

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee
Date/time: Monday, January 31, 9 AM – 11:30 AM
Place: Virtual meeting (Zoom)
Purpose: Group discussion of quarterly reports, financial update and clarity on meeting cadence and schedule for 2022.

Member attendees

Co-chair Susan Emmons, Dan Fowler, Ellen Johnson, Jenny Lee, Seth Lyon, Carter MacNichol, Felicity Montebalco, Jeremiah Rigsby, Roserria Roberts, Dr. Mandrill Taylor, Co-chair Kathy Wai

Absent members

Gabby Bates, Heather Brown, Armando Jimenez, City of Portland Commissioner Dan Ryan, Jahed Sukhun

Elected delegates

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington, Clackamas County Commissioner Sonya Fischer, Metro Councilor Christine Lewis, Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal

Metro

Nui Bezaire, Ash Elverfeld, Breanna Hudson, Rachael Lembo, Patricia Rojas

Facilitators

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement

Welcome and introductions

Land and labor acknowledgements were made by Co-chairs Kathy Wai and Susan Emmons.

Kathy and Susan welcomed the group to the meeting.

Allison Brown, facilitator, reviewed the group agreements.

September, October and December meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Conflict of interest declaration

Dan Fowler announced that he may have a future perceived conflict of interest based on a property that he may be facilitating a purchase/sale for in Clackamas that could be connected to housing programs through Clackamas County.

Carter MacNichol is a board member of Transition Projects which is a contractor for one or more of the counties within the Metro Supportive Housing Services (SHS) program.

Public Comment

Two written public comments were included in the packet. No verbal public comment was made during the meeting.

Financial update

Rachael Lembo joined the meeting. Her report was included in the meeting packet.

- \$6M has been received in SHS taxes so far and all has been distributed to the county partners.
- Setup of the full tax collection system is expected to be completed in summer 2022.



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- \$3.2M in contingency has been held and nothing has been used. She will keep the committee updated as to whether or not that money ends up needing to be used.
- No questions were asked by committee members.

Discussion: Meeting sequence and 2022 committee structure

Kathy introduced this portion of the agenda with context for the discussion. Members discussed wanting to create a different structure rather than just having committee meetings every month. She said that workgroups have also been discussed.

Nui Bezaire said that staff are able to support one meeting a month but request committee feedback on what those meetings are.

Questions and comments from this discussion:

- What would an equity subcommittee look like?
- One working group a month and split into two subgroups.
- Meet more often than every three months and would like meetings to happen at a minimum of every other month.
- County partners will be at oversight committee meetings occasionally.
- Communication training for committee members.
- Every other month meetings.
- Quarterly meetings are enough or time limited meetings.
- Would like a structure where staff bring things to the committee to review.
- Meeting too frequently could get in the way of implementation progress.

Patricia said that a survey follow-up will be sent to members to get a better idea of what workgroups would be supported and what their focus would be.

Susan proposed skipping February meeting and reconvening in March.

Group break took place from 9:51-9:58.

Quarter 1 Progress Report Discussion

Patricia provided the following background information while introducing this portion of the agenda.

- Official reporting templates will be ready soon.
- Counties agreed to update Metro and the committee on how things are going with their programs despite not having official templates yet.
- Committee members sent questions ahead of time that will be answered in the meeting and also in writing due to meeting timing.

Washington County

Josh Crites, (he/him/his pronouns), Washington County, Assistant Director of Housing Authority of Washington County, joined the panelists and said that they have been incredibly busy internally and externally at creating equitable systems of care.

Jes Larson, (she/her pronouns) Supportive Housing Services Program Manager, Washington County Housing Authority, continued to present information on Washington County updates.

- Their budget went from \$5M to \$50M with SHS funding.
- Housing case management services program
- Providers receive a housing case manager for every 20 participants they aim to serve
 - Case managers do outreach, placement, and retention to ensure long-term housing stability with Population A.



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- The County is doing upfront program and capacity work building to bolster their system so it is on stable footing for the future of the program.

Eboni Brown, Executive Director, Greater Good NW, spoke to their work in Washington County. They operate two Bridge Shelter programs, housing support and provide system navigation support.

- Behavioral health specialists' on-site.
- Placed 11 households into permanent housing this year.
- Recently reconnected a mother struggling with mental health issues with their family who had been separated for twenty years.
- One solution doesn't work for all people and Washington County is supporting their choices to support community members as they need it.
- Monthly, executive directors in Washington County meet to troubleshoot and find creative solutions to issues they face.

