

Appeal Tribune

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Oregon isn't getting help to renters in time

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Vanessa was about four months behind on the rent of the Salem apartment which she and her two children shared.

She received unemployment benefits since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, but she relied on the federal government's eviction moratoriums to keep a roof over their heads until the last moratorium was nullified in August.

When Vanessa informed her landlord she wasn't going to be able to pay rent in August, they told her about an emergency rental assistance program funded by the federal government for which she might qualify.

Oregon's application process has been plagued with problems since it launched in July. But a state law gave

Vanessa 60 days of protection from eviction while she waited to find out if her rental assistance would be approved.

The state approved that money this week and paid her landlord the back rent plus three months of future rent. She has a level of security, unlike tens of thousands in Oregon still waiting to find out if their applications will be approved by the state.

"It's probably like my lifeline right now," Vanessa said. "Being able to have a place for me and my kids to be able to stay in, it's been a substantial help in my life right now."

Though her situation was resolved favorably, tens of thousands of renters in Oregon are still waiting to find out if their applications will be approved be-

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During COVID-19, homeless encampments grew across the Mid-Valley, including this one in Salem near Market Street Northeast and the Interstate 5 overpass.
ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

OVERCOMING BARRIERS



Adabella Bonifacio Herrera, Aide Robles Rodriguez and Karina Leon Ramirez, all children of farmworkers and preparing to start the post-secondary chapter of their lives. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Children of Marion County farmworkers plan to continue their education

Dora Totoian Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

In the 10th grade, Adabella Bonifacio Herrera sat down to take an exam in her English for Speakers of Other Languages class that would determine whether she'd become proficient enough to take classes in English full time. • When the school notified her a few days later to change her schedule, it was an accomplishment for Bonifacio Herrera, who is trilingual and had moved to Woodburn from the Mexican state of Oaxaca at age 11. • Now, Bonifacio Herrera, 18, is tackling another goal. She's starting cosmetology school.

"(I'm excited) to meet other people who are doing the same thing, and when I'll have my diploma, it'll mean an opportunity to advance and accomplishing one of my goals," she said in Spanish, which she said remains more comfortable for her than English.

Bonifacio Herrera, like many other children of Oregon agricultural workers, is making the most of the opportunities her parents never had. As these students

move beyond high school, they're reflecting on overcoming barriers created by the U.S. education system, taking on experiences that in some cases may be new for the entire family and maintaining their connections to their families, roots and cultures.

"I'm proud of my parents because they gave me the opportunity to study, while

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Oregon readies plan to cap greenhouse gas emissions

Tracy Loew Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

After more than a year of work, Oregon has proposed rules for its Climate Protection Program, meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change.

Now, the public has a chance to weigh in. The state will hold two public hearings this month, and will take written comments until Oct. 4.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed an executive order in March 2020 directing multiple state agencies to take actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The move followed two attempts by the Oregon Legislature, in 2019 and 2020, to pass cap and invest legislation, which would have put a progressively declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions statewide.

Both times, Republicans fled the Capitol to prevent a vote.

The new program would set limits on greenhouse gas emissions from significant sources in Oregon, including large corporate polluters, transportation fuels, and other liquid and gaseous fuels.

The program calls for declining caps on emissions, with targets of reducing greenhouse gas pollution to at least 45% below 1990 levels by 2035, and 80% below by 2050.

It also establishes a Community Climate Investment Fund, which would allow fuel suppliers to earn credits by contributing funds to groups working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon.

The program exempts landfills, electric power plants, and some natural gas compressor stations. However, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2021 earlier this year, requiring that all electricity sold in Oregon be 100% clean by 2040.

"We all have witnessed the growing and horrific effects of climate change across Oregon and the nation," Richard Whitman DEQ director, said in a statement. "These new programs put Oregon on a path to doing its part to avoid the worst effects of climate change."

Modeling conducted as part of the rulemaking process showed that the program would significantly reduce emissions without disrupting Oregon's economy, according to the state Department of Environmental Quality.

A DEQ staff report said the program could increase consumer fuel prices, but if clean alternative fuels are more cost-effective than the fossil fuels they replace, it could also decrease those costs.

A 35-member advisory committee helped write the rules, meeting seven times since January 2021.

But some advocates say the rules should go further. In June 2021, representatives of 24 organizations, including some members of the advisory committee, signed a letter calling for stricter emissions caps and fewer loopholes for polluters.

After the public comment period closes, the rules must be approved by the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission. A vote is expected by the end of the year.

The new program would be just a part of the statewide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon. Other pieces include the Clean Fuels Program, incentives for electric vehicles, and energy efficiency programs.

How to comment

The public can comment on the proposed Greenhouse Gas Emissions Program at an online public hearing, or by submitting written testimony.

The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission will hold a public hearing from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 30.

For information about the proposed program, to pre-register to provide comments, and for instructions to join the meeting, go to: <https://www.oregon.gov/>

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Pit bull reunited with California owners after being found in Salem

Virginia Barreda
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The odds were stacked against Jeanette Pulley and Jake Crager.

The Crescent City, Calif. couple's 89-pound pit bull, Bobwire, escaped from their yard almost two weeks ago. For days, they combed the streets of their neighborhood, put up posters, offered a reward — and just about lost hope.

But when they thought Bobwire was gone for good, Pulley and Crager got a phone call from a relative who'd seen a picture of the dog online. He was up for adoption at the Marion County dog shelter.

After a frantic phone call and hurried drive, the couple reunited with their beloved pup Monday evening — nearly 300 miles from their home, a Salem version of the "Homeward Bound" journey.

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