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QuickPoint! – Portland’s homeless population needs a “hand-up,” not another Metro money grab

By Rachel Dawson

The Oregon nonprofit [Cascadia Clusters](#) understands the value of providing Oregon’s growing homeless population with a “hand-up” by helping individuals gain the skills needed to construct affordable transitional housing. Cascadia Clusters is a nonprofit charity that receives no government funding. Instead, it relies on donations.

The organization provides meaningful skills training for homeless individuals along with a daily stipend. These skills include framing, roofing, insulation, and finish carpentry. The “tiny homes” they build make up the units at [Hazelnut Grove in North Portland](#) and [Agape Village in Southeast](#). Each tiny home is about 200 square feet and costs \$18,000 to build. Each has a basic kitchen, a sleeping loft, and a composting toilet. The people who take part in Cascadia Clusters’ construction training gain both a safe home and the skills to lift themselves out of poverty.

The work being done by Cascadia Clusters differs dramatically from Metro’s “Supportive Housing Services” Measure 26-210 on the May ballot. Unlike [Metro’s poorly planned and unclear measure](#), Cascadia Clusters has a straightforward plan for what the organization wants to accomplish and how, when, and where all donated money will be used. Its “hand-up” philosophy can be imitated by other groups wanting to help people leave the cycle of homelessness for good. Voters who want to assist the homeless should consider donating to one of the many Portland nonprofits with a track record of helping those in need, and vote no on Metro’s bureaucratic money grab.

Rachel Dawson is a Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.