



Tri-County Planning Body Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Tri-County Planning Body Meeting
Date: Wednesday, July 10, 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), Mindy Stadlander (she/her), Yvette Marie Hernandez (she/her)

Absent members

Monta Knudson (he/him), Sahaan McKelvey (he/him)

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 – Cristina Castaño (she/her), Kanoe Egleston (she/her), Washington County – Nicole Stingh (she/her), Allie Alexander-Sheridan (She/Her)

Metro

Valeria McWilliams (she/her), Ruth Adkins (she/her), Liam Frost (he/him), Patricia Rojas (she/her), Michael Garcia (he/him), Sandi Saunders (she/her)

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.

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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.

The TCPB approved the June Meeting Summary.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

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 participates on the TCPB as a community member.

Staff Updates

Patricia Rojas, Metro, shared an overview of Metro Chief Operating Officer, Marissa Madrigal's, [housing funding recommendation](#) to Metro Council. The recommendation included allowing SHS funds to be used for affordable housing construction and developing one independent oversight investment board. Patricia shared that the regional work of the TCPB will continue, and that staff will follow up with one-on-one calls with TCPB members.

Nicole Stingham, Washington County, shared that the county successfully mobilized severe weather shelters and thanked service providers.

Cristina Castaño, Multnomah County, shared that two shelters have opened.

Vahid Brown, Clackamas County, also shared that the county successfully mobilized severe weather shelters and thanked service providers.

Cristina Palacios announced that the [Housing Oregon 2024 Conference](#) will be on September 24 and 25.

Employee Recruitment and Retention Progress Report Part 2

Ruth Adkins, Metro, reviewed the meeting packet information and the goal language and recommendations. She shared that the next steps include developing regional strategies, an implementation plan, and an updated work plan.

Multnomah County, Washington County, and Clackamas County staff presented an overview of each county's pre-SHS contracting landscape, cash flow, wage parity and compression, and employee workloads. They reviewed progress made on the goal recommendations and highlighted promising practices.

TCPB members and elected delegates had the following questions:

- **TCPB elected delegate question:** Is there any comparison across all three counties on wage parity?

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- **Washington County response:** We have not compared across the three counties, but we could do that.
- **Metro response:** We can consider that as we develop the implementation plan.
- **Clackamas County response:** Metro could do the cross-county analysis since the three counties report that data in the annual report.
- **TCPB member question:** What is the process if proof of documentation or identification was destroyed to prove residency?
 - **Clackamas County response:** SHS funds are flexible and allow individuals to self-identify what services they need. SHS funds are also flexible on identification and can go towards document recovery or be created at partner locations.
- **TCPB elected delegate question:** For Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), I heard one county has a ceiling of \$15,000 per household and another has a floor of \$12,000. What is the philosophy behind using a floor versus a ceiling?
 - **Clackamas County response:** Before SHS, we heard \$10,000 was not sufficient. From a county perspective, it is not about the floor but a level of commitment. Contracts can still be negotiated for other amounts.
 - **Multnomah County response:** We have been hearing from providers that the maximum is not sufficient for 24-hour staffing. There have been some providers asking for under \$10,000. It is an important conversation to have on whether the approach is a floor or a ceiling, especially for family and culturally specific units.
- **TCPB member question:** How were providers notified that advanced payments were an option in Clackamas and Washington Counties?
 - **Clackamas and Washington County response:** There was a memo and advanced communications before contract renewals, and it was written into the contracts themselves.
- **TCPB member question:** How were organizations chosen for Multnomah County's advance payment pilot?
 - **Multnomah County response:** Organizations alerted us with cashflow needs and due to the declared emergency, we worked with the contracting office to provide advance payment. We historically have not provided advance payments.
 - **TCPB member response:** For a pilot, you would want a representative sample of various providers, but this sounds more like an unintentional approach trying to meet a need to then inform future solutions.
- **TCPB member question:** Can you elaborate on the mental health support to caseworkers? Do Multnomah or Washington Counties have similar models? I encourage county staff to follow up with organizations so frontline workers know they can access these funds for mental health support.
 - **Clackamas County response:** There are a few models, one includes dedicated funding for a mental health professional staff position to support other staff. Another model is where there is dedicated funding for staff to identify a clinician to engage with.
 - **Washington County response:** We have not made specific investments. Some partners have used SHS allocations and contracts have flexibility for providers to support counseling for employees.
 - **Multnomah County response:** Our organizational health grants could be an opportunity for providers to offer that support, it is up to the organizations to decide.
- **TCPB member question:** Do the wage analysis reports include non-SHS contracts?
 - **TCPB member response:** The analysis is organizational, not contract-specific.

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- **Washington County response:** we have consistently heard feedback from providers on wage equity challenges between SHS contracts and non-SHS contracts.
- **Metro response:** We can send links to the wage analysis reports.

Kim Natarajan, Homebase, reviewed the key takeaways from last month's presentation and detailed three core strategies for achieving a livable wage: 1) commitment to and coordination of regional strategy, 2) planning for and allocating more funding to compensation, and 3) addressing the cashflow concerns for providers. She reviewed each strategy's associated actions and models that could serve as a roadmap toward livable wages. She closed by noting low wages are linked to poor recruitment and retention and that market forces will not correct conditions on their own.

TCPB members and elected delegates had the following questions:

- **TCPB member question:** Nonprofit providers cannot make cash flow with the current system and line-item requirements are a burden. Are line-item requirements from Washington County or Metro?
 - **Washington County response:** It is a Washington County requirement and is the fiscal leadership's interpretation of a regulation. We are conducting a financial risk analysis to reduce the level of burden.
- **TCPB member comment:** The ability to pay providers in advance is a good strategy but can also be a challenge for providers that are less fiscally aware.
- **TCPB member comment:** There are good examples in this presentation of things to look for. I encourage local governments to think about setting consistent wage floors through a collaborative process. I would like a regional cost of living adjustment calculation, providers to be included in budget conversations, consistent advance payment models, and a 15% de minimis this fiscal year. I am concerned about losing beds and shelter capacity if we get into a pinch point.
- **TCPB member comment:** I would like to see more information on how to support wage raises without jeopardizing medical assistance. Many Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are self-contractors and need money to access services, but if they go into the workforce, they will lose their medical assistance.
- **TCPB member comment:** I recommend that direct service staff be included in the Outcomes-Based Payment Model conversation. A lot goes into getting an individual stabilized and am concerned that the model could lead to agencies being incentivized to only take in the highest functioning individuals to meet outcomes. I encourage designing a model that incentivizes serving a wide range of individuals.

Ruth thanked everyone for attending and shared that the next step for Metro and the counties is to work with Homebase's roadmap and identify regional opportunities to build an implementation plan.

Closing and Next Steps

Mercedes shared that an August agenda is in development and will focus on discussions between TCPB members.

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

- Metro staff to have one-on-one calls with TCPB members regarding the housing funding recommendation.
- Metro to share each county's wage analysis report.

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- Metro and county staff to begin to draft the Employee Recruitment and Retention Implementation Plan.
- Next meeting: Wednesday, August 14, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.