

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2024
Time: 4:00 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 a progress report on the employee recruitment and retention goal and discuss.

Member attendees

Eboni Brown (she/her), Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Nicole Larson (she/her), Cristina Palacios (she/her), Co-chair Steve Rudman (he/him), Zoi Coppiano (she/her), Monta Knudson (he/him), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Mindy Stadlander (she/her), Yvette Marie Hernandez (she/her)

Elected delegates

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington (she/her), Metro Councilor Christine Lewis (she/her), Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson (she/her)

Absent delegates

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith (she/her)

County staff representatives

Clackamas County – Vahid Brown (he/him); Multnomah County – Breanna Flores (she/they), Christina Castaño (she/her), Kanoe Egleston (she/her), Washington County – Nicole Stingh (she/her)

Metro

Valeria McWilliams (she/her), Ruth Adkins (she/her), Melia Deters (she/her), Michael Garcia (he/him)

Kearns & West Facilitators

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

Note: The meeting was recorded via Zoom; therefore, this meeting summary will remain at a high-level overview. Please review the recording and archived meeting packet for details and presentation slides.

Welcome and Introductions

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West (K&W), introduced himself and welcomed the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) to the meeting, facilitated introductions, and reviewed the agenda and objectives.

Co-chairs Mercedes Elizalde and Steve Rudman provided opening remarks.

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The TCPB approved the May Meeting Summary.

Public Comment

Phillip Kennedy-Wong, Nonprofit Association of Oregon (NAO), provided public comment.

Keith Wilson, Shelter Now, provided public comment.

Caleb Coder, Flex PDX, provided public comment.

Co-chair Steve Rudman asked if Flex PDX was aware of the employee recruitment and retention work the TCPB was doing and if they had approached the three counties directly.

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, replied that Metro can follow up offline.

Conflict of Interest

Cristina Palacios declared a conflict of interest as Housing Oregon has applied to be a contractor with Metro and would receive SHS funding.

Yvette Hernandez noted that she works for Home Forward which receives SHS funding, but she participates on the TCPB as a community member.

Zoi Coppiano declared a conflict of interest as Community Action receives SHS funding.

Eboni Brown declared a conflict of interest as Greater Good Northwest receives SHS funding.

Sahaan McKelvey declared a conflict of interest as Self Enhancement Inc. receives SHS funding.

Staff Updates

Yesenia Delgado, Metro, shared a quarterly update on the SHS Oversight Committee (Committee). She highlighted that the Committee provided oversight to Multnomah County's Corrective Action Plan, received Quarter Two presentations from the counties, and reviewed and approved the TCPB's Landlord Recruitment Plan. She reflected there were lessons learned on the plan approval process, and that upcoming work for the Committee includes reviewing work plans and budgets.

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde asked if the Committee would revisit the draft work plans to see what changed from the drafts to the final versions.

Yesenia Delgado, Metro, replied that the Committee receives the final work plans, but it is not a formal process.

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, shared that Melia Deters and Giovanni Bautista have been promoted within Metro and updates on the recruitment process for the vacant TCPB seats will be shared via email.

Nicole Stingh, Washington County, shared that the county has opened new regional centers and KOIN recently aired a story about Washington County work systems and work on employee recruitment and retention.

Breanna Flores, Multnomah County, shared that the county's budget was approved and will leverage Continuum of Care funds to match SHS funds, the Joint Office of Homeless Services convened a provider conference, and its housing response action plan was released.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, shared that the Housing and Community Development Division has a new director, Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) opened the first culturally

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specific family center in the region, and [a video](#) on the county's coordinated access housing program has been released.

Cristina Palacios chatted that the [Housing Oregon Conference](#) is now open for registration.

Employee Recruitment and Retention Progress Report Part 1

Ruth Adkins, Metro, reviewed the goal language and recommendations and noted any remaining questions from the presentation will be addressed in Part 2 during the July meeting. She shared that Part 1 is to level set and share regional context.

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, thanked those who gave public comment and reflected that no other committee has solved this issue and that the work should be sustainable and last beyond the SHS measure.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, shared that Homebase completed a local and national scan, including reviewing reports and convening interviews and discussion groups to identify effective strategies and challenges to improve employee recruitment and retention. She noted that living wage is a key part of the work and reviewed the living wage calculation approaches based on the Housing Fair Market Rate (FMR).

