

Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025
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 discuss and vote on the Technical Assistance Regional Implementation Plan.

Member attendees

Co-chair Mercedes Elizalde (she/her), Yoni Kahn (he/him), Nicole Larson (she/her), Yvette Marie Hernandez (she/her), Cameran Murphy (they/them), Cristina Palacios (she/her), Co-chair Steve Rudman (he/him), Mindy Stadlander (she/her), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him), Monta Knudson (he/him)

Absent members

Eboni Brown (she/her), Zoi Coppiano (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 – Lauren Decker (she/her), Multnomah County – Cristina Castaño (she/her), Washington County – Nicole Stingham (she/her)

Metro staff

Michael Garcia (he/him), Abby Ahern (she/her), Nui Bezaire (she/her), Cole Merkel (he/him), Liam Frost (he/him), Daisy Nguyen (she/her), Finn Budd (they/them)

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.

Summary of Meeting Decisions

- The Committee approved the January 8, 2025 meeting summary.
- The Committee approved the Technical Assistance Implementation Plan.

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Welcome and Introductions

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, introduced himself, facilitated introductions, and reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives.

Co-chairs Mercedes Elizalde provided opening remarks and reflected on how the TCPB will need to make strategic choices regarding SHS funding discussions.

Cameran Murphy asked what the process is if an action captured in the meeting summary has not been followed up.

Ben replied that if there is an edit to the meeting summary, a member is to share that edit before summary approval. He noted that if there is an action item that was accurately captured in the summary but not followed up on, a member should note that for the record after approval.

Decision: Co-chair Elizalde, Yoni Kahn, Nicole Larson, Cameran Murphy, Cristina Palacios, Co-chair Steve Rudman, Monta Knudson, Metro Councilor Christine Lewis, and Sahaan McKelvey approved the January 8, 2025 meeting summary. There were no abstentions or rejections.

Cameran shared that an incomplete action item from the January 8, 2025 meeting summary was for Jake Kirsch from Housing Development Center (HDC) to follow up with more information regarding the Risk Mitigation Program.

Cristina Castaño, Multnomah County, replied that county staff are meeting with HDC to share that information with the latest Risk Mitigation Fund report in the March meeting packet.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Conflict of Interest

Cristina Palacios declared a conflict of interest as Housing Oregon is on Metro's contractor list and could potentially receive future Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funding.

Cameran declared a conflict of interest as Boys and Girls Aid receives SHS funding.

Yoni Kahn declared a conflict of interest as the Northwest Pilot Project receives SHS funding. He noted that he serves on the TCPB to share provider perspectives and does not represent his employer.

Sahaan McKelvey declared a conflict of interest as Self Enhancement Inc (SEI) receives SHS funds. He noted that SHS does not fund his position and that he serves on the TCPB to share provider perspectives.

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

Monta Knudson declared a conflict of interest as JOIN receives SHS funding.

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Technical Assistance Implementation Plan

Presentation

Cole Merkel, Metro, reminded the TCPB that technical assistance and training are two separate goals, and this implementation plan is focused on technical assistance. He noted that the training implementation plan is scheduled to be shared in April.

Cole reviewed the TCPB technical assistance (TA) goal and recommendation language and highlighted the importance of having consistent TA practices across the region and providing menus of TA options for providers to choose from. He shared that the implementation plan included racial equity considerations that center culturally specific providers, noting that “best practices” are often created through a dominant culture lens.

Cole shared that the TA implementation plan also considers understanding the unique TA needs of providers in each county and ensuring jurisdictions are not duplicating TA offerings. He noted that the TA implementation plan accounts for two-way learning between providers and jurisdictions and that the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) demonstration project will help define roles and responsibilities for TA between Metro and the counties.

Lauren Decker, Clackamas County, shared that the county is working with four TA providers that SHS providers can access. She noted that four SHS providers, two of which are culturally specific, have opted into the program and have learned about funding sources, contracting requirements, and what additional roles would better support their organizations.

