Welcome

**Please make yourself comfortable.
We will get started in a few minutes.**

Homeless Services
Department

SHS Advisory Committee Meeting
September 11, 2025
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Homeless Services
Department

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator	Action
3:00	**Welcome** **Land and Labor Acknowledgement** **Introductions**	Mack Vohs	Inform
3:15	**Q&A Followup**	Mack Vohs	Inform, Discuss
3:25	**Updated Access Definition**	Anna Johnson	Inform
3:35	**Recommendations Timeline Discussion**	Mack Vohs	Discuss
3:45	**Review Potential Recommendations /** **Prioritization Activity**	Mack Vohs	Inform, Discuss
4:25	**Fall Meeting Preview**	Mack Vohs	Inform
4:30	**Session closes**	**Close**	

Land & Labor Acknowledgement

Multnomah County rests on the stolen lands of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, and Clackamas Bands of Chinook Indian Nation; Tualatin Kalapuya; Molalla; and many others along the Columbia River. This country is built on stolen Indigenous land and built by stolen African people. This land was not stolen and people were not enslaved by ambiguous entities and actors. The land was stolen by, and African peoples were enslaved by White settlers who had government support.

We also want to honor the members of over 400 tribal communities who live in Multnomah County. Many of these people and their cultures still survive and resist despite the intentional and ongoing attempts to destroy them. Let us please take a moment of silence to acknowledge the history of how we are here in this place and to honor the People.

Credit to: Dr. Aileen Duldulao and Heather Heater, Multnomah County

Introductions

- Name

- Pronouns (if comfortable sharing)

- Organization/community you represent

Q&A Followup

Homeless Services
Department

Framing the Conversation

What are we talking about?

We are catching up with answers to questions the committee asked in the August meeting and previous meetings this year.

Why is it important?

Transparency and responsiveness to information the committee has asked for, to support with making recommendations.

August Q&A

Q: 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?

A: All our contracts for permanent supportive housing (PSH) include supportive services. But we know locally we have a need that outpaces the resources we have. One way we addressed this was by investing $13.9 million last year to raise the standard per-household services funding rate from $10,000 to $15,000 per year for PSH projects and establishing a premium funding level of $17,500 per household for culturally specific projects, family projects, and PSH buildings with at least 25% of apartments dedicated to PSH. Twenty-one providers received the funds, and many hired additional staff.

August Q&A

Q: Sometimes it feels like providers get too many second chances. When would a situation escalate to a contract being terminated?

A: This would be determined on a case-by-case basis. Our agreements allow us to issue corrective action plans, and if a contractor fails to complete it, we may impose sanctions up to and including termination of the contract.

August Q&A

Q: How are we assessing/evaluating/remediating cases where a provider has a pattern of under-serving communities of color, LGBTQIA+, formerly incarcerated?

A: This year one of our SHS work plan goals is to assess racial and other identity-based disparities in services and outcomes. We receive annual data from providers on the demographics of their staff, and we regularly evaluate demographics of who is served. Over the last year, data and equity staff developed and will be implementing new equity measures to better understand how providers are serving priority populations and whether disparities are being reduced. These measures are essential for our budget and contracting processes. This year we will report on these measures and describe our current actions to address racial and other identity-based disparities. This assessment will help our office identify and better understand existing disparities in services and outcomes, laying the groundwork for programmatic and policy interventions.

August Q&A

Q: How are user experiences and / or grievances drawn upon to evaluate the work within different contractors?

A: Programs are required to have grievance policies to allow people receiving services or a family member to provide feedback about their experiences. Programs must keep a record of grievances and make their process well-known and easily accessible, but we don't currently require programs to share their grievances data with us. However, we are exploring the creation of a process for participants to elevate concerns and grievances directly to our office. In the July meeting we had a presentation from Doc Ramblings that introduced this project.

August Q&A

Q: Are there any independent user based evaluation surveys administered to participants who use services from HSD contracted providers? What happens to user evaluations carried out by contractors? Does the Homeless Services Department see those directly?

A: We do not currently collect any user surveys independently. Contracts require organizations to demonstrate accountability through at least once a year engagement with participants about delivery of services; however, these are not shared with our department. Our expectation is that programs should use that information to evaluate their policies and procedures and if needed adapt them to be responsive to the feedback.

August Q&A

Q: Are contractor reports and internal evaluations leveraged to identify *successful* practices for system replication and improvement initiatives?

A: This is one of the goals of a quality improvement project we have identified for FY26 around our monitoring processes. However, a common practice in providing technical assistance at the system level is to use system leadership spaces to explore and uplift successes and strong program practices in the spirit of peer sharing and learning.

August Q&A

Comment: I would have hoped to hear something in the presentation about disability.

