



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

800 Exchange St., Suite 410
Astoria, OR 97103
(503) 325-1000 phone / (503) 325-8325 fax
www.co.clatsop.or.us

August 10, 2023

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, NE Suite 254
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners applauds your longstanding commitment to address Oregon's housing crisis and leadership during the legislative session to direct millions of dollars for housing production and supportive housing services.

We also appreciate being added to the EO 23-02 Declaration of Homeless Emergency, and your recognition of the severity of the homelessness emergency in Clatsop County. Our MAC Group has built upon Clatsop County's strength of collaborative partnership to develop a comprehensive and multi-faceted plan, leveraging the capacity of multiple partners, to help those without homes find shelter, services, and permanent housing.

Despite the state's recognition of Clatsop County's need, the resources committed by the state are well below what is necessary to implement the plan, do not reflect the magnitude of the problem we are trying to solve in Clatsop County, and are disproportionately less than what is offered to other counties.

As context, Clatsop County, with a population of approximately 41,695 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022), represents about 1% of Oregon's population. Yet, with approximately 928 individuals experiencing homelessness as of the [2021 Point-in-Time count](#), Clatsop County has 5% of Oregon's homeless population. The County has hovered around this 5% mark since the 2017/18 count. In raw numbers, Clatsop County has more people experiencing homelessness than much larger urban counties, such as Washington, Clackamas, Yamhill, and Jackson counties.

The Clatsop County MAC Group has created a plan that will create nearly 100 shelter beds and provide rapid rehousing to nearly 200 individuals in the next year. With funding from Project Turnkey 2.0, the [Columbia Inn shelter](#) is scheduled to open in the next 30 days. To fully implement our plan, Clatsop County and our partners estimate a funding requirement of approximately \$8 million. To date, the funds allocated in the Balance of State process total only \$1.5 million. This is one-fifth of the amount needed to implement our goals and represents only 1% of the currently allocated resources.

The attached infographic demonstrates that Clatsop County, while being designated a rural county, has urban levels of homelessness, and is being disproportionately impacted by Oregon's housing crisis.

If the state allocated resources that matched Clatsop County's need (5% homeless population = 5% homeless funding), we would be awarded roughly \$7.7 million through the resources being distributed by OEM and OHCS. We call on you to take a stand on behalf of Clatsop County to address this glaring funding disparity.

With over \$55 million in state emergency housing funds remaining to be allocated, we know that the resources exist to allow the state to equitably invest in Clatsop County's partnerships and plan to help those experiencing homelessness in our County.

Our request to you is provide resources to Clatsop County based on the need (5%), so Clatsop County can humanely and effectively serve the most vulnerable in our communities. We need the state to equitably partner with us in meeting this humanitarian crisis.

We also encourage the state to open funding opportunities for existing emergency shelter beds. These beds are the critical infrastructure serving those most in need in our community today and must be retained as we work diligently to expand beds, access and services.

We look forward to continuing this discussion with you and your staff soon.

Regards,



Mark Kujala
Chair, Board of Commissioners

Cc: Courtney Bangs , Vice Chair
John Toyooka, County Commissioner
Pamela Wev, County Commissioner
Lianne Thompson, County Commissioner