

## Emergency Housing Account

### **Projected Amount Available**

The Legislative Revenue Office projects that the new recording fee will generate \$15 million in the 2009-11 biennium. Of that, \$1.5 million will come to the Emergency Housing Account.

### **Statutory Mandate**

The Housing Opportunity Bill requires that 10 percent of the revenues generated during the biennium be deposited in the Emergency Housing Account, as amended in ORS 458.620.

Moneys in the Emergency Housing Account are appropriated continuously to the [Housing and Community Services] department to carry out the provisions of ORS 458.650.

### **Legislative Intent**

It is the intent of the 2009 Legislature to maintain the statutory provisions of the Emergency Housing Account. General Fund dedicated to the Account was reduced for the 2009-11 biennium by \$1.6 million.

The legislative intent does not mandate a revision of the EHA administrative rules, but instead strives to meet the mandates of ORS 458.650 and the intent of the Housing Opportunity Bill. In order to accomplish this intent, OHCS may revise its administrative rules.

### **Critical Needs - Problem Statement**

After ranking fourth and fifth highest percentage of population experiencing homelessness in the nation in 2006 and 2007, Oregon jumped to first place in 2008. This determination was made according to the 2009 HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. The ranking, which is based on the percentage of population, indicates that .54 percent of Oregonians experienced homelessness, or 20,653 individuals. The report relies on 2008 data. It was compiled just as the Oregon economy was making a downturn, and suggests that the number of homeless persons is, in actuality, even larger and the consequences of homelessness much worse than estimated.

In January 2009, Oregon Housing and Community Services' partners counted 37 percent more people experiencing homelessness than in 2008. The largest proportion of the increase is among people turned away from shelter services and those identified in the street count.

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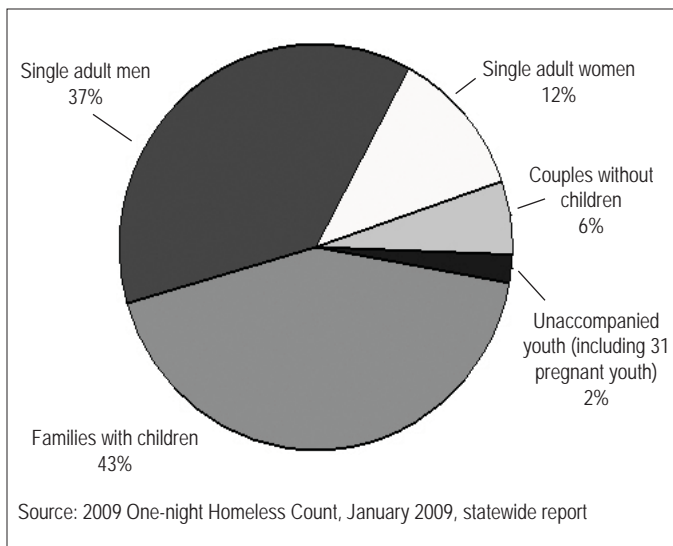


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Some troubling findings from the 2009 count:

- 17,122 people were identified as homeless
- 43 percent of people identified as homeless consisted of families with children
- nearly 50 percent of those identified were single adults
- more than 25 percent (4,313) of the children counted were younger than 18 years



The top three stated causes of homelessness in 2009:

- Couldn't afford rent – 29 percent
- Unemployed – 29 percent
- Drug/Alcohol (self-identified) – 17 percent

The number of veterans counted nearly doubled between 2008 and 2009 to 1,425 households. Nearly 59 percent of households counted had a member with an emotional or mental disability, or substance abuse issue (6,846 households).

## **Current/past practice with the similar resources**

The Emergency Housing Account has been distributed under a formula allocation to the network of Oregon community action agencies. These agencies provide the primary service delivery system in using resources for a variety of strategies to serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Traditionally, community action agencies use the funds to:

- leverage other resources;
- pay for shelter nights;
- provide rental assistance;
- deliver case management and associated services; and
- cover administrative expenses.

The Legislature has approved an agency performance measure for the department's homeless programs. The performance measure states that the department, through its homeless programs, must work to achieve a 60 percent success rate in moving homeless individuals from homelessness to stable housing with publicly funded case-management services. The past results reported to the Legislature show that the agency has consistently fallen short of this target

## **Service priorities**

Oregon Housing and Community Services proposes to identify and implement best practices that deliver successful outcomes in moving homeless individuals to stable housing; to provide training and technical assistance to service delivery partners to address data collection, reporting, and definitions, as well as case management practices, to help more people achieve stable housing.

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The Governor's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, as well as SB 200, the state homelessness policy, provides a policy framework and guide to more effectively target state resources. Proven strategies, backed with input from providers and advocates, and existing data, require an emphasis and priority on new allocation strategies that include:

## Permanent Supportive Housing Strategies

Financial assistance with housing costs (e.g. security deposit, first month's rent, move-in and utilities connection deposits, short- or long-term housing subsidies); advocacy and assistance in addressing housing barriers (e.g. poor credit history or debt, prior eviction, criminal conviction).

## Emergency Service Strategies

Address the immediate need for shelter or stabilization in current housing. Focus should be provided on intervening prior to a family becoming homeless, and ensuring they maintain housing.

## Assessment Strategies

Assess clients' housing needs, preferences, and barriers; resource acquisitions, and identification of services needed to sustain housing.

## Case Management Strategies

Service focused on maintaining permanent housing or acquiring and sustaining permanent housing.

## System Change Strategies

Listen and learn from partners in service delivery to refine allocations and expectations, and explore integrated partnerships and coordination of multiple program resources in the delivery of services to – and housing for – people experiencing homelessness.

## **Funding distribution**

OHCS proposes to allocate the new revenues generated through the Housing Opportunity Bill to its community action partners to achieve the above service priorities. Through enhanced accountability, OHCS will use EHA resources to prevent homelessness, keep families in stable housing, and rapidly rehouse those who do fall into homelessness.

## **Proposed outcome measures**

- Housing retention and stability after placement in permanent housing
- Prevention of displacement
- Participation of private landlords in housing homeless persons

Please send your comments and questions to:

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