

Tri-County Planning Body landlord recruitment goal

Regional implementation plan

March 2024



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Tri-County Planning Body Landlord Recruitment Goal



Regional Implementation Plan - March 2024

Tri-County Planning Body Landlord Recruitment Regional Goal

Increase the availability of readily accessible and appropriate housing units for service providers. *Adopted May 10, 2023¹.*

Regional Issue

Private market housing plays a vital role in ending people's homelessness. Historically, local service providers, and individual case managers, have each established their own ongoing relationships with landlords who have proven to be reliable partners. This has meant that case managers have needed the skillsets to both manage relationships with landlords/property managers and successfully execute their primary responsibility: to provide the appropriate support for someone exiting homelessness into stable housing.

This approach perpetuates silos and limits the opportunity to maximize access to units because it relies too heavily on individual relationships. This approach does not support prioritization or equity efforts. Recruiting and retaining landlord cooperation and commitments is challenging because landlords don't understand the requirements of local vouchers (RLRA), there is prejudice against people exiting homelessness, and case managers lack a real-time list of available units in which to place their clients. Each of the three Counties have made efforts to address this, to varying degrees of success.

Racial Equity Considerations

Central to the work of the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Measure is the guiding principle of leading with racial equity and racial justice, with a charge to reduce racial disparities in homeless service outcomes across the region. The Counties and Metro have committed to addressing the goals outlined by the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) while embedding equity in the development and execution of our work together.

The Regional Landlord Recruitment goals mark our first opportunity to implement a plan to create regional policies and programs that will result in a regional increase in the access to rental units. The historical and contemporary experiences of housing discrimination that influence the housing placement outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and Other Communities of Color, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQ+ communities, have an impact on where people can live. It is vital to identify a process to consider how these proposed strategies will increase housing choice, impact historically oppressed communities, and reduce disparities among historically marginalized groups.

To this end, the Counties and Metro commit to ongoing coordination among equity staff, with a goal of ensuring all strategies contribute to the reduction of racially disparate outcomes in housing placement and retention. The tri-counties and Metro are in active conversation to develop a plan for coordinating these strategies. As equity capacity is built out across the region, designated equity staff

¹ Tri-County Planning Body Goal and Recommendation Language, May 10, 2023. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2023/10/26/2023-tcpb-goals-and-recommendations-20230510.pdf>

will convene and produce equity considerations by utilizing a regionally informed equity lens tool to inform the enacted strategies for the overarching TCPB goals. Convening equity staff from each of the three counties ensures that our regional equity strategies are informed by expertise on the unique equity needs of each county and the people they serve. As each strategy advances, the tenets of affirmatively furthering fair housing will be central to implementation efforts. This includes language access needs and additional considerations for materials to proactively educate landlords on fair housing.

Planning and Implementation Considerations

In developing the regional plan structure, the TCPB adopted in December 2022 a set of criteria intended for reviewing proposed implementation plans. We have utilized those criteria to summarize below how staff are addressing additional considerations in this regional implementation plan.

- **Compliance with TCPB Charter**

The TCPB charter states that the TCPB is responsible for developing and implementing a Tri-County initiative and will be responsible for identifying regional goals, strategies, and outcome metrics related to addressing homelessness in the region. To this end, one of the TCPB's responsibilities is to review proposals that outline programmatic strategies and financial investments from the Regional Investment Fund (RIF) that advance regional goals, strategies and outcome metrics. This implementation plan provides the committee with the information necessary to carry out the assigned function outlined in the charter.

- **Feasibility**

The Counties and Metro have determined that this implementation plan is feasible to fulfill given the requested funding allocation, the proposed technical support requested by qualified consultants, and leveraging the established meeting space and staffing for ongoing coordination in the landlord liaison meetings.

- **Staff capacity**

The implementation plan counts on leveraging existing staff capacity and meetings to work together in the operationalization and on-going coordination of the work, and ensuring landlord liaison work is supported by the RIF. This plan also considers identifying tasks that should be supported by qualified consultants for strategic support. An important consideration will be to understand the potential trade-offs in the pace of implementing, given that more pre-work will result in a stronger program while there is an immediate need for landlord engagement.

- **Infrastructure**

It will take our region time to create a responsive system that addresses regional and local needs in our high-rent, low vacancy communities. Additionally, as new initiatives launch, roles and responsibilities for each County and Metro must be collaboratively identified. The plan proposes to utilize the expanded capacity of the Metro Housing Department and within each County to lead this work.

- **Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Alignment**

Strategies to recruit landlord and building owners to participate in supportive housing programs has been identified as a need in Washington County's LIP (p. 31), Multnomah County's LIP (p. 18) and Clackamas County's LIP (p. 148).

