



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting
Date: August 28, 2023
Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual meeting (Zoom)
Purpose: Update on Multnomah County corrective action plan; update on Metro tax collection and disbursement through July 2023; presentation and discussion of county work plans and budgets for FY23-24; presentation of FY23 Q4 progress.

Member attendees

Co-chair Susan Emmons (she/her), Kathy Wai (she/her), Jenny Lee (she/her), Felicita Monteblando (she/her), Jeremiah Rigsby (he/him), Mike Savara (he/him), Co-Chair Dr. Mandrill Taylor (he/him), Becky Wilkinson (she/her), Seth Lyons

Absent members

Maria Hernandez (she/her), Dan Fowler (he/him), Carter MacNichol (he/him)

Elected delegates

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington (she/her), Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal (she/her), Metro Councilor Christine Lewis (she/her)

Absent elected delegates

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith (she/her), City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler (he/him)

Metro

Nui Bezaire (she/her), Ash Elverfeld (they/them, she/her), Liam Frost (he/him), Breanna Hudson (she/her), Rachael Lembo (she/her), Patricia Rojas (she/her), Finnegan Budd (they/them)

Kearns & West Facilitator

Ben Duncan (he/him)

Welcome and introductions

Co-chairs Susan Emmons and Dr. Mandrill Taylor provided opening remarks and welcomed the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Oversight Committee members to the meeting.

Ben Duncan introduced himself as facilitator and facilitated introductions between SHS Oversight Committee members.

Committee did not have quorum to approve June and July minutes.

Staffing update

Patricia Rojas, Regional Housing Director, Metro, stated that since the housing department had been established back in the fall, we have been granted 22 full time positions. We have recently offered a candidate the communications manager position; this position will bring on a consultant and communication analysts. We are working on capacity-building to support the providers in the community by building a new team to help coordinate this support. Liam will be leading this department, identified as technical assistance, to design this work on a technical and strategic level. Ash Elverfeld, previously a Metro Housing Program Assistant, was promoted to Program Manager, to help with capacity building and technical design. Valeria McWilliams, previously Senior Housing



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

Policy and Planning Coordinator, will be stepping into a supervisory role with the Regional Alignment Team, also known as Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) to help with that work. We are also growing our policy work and have identified several goals; Valeria's role will help this body to build a plan to meet these goals as well. Nui Bezaire, previously Metro Supportive Housing Services Manager, has been promoted to Permanent Supportive Housing Manager to help with this specialized work with a transition date of October 1. The housing department will be bringing on 3 managers and has been moving fast with recruitments, hiring six people in the last two months, seven if we are able to bring on the communications manager.

Conflict of interest declaration

Jenny Lee, Coalition of Communities of Color, and Mike Savara, Special Initiatives Director at Oregon Housing Community Services, shared potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Public comment

Cole Merkel, Co-Director, Here Together, provided public comment. He followed up on a letter sent by his organization the Friday before this meeting (8/28/2023) to Metro.

Cole said that the Metro Supportive Housing Services dashboard is the most helpful place for people to see the progress made for the public; however, they believe it is unclear how the funds were allocated. They are requesting that Metro reassess their regional goals based on what was learned during year one of the program, and what we have learned due to the pandemic. They are requesting that Metro clearly shows what funds were allocated to Population A vs. Population B. They would also like to know when the Regional Long Term Rent Assistance (RLRA) will be saturated since it is clear this will be before the 10-year mark. They are hoping that by reassessing these goals, the Supportive Housing Services program can be reamplified.

They also urged the committee to be sure to pay close attention to the non-displacement of funds measure, which was included in the IGA (Intergovernmental agreement). This measure acknowledges that preventing homelessness requires partners on all levels of the government, local, state, and federal. This is a crucial accountability tool that shows that taxpayers dollars will not be used for anything, but Supportive Housing Services funds. Washington County was the only one to have this displayed and would ask other counties do the same.

Ben Duncan, Facilitator, Kearns and West, asked if the committee are wanting Metro staff to respond to the public comment, please show a thumbs up.

Several committee members raised their thumbs. Mike Savara said they may want Metro to follow up via email, or in a following meeting rather than in the moment. Ben clarified that this discussion would be for a future date, so they can have intentionality and some deliberation.

Update on Multnomah County corrective action plan

Patricia said she is pleased to announce a signed agreement between Metro and Multnomah County for this Corrective Action Plan. This was included in the committee's packet. This tool was established in the IGA to help solve any number of issues. There was a material deviation from the FY23 budget. Their budget was underspent and this plan should help to get them back on track. Some of the areas that were noted were housing placements, housing retention, etc. There are strategies to help with giving money directly to providers through grants and money to help with nonprofit development such as staffing and organizational development. Metro will receive monthly updates, and are planning to send quarterly updates to this committee through written updates in the packet.