Cristina Palacios asked how other benefits and amenities, like working from home, are being considered.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, replied that many factors go into working conditions that may impact recruitment and retention, but the presentation is primarily focused on wages.

Sahaan McKelvey noted that most direct service staff have at least one child, and it might be more appropriate to include the two-bedroom market rate to calculate a living wage.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, replied that the one-bedroom calculation was an example and that a discussion on the target would be needed.

Nicole Larson asked if the \$1,776 per one-bedroom was an actual calculation from the tri-county area.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, confirmed it was the federally published number for 2024 FMR.

Eboni Brown noted that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) calculation includes having children and encouraged looking at the differences between MIT and FMR calculations.

Sahaan McKelvey shared his preference for the example to include having one child as that is more realistic. He noted it would be about \$85,000 a year for a living wage with one child.

Eboni Brown stated MIT's calculation is \$47 per hour to have one child.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, shared that the national scan found four national studies on employee recruitment and retention and some examples in King County that tried to implement solutions on the topic. She noted that a living wage is a crucial need nationally, and shared challenges that arose out of national interviews, including the cost reimbursement model.

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde asked if there was demographic data on who is working in the field.

Maddie Nation, Homebase, replied they can follow up with that information.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, shared that the local scan found that pay is a large concern. She detailed emerging strategies providers are using including using reserve funds to raise wages, and shared some ideas counties are piloting, including partial advances on contract awards. She noted key

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challenges include cash flow concerns, wage parity and compression, and workloads. She stated that overall, a regional approach and system changes are needed to reach a living wage.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked if there was a preference for non-line-item-based contracts and if the underlying cause of line-item budgets was Metro's requirement of detailed reports from counties.

Eboni Brown stated that line-item budgets are not necessarily required by Metro because some Metro contracts do not require line-item receipts, while others require substantive amounts.

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, replied that Racheal Lembo would need to address that question.

Co-chair Steve Rudman hoped Metro was not causing this problem and reflected that in the 1990s providers would receive funds three months in advance, and asked why that is not happening now.

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde stated that in the July meeting, counties will be presenting and be able to address these questions. She asked for July's presentation to include what Metro requires and what each county requires.

Monta Knudson asked if there was a cost analysis done to see which solutions to challenges would be easier to address.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, replied that cash flow was the biggest concern that would have the most impact, but was not sure if it was the costliest. She shared that they heard that wage parity and compression seemed like an easier fix and that workloads were about discussing what is reasonable between all parties.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington asked the TCPB to think about how to get input from county staff on what they think the underlying causes are and to think about what the message would be to the public and Metro Council about the nature of the problems and solutions. She emphasized the importance of staying in a solution space.

Mindy Stadtlander asked for more information on slide 38 about a proposed solution to adopt a living wage standard.

Valeria McWilliams, Metro, replied that would be addressed in July's presentation.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, replied that was a quote from the NAO report which listed suggested solutions.

Ruth Adkins, Metro, added that Metro has met with NAO, and will brief Homebase. She shared that Homebase would develop a roadmap of where the region could go as a next step later this year.

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde asked for the July presentation to include when providers are asked to provide updated costs to jurisdictions and share counties' invoice approval processes and payment models.

Sahaan McKelvey asked for the TCPB to consider that a 5% cost of living adjustment does not work when inflation is at 8%.

Co-chair Steve Rudman asked for the July presentation to include the reasoning behind why there are or are not cash advances for providers.

Ruth Adkins, Metro, stated that all answers may not be received in July, but Metro may provide a frequently asked questions document on the issue.

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Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, shared that Metro will accept any additional questions through the post-meeting survey.

Closing and Next Steps

Mercedes Elizalde provided closing remarks and shared that there is some work on this topic at the state level. She emphasized the need to be clear on the values driving the work.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, adjourned the meeting and noted next steps include:

- TCPB to meet Wednesday, July 10th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.
- Metro to confirm if Flex PDX was aware of the TCPB's work and if they have approached the three counties directly.
- Metro to share updates on the recruitment process for the vacant TCPB seats via email.
- Homebase to share demographic information on who is working in the provider space.
- Committee members to share any remaining questions with Metro.
- July's meeting packet and information to include:
 - The underlying cause of line-item budgets.
 - Each jurisdiction's payment models and requirements.
 - When providers are asked to provide updated costs to jurisdictions.
 - Each jurisdiction's invoice approval process.
 - Why or why not cash advances can be given to providers.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.