

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, October 11th, 2023
Time: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Place: Metro Council Chambers, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, OR 97232 and Zoom Webinar
Purpose: The Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) will receive briefing on and discuss updates on the technical assistance goal and learn more about the Regional Investment Fund (RIF).

Member attendees

Co-chair Eboni Brown (she/her), Co-chair Matt Chapman (he/him), Zoi Coppiano (she/her), Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Yvette Hernandez (she/her), Monta Knudson (he/him), Nicole Larson (she/her), Michael Ong Liu (he/him), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Cristina Palacios (she/her), Steve Rudman (he/him), Mindy Stadlander (she/her)

Elected delegates

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

County staff representatives

Clackamas County – Adam Brown (he/him), Vahid Brown (he/him), Multnomah County – Kanoe Egleston (she/her), Breanna Flores (she/they), Washington County – Jessi Adams (she/her), Jes Larson (she/her)

Metro

Abby Ahern (she/her), Giovanni Bautista (he/him), Melia Deters (she/her), Liam Frost (he/him), Patricia Rojas (she/her)

Kearns & West Facilitators

Ben Duncan (he/him), Ariella Dahlin (she/her)

Note: The meeting was recorded via Zoom; therefore, details will be mainly focused on the discussions, with less detail regarding the presentations. Presentation slides are included in the archived meeting packet.

Welcome and Introductions

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, welcomed the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) to the meeting, facilitated introductions between TCPB members, and reviewed the agenda.

The TCPB approved the September Meeting Summary.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

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Staff Updates

Abby Ahern, Metro, shared that a monthly progress report detailing the TCPB Regional Goal Progress was shared in the meeting packet. She stated that Focus Strategies is finalizing their landlord recruitment and retention work and will present to the TCPB in November, that Home Base has begun their workgroup meetings on coordinated entry, that the Medicaid Waiver Tri-county Partnership Group is continuing to meet on healthcare system alignment, and that Home Base will soon begin convening workgroups regarding living wage.

Mercedes Elizalde asked for more information on the stakeholders involved in the landlord recruitment and retention interviews and workgroups.

Liam Frost, Metro, responded that Metro will share the list of stakeholders and that more information will be provided in the TCPB presentation next month.

Liam Frost, Metro, shared that Home Base will be reaching out to some TCPB members for participation in the living wage work group. He reminded TCPB members to email Melia Deters, Metro, if they are interested in participating in a small group to provide feedback to Dan Cole and Multnomah County and noted that 3 members have expressed interest. He shared that Supportive Housing Services (SHS) committee member applications will be closing soon and followed up that Metro is finalizing a draft process regarding co-chair selection per co-chair Eboni Brown's request.

Co-chair Eboni Brown asked if there is an age requirement and shared that her daughter was interested in applying.

Liam Frost, Metro, responded that Metro would check with their legal team.

Patricia Rojas, Metro, shared that Metro is hiring a few manager positions and that 51 individuals attended an information session regarding the availability.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, shared that its Community Development team hired two new staff to help launch new programs, including the Medicaid Waiver program.

Jes Larson, Washington County, and Breanna Flores, Multnomah County, both shared that progress is being made on their individual SHS Annual Reports.

Progress Report: Technical Assistance

Liam Frost, Metro, reminded TCPB members of the Technical Assistance Goal language and highlighted that the goal is unique since Metro is directly supporting this work, which will expand to the counties over time.

Abby Ahern, Metro, detailed the Technical Assistance Problem Statement and defined technical assistance and capacity building. Abby introduced a panel discussion with co-chair Eboni Brown, Sahaan McKelvey, Monta Knudson, and Zoi Coppiano to share their experience and expertise of technical assistance.

Co-chair Eboni Brown shared that for the past two years, her organization Greater Good Northwest, has received technical assistance grants for building better training programs and executive director training. Eboni shared that the executive director training helped her learn how to effectively run an organization. She added that her organization is at the end of a comprehensive training plan for staff.

Monta Knudson shared that his organization, Bridges to Change, has been providing technical assistance for smaller organizations for the past five years, focusing on risk mitigation, financial management, and human resources. He noted that sometimes smaller organizations don't know what they don't know, and the trainings his organization frontload all the information needed.

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Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked if frontloading information meant if a new executive director shared that they need training on X, Monta's organization would also provide Y and Z training based on their experience and discretion.