- **Unintended Consequences**

This proposal recognizes that a major unintended consequence of the implementation plan would be adding a burden to case managers to educate landlords. Coordinating a communication and education plan, aligning financial incentives, studying a centralized unit tracking database, implementing quality problem-solving services, and considering ways to support mission-driven property management are all strategies meant to relieve this burden on case managers. Provider training on barrier removal should be a separate training that case managers take to support building a positive foundation for future tenants and their landlords as well as building capacity to negotiate with landlords and property management.

Unintended consequences of these strategies include leaving behind culturally specific providers and BIPOC program participants who depend more on informal connections to gain housing. Careful consideration was made within each strategy to limit these unintended consequences as developed, and the four jurisdictions will work collaboratively to combat these and mitigate other potential impacts that are not aligned with the values we lead this work with. Additionally, an equity lens will be utilized along the implementation process to ensure continued efforts to effectively support this vital group of partners.

- **Building on Existing Efforts**

SHS funding, a valuable local resource, caters to our region's specific needs, which avoids duplicating existing efforts. This implementation plan builds on existing efforts and has considered service providers' frustrations stemming from the constraints of under-resourced programs. SHS funding can alleviate these frustrations and, through strategic planning, we can uphold the vital community relationships service providers have forged with property owners. All the strategies will be centered around program participants. We do this by ensuring sufficient service levels for case management and other wraparound support, while upholding the commitments we have made to property owners. The best incentives we can offer to landlords in our region are services that support long-term tenant stability. This proposal prioritizes strategies that will expedite housing placement for those experiencing literal homelessness, diminish racially disparate housing and retention outcomes, and mitigating housing discrimination experiences for prospective tenants and service providers.

Budget

We anticipate \$7.81-8.06 million to support this goal. The exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants.

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB's monthly progress reports, and more substantial information, including budget expenditure, will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August 2024) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

Item	Cost
Strategy #1: Communication and education plan	\$50,000-150,000
Strategy #2: Align financial incentives	\$100,000
Strategy #3: Tracking and access to unit inventory*	\$810,000
Strategy #4: Prioritize quality problem-solving services	\$500,000
Strategy #5: Investigate needs for property management	\$50,000-100,000
Existing work	
Risk Mitigation program	\$6,000,000
Support staffing for County landlord liaison	\$300,000-400,000
Total	\$7,810,000-\$8,060,000

*As this strategy has developed, the costs have increased.

Strategy #1: Communication and education plan

Program Description

The three Counties and Metro will hire a consultant to develop a regional communications campaign focused on landlord education using Metro and Regional Investment Fund (RIF) resources alongside capacity in the landlord liaison group. The plan includes educating landlords about the different rent assistance programs, highlighting the benefits of participation from landlords, and training for housing case managers on causes of racial disparities in housing and homelessness. The overarching communication campaign will allow landlords to access all necessary information in one place, and consequently will reduce the workload of case managers, whose focus can shift to their primary work of supporting tenants. It may have the added benefit of increasing understanding of fair housing.

It is imperative that this communication and education campaign reaches landlords of diverse backgrounds. Efforts to support this include focusing on: areas with a connection to culturally specific groups, social and traditional media outlets created to support BIPOC communities, schools with high concentrations of BIPOC students, and resources and events within BIPOC communities. Language access best practices will be embedded into the development of materials and strategies.

Leveraging the existing landlord liaison meetings, County and Metro staff will use this space to work together in the operationalization and on-going coordination of the implementation of this strategy.

This strategy supports two areas of regional alignment: 1) programmatic, in the form of a regional communication and outreach plan that ensures a common approach across Counties and 2) administrative, with Metro supporting the functions of hiring a consultant and ensuring a central information hub (website).

Timeline and Milestones

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB's monthly progress reports, and more substantial information will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

It is anticipated that the items listed in the chart below will be complete by the end of Program Year 4. Staff will work on developing timelines for each deliverable listed below which will be reported to the committee in the monthly or quarterly progress reports.

Deliverables	Details	Responsible Party
Regional awareness campaign, directed toward landlords, about existing financial incentives. This will include a focus on reaching culturally specific landlords.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify details of various housing voucher and incentive programs • Launch info on Metro website • Feedback from landlords and landlord organizations can be passed through Metro Housing Department and incorporated into website edits, training, and outreach materials • Develop communication and education materials in collaboration with landlords and landlord organizations 	Contracted communications consultant (Metro), County staff (landlord liaisons)
Training for housing case managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to include planning and zoning laws (redlining) and predatory lending • Education about housing voucher and incentive programs and their impact on racial disparities 	Counties, housing case managers

Regional Investment Fund Utilization

Exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants.

