



REPORT ON
IMPLEMENTATION
PATHWAYS
BY THE

TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS AND RACIAL DISPARITIES IN OREGON

MARCH 2023

REPORT TO THE OREGON
STATE LEGISLATURE

In January 2022, the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities submitted a report of their findings and recommendations in the 81st Legislative Session of the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

This report—dedicated to the 522 known unhoused Oregonians who died in 2022*— outlines key implementation pathways for Oregon to actualize changes as charged by House Bill 4051.

***Source:** As reported by the Oregon Health Authority 2022 [Domicile unknown dashboard](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROCESS SUMMARY AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Task Force met as a full body 8 times and in smaller subcommittees 14 times between June 2022 and March 2023. Oregon’s Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities prepared the following interim report in fulfillment of its charge, as laid out in House Bill [4051](#) (2022) and in an effort to build on its [foundational recommendations](#), as mandated in House Bill [2100](#) (2021). In its January 2022 Findings and Recommendations Legislative [Report](#), the Task Force adopted an overarching problem statement, which has since focused its work:

Oregon has a unique and complex opportunity to reimagine its current homeless services funding system and structure in pursuit of racial equity and justice, demanding both immediate action and a long-term commitment to achieve 1) alignment, 2) structural change across philosophical differences and historical positionality within existing structures, and 3) adequate resources to effectuate the transformational change required to reduce racial disparities by people experiencing homelessness.

With its reauthorization in 2022, the Oregon Legislative Assembly charged the Task Force to identify “implementation pathways for [1] changes to the state’s funding structure, [2] modifications for contracting processes and [3] solutions regarding the eligibility and funding of services.”

The opportunities that are waiting to be unlocked, down each of these three pathways, are blocked by one common truth: “You can’t solve a ten-dollar problem with 50 cents,” in the words of a Task Force Member and longstanding advocate for low-income Oregonians.

The Task Force offers these recommendations in alignment with our commitment to pursuing racial equity across Oregon and working intentionally to reduce the disparate impact of homelessness on communities of color in Oregon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AREA 1: SOLUTIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING OF SERVICES

The Task Force recommends ongoing funding of \$1.1 billion to include enhanced investments in rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing; expansion of Oregon’s Housing Development Grant Program (“Trust Fund”); creation of an Oregon Special Needs Assistance Program – a set aside of locally flexible funding for historically underfunded institutions that represent historically underserved populations; preservation of existing services and funding for antipoverty programs that intersect with homelessness; establishing a state-funded housing choice grant program for rent-burdened working families, individuals with disabilities, and aging seniors; a stopgap fund to bridge over the benefits cliff, reduce turnover, and ensure living wages for frontline service providers; expansion of the landlord risk mitigation fund; additional capacity building grants to establish local planning groups within the Oregon Balance of State; and development of an insurance mitigation fund for smaller organizations that are typically disadvantaged by state insurance requirements to receive funding. Relatedly, the Task Force recommends Oregon Housing and Community Services may include culturally specific organization or culturally responsive organization as defined in ORS 456.005 like historically funded institutions outlined in statute for disbursement of state and federal homelessness funds through grants and loans. Lastly, the Task Force recommends the Legislative Assembly grant Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) authority to allocate homelessness funding in any method that ensures statewide geographic coverage without regard to existing or prior distribution formulas, including through a competitive grant or contract process.

AREA 2: CHANGES TO THE STATE’S FUNDING STRUCTURE

The Task Force recommends OHCS work with its partner state agencies in the Interagency Council on Homelessness to establish universal goals to address homelessness across the state and employ the tools of targeted universalism to then design and implement coordinated programs and policies that are tailored to meet the needs of all Oregonians. The Task Force recommends the state adopt a competitive funding structure for administering state and federal resources to address homelessness that prioritizes maintaining existing service levels and expanding funding availability and eligibility beyond historically funded organizations, geographies, and institutions by direct allocation to 1) the nine federally recognized tribes that border within Oregon, 2) Community Action Agencies for initiatives that intersect with homelessness priorities, 3) Continuums of Care and local planning groups similar to the coordinated homeless response offices established in House Bill [4123](#) (2022); and within the 2023/2023 fiscal year, culturally specific, culturally responsive, culturally based, and other organizations that are focused on reducing disparities.

