

Meeting minutes



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee
Date/time: Monday, March 28, 9 AM – 11:30 AM
Place: Virtual meeting (Zoom)
Purpose: Presentation and group discussion of quarter 2 reports, financial update, and review and next steps from oversight committee survey on scheduling and priority topics.

Member attendees

Co-chair Susan Emmons, Dan Fowler, Armando Jimenez, Ellen Johnson, Jenny Lee, Seth Lyon, Carter MacNichol, Felicitia Montebalanco, Jeremiah Rigsby, Dr. Mandrill Taylor, Co-chair Kathy Wai

Absent members

Gabby Bates, Heather Brown, Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal. Roserria Roberts, City of Portland Commissioner Dan Ryan, Jahed Sukhun

Elected delegates

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

Metro

Nui Bezaire, Ash Elverfeld, Breanna Hudson, Rachael Lembo, Patricia Rojas, Valeria McWilliams, Jimmy Oporta

Facilitators

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement

Welcome and introductions

Land and labor acknowledgements from the Uprise Collective were read by Co-chairs Kathy Wai (she/her) and Susan Emmons (she/her).

Kathy and Susan welcomed the group to the meeting.

Susan spoke to the recent survey results on member priorities for the committee meetings and the major highlights were that people wanted more connection and more time for time for discussion in meetings.

January meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Conflict of interest declaration

Dan Fowler announced that he was involved in a property sale for an affordable housing development. He's also involved in finding a relocation site for a non-profit.

Carter MacNichol is a board member at Transition Projects and they are a contractor receiving Supportive Housing Services funding.

Public Comment

No verbal public comment was made during the meeting.

Financial update

Rachael Lembo (she/her), Planning, Development and Research Department Finance Manager joined the meeting. The financial report was included in the meeting packet.



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- \$19 million collected in February and that is significantly higher than other months. They anticipate that it will go up significantly going forward.
- Seeing an increase in estimated tax payments for 2022 starting to come in.
- Metro has paid out about \$27 million so far to the counties.
- “Transfers E” in the report refer to internal transfers at Metro.

Presentation: Quarter 2 Reports and Housing

Nui Bezaire (she/her), Supportive Housing Services, Metro, presented a high level overview of the quarter two progress reports using a slideshow. Details are in the reports that were included in the packet. She also reviewed the Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA) program.

- Challenges in quarter two: hiring, COVID-19, severe weather and other emergencies, and the narrative that the supportive housing services (SHS) program is a cure-all or the only resource to address homelessness.
- Progress made in permanent supportive housing (PSH) units/vouchers, shelter beds, permanent housing placements, homelessness and eviction prevention, and outreach.

Breakout discussions

Members and attendees either chose to go into breakout rooms or stayed in the main meeting room at this point. Notes from the breakout room discussions can be found attached at the end of the meeting minutes as Attachment A.

Group Discussion: Q2 Reports and Housing

Kathy welcomed members back to the main room and offered the groups an opportunity to share out.

Dan noticed a theme of how individual solutions are and that process is going to take time.

Dr. Mandrill Taylor said the group he was in focused on systemic reasons as to what has brought us here and the solutions need to be framed with a systemic focus. They also discussed focusing on how we’re communicating progress going forward.

Carter said they talked about the communication challenge. There is urgency to communicate effectively about the work. We talked lot about that and progress being made.

Marc Jolin (he/him) and Yesenia Delgado (she/her), Joint Office of Homeless Services; Vahid Brown (he/him), Housing Authority of Clackamas County; and Jes Larson (she/her) and Liz Morris (she/her) of the Housing Authority of Washington County joined the meeting members on screen.

The following section has questions from members and responses from county partners italicized.

Have you experienced backlash from neighborhoods where additional units of housing are proposed or placed?

- *Marc said they haven’t recently but they did a few years ago. Resistance has mostly been around shelters.*

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- *Jes said that Washington County secured a motel site in Hillsboro with Project Turnkey and that it has been operated as a shelter program during the pandemic but with plans to have affordable housing there in the future. They worked quickly to get the shelter running and received feedback from neighborhood members that they were not satisfied with the project or process. Washington County took that constructive criticism and are using it to inform future engagement processes.*

What barriers still remain that make it challenging to scale up housing placements?

- *Liz said that people having access to caseworkers and housing navigators has been a huge benefit for people in finding housing and filling out applications. But while the County is offering limited screening criteria and using Housing First principals, the landlords may not be. Sometimes they're reducing barriers effectively, and sometimes the usual barriers are still an issue.*
- *Marc added that the Fair Market Rent (FMR)¹ levels are at 120%, [meaning that the RLRA vouchers can be used to pay rent that is up to 120% of the HUD-calculated FMR. FMRs represent the cost to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in a local housing market. This is a higher, more flexible standard than other housing vouchers.] They're using RLRA to pay for more creative housing types like shared housing.*
- *Vahid said that RLRA is about meeting people where they are and using a person-centered and trauma informed approach. He said that they're "screening people in, not out." Staff RLRA workers are going to hotels where people have temporary shelter and helping fill out forms rather than having them go to the housing authority. He noted that there are cultural difference between RLRA and typical HUD programming.*

What are the actual steps people go through for RLRA? What does it look and feel like?