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

Felicita Montebianco asked about the 2% cost of living adjustment, she is surprised at this number due to prior knowledge and a report that recently came out. This number feels low. Joint Office came out with a compensation report, and let us know that people are not being compensated fairly which is leading to burnout.

Patricia responded that this is another 2% on top of the 5%. The 2% is retroactive. This will total around 7% for this year's cost of living adjustment.

Susan Emmons asked about rent assistance, with the trajectory of 10 million rental assistance dollars to be spent by June 2024, 275 households served, with 0 dollars spent in quarter one, and a projected 2.5 million spent in quarter 2 – Does Metro expect that these contracts will be executed before the September 25th committee meeting? Will this money be ready to roll October 1st?

Patricia responded that this is a question for Multnomah County staff, and Metro will check in with them after this meeting unless there is a representative who can give an update. There are contracts already in place that have rental assistance as a line item, the corrective action plan would be used to help allot more money to these existing programs and show the increase in funds towards them.

Commissioner Jayapal, Multnomah County Commissioner, suggested that Serena Cruz, Chief Operating Officer, Multnomah County, give a brief answer to Susan regarding rent assistance and monitoring.

Serena responded that there is an updated corrective action plan attachment that shows 10 million dollars less in FY24 since it will be spent in FY23. This will be shared with Metro. The Board must approve 17 million dollars, which has not been done yet, but they will know by the end of September. The rent assistance is for housing placement services and these things take time. The top priority with this money is to support capacity building with our community-based organizations. She stated that the contracts team needs direction and that the county is going to focus on capacity building grants so that organizations can retain staff and recruit the workforce they need.

Co-chair Emmons responded with a question, in terms of community-based organizations and distributing funds, it was said that the county would contract with outside organizations to handle those grants. Is this no longer the case?

Serena responded that they were denied assistance from several foundations now, and that unless they can find someone, they will be distributing the funds themselves even though this violates their policies. This would mean setting up a new set of policies to be able to do this work. The county is exploring one more alternative before they settle on this decision. They have a strong belief that if the distribution is taken over by a third party, the money would reach organizations faster and their contracts team could focus more on other priorities.

Co-chair Emmons responds that the committee has a lot of faith in the county, and that she is aware they share the same goals; however, rent assistance and regional long term assistance are the best way to get money out there to people who need it. It is her hope that they are able to get the money to existing providers by October 1st because there was a lag time last year, and many people who were ready to use the funds.

Serena responded that the county is trying to reform the work they are doing while they are doing it. That they are trying to utilize some of the budget that was approved last year, this



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

year with existing contracts, and that they also hope to be able to get the ball rolling as soon as possible.

Felicita asked how they will receive updates on the corrective action plan.

Patricia responded that she imagined some updates to be given quarterly with the updates that Metro staff already produce. She is also thinking there will be written updates in the packets per each meeting once we begin to receive the monthly updates from Multnomah County.

Metro tax collection and disbursement update

Details for this presentation are in a one page update and can be found in the final meeting record.

Rachael Lembo, Finance Manager, Metro, stated that the July collections were just over 15 million which was higher than last July. On the first chart, it shows a line for collections for FY22 and FY23. Then there is a small dot for where we are in FY24 where we only are one month in. Just to set expectations, they believe that this year will be somewhere between FY22 and FY23. FY22 was the first year and not everyone was aware of the tax, so finance knew there would be some spillover in FY23 and because of this, FY23 collections were higher than projected. So, FY24 will be somewhere in the middle, and we can confirm this as we continue to track that as we move through this fiscal year.

Washington County FY24 work plan and budget

Details for this presentation are in a slide deck and can be found in the final meeting record.

Jes Larson, Assistant Director, Department of Housing Services, Washington County, used a slide deck to provide an overview of their fiscal year 2023-2024 work plan and budget.

Ben Duncan asked whether there was an allocation distribution for population A versus population B or how much funding is allocated program services activity between these two populations?

Jes responded that this was not something that was reported on in year one because there was not a methodology for how to report population A or population B in distribution in our allocated funding. Staff are finalizing this methodology, and we should see this in the annual report. There are also some investments that cannot be distinguished between the populations, and this will provide some clarification for the counties to use the same approach to provide this measurement. In the meantime it is the counties' intentions to be consistent with their annual workplan, local implementation plan, program plan, with the 75/25 distribution into population A and population B programs.

