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Combination of cash with other supports proves effective in helping young adults out of homelessness, study found

A pilot program that provides cash and other supports to Oregon youth experiencing homelessness made a significant contribution to their ability to secure stable housing. The supports also enabled youth to achieve independence, according to [a report](#) issued by researcher [Young People to the Front](#).

The Direct Cash Transfer Plus (DCT+) pilot program operates through a partnership between [Point Source Youth](#) and the [Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program \(YEHP\)](#) within the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). It pairs cash support with housing navigation, education on managing personal finances and other supportive services that are provided through three community partners — the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Antfarm and JBarJ Youth Services.

The study by Young People to the Front included 63 of the pilot program's first 120 participants who completed a series of surveys during the two years they received support. Of those, 94 percent self-reported that they were housed at the end of the program.

"We are very encouraged by the early results showing that Direct Cash Transfers help youth move beyond survival mode and toward building more stable,

independent lives," said YEHP Program Manager Matthew Rasmussen. "By creating space for emotional stability, financial skills, and rental history, this approach significantly reduces the likelihood of chronic adult homelessness."

The cash support is essential as it helps youth overcome common barriers to stable housing such as a lack of credit history and sufficient income, Rasmussen added. It can be used for rent, deposits, furniture and transportation.

"Oregon's results confirm what we saw in New York: When you cover the real cost of shared housing directly for two years—and pair it with support—young people stay housed," said Larry Cohen, co-founder and executive director at Point Source Youth. "This isn't complicated. Stability takes time, and flexible cash gives young people the breathing room to build it."

Other findings from the first two years of the pilot program include:

- 72 percent of participants were working or enrolled in school.
- The number of youth achieving high school diplomas increased by 8.1 percent over the course of the program.
- Participation in financial literacy workshops increased by 23 percent.

Combined, the supports offer youth an opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives.

"DCT helped me move from survival mode into a place where I could heal, grow, and plan for a sustainable future," said Gabrielle Huffman of Bend, who participated in the program. "Just one year after completing DCT, I'm in my own place, halfway through a business degree, focused on building a stable, secure foundation for my daughter and myself, and working toward becoming a nonprofit leader who supports her community."

Direct Cash Transfer Plus operated in Multnomah, Clackamas and Deschutes counties during the initial pilot. Jackson County has since been added for the second group of 120 participants. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 24 when they apply for support for a two-year period. The second group of 120 participants have been selected and the pilot program is not currently accepting new applications.

Youth in the program work with a case manager to establish self-directed goals that contribute to their long-term housing stability and overall well-being needs. Cash support is provided for up to two years to help meet their ongoing needs as they work to establish stable housing.

Funding for the initial pilot program was provided through an interagency agreement between ODHS and Oregon Housing and Community Services. To help support the second group of participants who are in the current pilot, YEHP received a \$1 million philanthropic donation and some funding through Senate Bill 5526.

Direct Cash Transfer Plus is just one of a variety of services offered through YEHP.

YEHP is committed to helping young people, ages 14–24, who are experiencing homelessness through a network of community partnerships. These partnerships connect youth to critical resources and services, build trusted relationships, provide access to everyday essentials such as showers, laundry facilities, and academic and employment support, and offer temporary shelter and housing opportunities.

YEHP's tuition and fee waiver assistance support is also delivering results. From fall of 2023 to current, YEHP has approved 267 tuition and fee waivers for eligible

youth experiencing homelessness through partnerships with Oregon's public universities and community colleges. The universities and colleges agree to waive the tuition and fees for qualifying youth.

YEHP continues to expand its focus on prevention strategies and housing stability initiatives. The program's goal is to help youth avoid entering homelessness in the first place and to secure and maintain stable housing, reducing the likelihood of future homelessness as adults.

Learn more [about YEHP](#) and [other programs and services for youth](#) in Oregon.

Additional resources:

[**Two-page summary of the Direct Cash Transfer Plus program**](#)

Contact ODHS Communications (see above contact) for photos of:

Matt Rasmussen, Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Manager with the Oregon Department of Human Services

Larry Cohen, co-founder and executive director at Point Source Youth

Gabrielle Huffman, Direct Cash Transfer Plus participant in the initial pilot

Other quotes from youth in the **Direct Cash Transfer Plus** program:

"The DCT program is how I'm still alive. If I did not have such support in the beginning of the program I would still be stuck in a homeless pit. DCT gave me a very reliable resource it was the reason I could eat ... and had a slice of freedom at the end of the night."

"I have been able to completely change my life, graduate college, support my family, buy a car, build savings habits and financial literacy."

"I left sex work and I was able to focus on healing myself, pay for school expenses, and begin putting the work in starting a small beaded earring and art business."

"Without this program I would still be a homeless single parent, struggling to provide even the basics for myself and my child."

"Honestly, it just gave me valuable time to be able to figure out my life as a young adult. I don't know how else to put it. DCT has been a tremendous help."

Quotes from youth who received **tuition assistance** through YEHP partnerships:

"I want to thank you again for your help with registering me for the YEHP. I'm excited to share that I'm currently maintaining an A average in both of my property management classes and am hoping to secure an internship by winter to apply what I've learned in a real-world setting. [This] support has given me access to academic opportunities I wouldn't have been able to afford on my own, and I'm truly grateful for that."

"I am currently facing a lot of positive change. My job promoted me to case manager for my county. I am super honored and excited for this opportunity, and with it I will be having a larger workload. Along with my promotion, I am attending community college to get my associate [degree] in general studies then transfer to a university to obtain a political science degree. The YEHP Tuition and Fee Waiver helped me with this path."