

# RAY GUIDANCE SUMMARY

**The information contained within this document is pending DOJ approval**

## Rental Assistance for Youth (RAY) Program Intent

In the 2021 Regular Session, the Oregon Legislature approved House Bill 2163, which allocated State General Funds for expenditures and activities received by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to assist Oregonians under the age of twenty-five who are literally homeless or experiencing housing instability. Funds from the regular session will allow grantees to assist households by partnering with and providing a range of interventions such as rental assistance and coordination with partners who are providing wrap-around services to support Oregon youth at risk for homelessness or who have become homeless and require access to housing supports.

Based on the legislative priorities outlined in House Bill 2163, the Rental Assistance for Youth Program will prioritize service to youth populations (individuals who are younger than 25 years of age) experiencing the following:

- (a) Homeless;
- (b) In any substitute care program, as defined in ORS 326.575;
- (c) Incarcerated or detained in a correctional facility or detention facility as defined in ORS 419A.004; or
- (d) Residing in a facility for dependency treatment or rehabilitation or for mental health treatment.

RAY will provide local rental assistance, in tandem with providers of other critical housing-related resources, to assist those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness with special efforts made to outreach and market to Native American populations, Alaskan Natives, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, as well as LGBTQI-GNC youth who meet the program requirements. Targeting of funds shall not violate any Fair Housing or anti-discriminatory requirements



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## Partner Collaboration Requirement:

Partnerships and collaboration are one of the hallmarks of an effective homelessness prevention system. We know that people access help in a variety of ways and that trusted messengers are key to ensuring equitable access. Data also show clear trends that communities of color, female heads of household, LGBTQI-GNC individuals, and families are disproportionately impacted by homelessness nationwide.

## Equity and Racial Justice:

OHCS is committed to advancing equity and racial justice in alignment with the Statewide Housing Plan and informed by national promising practices and lived experience of communities of color. OHCS and its grantees commit to an intentional, data-driven approach to reducing disparities in housing and social service provision. Additional guidance and information continue to be developed to further identify how OHCS and grantees can advance equity and racial justice within state and federally funded programs.

More information can be found at the Performance Measure Requirements section of this manual and at <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/our-work/our-four-strategies/>, <http://center4si.com/sparc/>, and <https://www.usich.gov/news/racial-equity-an-essentialcomponent-of-our-nations-homelessness-response/>.



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Applicant Eligibility	Oregon Rental Assistance for Youth (RAY)
Housing Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literally homeless</li> <li>• At imminent risk of homelessness</li> <li>• Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence</li> <li>• Homeless under other federal statutes</li> <li>• Unstably housed</li> </ul>
Priority youth populations for intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literally homeless</li> <li>• Exiting foster care system</li> <li>• Exiting incarceration or detained in a <u>correctional facility</u> or detention facility</li> <li>• Exiting mental health treatment facility, facility for dependency treatment, or rehabilitation facility</li> </ul>
Income Requirement	<p>≤ 50% AMI (Income less than or equal to 50% of the Area Median Income)</p>
Eligible program components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Financial Assistance</li> <li>• Stabilization Support Services (Case Management)</li> <li>• Prevention Activities</li> <li>• Diversion Activities</li> <li>• Outreach and Engagement</li> <li>• Administrative Costs</li> </ul>
<p>“Client facing” expenditure ratios (Temporary financial assistance directly spent on behalf of and in aid to the participant household)</p>	<p>Housing financial services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥ 50% (at least 50%) of overall client facing dollars must be spent on the costs related to moving into and directly sustaining housing (Rent, Utilities, Deposits, Moving Expenses, Payment of Arrearages and Past Rental Debts, Expungements, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Supplemental financial services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥ 30% (at least 30%) of overall client facing dollars must be spent on direct education/income/employment/ health related supports</li> <li>• ≤ 20% (no more than 20%) of overall client facing dollars must be spent on other safety/stability supports for the youth household</li> </ul> <p>** Homeless households must be engaged in activities and applications to identify, attain, and sustain housing <u>in order</u> to be eligible for supplemental financial services</p>
Recertification for assistance requirements	N/A

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## **Housing Financial Assistance (not an exhaustive list)**

Eligible services include but are not exclusive to:

- Long-term rent assistance to support a client accessing other housing resources or generating sufficient income to stabilize in housing: Rental assistance, late fees, and rent arrearages;
- Flexible Rental Assistance is inclusive of short-term, long-term, and permanent housing depending on the youths' needs

Housing units must be inspected before rental assistance payments can begin. Inspections must meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS) requirements. Housing authorities and CAAs are responsible for the HQS inspections and must provide details of the inspections with reimbursement requests

- Utility arrears (includes water, sewer, garbage, gas, electricity, phone, and internet);
- Housing costs such as mortgage/manufactured home payments and arrearages (limited to 3 months);

## **Quality of Life Allowances (not an exhaustive list)**

- "Quality of Life" allowances such as extra-curricular educational experiences, special occasion expenses (such as prom or graduation), etc. Costs to be capped at \$1500 per participant

## **Allowable Case Management Activities (not an exhaustive list)**

- Provide authentic case management services that are tailored to meet the individual needs of each youth.
- Case Managers will meet as needed with youth and landlords to address any difficulties.
- Case Managers will act as a liaison and advocate to solve landlord issues or concerns
- Work supports (i.e., training costs; transportation assistance – bus tokens, ridesharing; clothing to support employment needs)

The purpose of the work supports is to allow the household to stabilize by avoiding costs or expenses in other areas that are a barrier to housing stability.

- Provide a good renter course



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## **Additional Financial Assistance (not an exhaustive list)**

Additional funds may be used to the stabilize household.

Some eligible expenses include:

- Non-renewable \$500 household allowance (can be comprised of accumulated expenditures)
- Eviction Expungement, and related fees; does not include court adjudicated fines such as tickets, restitution, etc.
- Costs pertaining to obtaining vital documents such as birth certificate, driver's license, social security card, etc.
- Costs related to good renter courses

## **Documentation Requirements**

- Housing status verification
  - Examples: Literally homeless certification, notice to vacate, unstably housed statement, etc.
- Income status verification
  - Examples: Award letters, pay stubs, employment verification, etc.
- 3rd party verification of eligibility is preferred, if 3rd party verification is unavailable, participants may self-certify.
- Eligibility requirements above and beyond program guidance cannot be imposed by any grantee