

# Director's Message



Oregon Housing and Community Services

February 1, 2019

Dear Partners,

The convening of the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session brings hope, opportunity, and potential. Governor Brown's housing budget requests a historic investment of \$406.1 million, recognizing it will take an unprecedented effort at all levels to address the housing need in communities across the state. Housing remains a key issue in legislative conversations, and I have been energized and encouraged by my meetings with legislators who are engaged and eager to collaborate on solutions to serve their constituents and the state. OHCS and our partners are prepared to advocate for historic investments that will bring housing solutions to communities across Oregon.

While our state leadership on housing is tremendous, the partial federal shutdown brought uncertainty and threatened the housing stability of too many Oregonians. During the 35 days that the partial shutdown lasted, affordable housing developments were halted and tenants and landlords alike worried about the continuity of funding for a variety of rent assistance programs. We are grateful to the efforts of our federal partners working at HUD, Rural Development, and other affected federal agencies. OHCS will continue to monitor the affects on our partners and the people they serve, and will address concerns as they arise.

## Statewide Housing Plan

Today, our Housing Stability Council unanimously approved Oregon's Statewide Housing Plan titled Breaking New Ground. Completed after combining robust statewide outreach and partner input sessions with quantitative data analysis, the plan reflects what is needed to address the housing and service needs of both rural and urban communities across Oregon. After conducting extensive outreach and soliciting feedback on the draft plan this fall, we have made refinements and clarified our intentions. In addition, we have added accountability measures around equity and racial justice; included more information around permanent



**Breaking  
New Ground**  
OREGON'S STATEWIDE HOUSING PLAN





supportive housing to include the work of the Statewide Supportive Housing Strategy Workgroup; added community comments around land use and its close connection with housing development; and other edits to reflect our conversations with people across the state. I am extremely proud of the final Statewide Housing Plan and am eager to work with our partners across Oregon in implementing the six priorities. We are working on incorporating final edits and the full Plan will be published online next week.

## Affordable Housing Finance Update

### **Projects Closing**

Pleasant Avenue Apartments is the first project to close this year. The apartments include 24 homes that will serve veterans in Oregon City. OHCS supported this project with \$2,400,000 of GHAP funds. Thank you to OHCS staff, Housing Authority of Clackamas County, Federal Home Loan Bank, Meyer Memorial Trust, Home Depot Foundation, and NOAH for your work on this endeavor.



REACH's Argyle Apartments closed earlier this week. The apartments will include studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes for families and Portland's workforce. Residents will benefit from primary care health checks, health services (including gynecologic examinations, immunizations, ongoing care for chronic health conditions, minor illnesses and injuries), and health insurance enrollment services provided by North by Northeast Community Health Center. Worksystems Aligned Partner Network will provide workforce development as well. Thanks to all that dedicated their time to making this project a reality.

### **Open Funding Opportunities**

We have multiple open Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) at this time. The first application due date, for Lottery Backed Bonds for Preservation, is February 19<sup>th</sup> – be sure to get your applications in as soon as you can. Click the links below to learn more.

[9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits](#)

[HOME Investment Partnership Program](#)

[Manufactured Dwelling Park Preservation](#)





[Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credits](#)  
[Lottery Backed Bonds for Preservation NOFA](#)

### Site Visits

If you have applied or plan to apply for the 2019 9% LIHTC and/or HOME NOFAs, site visits are required to be considered for an award. To schedule a visit, complete the [Site Review Checklist](#) and email it to [Site.Visit@Oregon.gov](mailto:Site.Visit@Oregon.gov) with: your sponsor's name, the site name and address, contact information for person responsible for scheduling and attending the site visit, and the name of person completing the OHCS Project Site Checklist. **Site visit requests must be received by next Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.**

### Housing Stabilization Update

#### Point-in-Time Count

Communities across Oregon spent the end of January engaging service providers and community volunteers to account for each person experiencing homelessness. The Point in Time Count (PIT) determines the number of families and individuals experiencing homelessness on a particular day. The PIT is not intended to capture the total number of individuals who will experience homeless throughout the year, but rather as a tool to provide communities with a consistent measure of the prevalence of homelessness in their communities over time. This data gives us a better understanding of the gravity of the housing crisis and homelessness in Oregon while demonstrating the need for additional resources. Thank you to our partners and the volunteers who have been working diligently on the ground to conduct the count.

#### Special Recognition to Oregon's IDA Partners

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are matched savings accounts that help Oregonians save for homeownership, education, a future business, and other opportunities. The Oregon IDA Initiative is managed and operated by a group of non-profit organizations who are dedicated to helping Oregon families prosper. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending their first meeting of 2019 and the honor of presenting each organization with a certificate of appreciation for their many years of service to Oregonians through the IDA Initiative. I am touched when I think of the people they have empowered. Read the [2018 Annual Report](#) to see the impact of IDAs in our communities. More information is available online through the [OHCS website for the Oregon IDA Initiative](#) or on the [Oregon IDA Initiative website](#). Thank you to those that work tirelessly to provide opportunity!

