

Supportive Housing Services: Multnomah County's Ten-Year Plan

In May 2020, voters in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties passed Metro's Supportive Housing Services measure, a historic investment in proven solutions to end homelessness. Each county then created their own Local Implementation Plan (LIP), a 10-year roadmap guiding how this taxpayer funding will be spent. Multnomah County's plan, developed with input from the community, outlines immediate and ongoing investments in several areas.

OUR GOALS

- Add 2,350 permanent supportive housing units by June 2025, and place 2,500 people in permanent housing each year.
- Serve 1,000 new households with rent assistance each year.
- Support providers engaged in street outreach and emergency crisis support.
- Significantly increase both the number of culturally-specific providers and the number of BIPOC people served by the Joint Office of Homeless Services.
- Improve existing 'by-name' list to meet requirements of the Built for Zero initiative; standardize data collection and analysis across the Tri-County region.

FOCUS AREAS

AFFORDABLE PERMANENT HOUSING

At the heart of the Supportive Housing Services program is a focus on providing permanent, affordable housing to those who need it most, with an emphasis on supporting people who are chronically homeless.

Goal: Add 2,350 permanent supportive housing units by June 2025, and place 2,500 people in permanent housing each year.

EVICITION PREVENTION AND RENT ASSISTANCE

The housing market is unaffordable for many in our community, and we can't end homelessness by waiting for the market to change on its own. Instead, we are investing in short- and long-term rent support programs that help people move out of homelessness and connect them with services like mental health care, addiction treatment, case management and job training. This cost-effective strategy offers a permanent pathway out of homelessness.

Goal: Serve 1,000 new households with rent assistance each year.

INCREASING SHELTER CAPACITY AND STREET OUTREACH

About 20% of our planned Supportive Housing Services investments are for short-term emergency shelters, including alternative, motel and traditional sites. The Joint Office of Homeless Services has already doubled the number of shelter beds in Multnomah County since 2017, helping address the increasing rates of homelessness. As we construct and maintain short-term shelters, we're also focused on moving people from shelter into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

The best way to help people successfully transition into housing is to build relationships that support them each step of the way. That's why we're expanding three specialized teams providing street outreach, addiction response and medical outreach.

Goal: Support providers engaged in street outreach and emergency crisis support.

SUPPORTING CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC PROVIDERS AND SYSTEM CAPACITY

Racism, in both its systemic and interpersonal forms, drives the higher rates of homelessness experienced by Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander and other people of color. Our implementation plan supports and expands the capacity of our partners

who are leading the work to reduce racial disparities through intersectional interventions.

Goal: Significantly increase both the number of culturally-specific providers and the number of BIPOC people served by the Joint Office of Homeless Services.

REGIONAL COORDINATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DATA

The implementation of the Supportive Housing Services measure has led to increased collaboration and coordination between all three counties in the Portland metro area to build a truly comprehensive continuum of homeless services. The measure also allows for better coordination between Multnomah County's own departments and programs.

These funds will help us continue engaging with our communities, particularly with people of color and people with lived experience of homelessness. And we're using a data-driven approach that allows us to understand the drivers of homelessness and see our progress through easily understandable data points.

Goal: Improve existing 'by-name' list to meet requirements of the Built for Zero initiative; standardize data collection and analysis across the Tri-County region.

A PLAN DRIVEN BY EQUITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND COLLABORATION

When voters approved the Supportive Housing Services Measure, they showed their support for an unprecedented response to our homelessness crisis. Our plan for investing these taxpayer funds is grounded in the engagement of hundreds of community stakeholders, including people with lived experience of what it's like to survive outside. The Joint Office has launched two advisory committees, the Supportive Housing Services committee and the Lived Experience committee, to help guide this work.

It's undeniable that our community is facing an urgent crisis. The strategies that comprise this plan balance and prioritize equity, speed and effectiveness. We have a responsibility to end homelessness in our community, and [this plan](#) is a monumental step toward achieving that goal.