AREA 3: MODIFICATIONS FOR CONTRACTING PROCESSES

The Task Force recommends the Legislature expressly direct and grant OHCS the authority to create opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing insecurity to inform state policymaking and to provide direct compensation to people with lived experience of homelessness or housing insecurity for their expertise. The Task Force recommends the legislature authorize OHCS to identify, procure, and implement a comprehensive grants and financial management system no later than December 2025. Relatedly, the Task Force recommends the legislature direct both the Oregon Department of Justice and the Oregon Department of Administrative Services to review, revise, and negotiate language changes to contracts within 21 business days of receipt and review and revise insurance requirements for smaller organizations that are typically disadvantaged by state insurance requirements with the intention of investing in historically underfunded and underrepresented communities and organizations. Lastly, the Task Force recommends OHCS adopt a new funding cycle by the end of the 23-25 biennium on a biannual timeline to support transparency for current or prospective grantees.

OVERVIEW

HB 4051

The Oregon Legislative Assembly charged the Task Force to “specifically identify implementation pathways for changes to the state’s funding structure, modifications for contracting processes and solutions regarding the eligibility and funding of services [under section 7 (3)(b), (d) and (e), chapter 448, Oregon Laws 2021]:

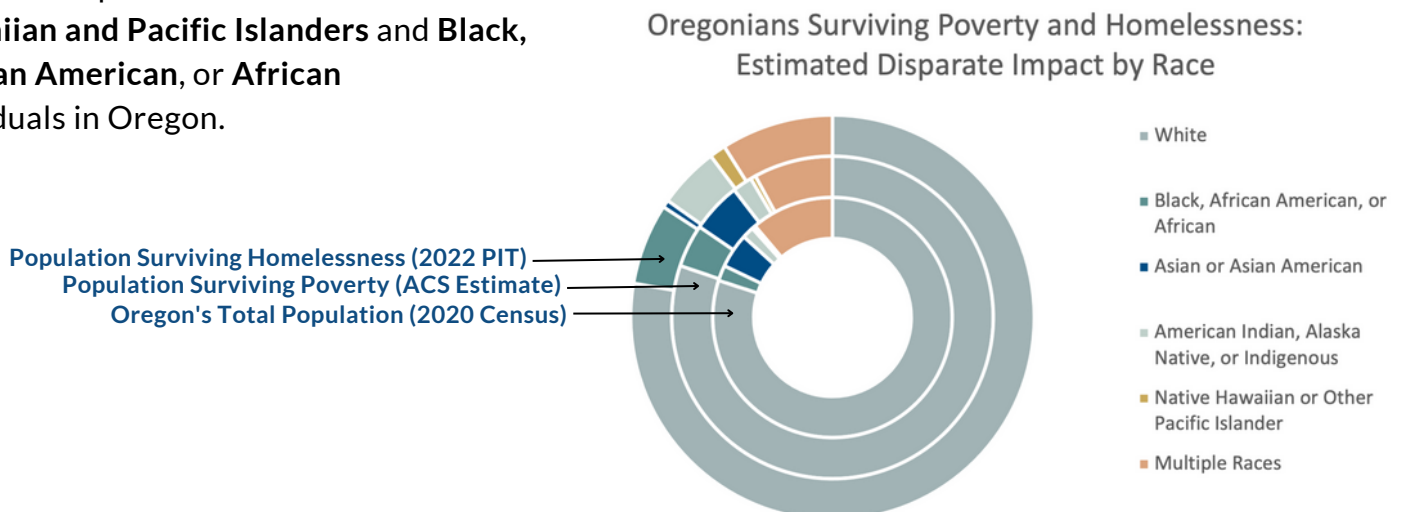
(b) Identify and investigate potential changes in this state’s funding structure to address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, including consideration of how housing transition of services delivery could be implemented to avoid service disruptions among people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity

