



Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, September 11, 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 briefing on and discuss the Regional Strategy Investment Fund (RIF).

Member attendees

Eboni Brown (she/her), Zoi Coppiano (she/her), Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Yoni Kahn (he/him), Nicole Larson (she/her), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Cameran Murphy (they/them), Cristina Palacios (she/her), Co-chair Steve Rudman (he/him), Mindy Stadlander (she/her)

Absent members

Yvette Marie Hernandez (she/her), Monta Knudson (he/him)

Elected delegates

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

Absent delegates

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington (she/her), Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith (she/her)

County staff representatives

Clackamas County – Lauren Decker (she/her), Multnomah County – Christina Castaño (she/her) and Breanna Flores (she/her), Washington County – Nicole Stingh (she/her)

Metro

Ruth Adkins (she/her), Abby Ahern (she/her), Giovanni Bautista (he/him), Liam Frost (he/him), Michael Garcia (he/him), Rachael Lembo (she/her), Lo Miranda (they/them), Patricia Rojas (she/her)

Kearns & West Facilitators

Madeline Kane (she/her), Colin Baker (he/him)

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.

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

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

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde provided opening remarks.

The TCPB approved the August Meeting Summary.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

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.

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

Yoni Kahn is employed by Northwest Pilot Project, which receives SHS funding from Multnomah County. He noted that he serves on the TCPB to share the perspective of a provider, but that he does not represent the organization that employs him.

Sahaan McKelvey shared that he works at Self Enhancement Inc (SEI) which receives SHS funds.

Cameran declared that they work at Boys and Girls Aid, which receives SHS funds.

Mercedes Elizalde shared that her employer Latino Network, receives SHS funds, but clarified that neither her salary nor the team she leads at the organization are paid with SHS funds.

Staff Updates

Liam Frost, Metro, provided updates on the staffing of the Metro team that supports the TCPB, including that Valeria McWilliams is on leave, and Abby Ahern and Giovanni Bautista have stepped in to support.

Yoni Kahn and Cameran Murphy introduced themselves as new members of the TCPB.

Liam noted that Metro is finalizing the COO recommendation memo to share with Metro Council.

Regional Investment Fund Presentation

Liam provided an update on the Regional Investment Fund (RIF), including background and context for the requirements of the RIF, understandings between Metro and Counties about usage of RIF funds, the focuses of Supportive Housing Services (SHS) in Years 1 and 2, and County RIF investment areas for Years 1 through 3. He noted that heading into the fall and winter, TCPB will be reviewing and possibly approving RIF investments related to TCPB-approved goals, such as coordinated entry implementation.

Rachael Lembo, Metro, presented an update on the FY25 financials for the RIF. Liam then presented a tentative FY25 work plan for each regional goal.

TCPB members and elected delegates had the following questions:

- **TCPB member question:** On the RIF Work Plan slide, what does “ongoing” mean?

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

- **Metro response:** After a regional goal plan is approved, “ongoing” indicates that plan implementation and monitoring work will be occurring.
- **TCPB elected delegate question:** The TCPB has been asked to review an implementation plan separate from the plan’s budget. Is Metro assuming that budgets are baked into plans going forward or will there be separate budget votes? I am referring to the landlord recruitment and retention plan.
 - **Metro response:** That plan had a budget attached to it, and the vote on that plan was more a function of that particular plan rather than the process the TCPB aspires to.

Nicole Stingh, Washington County, shared examples of the ways Washington County has spent RIF funding, including staff creating implementation plans for the regional landlord recruitment and retention goal, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) regional coordination, a workforce pilot program, and the regional risk mitigation program.

Cristina Castano, Multnomah County, reminded the TCPB that counties were granted permission to use RIF funds before implementation plans were approved, which allowed the Counties to address urgent needs and set the stage for longer-term successful outcomes. She provided examples of RIF spending in Multnomah County, including organizational health grants (specifically with the United Way), identification and addressing of opportunities for systems change, and regional alignment work (e.g. the landlord recruitment and retention programs, risk mitigation, and HIMS regional alignment), healthcare systems alignment.

Lauren Decker, Clackamas County, shared how Clackamas County has used RIF funding, including healthcare and housing systems alignment and a case conferencing pilot program, housing support for individuals recovering from illness or injury, technical assistance and housing plan development to ensure individuals stay housed.