Nathan Teske, Executive Director, Bienestar, also provided an update on their work.

- A full team of four staff have been hired since last September.
- Creating a continuum of housing services.
- Served 18 houseless community members since September.
- Appreciates the flexibility of the program and support for implementing creative solutions.

Clackamas County

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, related to the communication from Jes about setting up a whole new system and the funds being game changing for Clackamas.

- Stabilized programs in their first quarter
- Created shelter and new opportunities that had never existed in Clackamas County like year-round shelter

Linda Ellerby, Greater New Hope Family Services, presented as a Clackamas County provider.

- They have transitional housing and a hotel.
- Housed seven families already and about to house six more.
- Barriers their clients are facing: mental health, low income, trust issues, and that they weren't familiar with the organization.

Corrie Etheridge, Northwest Family Services, (she/her pronouns), also presented as a Clackamas County provider.

- Have provided case management to 30 households in short term programs but identified as needing long-term support.
- Likes being able to coordinate with other providers.
- Hiring and training is a focus for new hires, like fair housing, suicide prevention, training on the programs themselves.

Multnomah County

Marc Jolin, Director, Joint Office of Homeless Services, (he/him/his pronouns), presented on behalf of Multnomah County.

- They have been focusing on capacity building, stabilizing providers and expanding their network for supportive housing services providers.
- Doing a lot of work in collaboration with the other counties and Metro.
- 130 household's received civil legal investment support
- Short-term shelters created from COVID dollars have been converted to long term shelters with support from SHS funding.

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Ronda Carmer, Director of Community Justice Programs, Cascadia, presented as a provider in Multnomah County.

- They were awarded 24 housing vouchers for their Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) program which serves individuals that require a higher intensity of behavioral health services and have psychotic disorders.
- Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA) has been a game changer for them.
- RLRA creates a much more flexible approach to providing housing options to their clients.

Kim James, Director of Homeless & Housing Supports, Cascadia, also presented as a provider serving Multnomah County and shared more about what Cascadia Health Care does.

Allison asked the providers what external barriers they're facing?

- Eboni said that the biggest barriers not revolving around participants are the housed folks in the community. Unhoused individuals have been ostracized, it makes it hard for them to make community with housed people because they've been othered. She said unhoused individuals need to be brought back into our communities.
- Ronda said one of their biggest challenges is finding landlords that are willing to rent to their clients especially when clients have psychotic barriers and criminal backgrounds. A lot of landlord relationship building needs to happen.
- Eboni added that they have offered to cover rental insurance for their clients and that has helped put some landlords at ease.
- Linda said that there have been technology issues, families have struggled to get information. Also there aren't enough low income units available. She also punctuated the landlord issue that Ronda mentioned.
- Corrie agreed with others and said that in Clackamas County they see the Metro Urban Growth Boundary cutting in to their region in weird ways that cause barriers to providing services.

Allison then asked how the counties doing with their equity goals?

- Josh said that Washington County is grounded by their local implementation plan committee. One aspect they feel proud of is how they went about their service provider contracting. This resulted in more culturally specific providers who came and contracted with them.
- Vahid said that it's a core part of the whole measure and has been involved with everything they're doing. LIP was built in collaboration with Unite Oregon and Coalition of Communities of Color. The Coalition of Communities of Color did an analysis of the system and provided a list of recommendations that the county agreed with and all are either implemented or in the process of being implemented.
- Cristal Otero, Joint Office of Homeless Services, (she/her pronouns), they have been working with Clackamas and Washington County on an RFPQ for their SHS providers and the emphasis is on bringing in more culturally-specific and small providers. They anticipate bringing in 30 new providers for the region.

Allison asked the counties to comment on the capacity of programs that are doing the work and finding employees?

- Marc said it is a theme they've been hearing about for a long while and COVID is exacerbating the issues. They are committed to analyzing pay rates amongst service provider staff. They're hearing that they're struggling to keep current programming going while bringing on a new program. He said that it's beyond SHS to fix, it's a bigger issue and there are disparities across human services.

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- Vahid agreed with Marc and said they have also struggled to hire at the Housing Authority. COVID has been a huge barrier. There is an inherent capacity challenge in doing the work in the way that we're doing it, talking to their Boards, Committees, collaborate with providers and the other counties, there is so much collaboration in this way and that's new.

Questions and next steps

Watch for a scheduling survey to come.

Allison said they will get back to members with written responses for things that didn't get resolved in Q&A section.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 11:30 am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ash Elverfeld, Housing Program Assistant