

Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP)



SAY YES
to YEHP

Little History of YEHP – Have you heard of our program?

- The Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) is working to end youth homelessness. Homelessness affects youth across Oregon in urban, suburban and rural areas. We believe all young people should have safe and stable places to stay, the services and supports they need to thrive, and opportunities to reach their full potential.
- The program, under the leadership of our manager, Matt, operated as a single-person entity for over eight years (from 2015-2022) Matt spearheaded efforts to enhance the program, augmenting resources, securing additional funding, and disseminating invaluable knowledge about youth homelessness to local communities and partners.
- Beginning in 2020, our program underwent substantial expansion, initially fueled by Emergency Board funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This momentum continued with successive, albeit smaller, short-term legislative investments in 2021, 2022, and 2023, further solidifying our growth trajectory.

Serving youth: Our role



Oversee contracts and grants process



Deliver troubleshooting to grantees



Develop and advance policy direction



Track national best practice



Pursue funding opportunities



Engage youth and partners



Maintain connections to other ODHS programs



Youth who are Experiencing Homelessness:

- Let's talk about the experiences, barriers, and statistics around youth experiencing homelessness.
- Youth homelessness can often be misunderstood. We want to do our best to support learning about what youth experience and why youth become often can face housing barriers, instabilities and homelessness.

Oregon Youth Homelessness: By the numbers

8,300

homeless young people in
need of safe housing and
services every year*

7th

highest number of
Unaccompanied Homeless
Youth (UHY) across U.S.**

2nd tied with CA

highest number of UHY
without shelter across
U.S.**

- [Corporation for Supporting Housing Youth Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- [** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report**](#)

Overview: Youth homelessness

Young people experiencing unaccompanied homelessness are **particularly vulnerable**. Returning home is **not an option** for many of the youth SSP's program serves.

Youth face **disproportionate barriers** to affordable housing access and the adult homelessness system is **not designed to serve youth**.

Nationally, the number of available youth-specific short- and long-term housing beds would **need to double** to meet current need.

[Youth of Color Disproportionately Impacted by Housing Instability](#)
[Voices of Youth Count: National Estimates Report](#)
[Human Trafficking, National Network for Youth](#)
[Better Off in a Shelter? Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#)
[LGBTQ Young Adults Experience Homelessness at More than Twice the Rate of Peers](#)

1 in 5

Youth experiencing homelessness who have been victims of labor or sex trafficking or both

2x

Likelihood that youth identifying as LGBTQIA2S+ will experience homelessness

16%

Rate of homelessness among Black LGBTQIA2S+ youth

2.2x

Likelihood that American Indian and Alaska Native will experience homelessness

YEHP Accepts the Challenge



Providers and Grantees

Drop In

Shelter

TLP

Host Homes

Culturally
Specific
Services

Outreach

Who we're serving:

Youth experiencing homelessness

- **Unaccompanied youth, not in the care of a parent or guardian, residing in:**
 - Places not meant for human habitation (i.e. cars, parks, abandoned buildings, campgrounds).
 - Emergency shelters and transitional living.
 - Hotels and motels.
 - Over-crowded housing, doubling up and couch surfing.
- **Youth through the age of 24, though some programs may use more limited age criteria.**
- **Some of the most common reasons young people leave or are forced to leave home include:**
 - An unstable family life.
 - Experiences of family housing instability or homelessness as a child.
 - Severe family conflict, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or abandonment by parents and caregivers.
 - Caregiver and youth substance use and mental health disorders.

Legislative funding: Ongoing and anticipated results



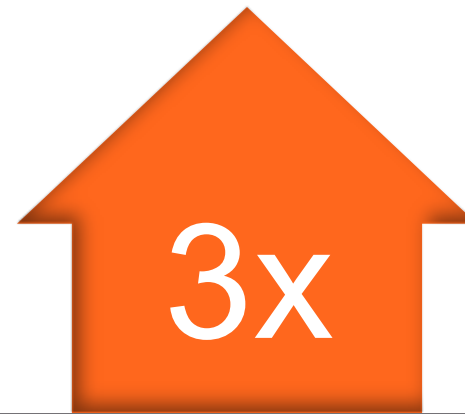
Service Locations

increased from 12 to 26 counties, better serving rural areas



Grants & Contracts

increased from 24 to 61, doubling funding opportunities



YEHP Providers

increased from 13 to 42, tripling program presence



- Host Home Project
- Increased Transitional Living Program investment
- Youth-specific affordable housing units and investments
- Low Income College Student affordable housing units and investments

How Youth Access Services

Initial contact

- Referral sources, such as school counselors
- Outreach workers and contacts in the community
- Self-referral by phone or online
- Walk-ins

Eligibility and assessment

- Verify age and housing status (self-attestation of homelessness)
- Assessments vary by provider

Development of goals and individualized service plan



More than just shelter

What special initiatives does YEHP do for youth experiencing homelessness?

Special Initiatives

- Direct Cash Transfers Plus (DCT+) Pilot
- Targeted Housing Assistance Program Pilot
- Youth-Specific Affordable Housing Rental Supports
- Statewide Youth Action Board - YAB
- Tuition and Fee Waiver for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

YEHP Future Goals and Plans

- YEHP is working to connect with our internal staff creating office hours – Starting July 2025
- Starting in July – YEHP will be hosting Analyst Hour – Every Third Thursday of the month!
- YEHP is continuing to connect with our community partners and other community agencies to see how we can best support youth in Oregon experiencing homelessness and housing instabilities.
- YEHP is working hard to connect with Eastern Oregon. Future goals will be visiting these areas with additional staff to see how we can do better.

Connect with YEHP!

- Join our mailing list today to receive updates about our work and what we are doing!
 - [YEHP ListServ](#)
- Reach out to any of us at our shared email address:
 - youth.experiencing.homelessness.program@odhs.oregon.gov
- Presentation Requests:
 - [Presentation Link Request](#)

Contacts

Matthew Rasmussen – YEHP Program Manager

503-602-1087

matthew.rasmussen@odhs.oregon.gov

Jennifer Kellam – Internal Agency & Youth Housing Coordinator

jennifer.kellam@odhs.oregon.gov

Jenne Bauer-Leffler – Performance and Data Coordinator

jennifer.bauer-leffler@odhs.oregon.gov

Brianna Rubio – Strategic Youth Engagement Coordinator

brianna.a.rubio@odhs.oregon.gov

Adam Jenkins – Systems Change Specialist

adam.n.jenkins@odhs.oregon.gov

Mel Keller – Community Engagement and Service Provider Support

mel.a.keller@odhs.oregon.gov

Freya Nehila – Administrative Support

freya.nehila@odhs.oregon.gov



Questions?



SAY YES
to YEHP