TCPB members and elected delegates had the following questions and comments:

- **TCPB member question:** Of the \$25.5 million in the FY25 budget allocated to TCPB goals and plans in development, how much money is allocated to each county?
 - **Metro response:** For Clackamas County, it is \$7.9 million; for Multnomah County, it is \$12.8 million; and for Washington County, it is \$4.9 million.
- **TCPB elected delegate question:** When discussing goal and non-goal related expenditures, what are considered non-goal related expenditures?
 - **Metro response:** That terminology is meant to comprehensively cover that this body covers all RIF-related expenditures. So far, TCPB has only considered goal areas, but in the future, there could potentially be other investments that are not expressly part of a goal that come to this body for review and approval. It might be very unlikely to happen soon, but this language is meant to be exhaustive in capturing these potential future investments.
- **TCPB member question:** What is the funding breakdown for each county for FY25?
 - **Metro response:** For coordinated entry, Clackamas and Washington Counties have approximately \$0.5 million budgeted. For healthcare system alignment, Clackamas County has \$0.8 million, Multnomah County has \$0.4 million, and Washington County has approximately \$0.7 million. For training, Clackamas County has \$0.2 million, Washington County has \$1 million. For technical assistance, Clackamas County has \$6.3 million, and Washington County has \$2.4 million. For employee recruitment and retention, Clackamas County has \$0.2 million, Multnomah County has \$10.3 million, and Washington County has \$0.4 million. And for HMIS, Multnomah County has \$2 million.

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

- **TCPB member question:** How much of the funds planned for this year can support implementation plans versus and how much of the funds are separate and would need new funds to implement? For example, with a plan for coordinated entry coming in October, how much of the approximately \$0.5 million to \$1 million that each County has appropriated will the TCPB see in that plan? I ask because I want to know to what degree plans will be underfunded or delay the implementation of plans because of not enough funding.
 - **Washington County response:** The answer might vary goal to goal or county to county. There are hard budgeted expenditures, like staffing, but those would be included in the plan. Then there are other items that could be shifted to align with regional efforts, e.g. technical assistance. I do not foresee underfunding or delayed implementation as a risk.
 - **Metro response:** Other TCPB members have asked similar questions over the years. When Metro and County staff come to the TCPB with proposed investment strategies, this body will ask: “Is this enough funding? Is this at the right scale? If not, how should we rearrange budgets and what does that mean in terms of timing?”
 - **Multnomah County response:** It is difficult to say at this point, but for example with coordinated entry, the County is doing its best to align RIF funds with the implementation plan that will be shared with this body soon. We believe RIF funds are aligned with approved implementation plans, so it should not be a challenge to align future implementation plans.
 - **Clackamas County response:** The County does not have committed RIF funds for coordinated entry. The committed budget is only for healthcare system alignment and regional landlord recruitment and retention.
- **TCPB member question:** What can members of the TCPB do to support this work?
 - **Multnomah County response:** We welcome flexibility to align our efforts and connect the dots. Being flexible is part of creating implementation plans. Many parts of these plans require thinking outside the box to address our housing and homelessness challenges.
 - **Washington County response:** We would appreciate your thinking about how implementation plans can allow for learning along the way and your understanding that our work together might evolve over time.
 - **Metro response:** It would be helpful for this body to help the Counties determine which programs are scalable and where ideas can be aligned, as they are testing and innovating.
- **TCPB member comment:** In future presentations about budgets, please provide more detail on the slides. This will allow TCPB members to be more supportive.
 - **Metro response:** We have a more detailed budget that we can share.
- **TCPB member question:** Could we get clarification about the overall budgeting process? I would appreciate clarity about the funds spent from the RIF versus funds spent from Counties. How can the TCPB contribute to the process of plan development, rather than simply voting on a single plan without feedback? How does the handoff happen now that TCPB is responsible for the RIF? There seems to be a large variance in RIF funds between Counties. Why is there such a large discrepancy and why does the regional approach allow for this? I want to make sure the TCPB can contribute in a meaningful way to ensure the RIF is allocated to all of the goals well when they are presented to us one at a time.
 - **Metro response:** To reiterate a point made earlier, Counties had leeway to invest RIF funds as they choose in regional strategies until the TCPB approved a plan, which happened for the first time this March. Going forward, the TCPB will need to approve all proposed investments. One to one-and-a-half years ago, this body

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

agreed to identify goal areas, which took longer than anticipated, and that process was informed by the members of this body. Then the members asked Metro and the Counties to develop plans to effectuate those goal areas. Next month, e.g., the TCPB will be asked to review and approve a plan on coordinated entry. This body can decide to approve, reject, or request improvements or more information about it, depending on if the members think that the proposed plan accurately reflects the goal that was set. Metro staff is happy to talk with any member about process outside of this meeting.

