Homeless Services Department

SHS Advisory Committee Meeting
August 14, 2025 | 3:00–5:00 pm

Attendance: Sandra Comstock, Cheryl Carter, Crystal Magaña, Daniel Carrillo, Ed Johnson, Ria Tsinas, Patrick Alexander, Theo Hathaway Saner, Xenia Gonzalez, Ty Schwoeffermann, Dwight Minnieweather
STAFF: Mack Vohs, Anna Johnson, Kaytee Evans

Agenda Item	Discussion Points	Decision/Action
Welcome Land and Labor Introductions SHS Updates		
Presentation on Access by Homeless Services Department Staff *Housing First & Low Barrier Practices in Contracting* with Program Compliance Project Manager Kaytee Evans	*See slides for full presentation content* **Program Compliance Project Manager Kaytee Evans** Kaytee's role provides contract and technical support to contract managers at the Homeless Services Department who work with community orgs that receive funding to deliver homeless services. She leads a lot of quality improvement efforts and projects to achieve this. Our providers are required to design their services to align with these approaches: ● Housing first and low barrier ● Racial and social justice ● Assertive engagement ● Culturally responsive services Organizations are required to set equity goals and complete a progress report at the end of every contract year. ● Some examples of goals organizations set:	

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	develop or improve representation on equity committees that work on organizational policies; improve staff representation. Contract language that speaks to our expectations about access to services: ● There is overarching language about accountability in our contracts. Organizations must have a grievance process, opportunities for staff and participant feedback, and termination policies (explaining why someone wouldn't be able to access services). Grievance policies ● Grievance policies establish a system of written procedures where a person receiving services or a family member can provide feedback about their experiences receiving services. Grievance policies should be readily available. An organization should make the grievance process well-known and easily accessible, and must keep a record of grievances. Participant and staff feedback ● The contract requires organizations to demonstrate accountability through at least once a year engagement with participants about delivery of services. Orgs should use that info to evaluate their policies and procedures and if needed adapt them to be responsive to the feedback. Termination policies ● Organizations must have a written termination and exclusion policy that protects the interest of the participant by applying a trauma-informed lens to evaluate situations that could exclude them. The organization has to state in very clear terms why a participant would be terminated. There also needs to be a process for the termination to be reviewed, and the provider should also allow for reentry into programming under appropriate conditions. Ensuring involvement of people accessing services in	

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	decision making	
	• Requiring regular policy reviews with staff, professional development opportunities to support their growth and understanding of expectations, etc. Also service user advisory committees—asking them to advise on various policies and programs in the orgs. Who at the HSD ensures these things are happening? • Program staff, business services staff, fiscal staff (invoices)--but primarily it's the contract administrators who ensure the partner is in compliance with the contract. Contract monitoring • We have a monitoring policy that requires our contract managers to engage in formal monitoring activities throughout the year. • Outcome of monitoring—if we find an org that is out of compliance or could improve, we issue findings and concerns. Findings don't necessarily mean that a provider is in non-compliance but indicate where the organization could enhance their work. Findings come with a very clear expectation and timeline for things to occur. Concerns could lead to a contract violation if not addressed. • We typically give organizations 90 days to revise policies to be in alignment with the contract. • We don't have language in the contracts that specifically say orgs must have forms in multiple languages so that example was not a formal contract finding, but we were able to make a recommendation that they make a one time investment in translating their paperwork into Spanish, and consider other languages as well to prevent further disparities in access to services. Homeless Services Department accountability—what do we do with all this info? • We collect all of the concerns and findings that we identify in on-site monitoring in one centralized place and perform an annual	