- *Liz said that the counties may differ slightly in their processes, while they're likely very similar, and she is speaking to the Washington County process.*
 - *A person enters first through their Community Connect coordinated entry system and is assigned to a network provider who identifies their needs and placement opportunities.*
 - *The worker goes through the RLRA application with the client, collects HMIS data, and then the provider submits referrals to the Washington County Housing Authority through email.*
 - *Staff at the housing authority review and turnaround approvals in 1-3 business days, then an award letter gets issued with allowances for rent assistance of up to 120% FMR to the network provider and they go over the next steps for using RLRA with the client.*
 - *A request for transient approval occurs next and then they can start applying to units.*
 - *Before official approval of the unit, an inspection occurs. If the unit passes inspection, the housing authority will start providing payments.*

Susan shared a story she heard from an agency worker working with a client who was eligible for RLRA. The higher payment standard is huge and transformative allowing people more options for which neighborhoods they'd like to live in. The client is in housing now as a result of RLRA.

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Vahid read a testimonial from Housing Authority of Clackamas County RLRA staff member Ashley Ferin.

Allison asked what coordination looks like across the region,

- *Vahid said they coordinate at several levels across the region including with RLRA. The county teams meet weekly and discuss various coordination efforts. They're also coordinating around a regional risk mitigation fund for landlord guarantees.*
- *Marc stated that they're working through a lot of regional coordination and standardization but that flexibility at the county level is important because of differences in communities and reflections back from providers that they're being responsive to.*

Seth asked what their prioritization is based on? Is it based on visibility, vulnerability, Coordinated Access?

- *Marc said that in Multnomah County Coordinated Access is used the majority of time in RLRA resources and they're using vulnerability to process them, which overlaps with Population A.*

Next steps

Kathy closed the meeting by reflecting the results of the survey that members took about future meeting frequency and interests. The majority wanted to go to bi-monthly meetings. The May meeting date would be coming from staff soon. She highlighted that there was also an interest in workgroups, an idea initially generated out of the retreat but that those are still being fleshed out. They would be opportunities to go deeper into an area of interest for the committee.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 11:30 am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ash Elverfeld, Housing Program Assistant

Attachments

Attachment A: Notes from the breakout room discussions

Room 1: Discussion Notes

After reading the Quarter 2 reports, what questions arise for you about the housing programs mentioned by the counties (e.g. RLRA, permanent supportive housing, etc.)?

Want to know the real process/steps.

"Who do you call?"

Do you have any questions about housing outcomes - placements into housing, who is being housed, etc.?

Impressed with the progress. Would like more visibility so the public could see the progress.

Lack of service delivery metrics.

Lost in the shuffle: What the plan is for assessing the quality of the services.

Happy with the progress made. Interested in specifics on the ground.

The "real life" logistics of how it works/how long it takes.

Want to be able to articulate the process and how it works.

Agree. Need to be able to understand and articulate it. Need to be able to communicate it.

We have to be patient with each other, so we build a system that lasts.

We need to develop that story, more than just numbers.

Being able to explain, "what is our process?" & explain our story.

We are making progress. Problem won't go away overnight.

Homelessness - a systemic issue. We have a lot of layers to peel back. It's a process.

Can't forget the individual.

Really takes knowing and building trust.

Services need to be wrapped around idea of individual as a person.

Big issue, but an individual solution. Everyone is different. The solution is unique to them.

Massive sheltering may solve one problem and create many new ones.

"Painting over dry rot" - doesn't solve the problem.

Be sure to spell out the consequences if we ignore the individual and do quick easy fix.

Many people already have a community of those they live with. They won't want to leave without them.

Understand the world through their eyes. Where is their community.

Meet people where they are at.

Do we want counties to do a deeper dive, what is the staffing makeup of services providers? What feedback is going on?

Want to learn more. What do they need to continue to be successful?

Shouldn't be hiding the problems. Need to see what isn't working.

Need some consistency in reporting so we can learn from successes and help each other get better.

Something about metrics that forces people to volunteer things they may not necessarily report.

Transformation of policing in the houseless community.

Getting to know the individual.

Hearts and minds of leadership sometimes have to change.

Bringing in the business community.

Is it clear what progress is being made with RLRA and/or other SHS housing programs across the three counties? Is anything not clear?

Coordination between counties/service providers for individuals?

Not a formal process. Working toward improving coordination.

Room 2: Discussion Notes

After reading the Quarter 2 reports, what questions arise for you about the housing programs mentioned by the counties (e.g. RLRA, permanent supportive housing, etc.)?

Do you have any questions about housing outcomes - placements into housing, who is being housed, etc.?

