

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 8th, 2023
Time: 3:30 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 and discuss their first briefing on goal recommendations for the landlord recruitment and retention 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), 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)

Absent attendees

Yvette Hernandez (she/her), Monta Knudson (he/him),

Elected delegates

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

Absent elected delegates

Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson (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. He noted that the agenda was reordered to have the Regional Investment Fund (RIF) presentation before the Landlord Recruitment and Retention Progress Report.

The TCPB approved the October Meeting Summary.

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Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Staff Updates

Yesenia Delgado, Metro, introduced herself as the newest Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Manager at Metro.

Abby Ahern, Metro, shared updates on the six regional goals. She stated that Homebase has conducted interviews with key Coordinated Entry Regional Alignment Workgroup members and jurisdictional partners, that the Medicaid Waiver Tri-county Partnership group is continuing the development of recommendations for operationalizing waiver benefits, that Metro is hiring a team to build out the Training and Technical Assistance Programs, and that Homebase is conducting a scan of local and national service provider compensation practices for employee recruitment and retention.

Liam Frost, Metro, thanked members for participating in an extended meeting time and thanked Susheela Jayapal for her housing work as Multnomah County Commissioner. He noted that Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson will be joining the TCPB and the SHS Oversight Committee. He highlighted that Clackamas County and partners opened the Good Shepherd Village on Monday which was funded by the Affordable Housing Bond update and contains 143 units, some of which offer supportive housing services.

Jes Larson, Washington County, shared that they are opening more affordable housing bond units in Tigard. She introduced Nicole Stingh as part of the team and shared that Washington County has openings for the Homeless Solutions Advisory Council.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, shared that a new staff member will be joining Clackamas County who will lead the health and housing systems integrated team.

Adam Brown, Clackamas County, shared that a \$10 million grant was awarded to the Homeless Solution Coalition to build a resource center in Oregon City.

Patricia Rojas, Metro, thanked all three counties for developing their annual reports, which are now available on the website.

Breanna Flores, Multnomah County, shared that Multnomah County presented their annual report with the SHS Oversight Committee on Monday, and reflected that it has been a year of challenges and successes. She highlighted that Multnomah County has a 99% retention rate for permanent supportive housing (PSH) and an 85% retention rate for rapid rehousing.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington stated that she read all three counties' Executive Summaries which all had incredible results. She thanked providers, staff, and partners for making this work happen.

Regional Investment Fund: Part II

Liam Frost, Metro, reviewed the TCPB process and shared that the TCPB begins influencing RIF spending when the TCPB reviews the draft implementation plan developed by the counties for approval. He shared that the counties contribute at least 5% of their SHS allocation of program funds towards the RIF.

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Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked if the counties and Metro create the draft implementation plan together.

Liam Frost, Metro, replied they can.

Jes Larson, Washington County, provided background on the creation of the RIF and shared that counties have most of the RIF funding set aside. She shared that a very small percentage of RIF funds has been used to date for moving regional work forward including Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA), the point-in-time count, and landlord liaison coordination. She stated that the purpose of the RIF is to support the construction of new systems and is not intended to fund program work.

Liam Frost, Metro, added that in these first two years counties have focused on building out regional programs and supporting service providers.

Steve Rudman reflected that some of those examples are related to the next agenda item and that it's important to ensure the TCPB gets the biggest bang for its buck. He shared that it's great to hear that those examples are in process and noted that more can be done.

Mercedes Elizalde asked if RLRA vouchers go across county lines, for example, if a voucher user lived in Washington County could they move to Multnomah County.

Jes Larson, Washington County, replied not yet. It's easier to design flexibility for RLRA to transfer between housing authorities, but moving the services paired with RLRA is difficult. She shared that policy guidance has been drafted on this, but it is a tension point.

Mercedes Elizalde reflected that RLRA is three separate county programs and isn't regionalized yet.

Co-chair Eboni Brown stated that it's great the three counties worked together to make these things possible and noted that when they don't work together it can cause a divide in services between counties. She reflected on her experience in Washington County and shared that with continued RLRA coordination she hopes that it will be simpler to transfer services over county lines. She shared that when she talked to organizations in other counties, some had no idea that the regional Risk Mitigation Fund was a tool. She shared that cross-county communications help build regional relationships.