Budget
Regional Awareness Campaign
Training for housing case managers
Total: \$50,000-\$150,000

Metrics

Metrics will be refined after a consultant is on board, and new metrics **may** be added.

Metric	Goal
Educational campaign	Reach 200 unique landlords/property owners/property management
Metro website up and running	Fall 2024

Metro website, with listed housing voucher types and incentives, visits increase	A goal will be set in collaboration with the consultant
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Strategy #2: Align financial incentives

Program Description

Regionalizing financial incentives for rental housing owners and managers (housing providers) can create opportunities for Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties to expand access to existing units in the rental housing market, which will increase the rental units available to people experiencing homelessness. Counties and Metro will further a regional approach by conducting research to develop a regional policy for financial incentives, considering a regional program to administer incentives, and identifying duplicative administrative functions that can be consolidated to reduce overall administrative costs to deliver incentives.

Equity considerations include creating a regional policy that can be implemented while also being accessible to divergent needs of different providers and communities. The creation of incentives needs to address how they will be used to reduce racial disparities and incidents of housing discrimination while also setting a trend for long-term tenant stability.

This strategy supports one area of regional alignment: 1) policy, by ensuring that landlord incentives are included in RLRA vouchers, namely renters' insurance and promotion of the Risk Mitigation Funds, would be taken across the region. Counties may explore feasibility of expanding financial incentives beyond RLRA to other housing programs, pending cost.

Timeline and Milestones

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB's monthly progress reports, and more substantial information will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

It is anticipated that the items listed in the chart below will be complete by the end of Program Year 4. Staff will work on developing timelines for each deliverable listed below which will be reported to the committee in the monthly or quarterly progress reports.

Deliverables	Details	Responsible Party
Research to consider increasing current regional financial incentives, whether to add additional housing programs (like rapid rehousing) or to increase payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create materials on existing landlord incentive incentives across programs • Scope research questions • Conduct research on costs and benefits • Determine course of action, next steps 	County and Metro staff

Training for housing case managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education about financial incentives for RLRA and existing incentives for other programs, such as Rent Well and the Housing Choice Voucher Landlord Guarantee Program 	Counties, housing case managers
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Regional Investment Fund Utilization

Exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants. Contracts for strategy #1 may be leverage for these activities.

Item
Research expanding financial incentives
Material development
Total: \$100,000

Metrics

Metrics will be refined after a consultant is on board, and new metrics **may** be added.

Metric	Goal
Estimated cost for broadening financial incentives	Complete by Winter 2024
Develop materials on existing incentives	Complete by Winter 2024

Strategy #3: Tracking and access to unit inventory

Program Description

Currently, there are multiple systems across the region that track and provide access to unit inventory and varying levels of success with placing households into housing that fit their needs. To better align these systems across the region, Multnomah County will pilot an initial approach, and then a study will be conducted to assess the feasibility of expanding this approach regionally.

Housing Connector will provide dedicated staff to implement unit acquisition and tracking services to Multnomah County. Housing Connector is an existing organization that has developed an online platform and creates partnerships with landlords to track available rental units and make them accessible to housing program participants. Housing Connector will recruit and maintain relationships with property partners and community organizations, provide training and ongoing support with platform navigation, and track key metrics on housing providers.

This strategy supports two areas of regional alignment: 1) programmatic – potential for uniform platform to support unit access efforts across the region and 2) administrative, with Multnomah

County running a pilot with the purpose of information sharing to inform considerations and future decisions around regional adoption.

Timeline and Milestones

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB’s monthly progress reports, and more substantial information will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

It is anticipated that the items listed in the chart below will be complete by Summer 2026. Staff will work on developing timelines for each deliverable listed below which will be reported to the committee in the monthly or quarterly progress reports.

Deliverables	Details	Responsible Party
Establish regional areas of consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key metrics considerations for regional adoption 	Counties
Multnomah County contracts for FY25 Housing Connector Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope of work defined with regional considerations HC submits biannual progress reports and SHS quarterly reports 	Multnomah County
Regional assessment of pilot findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review findings to inform report on barriers/opportunities for broader adoption. 	Counties and HC

Regional Investment Fund Utilization

Exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants.

Item
Contract with Housing Connector for Multnomah County Pilot
Total: \$810,000

Metrics

Metrics will be refined after a consultant is on board, and new metrics **may** be added.

Metric	Goal
Number of property partners gained	30
Number of property units listed	230
Percentage of units below FMR	70%
Number of households housed	72

Strategy #4: Prioritize quality problem-solving services

Program Description

To recruit and retain landlords, our system needs to be responsive to concerns and problems that arise during tenancy. Case managers are currently responsible for most of this work, with support from the Landlord Liaisons.

