

- I. [East County Family Shelter FAQ](#); and
- II. [Service Provider Q&A Responses](#)

Programming

Who is the service provider?

[Just Compassion](#) was awarded the contract to operate this family motel shelter. Originally based in Washington County (OR), this shelter will be their first project in Multnomah County. They have over five years of experience helping people experiencing homelessness, running a shelter and resource center in the City of Tigard.

Who will be staying in this shelter?

Shelter guests are deemed to have “family” status and are experiencing homelessness. A “family” includes adults with minor children or those pregnant in the third trimester. Homelessness is defined broadly to include families who are doubled up, staying in places not meant for habitation, in shelter, or facing official eviction.

Could this shelter serve single fathers?

Yes, any adult with minor children in their care can access the shelter. The minors just need to be in their care 51% of the time.

Will shelter guests be required to be clean and sober?

The Homeless Services Department (HSD) has a strict policy of no substances allowed on campus. While alcohol and drug use are not allowed onsite, the service provider staff will not test program participants as a requirement to access the shelter. Staff are trained to support families with substance use issues.

Will there be background checks?

Yes, all HSD-funded family shelters perform background checks to check for sex offenses against minors. It is common practice as part of case management to conduct additional background checks to identify and remedy any additional barriers to housing.

How does intake work?

Rooms with the East County Family Shelter are reservation-only. Guests will have gone through an evaluation process. HSD currently maintains a waitlist for family shelter that is approximately eight to nine months long. The shelter provider will assess families at the top of the waitlist for fit, e.g., proximity to home school, accessibility needs, etc.

How long will shelter guests stay at the East County Family Shelter?

The East County Family Shelter is a 24/7 shelter where shelter guests are guaranteed their room while engaged in the program. The typical length of stay is nine months, during which families' children will be attending school, and staff will be supporting shelter guests in working toward the ultimate goal of permanent housing.

Is there a system in place for contract management to ensure that the service provider is compliant to expectations, e.g., staffing levels?

Yes. HSD conducts contract monitoring every fiscal year to review compliance and assess risk. These processes identify whether an organization may need any off-cycle onsite monitoring. Site monitoring practices typically include reviewing policy documents, client files, and interviewing key staff.

Facility**Will there be space for students to study and/or parents to pursue additional education? Will there be wifi?**

Yes, there will be wifi on campus, and the privacy of these rooms allow each family to control their environment to focus on their education or career

development activities. The campus also has community spaces for people to gather should the need arise.

What is the kitchen facility and area for food?

The campus has a commercial kitchen designed for meals like a continental breakfast. Each room is also equipped with a microwave and refrigerator.

Site selection

Why is the County adding this shelter in East Multnomah County?

In 2024, HSD analyzed the need for homeless services by geography and found that Gresham, East County, and North Portland were the regions with the greatest number of people living in cost-burdened and overcrowded households.

Calls to 211, which is the single point of contact for families to request services, show that between April 2024 and March 2025 42.9% of all calls from families self-identifying as homeless came from ZIP codes that overlap Gresham and/or the three cities in East Multnomah County. Currently, there is no shelter designed to serve families located east of I-205.

Gresham is already overburdened by shelter. Why Gresham?

The location of this shelter is centrally located to serve families in East Multnomah County and the campus has met HSD's stringent requirements to ensure shelter programming is suitable for families, including: room arrangements, building condition, safety features (e.g., all rooms have fire suppression sprinklers), and accessibility to green spaces, shopping, health care, and other amenities.

As of October 2025, there are 51 publicly-funded shelter sites across the County, with just 3 located in Gresham. The East County Family Shelter would be the fourth.

What has been the relationship with the local schools?

The local school districts (Gresham-Barlow and Reynolds) are participants in the McKinney-Vento/Homeless Education Act program, each having dedicated district liaisons to bridge families experiencing homelessness with their schools. Both school districts have expressed their support for the new family shelter.

Communication/Community Engagement**Why didn't I know about this meeting?**

The primary mode of outreach leading to the opening of the East County Family Shelter has been focused on in-person community meetings and canvassing with nearby households and businesses. The first meeting took place at Mount Hood Community College in September, 2025. A follow-up meeting will take place in late October, 2025, at Walt Morey Middle School.

How can the community stay involved? Are there volunteer opportunities?

Members of the community are encouraged to stay apprised of shelter developments and news by visiting the project website at the following address: hsd.multco.us/emergency-shelters/east-county-family-shelter/

If there are volunteer opportunities, HSD will post them on the project site listed above.

END OF FAQ SECTION

Q&A Responses: Community Meeting #2, October 29, 2025

Site / Facility Questions

- **Question:** Is it 50 beds or units? **Answer:** 50 units. About half have 2 beds, half have one. All units have pull-out bed couches.
- **Question:** Are there security cameras? **Answer:** Yes!
- **Question:** Since the building is being leased, is it a temporary shelter? **Answer:** It is a 10 year lease, and HSD has an annual opportunity to exit annually. A high majority of families will be Gresham residents.
- **Question:** How much accountability is there for maintenance and housekeeping? **Answer:** Rooms are paid for nightly, so if the rooms are not at a certain standard, then we do not pay for it. We have a relationship with this current landlord and they have been great to work with.
- **Question:** Are there common areas? **Answer:** Yes, there is a large space where the owners used to live that will be a common area. There is also a shared dining area.
- **Question:** Food service - kitchenettes? **Answer:** No commercial kitchen on site, but hoping to collaborate with a Church to get hot meals. Lots of refrigerators to store food and good ways to heat them up on site. Mini fridges in the rooms and microwaves.
- **Question:** Is it easier to lease a building versus own? **Answer:** Considerations - Price of the building and do we have capital funding to purchase? Leasing includes a lot of

services, including maintenance and housekeeping. This is usually the better option.

