

OR-506CoC Hillsboro/Beaverton/Washington County

Continuum of Care (CoC) Board

Applicant Summary

Applicant: Elizabeth Sale
Organization: VP of Services, Boys & Girls Aid
CoC Board Position: HSSN Co-Chair

Professional or lived experience in:

- Youth Services
- Case Management
- Other – Child Welfare

For the past 24 years I have worked and volunteered in the child welfare field. I spent five years working for ODHS as a caseworker for foster children before I came to Boys & Girls Aid where I have worked for 19 years. Initially I spent many years as a clinician working with foster and adoptive families. More recently I led a team that strives to find permanent placements for youth who are currently in foster care and who have some significant barriers to permanency. When these youth are not able to be matched with a permanent resource they are at great risk of experiencing homelessness as they age out of the foster care system. Outside of my professional roles I have been a foster parent and started the first Foster Parent Night Out program in Clackamas County as a way to support others who do the hard work of caring for youth who cannot live with their birth families. I am now stepping into a role at Boys & Girls Aid that expands my responsibility beyond youth in foster care and in which I will be overseeing the housing and shelter programs offered by Boys and Girls Aid. I have much to learn regarding these programs, the various funding sources, and the network that exists in Washington County.

Experience and willingness to serve on behalf of and advocate for people experiencing homelessness:

My first introduction to learning about and interacting with those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness were in college more than 25 years ago. I volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, Blanchet House, and led a group of students on a "rural plunge" service-learning experience. Although I had a great deal of appreciation and respect for those organizations and the work they did and continue to do, professionally I was drawn to the child welfare system due to my own experience with foster care and adoption. As a child welfare caseworker I worked with a number of birth parents who were experiencing housing instability or homelessness and I vividly remember one case in particular where I was able to reunify a little girl with her birth father once he obtained an apartment. While I have little direct experience advocating for individuals experiencing homelessness I believe all of my child welfare work has involved similar advocacy skills and experiences. There is a great deal of overlap amongst those who are involved in the child welfare system and those who are experiencing homelessness. I believe the proactive work of preventing homelessness also prevents child welfare involvement in a number of instances and I am looking forward to becoming more involved in this preventative work. My current employment is directly aligned with the work of this board as I will be overseeing all of the shelter and housing programs offered by Boys & Girls Aid. I would welcome the opportunity to both learn from and serve alongside this dedicated group of board members.