



Regional Supportive Housing Services program: frequently asked questions

On May 19, 2020, voters in greater Portland approved a measure to raise money for supportive housing services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Who does the program serve?

The program provides services for as many as 5,000 people experiencing prolonged homelessness with complex disabilities, and as many as 10,000 households experiencing short-term homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

What kind of services will be provided by the regional program?

The program provides services within Metro's boundaries like case management, mental health care, addiction and recovery treatment, job training, housing assistance and culturally-specific services that have been demonstrated in peer-reviewed research to effectively and permanently elevate people out of homelessness.

How will the program be funded?

The program collects a 1 percent tax on all taxable income of more than \$125,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for joint filers. It also collects a 1 percent tax on profits from businesses with gross receipts of more than \$5 million. A tax on business profits does not tax business income that pays for such expenses as payroll, rent, equipment and inventory purchases. Personal and business income will not be taxable until Jan. 1, 2021.

How much will the program raise?

Initial estimates in early 2020 had the measure raising \$248 million annually to fund services throughout the region. However, it is unclear how much revenue the program will raise in the current rapidly changing economy.

How many people experience homelessness in the Metro region?

Estimates of homelessness in the region range between 6,000 and 12,000 people.

In January 2019, officials counted 5,711 people experiencing homelessness in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Education counted more than 7,000 students who experienced homelessness in the 2018 school year in Metro-area school districts. These reports undercount people experiencing homelessness while staying with a friend or family, or living in vehicles.

In recent years, more people are experiencing 'chronic' or prolonged homelessness. Approximately 3,123 to 4,935 people in the region experience homelessness related to complex and disabling conditions.

Who becomes homeless in the Portland region?

The January 2019 count surveyed people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. Most were longtime Oregonians who lost access to housing because of rent increases. A quarter of people experiencing homelessness in greater Portland were born in the region; more than half had lived in the region for more than two years. Thirty-six percent were people of color, including 14 percent of indigenous ancestry. More than three-quarters had a disability. Nearly half had experienced domestic violence.

How are funds distributed?

Revenue is distributed within the portions of Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties that are inside Metro's district. Revenue is distributed proportionate to the tax revenue estimated to be collected from individuals in those counties. Agencies addressing homelessness in Multnomah County receives 45.3 percent of the revenue, Washington County agencies receive 33.3 percent, and Clackamas County agencies receive 21.3 percent of the collected revenue.

How will funds be spent?

Local communities make decisions on how resources are to be programmed to address the need in each county. Each county develops a Local Implementation Plan based on local need. A regional oversight committee must review and approve each plan. Funds are distributed as rent assistance through local housing authorities, and service contracts with local social service and health care providers, who serve people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Is there a limit to administrative expenses?

The program restricts administrative expenses incurred by Metro to no more than 5 percent after collection costs. Administrative funds pay for oversight and accountability, data collection, coordination, public engagement, and other costs associated with management of the regional program.

What oversight and accountability is required?

Oversight is provided by a 20-member committee that broadly represents the diversity of the region and lends expertise to the program. Members provide policy and programmatic guidance, monitor programmatic expenditures and evaluate outcomes. All meetings and materials of the community oversight body are available and accessible to the public. Metro is required to have an annual independent financial audit and for the results to be made publicly available.

When does the tax go into effect and how long will it last?

The new tax requirements begin in January 2021. Revenue could be available for service provision as soon as July 2021. The program will fund the program for 10 years until 2030. Voters can vote to extend the program beyond 2030.