Abby Ahern, Metro, shared that there is a Cross-County RLRA Transfer meeting on November 16, and each county has an internal deadline to develop a process to ensure services can be transferred across counties.

Co-chair Matt Chapman reflected that for the TCPB's work to be most effective some things will need to be done regionally and other things will need to be coordinated. He shared that HMIS is an example of work that makes sense for centralization.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington shared that she doesn't mind identifying things to keep working on regionally, but highlighted the keyword is "yet."

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis shared that the intent of the RIF is innovation and supporting future needs and suggested not focusing on the weeds.

Liam Frost, Metro, presented the RIF's funding and the counties' expenditures, resulting in \$26.5 million in the RIF for Fiscal Years 21, 22, and 23.

Adam Brown, Clackamas County, shared that the current RIF investment areas for the counties are health-housing integration, capacity building, administrative consolidation, and regional risk mitigation.

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Progress Report: Landlord Recruitment and Retention

Mark Jolin, Focus Strategies, introduced himself and provided an overview of Focus Strategies' findings on unit acquisition. He shared that Focus Strategies reviewed national best practices, conducted interviews with key partners, and analyzed local context as part of their process. He shared that through this process, Focus Strategies identified seven topics for further exploration, which are covered in more detail in their memo.

Mercedes Elizalde reflected that it seems beneficial to add a fourth party to coordinate units and asked if they have seen an example of a mission-based nonprofit or B-corporation act as a property management company.

Marc Jolin, Focus Strategies replied that it's a spectrum and there are examples where units are owned by an organization that partners with other organizations to provide wrap-around services. He stated that the national best practices call for a neutral third-party mediator, but there are differences in opinion.

Co-chair Eboni Brown shared that last year she went through property management training and heard from the counties they weren't currently interested in that. She reflected on her experience of for-profit companies making it difficult to get and keep people housed, especially for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units.

Cristina Palacios stated she has heard there are not enough management companies and barriers to recruiting will need to be addressed.

Steve Rudman stated it's important for the RIF to be flexible and add value and that he agrees with a statement from the Focus Strategies memo that says efforts should be consolidated and the current fragmented approach is causing inequities. He shared his support for developing a comprehensive outreach and communication plan and noted each area of future exploration from the memo is tremendous. He stated that voters want to see homeless people housed and landlords want good tenants and suggested putting regional systems in place to make that happen. He suggested Metro or nonprofit partners could lead the systems work and emphasized the importance of building trust and a regional mindset.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington thanked Steve for his comments. She shared that the presentation helped bring the memo to life and stated there is a multi-step approach. She said step one was to receive information and begin to think regionally and shared that everyone wants to achieve these goals. She shared that she looks forward to step two where county staff have a chance to get together and share an approach. She shared that county staff have built trust and momentum in working together.

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith shared that trust is an issue and forcing consolidation before counties are ready will not go over well. She stated that Clackamas County likes to be independent and Clackamas County voters voted no on this tax which should be considered. She stated that it would be best to pick what to consolidate and what to leave at coordination.

Mercedes Elizalde asked if there were capacity limitations for the consolidation components in the memo for efficiencies and if they noticed any differences when interviewing individual landlords versus large property management companies.

Marc Jolin, Focus Strategies, replied not at that level of specificity and heard more of acute challenges in building consolidation. He stated that they did not talk to smaller landlords and heard from stakeholders in interviews about their experiences with recruiting smaller landlords. He shared that from the interviews, they heard smaller landlords are more flexible

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on screening criteria but are more hesitant to participate in larger bureaucratic partnerships. He shared there are equity considerations for consolidation and ways to advance relationships.

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith put in the Zoom chat that the landlords she has spoken with like vouchers and asked for that to be considered.

Michael Liu shared that trust is integral and his belief that there needs to be a central system in place. He shared that to be efficient, the central system needs to include both landlords and service providers, so they can build trust and cultivate relationships. He stated that if there wasn't a centralized system, smaller organizations could be harmed. He stated that dollars should be invested to make accessing other funding easier, used RLRA and Section 8 housing vouchers as an example, and encouraged making all dollars easy to access and have a standardized level.