	review for each of our systems of care. ● We look for consistent findings/contract violations across contractors. Sometimes this means we need to clarify expectations and develop a work plan for trainings or other opportunities for us to connect with providers and enhance our technical assistance around those areas of the contract. ● Other ways we do this throughout the year–our staff convene meetings with providers, offer technical assistance, and share feedback. New capacity in our dept for continuous improvement ● We are helping lead and participate in projects where we're looking at how effective we are in being accountable to contract compliance and supporting our partners with compliance. I'm glad to hear about accountability measures. It seems like that has improved over the last few years. What are some of the out of compliance areas that you have found across housing programs? ● Housing first, low barrier, termination and exclusions, grievances–these are all really common. One that comes up a lot as it relates to access is the grievance process–making sure folks have adequate access and understanding of this process at program entry and can use the process anonymously without having to ask a staff member. Do you evaluate waitlist management and practices around waitlists? ● It depends on the program. This isn't always bound contractually, but when they are that is something we look at. Why don't all contracts have an agreement around waitlist management? ● Can work with SHS team to follow up on this. Different systems manage waitlists differently. Coordinated Entry has a very clear management process, DSV system also has a very different and specific system.	

| | People have a hard time succeeding in housing first programs here because there aren't enough wraparound services to pair with low-barrier housing. Is there a plan to keep people in housing by introducing a program requirement for more case management for those who need more wraparound services?
● Our contracts for permanent supportive housing (PSH) all include supportive services. But we know locally we have a need that outpaces the resources we have.
● The funding that we have for PSH prioritizes supportive services.
● SHS team could follow up with our PSH team on this.

A lot of the houseless population is aging or experiencing disabilities—the reason it's so important to have supportive services to keep people housed is:
● Having a clean apartment is really hard when you have a disability or don't have the appropriate assistance.
● The supportive services are a really important component of retention—it's not just the low-barrier part.

I would have hoped to hear something in the presentation about disability.
● We do have very clear standards for PSH that we can share with the group as a followup.

You mentioned technical assistance for contractors if there are findings or concerns. Can you give a sense of what the capacity/limitations are with this? Does the County provide this, or contract it out?
● Generally technical assistance as a result of monitoring is done via the contract manager working directly with the provider around the areas of concern.
● If it's a fiscal challenge then the contract manager will connect the org with the right folks in our office.
● Sometimes it's by connecting them to other training in the community as well.
● What path we pursue depends on the situation. | |

	Continued committee discussion after the presenter left the meeting: ● Some orgs are better at serving BIPOC communities –what do you do about organizations that are serving mostly white folks? ● Really good to know checks and balances are there and built into the contract–I would be interested to hear from folks who have gone through a grievance process and see how it's actually going. ● From my experience the grievance process is hard to understand. A lot of times there isn't followup with the person about what happened with the grievance. Or the organization comes back and says this is a big problem but we can't fix it. ● Accountability piece–nice that it's in there but it seems like a contractor gets a lot of chances–when does it escalate to a contract being terminated? ● Exclusion from services–if someone is excluded from a program, could there be a panel of members from other organizations that can take a look at the situation more objectively–external evaluation. Cultures of cruelty remain but that could be one way to change that. Independent bodies to go over possible exclusions. ● Waitlists–there is a lot of variation from program to program. Question for the committee to consider: are there other areas like this with a lot of variation that could be standardized? ○ How people are excluded is a big one–not sure it can be standardized though. ○ Some folks have been kicked out for vague reasons like "being disrespectful." We need to ensure that the processes are clear and be clear about what situations qualify for a write up or exclusion. ○ I would like to see some kind of storage of either vehicles or other modes of	

	transportation (bikes, etc). We need more of this at the sites. I would like to see this across all programs.
	● Is anyone aware of orgs that do a good job with the grievance process and have a good model?
	  ○ Hygiene 4 All–developed a policy in response to their experience with C3P0 village.
	  ○ DESC in Seattle has a great model.
	  ○ NAYA–For our case management we had a grievance policy that we read to the participant at intake–online or in person. A hard copy of grievances are sent to the CEO and they direct it to the right person.
	● Housing case managers need to be more regularly checking in with their participants–sometimes months are going by without a touch point after move in. Setting expectations and standards around case management would be helpful.
	● TPI cross training–role playing around favoritism–need to have staff step back and see the big picture–not just see folks complaining but who has legitimate reasons for filing the incident reports.
	● Deescalation training for shelter staff to help with mental health and overall experience.
	