On-site Services for Families

- **Question:** Is there a medical facility on site? **Answer:** No, but will coordinate with the Mobile clinics, getting hair cuts on site and other medical services.
- **Question:** Parenting classes? **Answer:** Yes! Child Development Specialists will be focusing on this.
- Housing Placement Out of Shelter - Funds will go to helping pay for application costs, deposit, a few months of rent, other fees, etc. 98% success rate for housing out of shelter.
- **Concern:** Housing without connection to treatment and services. **Answer:** 4-6 months in shelter is spent providing connection to services, including treatment, employment, budgeting, etc. Check in regularly in person and see how they are doing. ICM - Intensive Case Management model.
- **Question:** Are you looking at the Woodland Flats affordable housing property as a potential place to refer families out of shelter? **Answer:** Sounds great!

Site Operations/Staffing

- **Question:** Are staff on site? **Answer:** Yes, 24/7 staffing and other staff are located on site. 10am-6pm general curfew. Must communicate if they will be outside of the shelter outside of these hours.
- **Question:** How is your staffing? **Answer:** We are one of the lucky agencies during this time as we are expanding. Getting a lot of great, qualified applicants. Michael Austin (Just

Compassion) is specifically going into each interview to make sure the right people are being hired into this space.

- **Question:** Does housekeeping and maintenance interact with families? **Answer:** Try to schedule them for when families are not in the room. Housekeeping and maintenance staff typically work around rooms during the day.
- **Question:** How many staff do you have 24/7? **Answer:** 1:25 person ratio is required. Try to do 1:20.
- **Question:** Do you have a rotation schedule for going on site? **Answer:** Yes, Michael Austin (Just Compassion) will personally be going regularly, especially at the beginning. Likely once a week at least. Hiring a shelter Director who will be there half the time. Shelter Manager and Supervisor will be there almost every day. Address concerns and calls immediately.

Community Impact

- **Question:** Does leasing impact the property tax that goes to the community? **Answer:** It depends. HSD answered:
 - The owner is still receiving income and must continue to pay property taxes, as the land use does not change, so in this case, the property is being commercially used for transient lodging;
 - Transient lodging purchased for emergency shelter is exempt from local, county, and state occupancy taxes; *but*
 - Local economic activity generated by the shelter itself must also be considered, with potential positive impacts on local jobs and services.

- **Question:** Can you talk about how to address issues that participants cause outside of the shelter? **Answer:** Good Neighbor Agreement - addressing site and surrounding property.
- **Question:** How are you going to communicate this with the community? **Answer:** Street Outreach Teams and engaging with the school districts to identify families in need of shelter. Focus on eviction prevention. **Answer:** Public website, ListServ, community engagement meetings.
- **Question:** How do you pick the people to engage in a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA)? **Answer:** Work with community organizations that represent a large body in the area. Mt Hood Business Plaza - engage with them to identify businesses to participate. Suggestion - Gresham PD Community Outreach. Potentially work with a facilitator. School Districts to connect with parents and the community in general. List of potential stakeholders. Holding these meetings to establish a group of community members who are aware, show interest, and have community connections. Stay apprised by going to Project Page (URL on FAQ document).
- **Question:** Are you going to develop relationships with orgs like My Father's House as well as Churches? **Answer:** Yes! Love making connections and have great relationships with many people.

Program Qualifications

- **Question:** Acceptance criteria? **Answer:** 4 Systems of Care: Adults, Families with children, Unaccompanied Youth (ages 18-25), and Domestic and Sexual Violence. Families

call 211 to be put on a waitlist. Ask preferences for Will do S.O. background checks. Check for legal guardianship.

- **Question:** Waitlist? **Answer:** Waitlist for family system for all of Multnomah County is 9-10 months currently and 350 households. Opening up these 50 units will help reduce this waitlist.
- **Question:** Do you have the ability to take families in on emergency cases? Such as families fleeing DSV. **Answer:** Considering making some of the rooms be emergency shelter rooms. Working on developing a process for this.

Family Shelter Tenant Expectations

- **Concern:** Not a sobriety criteria. **Answer:** Zero tolerance for drugs on site. Progressive model around engagement/intervention. For example: If they are smoking weed, have a conversation and refer to treatment. If they are selling drugs, that gets elevated to higher level.
- **Question:** What is the procedure when people use substances outside of the shelter site? **Answer:** Staff will engage with them and get them back into services. If there is concern of the welfare of their child, then CPS may get involved. All staff are mandatory reporters.
- **Question:** At what point do you determine referrals to services are not working? **Answer:** Use the progressive model but we may exit them to another program.
- **Question:** What is the average length of stay? **Answer:** Approximately 4-6 months. If it takes longer, as long as they continue to engage then will continue to work with them.

- **Question:** How do you ensure people have access to transportation? **Answer:** Yes, funding to help with TriMet bus passes.
- **Question:** What is the policy about addressing reports? **Answer:** Safety coordinator will be the first response. Non-emergency will be called as needed. Emergency response will also be used of course.
- **Question:** Will sobriety be a requirement? **Answer:** No, but they cannot do drugs on site. Room inspections - check cleanliness, no drugs, any maintenance needs, etc.