

Frequently Asked Questions for East County Homelessness Resource Center

(19421 SE Stark St, Gresham, OR 97233)

Programming

Will the pod village shelter be low-barrier?

The East County Homeless Services Center will be a low barrier community that will provide culturally responsive services to ensure equitable access and outcomes for adults of all backgrounds and identities. “Low barrier” is a fluid term that indicates that services will be designed to be easily available for people experiencing homelessness but also ensuring that health and safety standards can be met.

Is there an expectation of sobriety?

Onsite use is not permitted for any JOHS-funded shelters. The program will not administer tests to determine sobriety but will expect that guests behave appropriately within the general expectations established.

What type of services will the day center have?

Programming is under development by the planned site operator, Sunstone Way. Best practice for day shelter services programs is to bring as many different support types to the facility as possible to act as a central location for services. The mission is centered around co-locating services to meet people where they are in a trauma informed manner, going beyond the basic act of providing shelter during daytime hours. The provider(s) responsible for operating the site will ensure that all service delivery is organized in consideration of safety and security for both the site and surrounding areas.

Will meals/food be provided?

Yes, there will be food, beverages and snacks offered, as well as a kitchen to prepare meals for both users of the day center and participants of the pod village.

Is there a max length of stay for individuals?

Any maximum length of stay will be determined in partnership with the operator during the program design phase. Length of stay needs to be in alignment with Oregon Fair

Housing Law and best practice for shelter. We aim to have shelter stays be brief and ensuring that people are connected to resources that will support them in moving from shelter into housing.

Will the pods be on a referral basis? Will service providers be able to refer people?

Once the shelter operator is selected, the process for referrals for the pods will be determined. JOHS is committed to a coordinated referral process that includes the City of Gresham's Homeless Services outreach program and JOHS-funded outreach teams to prioritize available shelter for individuals living unsheltered in East Multnomah County.

Will the ECHRC continue to be used as a severe weather shelter?

While the ECHRC is under construction, alternative locations will be used for severe weather shelter activities. After the ECHRC has reopened in Winter 2025/2026, the facility will once again be utilized for severe weather shelter, with a temporary capacity for up to 90 individuals. Sunstone Way, will manage the facility during severe weather events (both cold and hot). Once the activation is over, the facility will resume service as a day center, offering a place for people to be while they determine their next steps.

Is the planned use of the facility going to be temporary or is the County planning on this being a homeless center indefinitely?

Funding for the ECHRC is planned to be ongoing and help people of East County get into housing, including long- and short-term housing. Improvements planned for the facility include modular shelter pods that give the County flexibility for other potential future uses. The County has an annual budget process to deliberate on the projects and programs it will fund in the next fiscal year. [Learn more about the County's budget cycle and how to provide public comment here.](#)

Safety and Neighborhood Impacts

Will 24/7 security be provided?

The day shelter services are not overnight but the pod village project at the site will be operational 24/7 which will include 24/7 staffing. The JOHS supports dozens of shelter programs and in most cases, 24/7 site staffing is sufficient to ensure safety for the site and surrounding area. In some cases, we have added security services. We can be

flexible and adjust the service level or type of services (shelter staffing vs professional security services) if needed.

What is going to be done about drug use and mental illness?

All staff will be trained in de-escalation, mental health first aid, and other training to ensure that they are well equipped to manage challenging situations. Both the day services program and the pod shelter program will include expectations for guests regarding acceptable behavior, particularly around safety concerns. Program staff will be expected to hold guests to those expectations and manage behavior. Onsite drug use is not permitted for any JOHS-funded shelters. The program will not administer tests to determine sobriety but will expect that guests behave appropriately within the general expectations established.

How will escalations be handled?

All staff will be trained in de-escalation, mental health first aid, and other training to ensure that they are well equipped to manage challenging situations. Both the day services program and the pod shelter program will include expectations for guests regarding acceptable behavior, particularly around safety concerns. Program staff will be expected to hold guests to those expectations and manage behavior.

How will we keep the hardship of the homeless away from one of the most children-dense parts of Gresham?

The services planned for the East County Homeless Resource Center are designed to support unhoused individuals through their hardships onsite, in the confines of the facility. Through the Good Neighbor Agreement process, the JOHS will work together with the service provider, the City of Gresham, and the local community to co-develop robust safety protocols, including 24-hour supervision and clear communication channels for neighbors to ensure that programming operates in harmony with the surrounding community. The safety of everyone in the community is of paramount importance to JOHS.

How is this going to change the demographics of the immediate community?

The East County Homelessness Resource Center is opening to serve those living in East County (Gresham, Fairview, Wood Village, and Troutdale) and the local communities within and surrounding the area of the facility. It is not expected that the Center will draw participants from other parts of Multnomah County.

What will coordination with police and community nonprofits like the HOPE team be like?

JOHS is committed to the safety of its shelter participants and the community in which our providers operate. JOHS has existing partnerships with the City of Gresham and local law enforcement, including the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE (Homeless Outreach Person Engagement) team, and JOHS intends to include these partners in problem-solving. This program will also be integrated into the JOHS's system of care, which includes 60+ nonprofits throughout the County that provide a range of services including case management and housing navigation. We anticipate the Day Center will offer mobile service teams an opportunity for in-person office hours and co-located service to facilitate further coordination.

In working with Gresham Police, do they have a plan for how they are going to ramp up protection around the ECHRC?

