



PRESS RELEASE

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Home Forward Makes Historic Investments in Oregon's Largest Rent Assistance Program

Prioritizing equity and housing stability leads to \$8 million ongoing annual investment that will lower rent and increase choice for Housing Choice Voucher participants.

Portland, OR – Home Forward's recent investment in its rent assistance program aimed at decreasing tenant rents and improving housing searches for thousands of families assisted with a Housing Choice Voucher in privately-owned rental housing. This change increases "payment standard" subsidy levels to between 95% and 105% of fair market rent (FMR) in each of Home Forward's nine payment standard zones throughout Multnomah County, representing an approximately \$8 million annual investment in thousands of households.

Home Forward chose to advance race, gender, and geographical equity in pursuit of reducing disparities among subsidized households in private market rentals. As a result, the projected average tenant rent portions for Black, Native American, and Latinx households will reduce by 51%, 52%, and 50%, respectively, compared to the 41% average rent portion reduction throughout the Housing Choice Voucher program. Subsidy increases were also focused in communities experiencing historical and recent displacement, with a goal of increasing choice and opportunity for households searching for homes in neighborhoods around Portland's urban core. Amongst households that benefit from this change, 80% are headed by women with children; subsidy increases will impact over 3,100 youth and children. Families renting 2, 3, and 4-bedroom homes can expect to see average annual rent reductions of \$2,500 each year.

"This investment will have a meaningful impact on housing stability by reducing rent burden for so many families in our community," said Dena Ford-Avery, Director of Housing Choice Vouchers at Home Forward. "This step highlights Home Forward's commitment to centering equity in our housing programs while advocating for increased rent assistance funding in our region."

This focus on housing stability for Home Forward voucher holders follows federal funding increases and a successful regional rental market study led by Home Forward on behalf of the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metropolitan area. The rental market study was one of twelve successful challenges accepted by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The revised FMR, in many cases more than 10% above projections, increased HUD's funding allocation to the region. Meanwhile, Congress and President Biden increased overall funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program, which also increased the region's rent assistance supports.

“This is welcome news at a critical time for the people I represent in the Portland area,” said Congressman Earl Blumenauer. “I have fought to increase housing affordability through greater federal funding for voucher programs and ensure that programs reach and equitably serve community members of color, and Home Forward’s commitment is helping many in our community who are struggling to find a stable, affordable place to live.”

Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal adds, "This is a huge win for our community. Rent assistance and rent vouchers are an essential tool for making housing affordable, and this additional funding will bolster our ability to provide vouchers that keep pace with Portland rents. I commend Home Forward's work to increase housing accessibility and affordability."

Home Forward also acknowledges support from HUD, including the consideration and approval of the successful rental market study, and thanks landlord partners who provide and maintain homes for low-income renters throughout the state. Finally, and crucially, Home Forward highlights the efforts of staff who continue the hard but necessary work of supporting families in need and providing long-term housing retention resources.

Specifics on new payment standard subsidy levels are available [on our website](#). A copy of the successful rental market study used to establish accurate fair market rents is also [available to view](#).

Home Forward, the Housing Authority of Portland, is the largest provider of affordable housing in the state of Oregon, and serves all of Multnomah County. Its mission is to assure that the people of the community are sheltered. Home Forward has a special responsibility to those who encounter barriers to housing because of income, disability, or special need. Visit www.homeforward.org or call (503) 802-8300 for more information.

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