

Oregon Opportunity Network – 2014 Legislative Agenda

Oregon Opportunity Network, a statewide association of affordable housing and community development organizations and a member of the Housing Alliance, has several priority issues going into the short session:

- **OHCS Transformation.** While we believe that a more comprehensive transformation of OHCS would have the best chance of producing desired results, we are generally supportive of the concept that Director Margaret Van Vliet is bringing to the February session for the formation of an overarching governing body that will develop housing policy in alignment with other agencies; streamlining and consolidation of programs; and potential consideration of models in which homeownership and/or block grant funds are passed through to a collaborative of nonprofits. We are committed to partnering with OHCS and legislators to work through the details of structure and implementation. In particular, we advocate that the governing body has:
 - Authority to set housing and community services policy, with clear linkage to other state agencies and systems.
 - Fiduciary responsibility for an entrepreneurial business model, including a clear role in developing and monitoring the financial plan for the organization.
 - Transparent processes that invite input from a broad set of constituents and that provide accountability to the Governor, Legislature and the public.

We look forward to partnering with OHCS and legislators to work out the details so that together, we can ensure that the governance and operation of OHCS are more effective and work better for low-income Oregonians.

- **Grandfathering of current property tax exemptions for charitable organizations (HB4039).** We support HB 4039, which would grandfather *current* exemptions for affordable housing owned by nonprofit organizations. Maintaining current exemptions helps provide housing stability for vulnerable Oregonians. Because of the complex nature of affordable housing financing, a sudden change in tax status would threaten the viability of maintaining already scarce affordable housing for vulnerable populations, including developmentally disabled adults, children in foster care, seniors and families.
- **Resident opportunity to purchase manufactured home parks (HB 4038-1).** This compromise solution from the workgroup established in the 2013 session would ensure that residents are notified when owners choose to sell, so that they have the opportunity to make a competitive offer to acquire the park. Residents of manufactured housing are predominantly seniors, veterans, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. Resident ownership has proven to be an effective model to help prevent the loss of this affordable housing option and to help these folks stay in their homes.

We also support the following funding requests:

- **Restore funding for EHA/SHAP.** The Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) help keep at risk families in their homes, and help homeless families get off the streets and become stable. We are requesting an additional \$1.5 million to EHA and \$0.5 million to SHAP for the remainder of the 2014 biennium to return the programs to the level of the 2007 biennium.

- **Funding for foreclosure implementation.** In 2012 and 2013, the Legislature passed historic foreclosure reform laws (SB 1552 and SB 558), with the requirement of a “resolution conference” between the loan servicer and borrower before foreclosures are allowed to proceed. Counseling, resolution services, and legal assistance are known to benefit Oregonians at risk of foreclosure and our communities across the state. The system is working, and we need funding to help meet the demand. We need to release funds now to meet current demand; and we need to add \$800,000 into the budget to meet future demand.
- **Preserve existing affordable housing.** Across the state, thousands of people with very low incomes live in homes with federal rent subsidies and in manufactured home parks. Many of these homes are at risk of conversion to market rate, including some housing built and owned by non-profit partners statewide. We cannot afford to lose this precious resource or displace our vulnerable neighbors. We need an additional \$5 million in Lottery Backed Bonds to fill financing gaps and preserve these affordable homes.
- **Funding to stabilize the backbone for a statewide 211 system.** We also support 211info’s request for a state investment of \$1.1 million in the 2013-15 biennium to build the basic infrastructure to operate 211info as a statewide 24/7 service for vulnerable Oregonians.

Contact us for more information:



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Oregon Opportunity Network (Oregon ON) is a nonprofit association of affordable housing and community development organizations, public housing authorities, and partners across Oregon. Our vision is that all Oregonians have the opportunity to succeed in life. To be healthy and safe, you need a place to call home. Our member organizations include:

Statewide organizations

CASA of Oregon
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare
Catholic Charities
Enterprise Community Partners
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Housing Development Center
NOAH (Network for Oregon Affordable Housing)
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Central & Eastern Oregon

Columbia Cascade Housing
Community Connection of Northeast Oregon
Housing Works
NeighborImpact
UGMW Nonprofit Development Corporation

Coastal

CDC of Lincoln County
Community Action Team, Inc.

Southern Oregon

ACCESS
Housing Authority of Jackson County
NeighborWorks Umpqua
United Community Action Network

Willamette Valley

Community Home Builders
Farmworker Housing Development Center
Mainstream Housing, Inc.
Metropolitan Affordable Housing
NEDCO
Oregon Housing and Associated Services
Polk CDC
Salem-Keizer CDC
St Vincent de Paul of Lane County
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services

Portland Metro

Bienestar
Central City Concern
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Downtown Community Housing
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Authority of Washington County
Human Solutions, Inc.
Innovative Housing, Inc.
NAYA Family Center
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Housing Center
Proud Ground
REACH Community Development
ROSE Community Development

....Plus over 100 businesses, government agencies, community organizations and individuals across Oregon who support our mission.