Cristina C., Multnomah County, shared that the county provides TA and support for providers, including assistance for contract renewal and procurement support. She noted that the county partnered with United Way to provide \$10 million in capacity-building grants to providers to support workforce recruitment and retention.

Nicole Stingham, Washington County, shared that the county provided grants for organizational assessments, which identified needs around human resources, business services, strategic planning, and policies and procedures. She shared that phase two of the TA program will support the implementation of the capacity-building strategies identified in the assessment.

Cole summarized that each county is consistently leveraging culturally specific provider expertise and creating access to TA. He noted that the counties have different contracting approaches and different TA needs per region. He reviewed Metro’s Regional Capacity Team’s goals, noting current priorities are TA and training, and shared that the team has developed the first tri-county shared pool of consultants.

Nui Bezaire, Metro, reviewed Metro’s Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) TA demonstration and research project’s goals to determine what PSH service standards of practice look like. She shared that the project would support PSH and TA by prioritizing learnings from culturally specific organizations to develop service delivery standards and inform TA programming.

Daisy Nguyen, Metro, reviewed the racial equity considerations for the project. She shared that Metro asked 200 service providers to complete a PSH survey, which received 19 responses. The survey asked what providers their TA needs are, with the top two results being staffing and programming, process, and policies.

Daisy reviewed the TA implementation plan timeline from January to September 2025 and noted that the budget is coming from Metro’s administrative funds. She reviewed the implementation plan’s metrics, goals, and results, including pairing three culturally specific providers and one dominant culture provider with consultants, with representation from each county.

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Clarifying Questions & Answers

- **Question, Yoni:** Will there be another pilot in six months once this one is complete? Does behavioral health play a role in PSH? What is the plan after the discovery phase for the results to be integrated into county systems or Metro's role?
 - **Metro response, Cole:** What comes next is still to be determined. There is potential for the results to be applied to property management, but the results will influence Metro's policy work for PSH.
 - **Metro response, Nui:** This pilot is less prescriptive and more about learning how services are being provided. Any behavioral health learnings will be taken to the next stage of TA, which is still to be determined. The learnings from the discovery phase could lead us to overhaul best practices or could be about integrating certain items.
- **Question, Cameran:** What does culturally specific provider mean? Does the definition include age-specific groups?
 - **Metro response, Daisy:** The project focuses on centering racial equity. The definition describes culturally focused organizations, a majority of their clients are communities of color, and the organization staff, leadership, and board reflect the communities they serve.
 - **Metro response, Cole:** One spot in the project will be reserved for a dominant culture agency, which could include agencies that serve age-specific groups.
- **Comment, Mindy:** If services for high-intensity case management are included in TA, there is an opportunity for Medicaid billing for reimbursement.
 - **Metro response, Cole:** Ruth Adkins from the Metro team will connect with you on that.

Plan Approval Decision

Ben stated that each member would get a chance to share their thoughts about the implementation plan and propose any amendments. After that initial roundtable, a formal vote would occur.

Co-chair Elizalde shared that the implementation plan feels more like a research project and that TA is secondary to the project. She reflected that some PSH parts feel muddled, and the plan should clearly state what is being asked of providers to participate in the project and what benefits providers will receive. She noted that the TA consultant is being paid more than the PSH providers, and how counties currently define PSH and how that would change from this project is missing from the plan.

Cole clarified that the providers would receive six months of legitimate TA.

Co-chair Rudman shared that this is a good effort to solve the issue of PSH.

Cameran agreed with Co-chair Elizalde that it seems that there is not a clear understanding of PSH in the plan and that PSH seems different in each county. They reflected that they hope this project provides clarity on a PSH baseline standard of care.

Nicole L. agreed that there seemed to be tension between the plan being a research project and providing TA. She asked to ensure the objectives are clear for service providers that apply to participate.

Monta had no comment.

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Cristina P. reflected that there are funding cuts and asked what continuation would look like for the organizations that participated in the project.

Cole replied that it is a demonstration project that may influence future policy.