Is it clear what progress is being made with RLRA and/or other SHS housing programs across the three counties? Is anything not clear?

we're at a place where there is so much visible homelessness and in general the public doesn't understand what it takes to build a program like this

Survey showed - people want a calendar - to know when we're going to meet and what topics we will be covering

Wanting to tell stories of real people - moving into units, having basic necessities like washer and dryer - excitement about seeing people get a fresh new start

Paying folks a livable wage (workforce). Offering a better level of pay, offering training.

wraparound services - requires coordination with behavioral health, substance use community-- complex systems that take time and coordination

Sharing values was meaningful - understanding what people were concerned about, why they decided to join the committee

I did not know the high level we would operate on. I was thinking we would talk more strategy

the world has gone through so much transition in the last two years. We need to find ways for systems to work together

talking to people on the street - a gentleman said he won't go into a shelter (traumatic experience). He thought it was a requirement but became housed when he knew it was not required

**How do we align systems?
Key topic**

How many people will be impacted by the program?

part of the process is getting people into housing...but also checking in to see if they're still housed (tracking outcomes)

Survey showed - people want to interact with providers, important not to overload the agenda, leaving time for questions, having in-person meetings

Some committee members like visuals - not always easy reading and absorbing large amounts of information

I really like the program - works with a few different pieces of the system (like landlords) and provides resources for people already housed, to stay housed

interesting to think about how we started...now, feels like we can start talking about what is working, or not working or why

Meeting facilitation has improved

Lives impacted vs. infrastructure built

addressing this at the regional level and also being able to coordinate across sectors - connections take time...things may not be moving along as fast as it could be, but it takes time to build out these systems

group agreements have been helpful to elevate quieter voices

a lot of pressure on staff - especially from the media

Arranging site visits - where are we on that? Important connection to the work. Hopefully do a site visit in the summer/fall...connecting to providers and listening to what they have to say.

the work is moving in the right direction

Room 3: Discussion Notes

and counting people in programs. Large concern on who is being housed. Reliance on general category of Pop A + B without break down of ethnic demographics does not help us understand whether the program is

are facing. In terms of outreach, what are we offering and what are we lacking. In terms of data collection, we need to be more granular, in Pop A who are BIPOC- what services do they need, what is lacking and

By having so much data- it could also serve as no data because there's so much to analyze and left to interpretation

Mental health was a priority in LIP, but no reports have talked about resources for Pop A and B. Mental health and addiction might have not been addressed.

Would be helpful to hear more from providers and stories about what progress and implementation looks like on the ground. Helpful way to fill in the numbers.

IDD Community - making sure those folks are being served. Understanding it is a brand new program.

BIPOC population that are not targeted. It's easier to house other people. We need to take on the hardest to serve people.

go for the easier. used higher water risk

Coordinated Housing System - where in the continuum are these dollars being used?

After reading the Quarter 2 reports, what questions arise for you about the housing programs mentioned by the counties (e.g. RLRA, permanent supportive housing, etc.)?

How are we ensuring that non profit being provided not only capacity, but TA and trust. They are essential for this program. Hoping that they are having opportunities to share what they need and that they are getting them. Equity pay.

dashboard on the website, objectives are not consistent with who we are trying to help. in order for this fund to demonstrate or struggle, we need to know something different than the metrics we show.

not clear what progress there is besides units. addressing barriers for BIPOC to be housed to achieve permanent housing.

Is it clear what progress is being made with RLRA and/or other SHS housing programs

of data can cover the capacity to use the data. This is what we want to know, how successful are the programs in serving pop A and B need the racial breakdown. Along with context.

Do you have questions housing or placement housing, v being housed, etc.?

this needs to be answer before the first two sticky notes

Asking for courageous discussion for what we have and what we don't have present today.

year end progress report- consistent progress, looking across race (ballot measure focused).

Need to know what the actual barriers are.

Focus on questions we want to answer to decide on metrics

overall need, and what is the overall outflow. What is the piece being addressed by this program. Need the context, % of coordinate access housing 2) tangible discussion about who is getting served visibly. Outreach is helping the

bipoc organizations are being invested in and that's a huge start of the win, but progress been made outside our windows.

Room 4: Discussion Notes

Need consistency in reports, across counties

Budgets: Timing issue with knowing progress and next year's budget cycle already complete before we get the annual reports. Understand priorities - how?

After reading the Quarter 2 reports, what questions arise for you about the housing programs mentioned by the counties (e.g. RLRA, permanent supportive housing, etc.)?

Is it clear what progress is being made with RLRA and/or other SHS housing programs across the three counties? Is anything not clear?

Do you have any questions about housing outcomes - placements into housing, who is being housed, etc.?

Data: Can we get to a dashboard given the current climate?

Politics: The ballot initiative. What do we do about this? People are so frustrated. How real is this threat? What will happen to the housing programs?

Well done on quick progress, particularly Clackamas

MultCo: How many placed in PSH?

Lots of appreciation for providers. Helpful for public to know more about what's really happening on the ground.

funds. They're owning the narrative/driving it. People so laser focused on people living outside. Need to make visible that we are moving people from living outside and into housing. A need to emphasize

Behavioral health: need to better understand challenges and barriers to housing and housing stability.

What happens when counties set goals and spend a lot less than they planned to meet them? Should goals be adjusted?

Annual report: Need stories. Need to communicate/show a visible change.

Annual reports will be a big focus. Good they're coming out before ballot measure

How can we make reports speak to this progress?

Important to tell comprehensive story, regardless of funding source

Note on Clack - COVID funds had a huge impact