(d) Identify and investigate methods by which the Housing and Community Services Department and Housing Stability Council may modify contracting process and eligibility for providers of services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity

(e) Recommend solutions regarding the funding of services for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, including legislation or rulemaking and modifications to:

- A. The delivery and eligibility requirements for federal and state funds
- B. The receipt and distribution of information about homelessness services by the state
- C. Methods for addressing racial disparities

The Task Force updated its data analysis to include an illustration of the disparate impact of homelessness and poverty on Oregonians based on race and ethnicity. The infographic below is based on the data outlined on page 11 of the Data section of this Report. This analysis highlights a markedly disparate impact of homelessness on **Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders** and **Black, African American, or African** individuals in Oregon.



Task Force Membership and Appointments

The Task Force is composed of 19 members appointed by the President of the Oregon State Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Governor, and the Director of the Housing and Community Services Department. In addition to elected and administrative officials, most of the appointees to the Task Force represent organizations with diverse perspectives and experiences, including organizations that focus on street outreach and unsheltered homelessness, shelter, rapid rehousing, housing instability, including youth, children and families, adults or seniors, and organizations representing different communities and geographies.

Joint Appointments by the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate

- Ariel Nelson, League of Oregon Cities
- Jessica Pratt, Association of Oregon Counties
- Jimmy Jones, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency
- Paula Hall, Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)
- Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Urban League of Portland
- Maria Vargas, Latino Network
- Katrina Holland, JOIN
- Marisa Espinoza, Northwest Pilot Project
- Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE
- Vanessa Timmons, Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
- Nicole Witham, Teacher, and Community Member - Northern Jackson County
- Alan Evans, Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers

Appointments by the Director of the Housing and Community Services Department

- Jill Smith, Oregon Housing & Community Services Department
- Vacated by Sami Jo Difuntorum, Siletz Tribal Housing Department

Appointments by the Governor on Behalf of the Racial Justice Council

- Vacated by Marcus Mundy, Coalition of Communities of Color

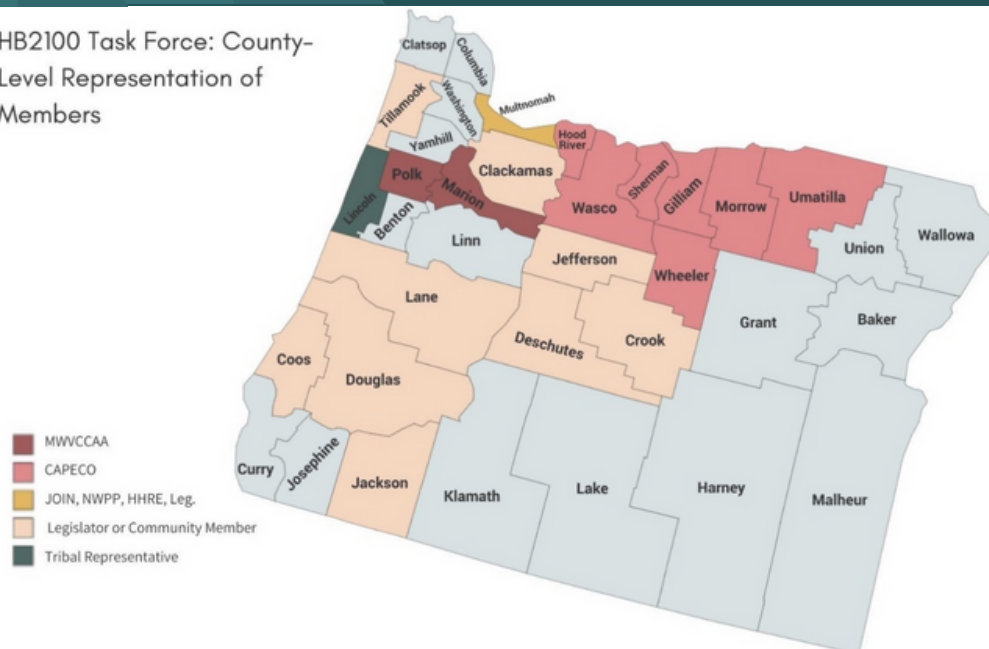
Appointments by the President of the Senate