- **Washington County response:** Regarding variances in budget allocations by county, there are times when one county takes the lead on plan development and/or piloting for all three counties.
- **TCPB member comment:** Requests for flexibility make sense, but high-income people who pay the highest share of these taxes are starting to want to see results. Flexibility and innovation can be seen as wasting taxpayer money on initiatives that do not work. I know that funding discrepancies between the counties are often because one county takes the lead and/or pilots a program for all three counties. I would like to see more details on these leading/piloting efforts because we need to start showing what is working and what is not in response to pushback, we are starting to get against the tax that funds these programs.
- **TCPB member comment:** It is important that we do not consider each of these goals as individual expenditures, and additional detail will allow the members of the TCPB to elevate the successes and challenges of the programs that the RIF funds. We also need to keep in mind that this work involves moving people through large, complex systems, so feedback from service providers will be crucial to ensure we are meeting our goals. I hope to build off of existing investments to center the journeys of clients through these systems.
- **TCPB member question:** This question is specific to Multnomah County's United Way grant. My understanding is that this grant was to fill gaps around wage complications and capacity needs. Instead of doing that through increases in individual contracts, this grant was meant to be flexible to address that issue. Will it eventually translate into wages in those contracts so that the \$10 million will no longer be paid for by the RIF? What is the plan for the future of that grant?
 - **Multnomah County response:** The plan is to renew that process with the United Way. This initiative supported 3,500 individuals already employed in housing and homelessness services. Our intention is to continue to support employment retention and reducing position vacancy rates. The hope is to continue that in this fiscal year. The \$10 million in FY24 was to meet an urgent need for providers before we had the capacity to commit to year-over-year funding. The United Way grant was intended to get more money out the door and in providers' hands quickly to address urgent employment challenges. In FY25, Multnomah County is exploring using the RIF to be in line with the employee recruitment and retention goal. We are trying to figure out how to continue to get money to providers to solve for recruitment, vacancies, and retention. We want to extend that investment this year because you cannot effectively target the issue of employee recruitment and retention with a one-time grant.
- **TCPB elected delegate comment:** The United Way grant was approved by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners last fall with some unanticipated funding from the SHS measure. The intention was to respond quickly to providers who had expressed challenges with staff, hiring, and retention in the most flexible way possible. It was viewed as a way to meet the needs of providers in the short term while looking at the long-term plan. The long-

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

term goal is to get providers sufficiently staffed to be able to implement programming so that we can start to hold providers more accountable with outcomes.

- **TCPB member question:** How ongoing will the United Way grant be? Do you anticipate it being a renewal for this fiscal year only or to be an ongoing annual allocation of the RIF?
 - **Multnomah County response:** That will be a topic we would want to discuss with the TCPB beyond FY25.
- **TCPB member comment:** We should continue to discuss the issues with RIF funding and not treat the county RIF budgets as set in stone. This is only 5% of counties' funds. The RIF is for systems development, alignment, efficiency, and effective region-wide policy.
- **TCPB member comment:** With coordinated entry coming before the TCPB in October, I would appreciate Metro sharing a higher level of detail that shows the amount of funding comes from the RIF, the percent of each county's RIF funding that will be allocated to coordinated entry, and the percent of RIF funds that are set aside for future implementation plans.
- **TCPB elected delegate comment:** As budgets for implementation plans come before us, we have the power to add or subtract as we see regional need. And as counties are innovating to develop and pilot programs, this body may have to tell them that will need to undo some things that they have been doing in the past because they are not in the best interests of our region, including things that might be required by the Federal Government. We may want to consider asking as a process question, "In addition to doing more and creating more services, are there things that we should undo to improve services regionwide?" We should be comfortable with undoing processes that no longer serve our region well.
- **TCPB member comment:** I agree. We should not be perpetuating and advancing racist infrastructure and policies that have been baked into Federal processes.
- **TCPB member comment:** I would like to see the equity goals and how they are met and/or not met.
- **Metro question:** Could Multnomah County clarify if it spent RIF funds on the United Way grant in last fiscal year or this fiscal year?
 - **Multnomah County response:** For the last fiscal year, the County did not use RIF funds for the organizational health grants, but this year the County is proposing using the same dollar amount in RIF funds.
- **TCPB member comment:** In thinking about goal versus non-goal budget items, the goals will be clearly expressed in implementation plans but that might not exhaust all funds. Do counties anticipate non-goal related expenses, knowing that all implementation plans will likely not be ready for review and approval this fiscal year?
 - **Washington County response:** We are starting the budget process now. There will likely be some ongoing costs, e.g. staffing and risk mitigation, and they would be in alignment with the conversations that have been had about implementation plans.
 - **Multnomah County response:** We have not planned to budget anything outside of RIF-related costs, but if we were then we would assume that it is different than what we would use for SHS funding.
 - **Clackamas County response:** The only costs we are planning for are ongoing costs, e.g. personnel costs for health and housing and risk mitigation, which is consistent with what we have been reporting to Metro.
- **TCPB member comment:** There needs to be a presentation about the RIF that aligns with the counties' budget processes, so the TCPB can see where the counties are earmarking funds for FY26 that are not connected to any implementation plan.

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

- **Metro response:** The counties' budgeting process for the next fiscal year starts in October, which aligns for this request. It also sounds like this request is for a public presentation, which is possible but complicated, given that at least in Multnomah County, the Chair proposes a budget that the Board then has to approve. We can commit to it, though.
- **TCPB member comment:** The United Way program should not be funded by the RIF.

Closing and Next Steps

Co-Chair Mercedes Elizalde shared closing remarks and reflections on the work of TCPB.

Next steps

- Metro staff to share a more detailed FY25 RIF budget to TCPB members.
- Metro staff to provide additional information about the budget process to TCPB members (as requested).
- Metro to consider a standard question in the implementation plan review process about what should be undone.
- Metro to prepare a presentation on RIF funding in alignment with county budgeting.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 5:31 p.m.