Monta Knudson confirmed that is what he meant.

Zoi Coppiano stated that in addition to what Monta and Eboni discussed, capacity building and reporting are related to technical assistance. She shared that her organization, Community Action of Washington County, received funding to strengthen its data team to work with Service Point. She noted that another grant source is a capacity building grant with Washington County for needs assessment planning.

Abby, Metro, thanked the TCPB panel for sharing their technical assistance experience.

Jessi Adams, Washington County, presented on Washington County's work with technical assistance. She shared that SHS funding requires financial and data quality reports, and to review these reports Washington County hired a data quality position and changed its internal structure to meet the needs of individual service providers. She added that Washington County launched a capacity-building technical assistance grant that has two phases. The first phase looks at the organization's infrastructures and identifies any needs, and the second phase is to implement those identified needs.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, shared that their approach is similar to Washington County. He stated that Clackamas County meets monthly with contract providers to identify any areas where support is needed and that the Clackamas County HMIS team provides technical assistance support including trainings and office hours. He added that Clackamas County convenes providers to build community and recognize hard work and that it recently launched an organizational development program. The program has a two-phase approach, the first phase helps providers identify any technical assistance needs, and the second phase includes receiving funds to address any needs that are identified. He provided an example of technical assistance and capacity building as it relates to service provider administrative funds.

Breanna Flores, Multnomah County, shared that similarly, Multnomah County focused on the long-term stability of service providers. She detailed that providers used capacity-building funds to expand programming, evaluate operations, and reduce the reimbursement model burden. She noted that Multnomah County has a capacity-building work group that meets monthly and is reviewing its recommendations. She added that Multnomah County has 20 technical assistance consultants that providers can work with to support organizational development, program design, and human resources. She highlighted that most of the funds this year have gone to equity-focused trainings and practices.

Sahaan McKelvey shared that his organization, Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI), recently used technical assistance to support their United States Department of Housing and Urban Development audit and to support the utility allowance equation. He stated that SEI provides technical assistance to smaller nonprofits, including support in program development. He emphasized that culturally specific providers provide technical assistance to other organizations consistently to maximize community benefits, but often don't receive funding for it.

Liam Frost, Metro, highlighted that technical assistance is extremely broad, and shared that Metro is building a regional capacity team that will be charged with developing programming for technical assistance, training, job fairs, and conferences. He emphasized that Metro's role is to provide value and consistency and to do no harm. He noted that the team is currently hiring, and once all positions are filled, they will develop an implementation plan for the TCPB to review.

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Patricia Rojas, Metro, added there are economies of scale and Metro can provide infrastructure support for technical assistance.

Mercedes Elizalde asked to clarify if Clackamas County hired a consultant to justify the 10% administrative rate and how many organizations are stuck at the 10% rate.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, replied no. He stated that the 10% de minimis fee is automatic if a service provider does not have a federally negotiated administrative rate.

Adam Brown, Clackamas County, replied that he does not have the number of organizations offhand, but can share it over email. He stated that most organizations either seek a federally approved indirect rate, a formal cost allocation plan, or the 10% de minimis. He highlighted that Clackamas County honors whatever rate an organization has and there is no cap. He added that technical assistance is intended to support organizations to understand their cost structure and rates and that rates should be consistent across contracts. He noted that county staff are working to align rates across counties.

Kanoe Egleston, Multnomah County, responded that each year they update provider rates and will follow up with that number of organizations at 10% de minimis.

Jes Larson, Washington County, responded that this is an opportunity for improvement as well and are working on alignment.

Patricia Rojas, Metro, replied that they honor federally negotiated rates and that organizations can be penalized for having different rates. She added that smaller organizations need technical assistance to pursue a negotiated rate, and this is an area where alignment would be helpful.

Adam Brown, Clackamas County, added that there was a historical issue where there was an arbitrary cap at 15%, which was corrected four years ago at the county level, but the Oregon Housing & Community Services Department still has a 15% cap at the state level. He noted that Governor Kotek's Executive Order aligns with federal best practices that indirect rates are a program cost.

Co-chair Matt Chapman shared that he is impressed by the technical assistance work underway and that the biggest challenge for organizations is not knowing what they don't know.