Metro and the Counties will work to expand services available to landlords to resolve issues with specific tenants and support communication with case managers. As a first step for this upcoming program year, Clackamas County will pilot a “hotline” for landlords to call that will add another layer of support and take some strain off case managers. This landlord hotline serves as a backup to case managers, recognizing the relationships case managers develop with tenants and landlords are vital, should be strengthened, and should not be impacted negatively. The purpose of the hotline is to reduce trauma to the tenant, preserve the relationship with the landlord, enhance landlord recruitment, and prevent evictions.

When landlords call, trained staff will be responsive to questions and coordinate between landlords, case managers, and others to quickly address problems. Hotline staff will act as a navigator for landlords to access information on housing programs and incentives, access RMP funds as needed, and identify and connect with the appropriate case manager. Hotline staff will support case managers with advice on communication with landlords.

This approach will begin with participants in RLRA and Continuum of Care Permanent Supportive Housing programs because access to a case manager is vital to its initial success. During evaluation of the pilot, Counties and Metro will consider supporting landlords participating in other housing programs that provide ongoing rental assistance.

This strategy supports two areas of regional alignment: 1) programmatic—a hotline ensures a common approach across Counties and will avoid confusion from landlords that have units in multiple Counties and 2) administrative, with one County leading the planning and contracting on behalf of the region. Consideration of regionalizing this strategy is contingent to the assessment of outcomes/effectiveness of this pilot.

Timeline and Milestones

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB’s monthly progress reports, and more substantial information will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

It is anticipated that the items listed in the chart below will be complete by Winter 2025. Staff will work on developing timelines for each deliverable listed below which will be reported to the committee in the monthly or quarterly progress reports.

Deliverables	Details	Responsible Party
Contract with service provider for 24/7 hotline coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate an RFP or program offer Evaluate and identify contractor 	Clackamas County
Hotline staff in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire hotline staff Train staff on different housing programs, risk mitigation programs, 	Contracted service provider

	<p>incentives, landlord tenant law, and fair housing law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/explore problem solving strategies tailored to the unique needs of culturally specific providers and their participants/communities 	
Case management tracker complete with a plan for regular updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create case management tracker for hotline access to facilitate coordination between hotline staff and case managers 	Clackamas County
Hotline is live and Clackamas County landlords know how to access it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadly advertise the availability of the hotline to landlords and service providers 	Contracted service provider, with County/regional support

Regional Investment Fund Utilization

Exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants.

Item
Hotline Staff
Advertising
Training costs
Total: \$500,000

Metrics

Metrics will be refined after a consultant is on board, and new metrics **may** be added.

Metric	Goal
Decrease in evictions among voucher-holders	10%
Landlords report they feel they have the information and support they need, in annual survey	90%
Decrease in costs due to tenant-caused damages	5%

Strategy #5: Investigate needs for property management

Program Description

There are very limited property management options in the region, and current funding is not sufficient to provide the level of services necessary for successful project-based permanent supportive housing (PSH). Many existing property management companies lack the skills necessary to effectively serve this highly traumatized population, and many of the existing nonprofit housing developers and housing service organizations do not have the skills necessary to provide effective Landlord Recruitment Regional Implementation Plan

property management. This lack of options, particularly in project-based PSH, is impacting the rates of referral and lease up. To more successfully place high-needs participants in affordable housing, stable and effective property management is vital.

The next step will be for Metro to contract with an entity in collaboration with the Counties and the state to conduct an exploratory study. The purpose of this study is to identify steps to ensure stable, mission-driven, and effective property management for affordable housing and project-based permanent supportive housing tenants, centering their needs and establishing a contracted partner(s) to provide this service for SHS funded units in all three counties. The study is a necessary step, as this strategy has not yet been fully examined through consultant contracts.

Possible areas of study for the consultant include: partnering nonprofit housing developers and/or housing services providers with property management companies to build property management services into their service array; working with a for-profit B corporation or other mission-driven entity to train people with lived experience of homelessness, housing instability, affordable housing residency, and/or PSH program participation to become property managers.

This strategy supports one area of regional alignment: 1) administrative, with Metro leading the study and consolidating contracting on behalf of the region.

Timeline and Milestones

Milestones will be shared in the TCPB’s monthly progress reports, and more substantial information will be provided quarterly starting in Q3 (August) to align with current SHS program reporting frequency.

It is anticipated that the items listed in the chart below will be complete by Spring 2025. Staff will work on developing timelines for each deliverable listed below which will be reported to the committee in the monthly or quarterly progress reports.

