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Coos County Homeless Response Office greenlights state-funded project

COOS BAY, Ore. (Feb. 12, 2024) — The Coos County Homeless Response Office on Friday approved allocating \$1.5 million in state funding to assist Coos Bay in relocating The Devereux Center and expanding services in its community.

Last September, Gov. Tina Kotek announced the disbursement of \$26.1 million aimed at adding 100 new shelter beds and rehousing 450 households in 26 rural Oregon counties. It was in direct response to Kotek's homelessness state of emergency and part of House Bill 5019. Coos County was awarded \$1,927,818 to rapidly rehouse 32 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and to add a minimum of eight emergency shelter beds by June 30, 2025. The Local Planning Group already approved funding The Salvation Army with \$480,000 toward eight 400-square-foot homes with an emphasis on housing families and couples.

Coos County serves as the fiscal agent to The Salvation Army project, where North Bend is the fiscal agent on The Devereux Center project.

Our Local Planning Group, which consists of appointed representatives from Coos County, Coos Bay and North Bend, is driven by a clear vision: to create transformative change in our community by empowering individuals experiencing homelessness to find hope, stability and opportunity. The cornerstone of this vision is the expansion of the highly successful Coalbank Village project – a sanctuary of hope that has enabled countless individuals to transition from life on the streets to thriving within an individual shelter community.

The Devereux Center, the largest and most established provider in our community, has been at the forefront of this compassionate endeavor. Over the years, it has continually expanded its services to meet the diverse and evolving needs of our population. Its unwavering commitment to support and uplift those in need has led to an ever-increasing demand for its services, necessitating a new, larger facility.

Currently operating out of a facility in the Empire District of Coos Bay, The Devereux Center has reached its capacity, bursting at the seams with clients seeking refuge and assistance. Its innovative approach to holistic care includes hosting a biweekly DKD Clinic, where 20 community professionals come together to address the physical, mental, social, behavioral health and spiritual needs of their clients. Through this comprehensive care, it has cultivated a nurturing environment where food becomes a means to build relationships, assess individual needs and encourage transformative steps toward self-improvement.

However, its current location at one of the busiest intersections in Coos Bay presents challenges that affect both safety and public perception. Moving The Devereux Center to an adjacent, less visible location – currently available for purchase – will not only provide much-needed expansion space but also ensure the safety and well-being of the clients who seek solace within its walls.

With state funding, the Coos County Homeless Response Office aims to realize this transformative expansion project, encompassing the purchase and renovation of the new location and the acquisition of essential shelters. The goal is to add 32 shelter beds within the facility

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<https://www.co.coos.or.us/homeless-response-office>

building. This expansion will enhance and increase the capacity of our existing services, ensuring that our clients have access to vital resources that will drive positive change in their lives.

The Devereux Center is the heart of Coos County's efforts to support the homeless population. Its comprehensive offerings include laundry facilities, showers, hygiene supplies, hot breakfast and lunch, short-term food bags, sleeping bags, tarps, blankets, internet and computer access, mail and phone services, local bus passes, advocacy, job postings, vocational development, housing assistance, dental screenings, birth certificate and personal identification assistance, and connections to myriad community resources. Our goal is to transition to the new facility as swiftly as possible, aiming for full operation within a year of receiving funding.

By moving to this co-located, adjacent site, The Devereux Center will be able to enhance coordination and expand its impact on the lives of those it serves. Support will not only help achieve this vision but will also signify our community's collective commitment to compassion, hope and opportunity for all.

About the Coos County Homeless Response Office

The Homeless Response Office was created through an intergovernmental agreement between Coos County and the cities of Coos Bay and North Bend. This pilot program sponsored by Oregon House Bill 4123 aims to support a coordinated response to homelessness. The pilot program includes funding and resources to support and grow existing homelessness response operations.