

News Release

Date: March 29, 2023

Contact: Jake Sunderland, Jake.Sunderland@odhs.oregon.gov, 503-877-0170

House Bill 5019 provides \$20 million to expand and strengthen the Oregon Department of Human Services, Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

(Salem) – The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) applauds Governor Tina Kotek who today signed bipartisan legislation addressing the state’s housing and homelessness crisis into law.

House Bill 5019 (HB 5019) includes a suite of policy changes and investments intended to address Oregon’s housing needs. It provides approximately \$20 million dollars of funding to expand and strengthen the ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

The ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program is tasked with coordinating statewide planning for delivery of services to youth experiencing homelessness under the age of 25. The program partners with impacted youth, community organizations and other state agencies to support and fund initiatives and programs within the youth homelessness system.

"We all have an interest in a community in which young people have access to stable and safe housing so that they can pursue their life’s goals and reach their full potential," said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht (he/him). "A young person’s experience with homelessness does not always follow a linear path and is unique from the experience of adults. We are grateful to Governor Kotek and the Oregon

Legislature for this investment of \$20 million that will strengthen our ability to work in collaboration with community-based organizations, local government and other system partners, to provide flexible supports and services that meet young people experiencing homelessness where they are.”

ODHS will use the \$20 million provided by HB 5019 to expand and strengthen its support of local programs across the state, as well as newer initiatives and supports for youth experiencing homelessness across Oregon by increasing investments in:

- Prevention services including youth outreach and drop-in services.
- Early and crisis intervention housing such as shelter and other programming.
- Medium-term housing such as transitional living and other programming.
- Host home programs that provide temporary housing for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Other services such as culturally specific programming, mental health and substance use supports.

HB 5019 will also increase the ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program staff from one to six positions, this will improve ODHS’ ability to collaborate with partners and young people, expand services that meet young people where they are and improve data collection.

In 2021, [ODHS completed the state's first needs assessment](#) focused on youth experiencing homelessness. The assessment estimated that there are over 8,200 unhoused individuals under the age of 25 who are likely to need safe, affordable housing and services to maintain stability.

More information about the ODHS Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program can be found [online](#).

About the Oregon Department of Human Services

The mission of the Oregon Department of Human Services is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

###