

Housing & Homelessness Improvements

The LOC will work to increase the technical assistance programs and resources available from the state directed at long-term housing planning and development site readiness programs. In addition, there need to be investments from the state in programs that assist homeless persons into temporary and permanent housing, housing development for low income and moderate income housing, and infrastructure to service housing.

Background

Across Oregon, the price of housing is rising at a pace faster than the state's economic growth. This is particularly felt in Oregon's rural and frontier regions. Moreover, high-growth, metropolitan areas are under increasing strain to meet market demands resulting from the high rate of in-migration. The state economist has identified multiple constraints that contribute to the inability of the construction industry to meet this need, such as a shortage in construction workers, the price of land, the number of shovel-ready lots, and the availability of financing. Cities have identified their need for state investment in land use technical assistance; infrastructure costs; incentive analysis; encouraging private investment; and workforce development.

Similarly, cities across the state are seeing more homelessness, representing a variety of populations, including: families, youth, and those impacted by mental health issues or addiction. City employees, particularly public safety officers, are often the first contact for those experiencing homelessness, but cities do not directly provide social services or crisis housing. Instead, cities rely on private, county and state programs to provide these services. The availability of affordable housing will address a segment of the homeless population's need.

People who are displaced from a limited supply of housing are often living in cars or co-habiting with other families in single-family homes. If more affordable housing is created, these residents will have a stable place from which they can rebuild their family's security and financing. However, there are other segments of the homeless population that need more than a house they can afford. They need programs and services that provide support, social services, and job training to stay housed. Therefore, investment in affordable housing is not enough to meet their needs. Investment in the services that help people stay in housing is the only means to prevent their return to homelessness.

Cities have expressed the desire to be partners in both creating more housing and ensuring that people can stay in these homes once they are housed. However, cities also recognize that their role is as a partner and facilitator. Cities cannot become the social service provider, nor do most have the resources to directly develop housing projects. Nevertheless, cities can work to plan for increased housing, help developers find the means to create housing, assist those that they encounter to find shelter, and bring all partners to the table to address housing and homelessness issues.

Desired Outcome

Housing and homelessness issues defy a single answer. To assist cities in addressing these issues, the League will focus on: additional technical assistance that will help cities plan for affordable housing; a stronger partnership for long-term solutions to homelessness; and an increased state investment in housing development and services for the homeless.