



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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OHCS budget begins to move

Salem - After two weeks of off-site budget meetings, Joint Ways and Means Committee members return to their traditional process in Salem. Oregon Housing and Community Services will have a public hearing on its budget starting Monday.

“We’re looking forward to sharing our accomplishments,” said **Rick Crager**, deputy director of Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

OHCS staff will focus on the agency’s continuum of services during three days of testimony before the Joint Ways and Means Committee this week.

Department managers will present information before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development beginning at 3 p.m. Monday and ending with public testimony on Wednesday.

OHCS will cover 47 funding streams during the first two days of presenting information and data. Agency programs enable hardworking Oregonians and our most vulnerable neighbors to succeed, become self sufficient and achieve prosperity.

Instead of addressing funding streams specifically, presenters will focus on the department’s continuum of services, ranging from servicing people experiencing homelessness to those ready to buy their first home. OHCS services include:

- **Homelessness** – provides funding for shelter, case management and transitional and permanent housing for the homeless.

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- **Food Assistance** – provides funding to enable food delivery through the Oregon Food Bank and regional food banks.
- **Rental Assistance** – provides funding to supply short- and long-term rent payments to qualified renters.
- **Energy Assistance** – provides funding that reduces energy costs for qualified recipients through utility-assistance payments and weatherization.
- **Affordable Rental Housing** – provides funding for the acquisition, rehabilitation and/or construction of long-term affordable rental housing.
- **Homeownership** – provides funding for qualified homebuyers to purchase their first home, as well as received the necessary support and counseling to sustain homeownership.

On the third day of testimony, nearly two dozen clients and agencies that partners with OHCS will speak to subcommittee members about the services they provide.

A copy of the full PowerPoint presentation will be posted on Wednesday, May 6 on the OHCS website following audience with the Joint Ways and Means subcommittee. To view, visit www.ohcs.oregon.gov.

In other action:

The Legislation reached an important deadline on the 28th that puts to bed all pending legislation not assigned to Rules or Ways and Means committees. On bills that made it past the deadline, the last day for legislative committees to post agendas for work sessions is May 20, with a wrap-up date of May 28.

“The universe of bills we’re dealing with has narrowed,” **Crager** said. “Once State Economist Tom Potiowsky releases the revenue forecast on May 15, the real work of crafting a state budget will begin.”

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The Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development will hear two OHCS policy bills on Thursday, May 7.

- **SB 199** – Prevents the loss of existing affordable housing through a \$4 million increase in the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit cap. Preserves existing Section 8 and Rural Development federal rent subsidies.
- **SB 201A** – Reduces the energy costs faced by low-income individuals in single and multifamily housing, including those financed by OHCS.

Other bills:

HB 2255A – Defines manufactured dwelling park units in manufactured dwelling park nonprofit cooperatives a real property. Hearing on May 14 before the Senate Consumer Protection Committee.

SB 200 - Establishes Oregon's policy to end homelessness; require greater collaboration between OHCS and the Department of Human Services; proposes that permanent housing be the state's preferred response to homelessness; and calls for a comprehensive and coordinated response to meet the individual needs of homeless persons. Hearing on May 8 before the House Human Services Committee.

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