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693-2023

Communication

Request of Ally Parzych to address Council regarding Home Share Oregon

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A brief description of Communication: Home Share Oregon in the City of Portland. Report out on success and request for support.

Agenda Items

693 Communications in [August 23, 2023 Council Agenda](https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2023/8/23) (<https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2023/8/23>)

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Requested Agenda Type

Communications

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

August 23, 2023



Portland City Council Testimony
8.23.23

Good Morning Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of city funding for HomeShare Oregon.

My name is Stan Penkin, and I am the Chair of Home Share Oregon. Sorry I could not be with you in person today.

(#2) Our mission is to increase access to affordable housing through home sharing. What began as a small program has exploded into a proven way to expand access to low-income housing, while also building financial resilience for some of our most vulnerable homeowners. **(#3)** HomeShare Oregon is an upstream approach to preventing homelessness. Statewide, we have 4,969 participants with over 1,200 homeowners registering to rent their spare bedrooms, and 3,134 home seekers trying to find affordable housing. The average rent for renters in our program is \$750.00-\$800.00 (\$1,000 less current market rate in urban centers, and also less than the rent for more traditional low income housing). The average lease length is one year.

(#4) Our goal is to empower homeowners and housemates to successfully execute the HomeShare program model. HomeShare is a proven response to increasing access to affordable housing. The reality is that we cannot build ourselves out of our housing crisis anytime soon, but by effectively utilizing the untapped existing inventory, we can house people quickly and without the enormous cost and time it takes to build new housing. HomeShare programs are currently being funded by local municipalities in Ohio, New York, Boston, California, Vermont, Maine, and more.

(#5) Last year, Home Share Oregon received a \$250,000 grant to pilot the HomeShare program in Multnomah County. With 1.5 FTE and targeted public education ad buys, the participation in the program increased 49%. The grant was allocated in late July and hiring was completed in early September. In less than 9 months, 83 people were placed at an average cost of \$3,012.04 per person served. Upon completion of the pilot, HSO, in partnership with the PSU School of Business Capstone Project, evaluated our success which included a participant survey, and identification of any barriers to using the program effectively so we can respond and improve where needed.

I will now hand it over to Ally.

Good morning. My name is Ally Parzych and I am the Development Manager for HomeShare Oregon. Thank you for allowing me to provide a continuation of an overview of our organization this morning.

As Stan mentioned, barriers to the use of our program centered on technological limitations by participants as well as a staffing challenge to meet participant demand.

27% of homeowners signed up for the program because they were mortgage burdened

19% signed up because they wanted to support affordable housing in their communities

73% were over the age of 55

63% were women,

53% received social security benefits

26% were from BIPOC communities.

34% of all participants had either experienced homelessness or housing insecurity
(Capstone Project. HomeShare Oregon. June 12th, 2023)

The data reinforced our thesis that home sharing is preventing foreclosure and building financial resilience, while also providing low income housing.

Today we are requesting \$1,000,000 per year for the next 2 years to fund a tech upgrade and 5 FTE's with administrative support to increase homeowner participants by 30% in the City of Portland. This will allow us to meet current participation demand, enhance our data tracking system, increase public education efforts, recruit more homeowners, and provide much needed shelter for many in need.

HomeShare Oregon understands there is no more cost effective solution to expanding access to affordable housing than homesharing. While continued investments need to be made in housing production, this cannot be the only approach as it supports antiquated policies which created the supply/demand issue in the first place. The vision of "a home for everyone" needs to evolve and expand so we can respond successfully to the current crisis. We can't build a home for everyone, but we can expand access significantly to housing, by putting to work the underutilized housing stock currently available.

We are asking for the city's support so we can better serve our participants, aggressively target the city of Portland for expansion, and increase homeowner participation by 30%. Homesharing is the most cost effective approach to the affordable housing crisis which is contributing to the rising number of displaced people. We are an upstream organization, preventing homelessness as well as foreclosure, before it happens.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to getting to know each of you and understanding how our relationship can grow stronger in years to come.