Liam Frost, Metro, noted that a Tri-County Request for Pre-Qualifications (RFPQ) has been issued to help counties develop a team of technical assistance contractors. He highlighted that Metro wants to be additive and not to do harm.

Jes Larson, Washington County clarified that the RFPQ is for technical consultant services, not service providers who deliver programs.

Patricia Rojas, Metro, added that once Metro's technical assistance team is hired, it will work collaboratively with service providers and county staff to make structural changes to elevate the work.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis shared that she liked the philosophy of being additive, not duplicative, and looks forward to the TCPB reviewing and approving the technical assistance work plan. She noted that there wasn't any data presented today and highlighted that people are running before walking regarding risk assessment. She emphasized the importance of building a system where providers can seek help with risk assessment, without jeopardizing their work and reputation. She asked how Monta's organization does that.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, noted that Monta had to leave, but will follow up with an answer.

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Cristina Palacios stated that it is important to be proactive to close the pay gap on equity by funding Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations at higher rates. She added that a 15% administrative cap was a barrier as BIPOC and rural organizations have difficulties increasing capacity. She suggested that the TCPB consider how to make pay equitable and elevate the needs of smaller organizations. She asked if there was data on rural and BIPOC organizations' pay rates.

Adam Brown, Clackamas County responded, that it's important to meet organizations where they are at and that they are trying their hardest to amend historic inequities. He added that the RFPQ will have technical assistance for organizations to secure funding to build capacity and that he can share that data offline.

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith stated the next Metro hire should be an accountant, advocated for full financial transparency, and asked to see monthly budgets for the TCPB. She noted that the TCPB hasn't reviewed any budgets and that needs to be addressed.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis replied that Metro has an elected auditor and that the SHS measure requires audits. She noted that the TCPB can decide what financial information is needed monthly for review since the infrastructure is there to provide it.

Patricia Rojas, Metro, highlighted that the SHS Oversight Committee has the charge of financial oversight and receives monthly reports on SHS finances. She encouraged those who are interested to attend those meetings and that the materials are publicly available.

Mindy Stadlander highlighted that there are capacity-building dollars available in the 1115 Waiver, and looked forward to identifying solutions to empower and link housing and health organizations.

Sahaan McKelvey reflected that the capacity-building conversation started out in the context of technical assistance and the group did a deep dive on an indirect rate. He added that an inadequate indirect rate continues the poverty cycle of providers, which needs to be addressed, and that capacity-building dollars are a temporary solution to ensure organizations are funded directly. He said that the do-no-harm philosophy should be how technical assistance is received and not for jurisdictions to tell organizations what to do.

Nicole Larson asked if there is standard language of what technical assistance is funded and if the reimbursement model applies to all counties and providers.

Liam Frost, Metro, replied that each county has developed a different approach with consistent standards.

Steve Rudman stated that he is impressed with the work underway and noted that it is important to have honest discussions and think about what makes sense to do regionally and what makes sense to locally.

Regional Investment Fund: Part II

This agenda item was not discussed.

Closing and Next Steps

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reflected the conversation themes the TCPB discussed.

Co-chair Matt Chapman shared that he felt the quality of conversations the TCPB has increases at each meeting and noted his concern about having enough time to address all issues. He suggested having meetings go longer occasionally to address all topics while also respecting other time commitments.

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Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked if someone could articulate what the result was of the good discussion they had.

Co-chair Matt Chapman reflected that the TCPB created a deeper level of common understanding and alignment in approaches. He noted that Metro looks to the TCPB for guidance and feels that Metro has guidance now based on the discussion on how to go about their technical assistance role.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, shared that from a process perspective as the TCPB moves from goal language to the regional plan, due diligence is needed. He added that this conversation looked like in practice what questions would need to be asked of the regional plan to ensure it can move to the Oversight Committee for review.

Nicole Larson thanked Metro for emailing out the TCPB role chart which was helpful.

The next steps include:

- Next meeting: November 8th, 4-6 pm.
- Metro to share the list of stakeholders involved in the landlord recruitment interviews and workgroups.
- Metro to check with their legal team on if there is an age requirement to be on the SHS Committees.
- Counties to share which organizations are at the 10% indirect cost rate and how many of those organizations are rural or BIPOC.
- Monta to share how his organization can provide risk assessment help without jeopardizing the work an organization is doing.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.