Co-chair Emmons asked when we will know about retention with the regional long-term rental assistance or when we will get a report on the retention rates of the regional long-term rental assistance.

Jes responded that there will be a report for the regional long term rental assistance program in the annual report; however, for rapid rehousing since this is in its first year, this will not be in the annual report since it is harder to track in its beginning stages. There is a goal for year three that they begin to measure how people may be in the program – do they need a high level of care? How they graduate from this? Retention and how to help people move on from the program go hand and hand and are a goal for year three.

Clackamas County FY24 work plan and budget



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

Details for this presentation are in a slide deck and can be found in the final meeting record.

Vahid Brown, Deputy of Housing and Community Development, Clackamas County, used a slide deck to provide an overview of their fiscal year 2023-2024 work plan and budget.

Co-Chair Taylor asked what the county perspective is on what they foresee to be the system challenges of ramping up these programs or if there are any barriers to ramping up or expanding.

Vahid responded that the organizational contract consultants speak to the challenge. The ability of small non-profit organizations to be able to grow rapidly, hire a lot of staff, and retain/maintain that staff is a global issue. We are asking organizations that have sometimes never received funding to enter these million dollar contracts, to hire on staff to support them, to report on and turn in invoices, and check in on data and data quality. The system is stressed out, as are our providers. We are using the carryover dollars to try and help to address these issues.

Co-Chair Emmons asked whether or not Clackamas County is being given the staff to implement all of these changes, and promote in their positions.

Vahid responded with an "unqualified" yes. The team has grown by quite a bit at this point. There's fiscal staff, administrative staff, coordinated entry staff, contract staff, etc. They are going to be adding additional staff, so yes. It feels like they have the staff they need now.

BREAK 11:07 – 11:12

Multnomah County FY23-24 work plan and budget

Details for this presentation are in a slide deck and can be found in the final meeting record.

Kanoe Agelson, Program Director, Joint Office of Homeless Services, and Antoinette Payne, Finance Manager, used a slide deck to provide an overview of their fiscal year 2023-2024 work plan and budget.

Co-Chair Taylor asked where the allocation was for outreach services.

Kanoe and Antoinette responded that safety off and safety on are where you see the allocation for outreach services. They are combined to mean safety off referencing shelter and then safety off as outreach. It is also in the system access and coordination. Also wanted to highlight that the Multnomah Housing Now will be another source of outreach and engagement.

Co-chair Taylor responded with the comment that it may be helpful to disaggregate this data so that people are easily able to see the allocation of funds.

Co-chair Emmons asked whether or not the county could give an example to how helpful or how the by name Built for Zero initiative helps one chronically homeless individual.

Kanoe responded that this list is helpful for providers because it provides a comprehensive snapshot of who is experiencing houselessness especially with the population a definition. She also said they could provide a more robust answer later.

Co-chair Emmons followed up with another question about staffing levels and the support from the county.

Dan Field, Director of the Joint Office of Homeless Services, joined as a panelist to respond about staffing. The Joint Office is working with a consultant to help identify their staffing needs. A new deputy director is being hired, as are some staff in the fiscal department, and



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

others. They are working to get there quickly but recognize that they need the right people with the right set of skills to join their team. They are aware of skills and people missing from their office and are hoping to hire more staff on soon.

Ben asked how they watch the ratio for population A versus population B, if it is built in or in line with their work plans like Washington County.

Kanoe responded that they are closely in line with the ratios with having 85% to 15% for population A and population B in fiscal year 2022. In the annual report, however, it will show something like 73% to 27% for population A and population B. She also agreed that there is a regional methodology in the works that they are hoping to utilize when it comes online.

Metro presentation of FY23 Q4 regional progress

Details for this presentation are in a slide deck and can be found in the final meeting record.

Nui and Rachael presented used a slide deck to provide an update on FY23 Q4 regional progress.

Mike Savara asked who is setting the goals for the programs. Are they a guess at what the counties can do? Did they come from the local implementation plan?

Nui responded that there was not a work plan for FY22, and so the counties worked off their local implementation plans to produce program goals. However, this year, we have created annual work plans which identify programmatic goals. These annual work plans are due from the counties by April. These program goals can be found on the Metro website. Year three work plans are the packet and will be posted to the website shortly.

Next steps

Nui closed with next steps. The FY23 annual report process has already begun in the interest of a shorter timeline. This timeline will be shared with the committee by the next meeting. There will be a technical writer that helps write this, chances for committee engagement, and analysis based off the reports from the counties. The hope is to have it drafted by January 2024 and presented to the jurisdictions by March 2024.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Finnegan Budd.