- Senator Dick Anderson, Oregon Legislature – District 5
- Senator Kayse Jama, Oregon Legislature – District 24

Appointments by the Speaker of the House

- Senator Wlnsvey Campos, Oregon Legislature – District 18
- Vacated by Former Representative Jack Zika, Oregon Legislature – District 53

HB2100 Task Force: County-Level Representation of Members



Collaboration and Approach

Task Force Governance. The third-party consultant supporting the Task Force developed draft Operating Bylaws and Procedures, aligned with HB 2100, HB 4051, Oregon Public Meeting Law, and the work of the Task Force to ensure its smooth continuation through December 31, 2025. This document was later modified and approved by a majority of the Task Force members through a formal vote. The Operating Bylaws and Procedures clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson and other Task Force members, quorum and decision-making, participation and absences, and task force vacancies.

Subcommittees and Assignments. The Task Force reviewed, voted, and approved a subcommittee and assignment structure to accomplish more work between Task Force meetings. The purpose of establishing three (3) non-voting subcommittees was to rotate Task Force membership and create an opportunity for each member to collectively examine prior recommendations, share perspectives, and identify implementation pathways outlined in HB 4051. Each subcommittee was supported by OHCS staff and the third-party consultant to answer questions, provide materials, and offer presentations during subcommittee meetings.

Facilitation Goals and Approach

The recommendation design process continued to be facilitated by a neutral third-party consultant specializing in strategic design for Task Force members to achieve the following:

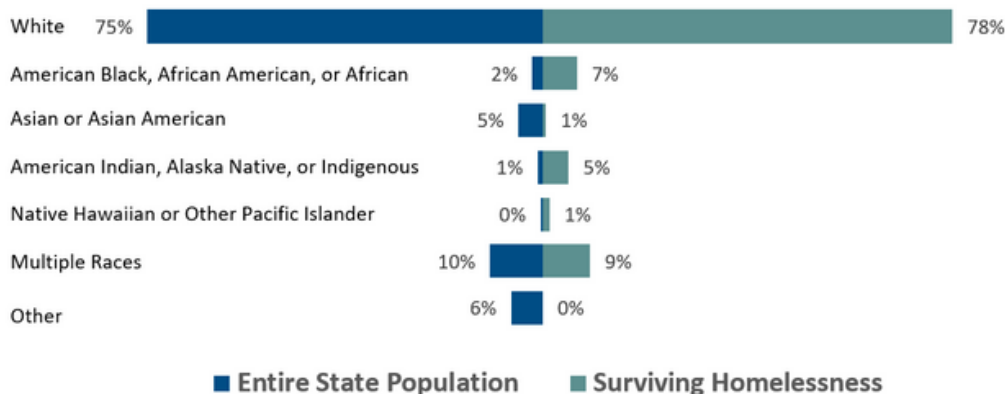
- Clarify roles, review timeline and deliverables.
- Build a mutual understanding of challenges, perspectives, needs, resource gaps, and aspirations.
- Offer sufficient space and opportunity for open dialogue and access to information.
- Compile, synthesize, and document outputs over time to refine implementation pathways.

