondent)*
- *“When an affordable housing unit is built the criteria is so strict that most won’t qualify. Issues that make them homeless preclude them from qualifying. Rigid criteria and long wait lists.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*

Resident perspective. Oregon residents also identified their suggestions for the most urgent priorities for persons experiencing homelessness. As shown in Figure 13, three in four residents identified an increase in permanent housing as a most urgent priority, followed by an increase in rental assistance, increase in transitional housing and mental health services.

Figure 13.
What are the most urgent priorities for people experiencing homelessness in our community?
Residents



Note: n=637.

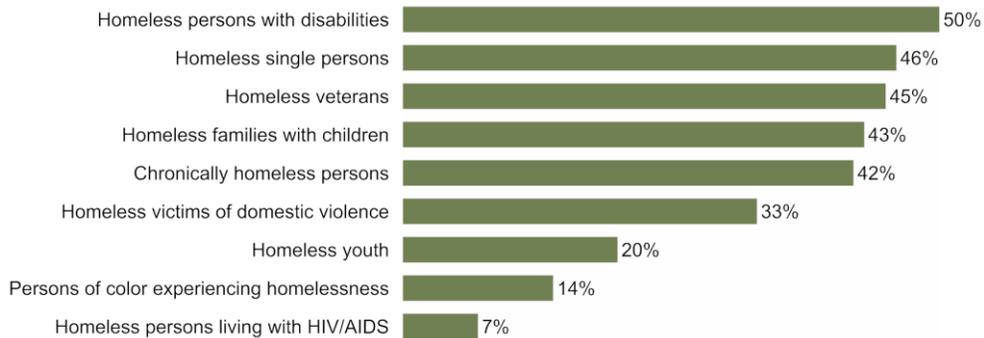
Source: BBC Research & Consulting from 2015 OHCS Community Survey.

Residents' reasoning for their priority selections had several themes related to causes of homelessness, homelessness prevention, and services needed to successfully maintain housing. Several attributed family homelessness to a lack of affordable housing while others emphasized the importance of both addiction treatment and ongoing supports once a person exits treatment. Examples include:

- *"Child care! Transportation! Life skills." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"Job training, work ethic training, budgeting and understanding how to pay bills." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"Lack of housing for people that are unable to live on their own due to mental health conditions." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"Lincoln County has no Homeless Shelter and needs one desperately." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"We need more shelter options NOW, but the only way to solve homelessness is with housing where the rent is affordable. That's permanent housing. But we also need more rent assistance to prevent people from falling into homelessness. The rent assistance we have is very limited and doesn't work sometimes until someone becomes homeless." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"We need to increase emergency shelters tenfold to meet demand. Shelters for women and children are woefully unavailable, and I assume shelters for men are in the same situation." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*
- *"We need affordable units and landlords willing to work with programs and people that are not 'perfect'." (OHCS Community Survey respondent)*

Segments of the population targeted by current homeless programs. Stakeholders identified the population segments targeted by current homeless programs. As shown in Figure 14, between two in five and half of stakeholders' programs target homeless: persons with disabilities, single persons, veterans, families with children and chronically homeless programs. One in five stakeholders identified homeless youth as a target of current programs for housing assistance.

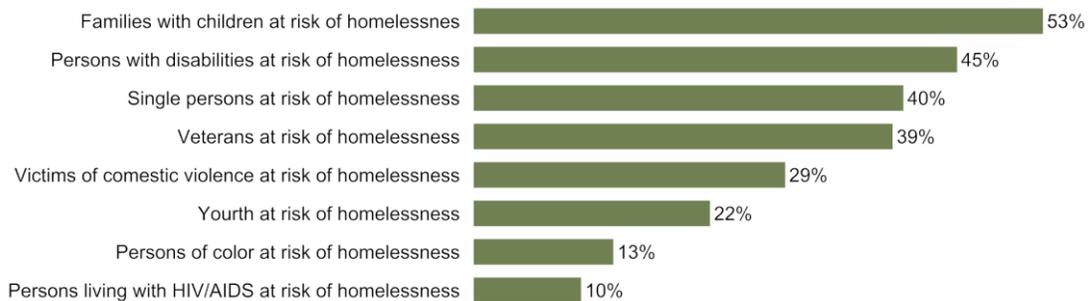
Figure 14.
Which segments of the homeless population are you targeting for housing assistance?



Note: n=122. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.
Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

Segments of the population at-risk of homelessness targeted for housing assistance. Figure 15 presents the population segments at risk of homelessness stakeholders' current programs target for housing assistance. Slightly more than half target at risk families with children and about two in five target at risk persons with disabilities, single persons, and veterans.

Figure 15.
Which populations at risk of homelessness are you targeting for housing assistance?



Note: n=120. Numbers add to greater than 100 percent due to multiple response.
Source: BBC Research & Consulting from the 2015 OHCS Partner Survey.

In community conversations, participants described the varied needs of low income households at risk of homelessness:

- *“Families who quit employment can be ineligible for TANF for up to 120 days. Reasons why people quit can include need for child care, help taking kids to doctors, do not have reliable transportation.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Foster kids—the aging out/discharge plans can be sleeping on someone’s couch. Need more flexible tools to house them.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“In the Dalles, or the surrounding four counties, there are no drug treatment/residential facilities.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Mental health, addictions, criminal background. And, it’s a small town—everyone knows you.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Must serve probation where they originally committed the crime.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Some families receiving TANF are required to participate in a jobs program but don’t have the transportation to do so resulting in decreased benefits.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*
- *“Subsidy/benefits cliff making folks no longer eligible for anything and the loss of benefits is greater than income increase, not enough income to sustain rent on their own—loss of any subsidy creates housing loss—difficulty navigating bureaucracy, lack of rental and deposit assistance, eviction prevention dollars are limited.” (OHCS Community Conversation participant)*

Public Comments on the Draft Document

[TBD]