

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date/time: Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Place: Zoom Webinar
Purpose: The Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) will continue to discuss issues and opportunities in regional coordination, review recommendation development criteria and go through a recommendation exercise for work prioritization as it relates to the Regional Plan

Member attendees

Co-chair Eboni Brown (she/her), Co-chair Matt Chapman (he/him), Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Nicole Larson (she/her), Michael Ong Liu (he/him), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Steve Rudman (he/him), Cristina Palacios (she/her)

Absent members

Zoi Coppiano (she/her), Yvette Hernandez (she/her), Alicia Schaffter (she/her), James Schroeder (he/him)

Elected delegates

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

Absent elected delegates

Metro Council President Lynn Peterson (she/her)

County staff representatives

Clackamas County – Vahid Brown (he/him), Multnomah County – Yesenia Delgado (she/her), Washington County – Jessi Adams (she/her), Jes Larson (she/her)

Metro

Ash Everfeld (they/she), Liam Frost (he/him), Patricia Rojas (she/her), Valeria McWilliams (she/her)

Kearns & West Facilitators

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

Welcome and introductions

Liam Frost, Regional Housing Assistant Director, Metro, provided opening remarks and welcomed the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) to the meeting. Liam thanked Clackamas County Commissioner Sonya Fischer for her work as she finishes her term serving the TCPB.

Ben Duncan introduced himself as a neutral third-party facilitator and facilitated introductions between TCPB Members.

Ben shared the TCPB process funnel tool.

Co-chair Eboni Brown motioned to vote on approval of the November Meeting Summary.

The TCPB approved the November Meeting Summary.

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Public comment

A written public comment was received and sent to the committee before the meeting.

Cole Merkel (he/him) provided verbal public comment.

Complete Regional Coordination Discussion -Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance, Data Quality and Capacity Building - cont.

Ben introduced the topic and provided an overview of last month's discussion.

Mercedes Elizalde stated the importance of coordinating entry services and assessments, leveraging resources such as Medicaid and 1115 waivers, and utilizing data across systems. She touched on service qualification issues which currently exclude folks from receiving care.

Clackamas County Commissioner Fischer shared that the TCPB should build a sustainable system of care. She emphasized the need to provide a continuum of support to allow for an individual approach to care and echoed the importance of coordinated entry and leveraged resources.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington expressed the importance of defining TCPB goals to measure success. She agreed on the issue of folks qualifying for services and suggested asking the three counties and their partner agencies what their current service needs are.

Co-chair Matt Chapman suggested mapping out the current system to see how it works and to identify where to make meaningful recommendations within the TCPB's jurisdiction. He proposed developing recommendations section by section to be responsive and show progress.

Nicole Larson echoed the suggestion for investing in a continuum of care. She reflected that the approach was effective when she worked with homeless youth. She agreed that having a coordinated entry process and real time service provider data is beneficial.

TCPB Recommendation Development Criteria

Ben reviewed the draft recommendation filtering criteria.

Mercedes asked for further clarification and definition on the racial equity, duplicative, and staff capacity criteria.

Liam assured members that the list is evolving and will be further refined.

Regional Coordination Issue Prioritization

Co-chair Brown acknowledged that the TCPB has many topics to discuss and introduced capacity building as a first discussion topic. She elaborated that capacity is an issue that the TCPB have heard from providers, county staff, and TCPB members, and is an issue that needs to be addressed before discussing other topics such as program expansion.

Chair Harrington agreed that capacity building is an important issue and asked how a potential economic recession would impact the situation and if staff retention should be a focus area.

Steve Rudman agreed that capacity building is a big issue that's connected to many topics and should not be discussed in lieu of other topics.

Commissioner Susheela Jayapal reflected that everyone agrees capacity is an issue and that there are many pieces to it like workforce, training, and wages. She suggested wages could be a specific strategy and noted that the three counties are currently engaged in capacity efforts. She asked if specific strategies that have been identified by each county should be recommended regionally or if there could be a mix of short- and long-term strategies.

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Co-chair Brown replied that the focus could be on multiple issues and that capacity would be a starting place.

Ben reflected that capacity seems to be the uppermost shared challenge and place to practice the TCPB process funnel.

Patricia Rojas, Regional Housing Director, Metro, stated that the TCPB has to go through a prioritization process to raise issues to pay attention to.

Co-chair Chapman agreed to focus on multiple issues and learn by doing. He suggested to conclude the discussion on whether to prioritize capacity building, and to start discussing which aspects of capacity building to prioritize.

Cristina Palacios posted in the chat that there could be up to 15% rent increases which could cause an increase in unhoused people and there will be a need for capacity.

Mercedes shared that capacity building is important and asked if the underlying issue could be unrealistic expectations. She reflected that many organizations are expected to roll out new programs and show results in a short amount of time, and while there could be a capacity issue, the issue could also lie in expectation management. She suggested picking one domain, such as Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA), and identifying multiple strategies, including capacity, to discuss.