Response: That is a very helpful callout. All contracts are required to comply with federal, state and local laws related to disability and other protected classes. This would include but is not limited to the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act. Our contract language specifically states that contractors must "Provide Housing First, Low Barrier, Assertive Engagement support services – participant-centered activities that focus on access, utilization, retention and adherence to housing, psychosocial, mental, and health services for persons experiencing homelessness. Participants shall not be rejected or exited from participation in PSH due to unnecessary barriers such as sobriety, income, mental health needs, disabilities, or due to being generally considered 'difficult to work with."

You Asked: Who's Talking About Access?

Lived Experience Advisory Committee, Homeless Services Department

The LEAC seeks to improve access by addressing discrimination, strengthening case management and housing support, updating facilities, and revising sensitive data collection policies.
The LEAC is currently developing recommendations on **improving shelter**, specifically:
1) Behavior and exclusion policies
2) Shelter accountability mechanisms
3) Provider alignment and system-wide training

You Asked: Who's Talking About Access?

Equity Advisory Committee, Homeless Services Department

The EAC has made recommendations to improve equity evaluations that could also improve access. They have recommended training HSD staff in the step by step processes HSD will utilize when providers do not fulfill equity contract requirements, and that the HSD create and share a clear outline of those processes with providers.

You Asked: Who's Talking About Access?

Tri-County Planning Body, Oregon Metro

This regional SHS group set a goal to make the Coordinated Entry system more accessible, equitable and efficient for staff and participants. A workgroup is mapping the challenges and successes of the Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas County Coordinated Entry systems and assessing opportunities to create connectivity/ co-enrollment with other systems.

You Asked: Who's Talking About Access?

Tri-County Planning Body, Oregon Metro

This body is also working on regional training goals that meet the needs of direct service staff, with sensitivity to the needs of BIPOC agencies.

- **Implementation strategy #1**: develop a non-credit training program through a community college
- **Implementation strategy #2**: identify and scale up existing trainings

You Asked: Who is Being Served?

SHS reports (quarterly and annual) provide data on race/ethnicity, disability, and gender identity for various service types (PSH, RRH, prevention, shelter, RLRA, etc.). The Q4 report is due August 15, and the annual report October 31. All reports are available at https://hsd.multco.us/shs.

By Name List shows the latest estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County with a breakdown of sheltered vs. unsheltered, inflow vs. outflow, and demographic categories like race/ethnicity, gender, age, and veteran status.

You Asked: Who is Being Served?

Demographics SHS Q4 Report (Apr - June 2025)	Permanent Supportive Housing	Rapid Re-Housing	Eviction & Homeless Prevention	Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance
BIPOC	69%	68%	69%	71.3%
Non-Hispanic White	31%	32%	31%	28.7%
Persons with disabilities	59%	37%	36%	54.8%
Woman (girl if child)	44%	57%	54%	54.2%
Man (boy if child)	54%	42%	45%	43%
Trans/Nonbinary/Other	6%	1.4%	1.3%	3.3%

Updated Access Definition & Problem Statement

Homeless Services Department

Framing the Conversation: Updated Access Definition

What are we talking about?

Members voted to approve definitions and problem statements for your priorities in June. Staff made changes suggested in the June meeting and sent out a survey for final feedback. The updated versions incorporate this feedback.

Why is it important?

Follow through and responsiveness to committee feedback. The updated access definition will also be a helpful framework for our discussion today about potential access recommendations.

Problem Statement

Problem Statement: Why Do We Need Better Access?

When someone is at risk of or becomes homeless in Multnomah County, getting help is not easy. It's not clear to people where to go, and it's hard to get a clear and complete picture of what mainstream and culturally specific resources are available. There are many access points and pathways, and the process is often confusing to navigate even for organizations and people who work in the system.

Many of the people navigating the system are in crisis, or operating without the time, capacity, or trust to engage in lengthy processes. When they seek services, they face further barriers to access in the form of historic & current discrimination and disparities, and ineffectively designed program and system-level policies. Because of past harms, people may have a valid mistrust of service entities and be hesitant to share personal information. On top of all of this is the fact that there simply aren't enough housing resources — which is both causing homelessness and making it worse — and not enough supportive services to go around. For some differently abled communities, there aren't any services that specifically speak to their needs.

Definition

Definition: What Does Access Mean to this Committee?