	Please see your meeting packet for examples of how other HSD/ local committees are working on similar recommendations around access. Our lived experience committee is making recommendations for shelter access and our equity committee made recommendations related to equity requirements in contracts.	

Following Up on Committee Questions Related to Access	We skipped this in favor of a longer conversation about the presentation	
Advisory Committee Ongoing	*See slides for full presentation content* Who is on the panel of reviewers?	

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Recruitment Feedback Session	• Homeless Services Department staff involved in committees, other staff; co-chairs or members of the committee.	
	Ideas for outreach?	
	• Flyers at shelters is an option	
	• Welcome Home Coalition	
	• Could you share with 211?	
	• Rose City Resource guide?	
	• Local universities including OHSU (public health, political science, etc)	
	• Clinics like Richmond or Outside In? Or even the hospital?	
	How to engage folks in the pool of candidates	
	• Having someone call them and share what it's like to be in the committee and get them excited–current members could be part of this.	
	How is the demographic information used in how we're choosing to invite folks to the committee? Maybe start with why folks want to join vs demographics, and express that the demographics aren't used to evaluate the person / explain why we ask for them.	
	• One reason we ask for this is because it helps us with a regional SHS goal that people of color and people with lived experience are overrepresented on all decision making and advisory bodies.	
	Second application form feedback	
	• Personal life experience section–These are all sensitive issues; can we explain why we value and ask for this?	
	○ "We uplift and value people with lived and living experience, and would like to know what yours is." Something to show how folks' experience would help improve services for folks accessing services in these areas.	
	People aren't always asked what they want to get out of the experience but that is a nice thing to ask–maybe not make it mandatory but at least it shows we're interested.	

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	The personal life experience piece can be a trigger for folks. Maybe make this section optional. Also please make sure the community we are serving has access to applying. It's a great way to help folks stay involved, and they may be inclined to share with others in their life. Regarding the section on outreach to potential committee candidates ● While I think this is important and could be tweaked to be more approachable for people to apply, the amount of communications listed from weekly to monthly for staff seems onerous. If there is a way to strike a balance or be available (for example, offer office hours or opportunities for people to ask questions), that would be good.	
Next Steps	SHS team will: ● Follow up on any questions from the presentation that were not answered in this meeting. ● Share ongoing recruitment feedback with the planning team.	

Zoom Chat:

15:03:03 From Crystal Magaña to Hosts and panelists:
　　　Hi everyone. I'm gonna stay on as long as possible. I'm still feeling weak after being in hospital the weekend.

15:03:57 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
　　　Thank you for being here Crystal! Please prioritize your health, if you need to hop off we totally understand!

15:04:19 From Crystal Magaña to Hosts and panelists:
　　　thankyou

15:05:17 From Kaytee Evans (she/her) HSD to Hosts and panelists:
　　　be right back, going to grab some water while we are waiting for folks to join!

15:07:10 From xenia to Hosts and panelists:
　　　Hi ya Xenia community member

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15:10:33 From Edward Johnson to Hosts and panelists:
Edward Johnson
Community volunteer

15:11:03 From xenia to Hosts and panelists:
Xenia she/her community member

15:12:58 From Patrick Alexander to Hosts and panelists:
Patrick Alexander PA Speaker 24

16:00:00 From sandracomstock to Hosts and panelists:
I know od lots of cases where housing case managers were not checking in regularly with their clients and that needs went by the wayside on things such as utility issues / and others – where I had to personally intervene to get checkins happening regularly

16:02:09 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
I made a note of that!

16:05:51 From sandracomstock to Hosts and panelists:
I have couple of key follow up questions to get answered off line : How are patterns of proportional underserving of particular communities of color, LGBTQIA+ , formerly incarcerated, disabled groups assessed / evaluated/ remediated ; How are user experiences and / or grievances are drawn upon to evaluate the work within different contractors ; How are Staff experiences / concerns drawn on to evaluate contractor performance; Is there any independent user based evaluation surveys administered to contractor users at HSD ? ; What happens to user evaluations carried out by contractors – does the HDS contractor see those directly ? ; Are contractor reports and internal evaluations to identify successful practices for system replication and improvement initiatives?