#### Legislative Budget Note

In the 2018 Legislative Session, the Legislature issued a budget note directing OHCS to revisit the administration of resources for the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP). The Housing Stability Council, OHCS staff, and our Community Action Agency partners have worked since October on a series of recommendations focusing on five key areas: alignment with the Statewide Housing Plan, the use of outcome-oriented strategies, statewide funding priorities, the creation of an effective and efficient homeless services system, and the use of best practices. This process has been insightful, encouraging, and





has helped solidify the partnerships among those of us working to end homelessness. Thank you to all those that dedicated their time and energy to improving policy and program delivery to better serve Oregonians. We are committed to continuing this work and collaboration beyond the budget note, and we are grateful to have partners who are so committed to their communities.

## Legislative Update

### Legislative Agenda

Under the leadership of Governor Brown, we head into the session with an ambitious legislative agenda. The [2019 OHCS Legislative Priorities](#) advance Governor Brown's priorities and align with the five year goals set out in our newly adopted Statewide Housing Plan.

First, we must address children's homelessness to ensure every Oregonian can access is provided with opportunity. One child without a stable home is too many. Unfortunately, according to HUD data, Oregon has the highest rate in the nation of family homelessness. Children cannot focus in the classroom without a safe, stable home, and children's homelessness will have a lasting adverse impact on our future as a state.



Next, we must create permanent supportive housing (PSH) to provide a pathway out of chronic homelessness. We know that PSH is a proven model for stabilizing our most vulnerable populations, and it saves public dollars by allowing for intervention before a mental health crisis.

**COST SAVINGS OF PSH**

Intervention	2018 Cost	Duration
Hospital stay	\$800	Per night
Emergency Room	\$500	Per average visit
County Jail	\$125	Per night
<b>PSH</b>	<b>\$59-64</b>	<b>Per night</b>

We will also address the lack of housing supply through policies and investments to accelerate development in Greater Oregon. Housing development has failed to keep up with population growth, impacting housing costs for Oregonians and the ability for businesses to attract and retain their workforce.



Since 2002 population growth has been **twice as fast** in rural Oregon compared to rural America, but new construction is **30% less than** in rural America.

### Recent Testimony Before the Legislature

I was invited to testify before the House Committee on Human Services and Housing on Monday to provide an agency overview and educate legislators on the ways OHCS serves Oregonians, as many of the committee members are new to the Legislature or new to the committee. I also provided an overview of our legislative priorities, highlighting the budget increases we are seeking to expand access to our programs and services. The level of engagement from the committee was encouraging, these are truly passionate policymakers dedicated to working towards solutions, for their







districts and the state. [You can access a video of my testimony, the PowerPoint presented, and other materials at this link.](#)



Assistant Director Claire Seguin testified in front of the [Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction](#) on Monday with Julie Peacock of the Public Utilities Commission. They discussed energy assistance programs and the work and recommendations of the Low Income Utility Program Work Group, which was led by the Governor's Climate Cabinet. Dan Elliott, a Policy Analyst in our Energy Services Section, was also on hand to answer committee questions and provide additional detail on OHCS' work to address and alleviate Oregonians' energy burden. Even with

existing programs, Oregon's energy burden remains at an estimated \$345 million a year, and we will continue to advocate for additional supports to support our neighbors struggling to heat and cool their homes. [To hear the discussion and see materials, visit this link.](#)

### Upcoming Hearings

On Monday February 4, our two agency bills will be heard in the [House Human Services and Housing Committee](#). House Bills 2055 and 2056 would support our work to bring additional house developments to rural and underserved areas. The Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator (HB 2056) would expand the Governor's Workforce Housing Initiative to communities throughout Oregon. The bill dedicates \$15 million in resources and continues leveraging the support of the Regional Solutions Cabinet to provide incentives to a minimum of three dozen collaborative partnerships between employers and communities statewide to support the development of low to moderate income housing to address the workforce housing shortage in Oregon. HB 2056 makes modifications to our existing Loan Guarantee Program to make the program a more flexible tool to support development. If you would like to support these bills, please reach out to [Ariel Nelson](#).

### ***Are you hosting a groundbreaking, grand opening, or other event?***

OHCS wants to celebrate with you! Please let us know if you are planning an event and would like a representative to speak, participate, or attend. [Complete the form at this link and someone at OHCS will connect with you.](#)

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MS', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Margaret Solle Salazar, Director

