



## AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: August 28, 2019

Order Date: September 10, 2019

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TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: County Administration

PRESENTED BY: Jeff Kincaid, Management Analyst

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ORDER and RESOLUTION/Declaring a Homelessness Emergency

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I. MOTION

Move to approve the attached Board Order and Resolution.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The Board has requested that staff bring forward a homelessness emergency resolution.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

Lane County, like many communities throughout the country, faces a housing and homelessness crisis that is exacerbated by untreated substance abuse and mental health issues. The 2019 Point in Time Count found a total of 2,165 people experiencing homelessness which is an increase of 524 (32%) people over the 2018 count. This has led to the Board receiving significant amount of public comment on the topic of homelessness.

Lane County continues to invest in addressing housing and homelessness challenges in our community on multiple fronts. Specifically, in FY 2018-19 Lane County invested \$2 million in one-time funds to construct 91 new Permanent Supportive Housing units for veterans, disabled seniors, youth aging out of foster care, formerly incarcerated individuals reentering into the community and chronically homeless individuals. In addition, Lane County has committed \$1 million in one-time seed funding for a new Behavioral Health Crisis Center. This evidence-based solution will divert individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance abuse crisis away from the jail and emergency room, to a treatment facility for individuals requiring a short-term stay over 24 hours. Lastly, Lane

County has committed additional funds for the continued expansion of the successful Dawn to Dawn shelter and navigation services. These significant investments are in addition to the prevention, intervention, stabilization, economic opportunity and partnership work (based on the Shelter Feasibility Study and Systems Analysis from the Technical Assistance Collaborative) that staff conducts on a daily basis.

On June 11, 2019, the Board requested that staff research homelessness emergency declarations put in place by other jurisdictions in order to determine the value in putting a similar resolution in place. The research concluded that since Lane County does not have any relevant code language for a homelessness emergency declaration any such declaration would be symbolic in nature and would not waive any type of laws or provide access to additional resources.

On July 23, 2019, the Board requested that staff draft a homelessness state of emergency declaration. This packet and the attached order are in response to this request.

B. Policy Issues

There are no specific changes in current county policies that are focused on solving homelessness as a result of this item.

Lane County Code does not contain provisions for the declaration of a homelessness emergency that triggers any special authorizations or powers.

C. Board Goals

This item relates to the Board's Strategic Priority of *Safe, Healthy County*, specifically Key Strategic Initiative *a. Increase housing options for residents to reduce the incidence of homelessness and increase affordability.*

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

There are no specific financial and/or resource considerations for this item. The County will continue work to address homelessness in Lane County.

E. Health Implications

Children, families, and communities that are impacted by high rates of transiency and mobility are at a higher risk for substance abuse, delinquency, school drop-out, and depression and anxiety.

In addition, unaffordable rents or mortgages result in trade-offs between material needs such as housing, food, transit, clothing, medical care and other essentials. Residential instability increases the likelihood of adverse physical and mental health impacts, particularly among youth. Homeless children are more vulnerable to mental health problems, developmental delays, and depression than children who are stably housed. Crowded conditions can increase the risk of infections,

respiratory disease, fires, and poor mental health.

F. Analysis

The anticipated impact of this item is to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness in Lane County.

G. Alternatives/Options

The Board may choose whether or not to adopt this resolution. Adoption of this resolution does not directly impact other efforts to address homelessness in Lane County.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

The Board has requested that staff bring forward this homelessness emergency resolution. As such, staff does not have a recommendation for this item.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

There are no timing or implementation issues with this item.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

There is no specific follow-up for this item. The County will continue work to address homelessness in Lane County.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Board Order and Resolution

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER AND RESOLUTION  
NO:

In the Matter of Declaring a Homelessness  
Emergency

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners is committed to addressing homelessness in Lane County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners has received significant public comment on the topic of housing and homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, Lane County continues to invest in addressing housing and homeless challenges in our community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners has requested and received research on the value of adopting a resolution to declare a homelessness emergency in Lane County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners desires to declare a homelessness emergency as a symbolic gesture to increase awareness of the issue in Lane County.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of County Commissioners of Lane County **ORDERS** as follows:

The Lane County Board of County Commissioners declares a homelessness emergency in Lane County.

**ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

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Pete Sorenson, Chair  
Lane County Board of Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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LANE COUNTY OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL