

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee
Date/time: Monday, July 25, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Place: Zoom (Virtual)
Purpose: Presentation and group discussion of quarter 3 reports; Metro tax collection and disbursement update; report out from June workgroup meeting; and revisiting meeting frequency.

Member attendees

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

Absent members

Gabby Bates, Heather Brown, Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal, Armando Jimenez, City of Portland Commissioner Dan Ryan, Roserria Roberts

Elected delegates

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

Absent elected delegates

Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal, City of Portland Commissioner Dan Ryan

Metro

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

Welcome and introductions

Co-chair Kathy Wai (she/her) and Co-chair Susan Emmons (she/her), welcomed the committee to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda.

May meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Conflict of interest declaration

Carter MacNichol (he/him) is a board member at Transition Projects and they may receive Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funding.

Jenny Lee (she/her) works at Coalition of Communities of Color and their research team has entered into a partnership to do data analysis on community engagement with the Housing Authority of Clackamas County.

Dan Fowler (he/him) is on the Homeless Solutions Coalition of Clackamas County and they may at some point receive SHS funding.

Public Comment

No verbal public comment was made during the meeting.

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

Starting tomorrow, the deadline for receiving written comment that is sent to members ahead of the meeting will be adjusted to the Wednesday before the committee meeting by 4:00 p.m.



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Quarter 3 reports focused discussion: Racial equity

Co-chair Wai (she/her) introduced this agenda item and asked Nui Bezaire (she/her), Supportive Housing Services Program Manager, Metro, to provide a regional overview of quarters one to three and progress based on the progress reports received from the counties.

Details for this portion of the meeting can be found in the final meeting record. Minutes will include portions of the presentation, discussion and questions not found in the slide deck. A summary of County and Metro staff responses to member questions are italicized.

Co-chair Emmons (she/her) asked the counties to respond to the following questions: Based on third quarter progress reports and now having finished the fiscal year, how are you doing in terms of prioritizing BIPOC individuals as stated in your local implementation plan (LIP) goals, what are the lessons learned? How will you apply what you've learned in the second year of SHS funding?

- *Jes Larson (she/her), SHS Program Manager, and Jessi Adams, Capacity Programs Manager, Washington County- They have prioritized their referral program, launching it with Aloha Inn and using culturally specific providers to provide half of the referrals for that building, the other half came through Community Connect. They look forward to seeing how it works for permanent supportive housing programming. The data is young for this new programming, but they are hopeful and will continue evaluating their programs.*
- *Vahid Brown (he/him), Supportive Housing Services Program Manager, Housing Authority of Clackamas County- People using motel shelter program pre-SHS funding were prioritized for their first round of housing navigation and case management programs. That was a less diverse group in comparison to the system overall and so their first couple quarters show people served as less diverse and more White. As they launched new programs, modified referral and placement processes, that proportion is adjusting. Initially they had around 18% BIPOC in their SHS programs which has moved up to 23% and is continuing to trend upward. They have a significant increase in contracts with culturally specific providers in Clackamas County due to their first-year procurements. They're utilizing participant choice for allowing program participants to rank the organizations they'd like to work with from most to least—this was piloted and went well so it will continue through other programming as well.*
- *Yesenia Delgado (she/her), Supportive Housing Services Manager, and Shannon Singleton, Interim Director of the Joint Office of Homeless Services- Based on feedback from their providers, the County provided capacity building grants in the first year of implementation. Their Coordinated Access System expanded to hire more culturally specific navigators and outreach workers. They're currently working with local and national consultants to review their coordinated access system to make it more equitable in their delivery. This year, members will hear more of an update on a bridge housing model they're working on. In the new fiscal year, they will launch a new SHS advisory committee solely focused on SHS to resource folks with lived experience and getting their continued expertise throughout the planning processes.*

Co-chair Wai moved the group into a Q&A. Nui started with questions that came through the chat.

Jahed Sukhun asked if immigrants and refugees are included in their services and statistics and whether they are tracked separately?

- *Shannon said that folks in the immigrant and refugee community are included and able to access services. They are counted through their racial identity but they don't track immigration status. There are pitfalls in the system around reporting since some data is provided to the Federal government while others are local. Not something Multnomah County would say yes to tracking right away.*

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Ellen Johnson asked if the counties are looking at data disaggregated by program type?

- *Vahid and Jes both said yes.*

Dr. Mandrill Taylor commented that in addition to tracking case management utilization with SHS participants, he would like to see them tracking actual mental health service utilization (for those identified participants) to better identify their barriers to care. Things like, who's getting screened and is it leading to a connection to the services? Is the screening leading to people being connected to services?

Ellen asked whether based on their experience this past year, if there is a greater demand for BIPOC adults without children for housing compared to BIPOC people with children? Is there a misalignment for housing if most housing is for families and most homeless folks are single adults?

- *Shannon said that there is a statewide conversation happening about this and that Oregon doesn't do a great job providing housing for communities of color in response to what they ask for. The State is looking at getting investment in co-op housing. For example, the African immigrant community has been asking for homeownership because they could invite their homeless community members in to live with them while they're working on next steps for their own housing. Yes, there's analysis locally but it's a statewide issue around housing investments.*

Jahed asked what the agencies being contracted with receive for admin fees and how that works?