Deliverables	Details	Responsible Party
Contract with consultant to study mission-driven property management options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate an RFP or program offer • Evaluate and identify contractor • Outline scope of work 	Metro with input from Counties and state
Conduct study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify needs and gaps in current affordable housing and project-based PSH properties • Include engagement process with housing services providers, landlords, property management companies, and affordable housing/PSH residents • Consider needs or BIPOC communities 	Contracted Consultant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide options for mission-driven property management 	
Identify one or more strategies to implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene workgroup to consider options that result from the study 	Metro, with support from Counties and the State

Regional Investment Fund Utilization

Exact cost determinations will be developed as this strategy is implemented, staffing needs arise within Counties, and scopes of work are defined with consultants.

Item
Contract with consultant
Total: \$50,000-100,000

Metrics

Metrics will be refined after a consultant is on board, and new metrics **may** be added.

Metric	Goal
Identify one or more strategies to achieve mission-driven property management	Complete by Spring 2025

Appendix: Crosswalk with Focus Strategies Unit Acquisition Memo

Source: Focus Strategies, “National and Local Approaches to Unit Acquisition and Opportunities to Strengthen Local Unit Acquisition Efforts” (10.30.23), pp. 10-25. Comments in italics based on consultation between Counties and Metro. Please note that recommendations that did not advance at this moment are under consideration for future efforts. It could be that the recommendation is not yet prime for regionalization as it may not improve or address regional landlord recruitment needs in all three counties, but may be a strategy to consider for one or more counties.

1) Apply an equity lens to all program design and implementation work	<i>Included in the County’s existing work and supported through staff positions, local advisory bodies, community engagement, and technical consultants. See Error! Not a valid result for table. section above.</i>
2) Develop a comprehensive communication and education program for housing providers	<i>Included in Strategy #1: Communication and education plan.</i>

<p>3) Consolidate partnership formation responsibilities</p>	<p><i>The Counties recommend this action area be considered in a second phase once the initial strategies are successfully underway. Multnomah County is currently implementing a similar approach through Housing Connector. We will study and learn from this implementation to consider potential scaling as a regional strategy.</i></p> <p><i>Metro and the Counties will revisit this recommendation in FY 25-26.</i></p>
<p>4) Rationalize the system of financial incentives</p>	<p><i>Included in Strategy #2: Align financial incentives. In addition, the following incentives are accessible and aligned within Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah County: For renting to a participating RLRA household, landlords have access to repair funds up to \$1,000 for required repairs, landlord incentives that include holding fees, and a minimum \$500 landlord incentive.</i></p> <p><i>Currently, flex funds allow for additional deposits to be paid to landlords in addition to purchasing renters insurance for participants.</i></p>
<p>5) Explore expanding agency leasing for those with the greatest barriers</p>	<p><i>Although block/agency leasing can be an effective strategy for unit acquisition, the Counties believe this is not a priority to regionalize in a first phase. The ability to administer block or agency leasing depends on availability of properties/units and relationships with owners and property managers. That landscape is different in each County, creating challenges to a regionalized approach. Each County may explore their own strategies in the realm of block leasing, as there are many models to follow that work for different goals and circumstances. Block/agency leasing is allowable within existing programs.</i></p> <p><i>We hear from providers the need for housing options for people with very intense needs, such as severe and persistent mental illness or acute substance use disorder. Agency leasing is one option, and the Counties want to explore expanding transitional housing, respite housing, and integration with the health system to address these needs with wrap around services.</i></p>

6) Prioritize quality problem solving services	<i>Included in Strategy #4: Prioritize quality problem-solving services.</i>
7) Consolidate key aspects of tracking and providing access to unit inventory	<i>Included in Strategy #3: Tracking and access to unit inventory.</i>
8) Invest in services beyond housing provider partnerships	<i>Integration with Rent Well and other programs to be considered as part of strategy #2.</i>
9) Conduct an evaluation of current state of landlord recruitment and participation	<i>This will be a consideration of the consultant hired for strategy #1</i>
10) Invest dollars into a regional fund for unit retention and incentivize long-term unit availability	<i>The intended purpose of the Risk Mitigation Program is to support this, and the investment the RMP is included in this plan</i>
11) Conduct an examination of other services that are providing housing units beyond SHS to align resources and expand housing availability	<i>This will be included as part of strategy #2.</i>
12) Identify and communicate known barriers and root causes preventing housing placements	<i>This will be included as part of strategy #1.</i>

13) What would a mission-based property management engagement look like?	<i>Strategy #5 will investigate this question.</i>
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