16:07:26 From sandracomstock to Hosts and panelists:
On the last q in the chat i meant: Are contractor reports and internal evaluations leveraged to identify successful practices for system replication and improvement initiatives?

16:22:41 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
I totally agree that there needs to be some serious changes around exclusions

16:23:06 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
Staff need to be accountable for excluding people

16:23:43 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
Cos I guarantee if you look at the records there would be a pattern..

16:27:00 From Cheryl's iPad to Hosts and panelists:
Less favoritism could help with that

16:30:30 From Crystal Magaña to Hosts and panelists:
    I apologize. I need to go lay down. This has been an amazing mtg. Love all the discussion.

16:30:48 From Mack Vohs (they/them) to Hosts and panelists:
    Thanks so much Crystal! Get some rest!

16:30:50 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
    Thank you Crystal! Take care ❤️

16:30:58 From Crystal Magaña to Hosts and panelists:
    thankyou

16:40:23 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
    I can't find a policy written down anywhere... but I can tell you what I remember-
    DESC was hardcore. Obviously if people were tenets in housing they couldn't be barred or excluded from their apartments, just from common areas- and that is only if they have been exhibiting behaviors that cause safety concerns.
    It is also a staff decsion, no one person can make it.

16:45:57 From Daniel Carrillo to Hosts and panelists:
    If you are able to contact local universities and email them about the opportunity, I am sure the Public Health Majors and OHSU students would be more inclined to apply, or even political field students.

16:46:26 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
    Thanks Daniel, that is a great idea!

16:47:04 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
    In terms of shelters or emergency services-
    Exclusions were a LAST resort. Reasons for doing so were pretty well known- violence against against staff or anyone in shelter, or drinking or using in shelter- and only for the day.
    Longer bars were decided by the team.
    Re-entry was decided by a panel of staff from different projects who are familiar with the policies and who have read the logs. It was a rotating panel and it also helped build community amongst all of the different projects. If that makes sense...

16:47:41 From sandracomstock to Hosts and panelists:
    On Ria's comment - I have a friend who manages a program at DESC in Seattle I could reach out to see what their accountability and grievance policy looks like in the current moment if there is interest

16:47:54 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
    ❤️❤️

16:48:13 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
    That was my favorite place to work in the world!!

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16:49:42 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
		I worked there 5 years in housing and the main shelter! I learned sooo much there! And I miss it terribly!

16:55:01 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
		I'm late to the party, but perhaps you could put the flyers up at clinics? Like Richmond or Outiside In? Or even the hospital?

16:55:13 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
		Yes that is helpful feedback Ria!

16:58:54 From Cheryl's iPad to Hosts and panelists:
		Maybe we could ask less evasive questions

16:59:50 From Cheryl's iPad to Hosts and panelists:
		Make it optional

17:01:01 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
		I wanted to circle back to the demographics--one reason we ask for this is because it helps us with a regional SHS goal that people of color and people with lived experience are overrepresented on all decision making and advisory bodies.

17:03:15 From sandracomstock to Hosts and panelists:
		THANK YOU!!!!!

17:03:23 From xenia to Hosts and panelists:
		Thanks y'all

17:03:25 From Cheryl's iPad to Hosts and panelists:
		Great meeting today

17:03:26 From Anna J, she/her, SHS team to Everyone:
		Thank you all so much ❤️

17:03:26 From Ty S to Hosts and panelists:
		Thank you!

17:03:27 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
		Thank you all!

17:03:30 From Taxfree to Hosts and panelists:
		Thanks

17:03:32 From xenia to Hosts and panelists:
		Sorry my phone died for second

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17:03:38 From Glyceria Tsinas to Hosts and panelists:
        Love all the way around!