Task Force Actions

- **Interim Report to the Oregon State Legislature.** The Task Force submitted an [interim report](#) to the Oregon State Legislature in September of 2022 outlining its work to-date, new timeline, new charge, and next steps to carry out its goals in HB 2100 and HB 4051.
- **Oregon Interagency Council on Homelessness.** Established in October 2022 and extended in January 2023 through [Executive Order 23-02](#). Created with the purpose of improving and aligning state programs, policies, and supports for people experiencing homelessness across the state and driving progress towards preventing and ending homelessness statewide. The Task Force’s research on geographic and racial disparities provided much of the factual basis for the Governor Kotek's 2023 *All In* initiative. The ICH’s charge and founding principles, as stated in [Executive Order 22-21](#):

“Whereas, it has been recommended by a state task force that in order to decrease rates of racial disparity among people experiencing homelessness, the state should transform its systems to: (1) share decision-making power with people with lived expertise of homelessness, (2) improve data collection to better understand the scope and impact of homelessness and how it varies by geography, (3) increase access through targeted strategies, and (4) adopt continuous quality improvement processes and an orientation that prioritizes learning, experimentation, and iteration in the development of all statutes and rules; all of which can be pursued through high-level interagency collaboration within the state government.”

Estimate (% Race & Ethnicity) of Oregonians Surviving Homelessness



DATA

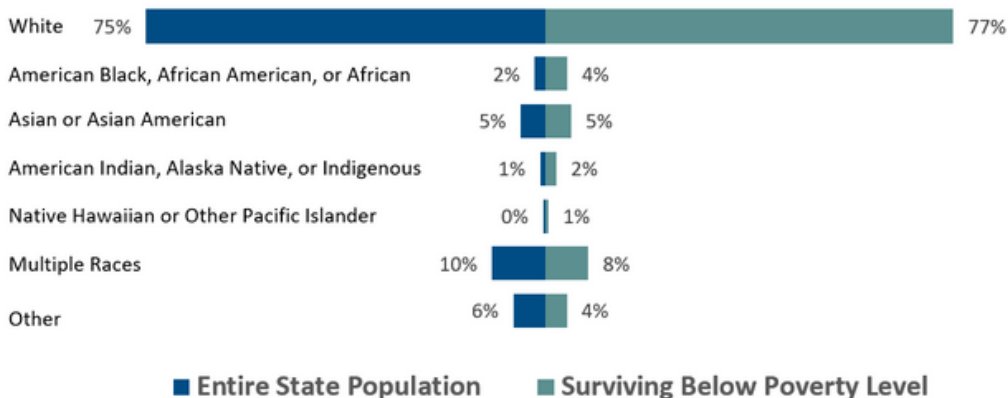
The [Annual Homelessness Assessment Report \(AHAR\) to Congress](#), published December 2022, ranks Oregon in the top five states where homelessness has increased most rapidly and affected specific groups at disproportionate rates. Oregon is one of only five states where:

- People are most likely to experience unsheltered homelessness;
- Homelessness has affected more residents in 2022 than 2020 and continues a trend of more and more Oregonians experiencing homelessness as they have been counted since 2007;
- Families with children are experiencing high rates of unsheltered homelessness;
- Veterans are experiencing homelessness at increasing rates despite increasing federal resources; and
- People with disabling conditions have been experiencing repeated or continued periods of homelessness at increasing rates since 2007 and at higher rates since 2020.

While Oregon must respond to this data and its national standing accordingly, the Task Force recognizes that inadequate homeless services are a nationwide phenomenon and moral failure, directly resulting from our shared history of structural racism and public systems designed to perpetuate inequity.

With the Legislature’s investments in the Task Force's work to-date, paired with decades of community organizing and mutual aid, Oregon is uniquely positioned to face this history head-on and make substantial and sustained investments in culturally specific and effective services statewide.