- *Yesenia said that they have been hearing from culturally specific providers about administrative fees and asking for more feedback. She said at Multnomah County it's complicated—it depends on the organization because not all needs are the same from organization to organization.*

Felicita Montebianco asked if there will be future county reports that include information on staff retention, staff salaries, etc.?

- *Nui said that there are regional reporting metrics, including sharing the gap between the highest and lowest paid staff person, in the annual report.*

Seth Lyon asked if moving forward with this and developing reports, can they see what SHS is paying for versus what is already in the system? He stressed that they want to demonstrate how SHS funds specifically are impacting the systems.

Additionally, Seth said it was great to see more outreach services added since coordinated access creates barriers for a lot of communities. Outreach seems like a great way to do that, but how are counties deciding where to prioritize it?

- *Shannon said that Multnomah County has navigation work happening throughout their system. They have outreach that is geographically based and happening all the time. Between outreach and enforcement-based outreach, outreach is the way to go. They're also doing something called "inreach" by going into other spaces to meet people.*

Co-chair Wai said that Asian and Asian Americans have been targeted by hate crimes disproportionately and it has grown 300% since the start of the pandemic according to OPB news published statistics posted on the date of this committee meeting. There could be reasons Asian and Asian American communities aren't coming forward for services given statistics like this and it's important to continue talking about systems of oppression that are interconnected. It's not just culturally specific organizations that have to do all this work, it's up to everyone. What are counties

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doing beyond contracting and procurement, any bias training for staff on racism and breaking down systems of oppression?

- *Jes said that yes there is across all three counties. All staff are trained in anti-racist practice and when expanding programs they come together for a series of trainings over a week or two.*
- *Shannon agreed with Jes and for Multnomah County they also have some new equity folks being hired. They want to operationalize equity expectations.*
- *Vahid agrees with all. He added that there is technical assistance for equity and engagement work. Clackamas County is also working with Unite Oregon and Coalition of Communities of Color to engage with their continuum of care and close gaps so they can reach all communities.*

Break 11:07-11:17

Metro tax collection financial update

Rachael Lembo (she/her), Finance Manager, Planning Development and Research Department, Metro, joined the meeting to share the first closing numbers. They collected just shy of 240 million dollars and dispersed just short of 210 million. Some of the funds were retained for Metro.

There were some cost savings at the City of Portland, including some hires that were unable to take place. They don't expect it to happen every year but it is an advantage this fiscal year. They'll be trying to find the right amount of staff over the next couple of years for balance. The City is very aware of keeping costs down.

Ellen noticed that the Washington County report had a surplus to spend in Q4- do they anticipate having a surplus? How do we ensure money is spent before end of year or in next year? Same question for Clackamas County.

- *Rachael said that with the low amounts received in much of the fiscal year through taxes and then the huge amount that came in the last quarter, there wasn't time to spend it all. Because they couldn't get all money spent in last quarter, funds will roll over into the new fiscal year. Metro is asking them about their carryover funding and how they're adjusting budgets to account for it. Due to this being a startup year with a new tax, Metro doesn't expect tax collection to look this way in years going forward where there is such a drastic increase in funding received in the final quarter.*

Ellen asked about where the IGA asks for an independent audit and Metro audit?

- *Rachael said that Metro gets a financial audit every year and usually happens in the fall and gets returned by end of calendar year typically. Internal auditor has housing on his list for FY23.*

Jahed asked what counties are doing for long-term fixes to issues? Mental health, rent control, youth programs, etc.

- *Nui said that they can dive deeper into investments in the September meeting with the counties.*

Staff response to previously received public comment

Co-chair Emmons said that they received a response from Metro staff to Tom Cusack's public comment in the packet and asked if anyone had questions.

Ellen asked about Tom Cusack's response to Metro's response received before the meeting. The chart in comment shows graphically that payment standards set is excessive for the population

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accessing housing. The oversight committee has to look at fiscal responsibility of programs. She said that they shouldn't balance simplicity and ease of use with efficiency for housing more people. Are we overpaying subsidized housing providers? Would like committee to discuss. Ellen says Metro's response isn't appropriate and would like committee to discuss it in the future.

Dan asked hypothetically whether the RLRA policy is about ease or access for the most number of people? There's no pride of authorship, don't want anyone to be defensive about what has already been created. Tom's comment isn't against anyone or being intrusive. Dan wants honest open response that serves the homeless the best.

Co-chair Emmons suggests co-chairs make a plan to respond to additional public comment.

Committee business: Meeting frequency

Co-chair Wai presented that they would like to discuss meeting schedule through calendar year 2022. Some members at June workgroup said they may want to meet monthly instead of every other month. The next meeting is in September and there will not be one in August. If the group decides to go monthly it would be September, October, early December. This would mean workgroup meetings couldn't take place as earlier discussed.

Jahed would like to meet monthly.

Ellen would like a short meeting in August in regard to rent level issue and asked them to consider a short meeting followed by a longer monthly meeting.

Dr. Taylor agreed with Jahed.

Co-chairs summarized that they'll consider a short August meeting for one topic and then have September, October, and December meetings. The committee will talk about the meeting frequency in 2023 later on.

Jahed asked if HUD can talk to the committee.

Staff will follow-up in response to these suggestions.

Next steps

Counties to come with budgets and work plans in September.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ash Elverfeld, Housing Program Assistant