Cristina agreed in the chat that organizational capacity cannot meet current expectations.

Sahaan McKelvey echoed the importance of tackling multiple issues and that capacity building is a strategy for all topics. He noted a need to retain the workforce, and that time and available resource expectations should be considered.

Commissioner Jayapal stated that RLRA has a lack of available units and there is a need to recruit landlords to expand inventory capacity.

Co-chair Brown agreed with everyone and shared that service providers should increase their employee wages. She noted that the TCPB can provide short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations and that the discussion needs to focus on narrowing in on an issue.

Co-chair Chapman recommended a discussion of RLRA with a focus on capacity building.

Ben noted that there is a meeting time constraint in beginning that discussion and read out Cristina's chat that said there needs to be a focus on equity since BIPOC service providers can use funds to serve diverse populations but need time to build quality programs.

Chair Harrington noted there is interest in RLRA, capacity building, and many other topics, which can be overwhelming. She shared the importance of service providers and her concern about service provider criticisms mentioned at the TCPB and the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Oversight Committee. Chair Harrington is considering writing a letter to Metro Council asking for SHS funding and asked if the TCPB could focus on solutions and the commitments made to voters.

Nicole reflected that capacity building seems to have an overlap with other issues. She stated the importance of knowing what the issue baselines are as the TCPB builds out expectations.

Co-chair Chapman welcomed input from county partners. He reflected that there were many ideas related to capacity and suggested discussing specific issues within capacity.

Sahaan shared that providers will have to expand new recommendations while continuing to do what they are currently doing. He shared to do RLRA successfully, service partners and providers must be engaged and empowered.

Cristina suggested using a framework that acknowledges that ending homelessness is not a project but building a system of greater housing stability and reliance.

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Jes Larson, Supportive Housing Services Program Manager, Washington County Department of Housing Services, stated that RLRA vouchers are implemented in partnership with case managers who help clients through the process. She noted that in Washington County, it's the lack of case manager capacity to roll out more RLRA vouchers. She noted that it's less about wages and more about organizational infrastructure and the level of sudden growth that cause the blockage.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jayapal suggested that strategies don't have to be implemented in the same way at the same time for each county. She suggested developing a model in one county and then rolling out in the other counties later to help with capacity. She highlighted the constraint of unit availability and the need to recruit and retain landlords.

Steve Rudman said that a systems level discussion is missing and there is a need to work with the landlord industry. He asked if Metro staff can work with Counties to identify different models of working with landlords and to assess how those models could work in the Portland metropolitan region.

Nicole asked if case managers are tasked with finding housing for clients.

Co-chair Brown replied that it is up to the housing and retention workers. She reflected that her organization only had 2 case managers for 40 clients and it's an all-hands-on deck situation. She suggested incentivizing landlords.

Nicole asked how RLRA is functioning with clinical case managers and shared it could be helpful to know what case managers report as their capacity issue.

Co-chair Brown responded that the issue ranges from organization to organization. It could be wages, responsibility, or safety concerns.

Jes shared that Washington County has landlord liaisons they work with.

Vahid Brown, Housing Policy Coordinator, Clackamas County, mentioned that folks are screened and matched with housing navigators in Clackamas County to find housing.

Mercedes asked how many case managers or peer support workers are trying to do this work, but don't have RLRA vouchers because their program pre-dates SHS.

Vahid responded that there was a large turnover of housing navigators that predate SHS.

Closing and next steps

Ben shared that a survey will be sent out to prioritize next meeting's topic. January's meeting will hone-in on a subject and begin the funnel process.

Steve shared that he hoped Metro staff could work with county staff to identify bottom-up capacity issues and models of housing connector programs in places like Seattle and Los Angeles.

Washington County Chair Harrington asked what the TCPB's role is in each one of the opportunities identified in the slide deck meeting materials.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jayapal shared that TCPB's role is to elevate regional strategies, and a landlord regional program would be a beneficial strategy.

Liam stated that the TCPB would have to vote on Steve's request of Metro.

Nicole shared that it would be helpful to do a survey and identify a goal and any decisions that need to be made at the next meeting.

Steve motioned to vote on approving Metro staff to identify bottom-up capacity issues and models of housing connector programs.

TCPB approved the task for Metro.

Co-chairs Brown and Chapman abstained.

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Chair Harrington shared that Washington County previously met with Brilliant Corners and they can share out those notes.

Next steps include:

- Metro to provide definitions on the filtering criteria.
- TCPB members to respond to prioritization survey.
- Metro to begin identifying bottom-up capacity issues and the models of other housing connectors programs.
- Washington County to share notes from previous meeting with Brilliant Corners.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:15 pm.