Yvette asked if turnover would be tracked for the participating service providers and if there would be a discovery of how organizations are retaining staff. She is interested to know if the TA will produce a decrease in turnover and an increase in quality service.

Daisy replied that Metro is developing the framework for the TA consultants that includes looking at funding streams and staffing as those two items have a large impact on service delivery.

Sahaan shared that he supports the concept of utilizing the experience of providers to inform PSH practices and that providers will be receiving TA, but that not everything can be done at once. He reflected that future iterations of the project should have a narrower scope, and that county staff would be able to provide TA on how to be a good contractor for them. He noted that it would be helpful to scale up the learnings from the project. He reflected on how “best practices” are “mainstream practices,” and that “culturally specific practices” are “best practices.” He suggested replacing the language “dominant culture” with “mainstream culture” or “white culture.” He agreed with Co-chair Elizalde’s comments on honing in on regional priorities, and how to set up TA regionally for SHS priorities or the housing system.

Yoni stated that a lot of good work went into the plan from the first update the TCPB received. He reflected that braided funding is a key question on how organizations are structured and that there is currently an uncertain funding environment at the federal level. He agreed with Mindy’s comment about connecting with Medicaid funding.

Mindy stated that the providers selected for the project should be prepared to work through federal funding cuts.

Metro Councilor Lewis shared that this is a priority for Metro Council and while she understood budget and scale constraints, noted that one provider from each county participating in the project is not enough perspective and would hope to add providers in the future.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington appreciated the collaborative TCPB work and Sahaan’s comments around language. She reflected that part of the presentation discussed work that was already being done at the counties, and she looks forward to building and sustaining regionalism in the future together. She shared that while this is framed as Metro’s work, this is regional work in systems development.

Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson shared she appreciated the comments around language and elevating culturally specific work.

Decision: Co-chair Elizalde, Yoni, Nicole L., Yvette, Cameran, Cristina P., Co-chair Rudman, Mindy, Sahaan, Monta, Washington County Chair Harrington, Metro Councilor Lewis, and Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson unanimously approved the TA Implementation Plan.

Staff Updates

Liam Frost, Metro, stated that the counties are experiencing budget challenges for fiscal year 2026 and that collective action is needed. He shared that the four jurisdictions have been working together to problem solve and a solution has been proposed which includes Regional Investment

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Fund (RIF) carryover as a potential source. He reflected that Metro wants stable and effective funding and wants to move solutions fast so that county budgets are not delayed.

Jes Larson, Washington County, reviewed budget forecasts and shortages, and that Washington County is looking at about a 15% reduction. She reflected that all three counties are experiencing this and that real people will be impacted by this including clients and case managers. She shared the jurisdictions are proposing a budget to make sure housing and services are sustained, and that the jurisdictions are working through policy and scenario questions. She stated the proposal looks at using the unallocated carryover RIF before the TCPB developed its goals.

Metro Councilor Lewis shared that stability is the priority along with maintaining and building trust with providers, the public, and the counties. She shared that if the TCPB approves the proposed budget, Metro Council will work to support code or intergovernmental agreement amendments.

Co-chair Elizalde shared that this would be an appropriate consideration and noted that this should not be an excuse for jurisdictions to make hard choices about funding.

Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson appreciated the multijurisdictional partnership and stated that these funds are needed to transition to the next stage of planning.

Ben stated there would be further discussion at the March meeting and asked TCPB members to send questions to Metro staff via email.

Nicole L. asked if Metro could also share how much RIF funding there is and what has been allocated.

Washington County Chair Harrington asked for the proposal to make it clear that the funds being considered are the carryover RIF from years 1 and 2.

Closing and Next Steps

Ben shared that the next steps are:

- Metro to connect with Mindy regarding the opportunity to integrate Medicaid billing with TA services for high-intensity case management.
- Metro to share current RIF funding allocations.
- TCPB members to share any RIF budget proposal questions with Metro.
- Next meeting: March 12, 2025, from 4:00 – 6:00 pm.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:02 p.m.