Because of this, the SHS Advisory Committee would like the Homeless Services Department to lead efforts to improve access to homeless and housing services in Multnomah County and equip participants to successfully navigate our system.
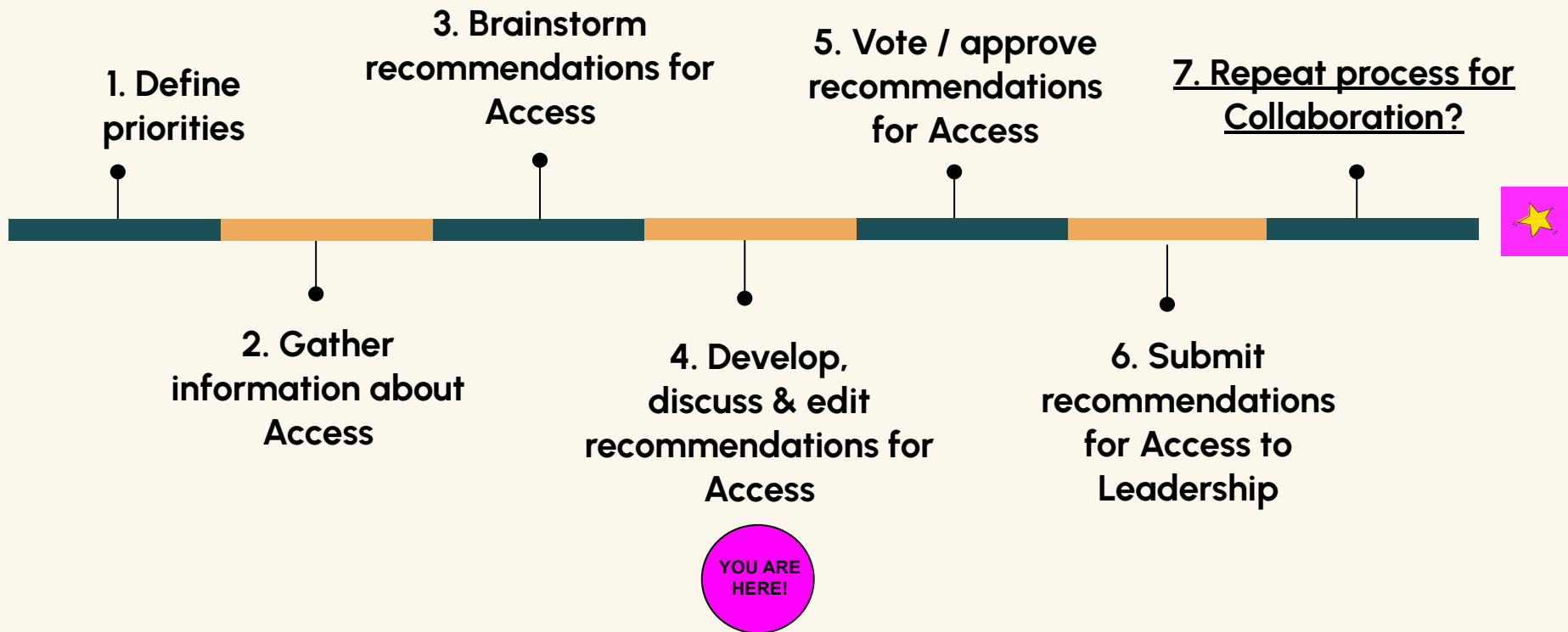
Access in supportive housing means that all individuals — regardless of race, ability, gender, orientation, family status, pregnancy, or mental, physical, behavioral health status, or any other aspect of their background — are treated with respect when they ask for help, and can meaningfully and easily access, navigate, and benefit from housing and the services that support housing stability. Access is about physical space, but it's also about designing systems that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to real-life barriers to housing. Access must be more than a value — it must show up in everyday interactions through clear communication, consistent follow-through, simplified navigation, and transparency about what's possible.

Process Update

1. Define priorities

2. Gather information about Access

3. Brainstorm recommendations for Access

4. Develop, discuss & edit recommendations for Access

YOU ARE HERE!

5. Vote / approve recommendations for Access

6. Submit recommendations for Access to Leadership

7. Repeat process for Collaboration?

Potential Access Recommendations /Activity

Homeless Services Department

Framing the Conversation: Potential Recommendations

What are we talking about?

The SHS team reviewed all of the committee's discussions about Access from throughout the year and has compiled a list that contains ideas for potential recommendations, and barriers that could become recommendations.

Why is it important?

Having the committee's gut reactions and initial conversations about this list is a first step in refining what recommendations will eventually be presented to the leadership of our department. It is important to hear everyone's voices!

Review Time & Activity

5 minutes for folks to review the list of **potential recommendations** and **barriers** (available in your meeting packet) that could be developed into recommendations.

Questions to think about in preparation for the whiteboard activity:
- Is there anything missing?
- Anything that should be removed?
- Are there any recommendations that could be combined?
- Is there a certain category that you feel the strongest about?
- Which barriers are you most interested in turning into recommendations?

Fall Meeting Preview

Fall Meeting Preview

October: No meeting; enjoy a fall break 🍂 SHS staff will send out a followup survey to further refine the committee's list of potential recommendations.

November: We will likely spend this meeting wordsmithing and coming up with recommendations to address key barriers to access the committee has identified.

Close