Estimate (% Race & Ethnicity) of Oregonians Surviving Poverty



Oregon - Statewide	2022 PIT	%	2020 Census Estimate Below Poverty Level	%	2020 Census	%
Total	17,959 individuals on a single night		506,558 individuals	11.9% of all Oregonians	4,237,256 individuals	
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx	15,876	88.4%	329,299	77% of those living in poverty	3,648,499	86%
Hispanic or Latinx	2,083	11.6%	96,265	23%	588,757	14%
White	13,960	77.7%	388,264	77%	3,169,096	75%
Black, African American, or African	1,172	6.5%	20,683	4%	82,655	2%
Asian or Asian American	101	0.6%	24,138	5%	194,538	4.3%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	880	4.9%	9,652	2%	62,993	1.49%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	227	1.3%	2,736	1%	19,204	0.45%
Multiple Races	1,619	9.0%	38,373	7.6%	443,339	10.5%
Other	not surveyed	n/a	22,712	4.5%	265,431	6%


Task Force Recommendations

The recommendations below, build on much needed financial investment, our shared analysis of the latest data, challenges, and opportunities facing people experiencing homelessness in Oregon, service providers, Task Force Members, and all Oregonians.

AREA 1: SOLUTIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING OF SERVICES

1. An unprecedented crisis requires extraordinary measures. A billion-dollar problem cannot be solved with inadequate local, state, or federal resources. The Task Force recommends ongoing funding of \$1.1 billion:

- \$510 million for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing with no less than \$102 million provided to the Oregon Balance of State
- \$190 million to expand Oregon’s Housing Development Grant Program (“Trust Fund”)
- \$190 million with no less than \$38 million provided to the Oregon Balance of State to establish an Oregon Special Needs Assistance Program – a set-aside of locally flexible funding for:
 - federally recognized tribes that border within Oregon
 - culturally specific organizations
 - culturally based organizations representing historically underserved populations
 - recovery-based shelter or transitional housing operators
 - re-entry based operators serving returning citizens who are at-risk of homelessness
 - disability-serving organizations
 - migrant seasonal farmworker organizations
 - domestic and sexual violence providers
 - human trafficking providers
 - youth-serving providers
 - LGBTQ+ serving providers
- \$50 million to preserve existing services and funding for antipoverty programs that intersect with homelessness for Community Action Agencies
- \$100 million to establish a state-funded housing choice grant program, the Oregon Housing Choice Grant, for Oregonians who are rent burdened (spending 30% or more of their income on rent) and meet one of the following eligibility criteria:
 - Working families with children under 18
 - Individuals who can verify their disability with a qualified provider
 - Individuals who are age 55 and older
- \$50 million to establish a Direct Service Provider Hiring and Retention Fund, a stopgap fund to bridge over the benefits cliff that faces frontline service providers, reduce turnover, and ensure living wages for employees in the homeless services sector

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- \$5 million to expand the Housing Choice Landlord Guarantee Program and Rent Guarantee Program (landlord risk mitigation funds) to provide landlords with an incentive and added security to work with tenants receiving local, state, or federal rental assistance. Targeted program will offer:
 - Up to \$1,000 and up to fourteen days' rent loss to the landlord in reimbursement or some potentially required move-in upgrades, and up to \$5,000 in qualifying damages caused by a tenant during tenancy.
 - \$3 million Continuum of Care capacity building grant to establish local planning groups within the Oregon Balance of State
 - \$2 million insurance mitigation fund for smaller organizations with annual operating budgets at or below \$5 million that are typically disadvantaged by state insurance requirements to receive funding
 - The Task Force recommends the department may disburse state and federal homelessness funds through grants and loans to local governments as defined in ORS 197.015, tribes as defined in ORS 273.462, individuals, housing authorities as defined in ORS 456.005, nonprofit corporations as defined in ORS 65.001, culturally specific organization or culturally responsive organization as defined in ORS 456.005 and community action agencies as described in ORS 458.505.
 - The Task Force recommends the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department receive authority from the Legislative Assembly to allocate, in its sole discretion, homelessness funding in any method that ensures statewide geographic coverage without regard to existing or prior distribution formulas, including through a competitive grant or contract process.