The City of Gresham Police Department is a key partner in the success of this project, which is why the County is committed to the City's inclusion in the Good Neighbor Agreement. Sunstone Way, the planned site provider, has pledged to ensure accurate and timely reporting of incidents and partner with law enforcement in addressing security concerns that cannot be addressed through other interventions. Sunstone Way requires staff to have deescalation training and other skills to prevent and diffuse tense situations.

What about limiting the number of guests?

The 24/7 shelter will have a limit to the number of people being served. Unauthorized guests to the shelter is prohibited in JOHS-funded shelters. Programming and staffing at the Day Center will be adaptive to demand to ensure that the site will have sufficient staffing to keep the site safe and secure.

What is the staff/participant ratio?

This will be determined once a provider has been selected. The site will never be staffed by a single staff person at any given time and staffing ratios should be no less than one staff person per 25 guests.

Will there be signage "no camping within 250 feet?"

This can be negotiated with our local jurisdictional partners during the Good Neighbor Agreement process, which we anticipate will begin in early 2025.

Are individuals able to come and go all day?

There will be no unauthorized visitors for pod village participants, but there will be some traffic with service providers and inreach teams supporting the shelter and day-use center participants. The entry and exit from the dedicated parking lot is on Stark. An emergency gate will be available to first responders on the north side of the lot. “Day services” by definition is not 24 hours a day and there will be a set opening and closing time (TBD to be established in partnership during GNA process with consideration for need and impact on community). Only during events of severe weather would that be changed.

I think people will come to the day center and then when it closes, roam around the neighborhood. What’s the plan for that?

Staff will work with participants throughout the day to ensure that after the Day Center closes, users understand the expectation that they will not be allowed to tent or loiter around or near the facility after hours. The service provider will work with participants and community shelters when necessary to provide access to shelter beds and provide transportation, if necessary.

Will there be severe weather shelters during construction?

Multnomah County Emergency Services is determining alternative temporary sites to use for severe weather shelter during construction of the facility, which is expected to begin April 2025. Once construction is completed, the East County Homelessness Resource Center will resume serving as an emergency shelter (in the multi-purpose space of the building where the Day Center will be located) during severe weather activations with a maximum capacity of 90.

What will the city and mayor do for our community to restore any damages and how will we prevent damages to our community?

Comprehensive safety measures will be in place, including 24/7 staffing, security fencing, and strategic lighting to enhance visibility. These measures are aimed at fostering a secure environment and ensuring the well-being of the broader community, as well as shelter and day center participants. As responsible stewards of the community and good neighbors, JOHS is committed to implementing effective practices that prioritize safety and security for all.

Site Design

Will there be showers and laundry services on site, and will they be available to users of the day center?

Yes, there will be showers and laundry service on site for both users of the day center and participants of the pod village.

Will storage lockers be provided for day use?

Current design plans for the Cook Plaza building includes storage lockers that will be available for individuals using the day center. People who are sheltering in the pod village will be able to store their belongings in their pods during the duration of their stay.

Are there going to be any resources or accommodations for pets?

Current design plans have a pet relief area and open-air shelter with lighting and heaters for both the day-use area and pod village.

How will cars owned by those in the pods be handled?

There will be limited parking available on site for use by participants and/or service providers of the pod village. We are working to find solutions to reduce the possible impact of available street parking adjacent to the site.

With other Multnomah County-owned buildings with more parking, why weren't they used?

The Cook Plaza site was purchased by Multnomah County 2.5 years ago to fill a gap in providing essential services for people living unsheltered in the local community. Since its acquisition, it has served as a shelter when weather conditions become life-threatening. JOHS acknowledges the property will have limited parking upon conversion of the west lot into a pod village. We are exploring several options to ensure that the program does not have significant impacts on available public parking for local residents and businesses.

Community Engagement

What will the Good Neighbor Agreement process look like? When will it begin and who will be involved?

The Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) is a document that details the intentions of all parties to ensure the safety and success of a shelter program and the community where it is sited. It will detail how all parties will work toward proactively addressing safety concerns and establish a communication structure to problem-solve concerns and issues related to the shelter and its immediate surroundings expeditiously. Development of the GNA will begin in Spring 2025 with the goal of having it signed by all parties by the time the shelter is ready to open in December 2025. JOHS will convene community members, the service provider of the facility, and the City of Gresham to be parties of the agreement.

Who is invited to work on the GNA?

The Homeless Services Department has invited community groups, individuals, and organizations neighboring the facility to identify representatives to be a part of a working group that will review, amend, and agree upon commitments within the program's Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA). Representatives have been identified from the Gresham Neighborhood Coalition (including Rockwood Neighborhood Association), the City of Gresham, Kaiser Permanente, The Salvation Army, Sunstone Way (the planned site operator), Reynold Schools, and the Tamra Colonial Estates apartment complex (located next door to the ECHRC).

When can we meet with the service provider?

The service provider, Sunstone Way, was announced at our March community meeting. You can learn more about the organization online at sunstoneway.org and meet them at one of upcoming community engagement events.

Where can neighbors give their input?

Neighbors are encouraged to provide their input and feedback to the Joint Office in person at community meetings or by email at ECHRC@multco.us. JOHS is committed to remain actively engaged in the community by organizing JOHS-led community meetings and participating in listening sessions hosted by community partners.