Marc Jolin, Focus Strategies, shared that the importance of relationships was highlighted to emphasize that whatever consolidation happens should be done right and protect the relationships that have been built.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis stated that going beyond SHS vouchers moves the TCPB past consolidation or coordination and into alignment with other funds and different systems of care. She asked what the best practices were about utilizing other types of units beyond multifamily housing.

Marc Jolin, Focus Strategies, replied there are examples of organizations that partner with single-family homeowners, but there are not a lot of identified best practices, which is an opportunity for innovation. He added that he heard in the interviews the importance of other housing types, and this is an area where work can be done.

Co-chair Matt Chapman reflected that he does not think there is a great disparity between what Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith and Steve Rudman said in terms of regionalization and coordination. He shared that when the TCPB talks about centralization, it doesn't mean everyone has to do everything the same way. He shared that he believes a system can be created so that those who need services receive them and there is flexibility based on factors like geography, race, and ethnicity. He asked if there are examples of systems that provide the necessary centralization with flexible implementation.

Marc Jolin, Focus Strategies, replied that service provider and county staff experience can help build that flexibility in whatever the TCPB decides to do. He stated that this is an area that the region can lead on.

Internet was lost in the Metro Council Chambers for about 5 minutes.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked what the next steps are. She shared that she thinks that the TCPB will come back to this topic in a future meeting and will have the opportunity to hear county staff present information on this topic, and then the TCPB will have a dialogue on what to move forward.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, agreed that this is correct for the next steps and that a discussion on defining regionalization would also be a future discussion. He asked if county staff would want to offer any reflections and asked TCPB members as they review the memo to consider if anything is missing or if something should be removed.

Jes Larson, Washington County, stated they have not had time to digest the memo and prepare reflections. She shared that at a high level, many aspects resonate and there are a lot of local nuances.

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Breanna Flores, Multnomah County, shared that nothing is surprising in the memo and she looks forward to meeting with county staff to discuss further.

Mercedes Elizalde stated that she would like to know out of the already qualified pool of SHS providers, how many are implementing master leasing, who is doing general landlord education, and how many subsidies are under SHS. She suggested adding to the list to see what a mission-based property management company looks like.

Co-chair Eboni Brown suggested adding dollars into a fund made available for landlords to incentivize retaining tenants and SHS units, for example, if landlords commit to having 5% of their units to SHS they would receive access to the fund.

Steve Rudman shared that there are programs besides RLRA that help folks get housing. He agreed with Mercedes in looking at all programs and encouraging landlords to do business. He emphasized that a comprehensive communications and engagement plan is important as many landlords are unaware of these tools.

Nicole Larson suggested labeling the identified barriers more specifically as that could identify more potential partners in systems of care, such as addiction centers and behavioral health services.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, asked if anything should come off of the areas of future exploration list.

No TCPB member suggested removing anything from the list.

Closing and Next Steps

Co-chair Eboni Brown asked if the TCPB can receive a clear timeline by the December meeting of how long the process will take.

Co-chair Matt Chapman shared that many of these items are interconnected which may impact timeframes, and flexibility should be considered. He suggested investigating what the structure and methodologies of support for this work should be. He emphasized that the structure created should be focused on the bottom line of helping people. He encouraged Metro and the counties to begin conversations on what the structure should be.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington stated that she is going to reread the memo and come prepared for the possibility of continuing this discussion at the next meeting. She reflected that there are six goals to work on and expressed the need for a TCPB Work Plan for 2024. She stated that she is unclear on when they will deliver the Regional Plan to the SHS Oversight Committee for review.

Liam Frost, Metro, replied that there will be time on the agenda in December to go over the process timeline, but clarified that there are no specific dates. He shared that materials would be sent out in advance of the meeting and hoped that the county staff would be able to share their thoughts in the December meeting.

Co-chair Eboni Brown emphasized that she would like a timeline for when counties will review the materials and an overall timeline of how the goal will be actualized.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reflected that the next steps are:

- Next meeting: December 13th, 4-6pm
 - TCPB to go over the regional plan process timeline.

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- County and Metro staff to meet and share ideas on the Focus Strategies memo and a timeline for completing a proposal.
- TCPB to have a future discussion on defining regionalization.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington shared that Governor Kotek's Executive Order around homelessness included a dashboard which is now live at orhomelessnessresponse.org that has current data and is updated on the 15th of each month.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.