AREA 2: CHANGES TO THE STATE'S FUNDING STRUCTURE

1. The Task Force recommends the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department work with its partners in the Interagency Council on Homelessness to establish universal goals to address homelessness across the state and employ the tools of targeted universalism to then design and implement coordinated programs and policies that are tailored to meeting the needs of all Oregonians.

Through this process, OHCS could develop specific solutions to address current unmet needs, incorporating those solutions into a universal goal-oriented framework to equitably benefit all groups involved. Under the targeted universalism framework, OHCS would develop strategies that operationalize equity, direct resources and achieve outcomes for those most impacted by homelessness.

With this approach, policymakers and community stakeholders across Oregon can account for how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal and account for the culturally specific needs of different protected class groups, vulnerable populations, and underserved communities. Targeted universalism is a method of policymaking and programming that sets out to move all groups toward the universal policy goal, as well as a way of communicating and publicly marketing such programs in an inclusive, bridging manner. It is an approach that supports the needs of particular groups, including those in the majority, while reminding everyone that we are all part of the same social and civic fabric.

2. The Task Force recommends the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department adopt a competitive funding structure for administering state and federal resources to address homelessness that prioritizes both maintaining existing service levels and expanding funding availability and eligibility beyond historically funded organizations, geographies, and institutions by:

- Direct allocation, through formula funding or other means as determined in partnership with each sovereign nation, to the nine federally recognized tribes that border within Oregon
- Direct allocation, through formula funding or other means as determined by the Agency, to Community Action Agencies based on community engagement and input, for anti-poverty initiatives that intersect with homelessness priorities
- Direct allocation, through formula funding or other means as determined by the Agency based on community engagement and input, to Continuum of Care (CoC) and local planning groups structured similarly to coordinated homeless response offices established in [House Bill 4123](#) (2022)
- Direct allocation, through formula funding or other means as determined by the Agency based on community engagement and input, to culturally specific, culturally responsive, culturally based, and other organizations within the 2023/2024 fiscal year that are focused on reducing disparities where there is a demonstrated overrepresentation in homelessness in communities that are historically underrepresented

AREA 3: MODIFICATIONS FOR CONTRACTING PROCESSES

1. The Task Force recommends the 82nd Legislative Assembly to expressly direct and grant the authority to the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department to create opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing insecurity to inform state policymaking and to provide direct compensation to people with lived experience of homelessness or housing insecurity for their expertise. Compensation and support may be operationalized as formal advisory board structures, focus groups, surveys, and by other means. The Task Force recommends that the legislature permit the agency to contract with local non-profits and other entities to facilitate direct connections and compensation for people with lived experience who are providing their feedback to improve homeless services.
2. The Task Force recommends the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department receive authority from the 82nd Legislative Assembly to identify, procure, and implement a comprehensive grants and financial management system no later than December 2025.
3. The Task Force recommends the 82nd Legislative Assembly direct both the Oregon Department of Justice and Oregon Department of Administrative Services to review, revise, and negotiate language changes to contracts within 21 business days of receipt.
4. The Task Force recommends the 82nd Legislative Assembly direct both the Oregon Department of Justice and Oregon Department of Administrative Services to review insurance requirements for smaller organizations with annual operating budgets at or below \$5 million that are typically disadvantaged by state insurance requirements to receive state funding. The Task Force recommends these requirements be revised with the intention of investing in historically underfunded and underrepresented communities and organizations.
5. The Task Force recommends the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department adopt a funding cycle by the end of the 23-25 biennium on a biannual timeline to support transparency for current or prospective grantees:
 - a. January – OHCS hosts statewide listening sessions to inform funding cycle priorities.
 - b. February – OHCS announces funding cycle opportunities.
 - c. March – OHCS holds statewide pre-bidders conference.
 - d. April – OHCS releases applications for funding with a deadline of 45 days minimum for completion
 - e. May/June – OHCS reviews applications and makes notice of intent to award.
 - f. July – grant agreements are fully executed.

