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Legislature moves forward on critical shelter funding to help cities to serve unhoused Oregonians

House Bill 2004 includes additional \$27 million for shelter operation support

SALEM – The Oregon Legislature this week advanced \$18 million in critical funding to develop low-barrier shelter and navigation centers in areas where local government has taken on new efforts to address unsheltered homelessness.

As part of the process to rebalance the 2019-21 budget next week, [House Bill 5042](#) includes funding to support six low-barrier emergency shelters, known as navigation centers. These facilities are open seven days per week to connect homeless individuals and families with health services, permanent housing, and public benefits.

House Bill 5042 includes funding for navigation centers in the following communities:

- Eugene - \$5 million
- Salem - \$5 million
- Bend - \$2.5 million
- Medford - \$2.5 million
- McMinnville - \$1.5 million
- Roseburg - \$1.5 million

“Many communities across the state are working to address the needs of their unhoused neighbors,” House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) said. “These communities are ready to build and we must get them this funding as quickly as possible so they can make these facilities operational by next winter.”

This funding was previously in [House Bill 2004](#), which still contains \$27 million for grants to be distributed statewide to increase low-barrier shelter capacity, provide necessary facilities and amenities, and rapid rehousing services.

“Roseburg is making a lot of progress to provide shelter support for our unhoused residents,” Rep. Gary Leif (R-Roseburg) said. “The issue has many complex challenges, but this much-needed state funding will be critical to our community moving forward on this issue.”

“We scramble every winter to open additional temporary shelter here in Bend,” Rep. Jason Kropf (D-Bend) said. “Our community has been advocating for additional resources to make sure every family has a warm and stable place to sleep at night. This \$2.5 million investment will make a meaningful difference for Bend as we work to tackle this crisis.”

“There are many unsheltered individuals and families in my community who are experiencing remarkable challenges and need a helping hand,” Rep. Ron Noble (R-McMinnville) said. “The development of this low-barrier shelter will be such an important resource for them as we continue taking steps to address this crisis.”

The most recent point-in-time (PIT) count from 2019 found that more than half (64 percent) of the nearly 16,000 people experiencing homelessness in Oregon were living in unsheltered locations. This equates to more than 10,000 individuals estimated to be sleeping outside on any given night. The 2019 [Oregon Statewide Shelter Study](#) recommended the state identify opportunities to fund navigation centers, specifically in Eugene and Salem, to help cities end encampments and assist families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

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