

CHAPTER 531

AN ACT

HB 2544

Relating to homeless youth; and prescribing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. Unaccompanied homeless youth services enhancement grant program. (1) As used in this section, “unaccompanied homeless youth” means a person who is at least 14 years of age but not more than 24 years of age, who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and who is homeless.

(2) In addition to any other scholarships or grants, the Department of Human Services may award two-year grants to organizations that provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth.

(3) An organization is eligible to apply for a grant under this section if the organization has an existing grant with the department to provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth.

(4) Grants awarded under this section may be used for any of the following:

(a) To increase the accessibility of any of the following programs and services to unaccompanied homeless youth:

- (A) Shelter facilities;
- (B) Outreach;
- (C) Culturally specific services; and
- (D) Mental health or substance abuse services; and

(b) To create or strengthen partnerships with host home programs and other transitional housing options.

(5) The department may adopt rules to administer the grant program described in this section.

SECTION 2. Host home projects. (1) As used in this section:

(a) “Host home project” means a project that facilitates an arrangement under which an unaccompanied homeless youth resides in the home of a private individual, pursuant to the terms of a contract between the private individual and the youth, for free or at below-market rent.

(b) “Long-term host home project” means a host home project run by an organization that has a memorandum of understanding or a letter of agreement with one or more school districts and in which unaccompanied homeless youth participants, on average during the most recent two years, resided in host homes for a minimum of 180 days, as reported by the relevant school district.

(c) “Short-term host home project” means a host home project in which unaccompanied homeless youth participants, on average during

the most recent two years, resided in host homes for a maximum of 180 days, as reported by the relevant school district.

(d) “Unaccompanied homeless youth” means a person who is:

(A) At least 16 years of age but not more than 21 years of age;

(B) Not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian;

(C) Not in the custody of the Department of Human Services;

(D) Not a ward of the state; and

(E) Homeless.

(2) In addition to and not in lieu of any other scholarships or grants, the department may award two-year grants to organizations that operate host home projects for unaccompanied homeless youth.

(3) An organization is eligible to apply for a grant under this section if the organization operated a host home project on January 1, 2021, and can demonstrate the ability to:

(a) Expand host home projects in communities in which the organization provides services;

(b) Establish new long-term host home projects in communities that do not have long-term host home projects; or

(c) Establish new short-term host home projects.

(4) Recipients of grants awarded under this section shall work to achieve the following outcomes for unaccompanied homeless youth:

(a) Improved school attendance.

(b) Participation in formal or informal mentoring.

(c) Increased access to nutrition, health care, mental trauma-informed support and transportation services.

(5) A recipient of a grant awarded under this section shall ensure all individuals of 18 years of age or older residing in the host home who are not the unaccompanied homeless youth have an approved background check under ORS 181A.200 and 409.027.

(6) A host home is not a child-caring agency as defined in ORS 418.205.

(7) The department may adopt rules to administer the grant program described in this section.

SECTION 3. Report. The Department of Human Services shall submit annual reports on the host home project grant program under section 2 of this 2021 Act to committees or interim committees of the Legislative Assembly relating to housing, homeless youth services and high school education. The reports must include information about the effectiveness of the projects, including:

(1) A description of the process used to identify and reach out to unaccompanied homeless youth;

(2) Assessment data and other indicators to determine how well the housing, health and academic needs of unaccompanied homeless youth are being met;

(3) Demographic information about youth served or assessed for program participation;

(4) The academic progress of students participating in host home projects; and

(5) Assessment by the youth, host families and partner government and nonprofit entities about their experience in the host home projects.

SECTION 4. Appropriations. (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the General Fund appropriation made to the Department of Human Services by section 1 (3), chapter 606, Oregon Laws 2021 (Enrolled Senate Bill 5529), for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, for self-sufficiency programs, is increased by \$1,800,000, for the purpose of carrying out section 1 of this 2021 Act.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the General Fund appropriation made to the Department of Human Services by section 1 (3), chapter 606, Oregon Laws 2021 (Enrolled Senate Bill 5529), for the biennium beginning

July 1, 2021, for self-sufficiency programs, is increased by \$1,800,000, for the purpose of carrying out sections 2 and 3 of this 2021 Act.

SECTION 5. Reports due. The report described in section 3 of this 2021 Act is first due no later than September 15, 2022, and the 15th day of each September thereafter.

SECTION 6. Sunset date. (1) Sections 1 and 2 of this 2021 Act are repealed on June 30, 2023.

(2) Sections 3 and 5 of this 2021 Act are repealed on January 2, 2024.

SECTION 7. Captions. The section captions used in this 2021 Act are provided only for the convenience of the reader and do not become part of the statutory law of this state or express any legislative intent in the enactment of this 2021 Act.

SECTION 8. Effective date. This 2021 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2021 regular session of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.

Approved by the Governor July 19, 2021

Filed in the office of Secretary of State July 19, 2021

Effective date September 25, 2021
