

JOHS Administration and Operations

Program Description & Goals

The Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) is the backbone agency supporting a collective impact approach to preventing and ending homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County. The City and the County consolidated resources and services under the JOHS to fund community initiatives to prevent and ultimately end homelessness for tens of thousands of individuals and families each year. The JOHS is guided by the shared values and common agenda of the A Home for Everyone (AHFE) partners and a commitment to maximizing the benefits of local public investments.

Explanation of Services

Homelessness is an ongoing crisis in Portland and Multnomah County. In the last several years, the city and county's communities have come together and responded in unprecedented ways. The JOHS represents a shared commitment between the City of Portland and Multnomah County to expand, improve, and simplify access to the range of services needed to address homelessness in our community.

JOHS administers contracts for homeless services, plans and manages systems of care, oversees system reporting and evaluation, conducts homeless street counts and one night shelter counts, and writes proposals to and monitors funds issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care program. These operations affect the lives of tens of thousands of homeless singles, youth, families, and survivors of domestic violence in our community.

Through the JOHS, funds are contracted to 40-plus nonprofit and public agencies to provide a comprehensive range of services to assist people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The JOHS receives funding and policy direction from the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The JOHS, by integrating staffing and funding, offers the City and County enhanced operational coordination and effectiveness in the delivery of homeless services.

Equity Impacts

The JOHS is committed to and has taken numerous steps to realize the AHFE goal of achieving racial equity in homeless services and eliminating disparate rates of homelessness on the basis of race and ethnicity. To that end, the JOHS has:

- (1) Improved data collection and outcome reporting using inclusive racial identities;
- (2) Created standards of practice for all contractors that include cultural responsiveness and culturally specific service provision;
- (3) Included a requirement for organizational equity assessments, plans, and progress reporting on all contracts;
- (4) Prioritized and increased funding to culturally specific organizations through local procurement processes and prioritization of culturally specific programs in competitive federal applications; and

(5) Prioritized staff support to the AHFE Equity Committee, the local launch of a national initiative to address the role of racism in causing and perpetuating homelessness (“Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities”), and the implementation of the AHFE equity lens in all AHFE planning effort .

The JOHS is further increasing its internal capacity to support racial equity work through the hiring of an Equity Manager and additional equity focused staff who leads the JOHS’s racial equity efforts with AHFE and its contractors, and the development and implementation of both the County’s, as well as an office-specific, workforce equity plan.

Multiple elements of structural racism drive racial disparities in homelessness both locally and nationally. Locally, people from three racial groups were confirmed to be over-represented in the homeless population, according to the 2019 Point in Time Count of Homelessness, the most recent available that includes numbers for the unsheltered population . These are people identifying as Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Black/African American. Among these three groups, people identifying as Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native were the most over-represented. Other data sources suggest that the failure of the PIT to document overrepresentation of the Latinx population is likely the result of the methodology used for the PIT . Achieving equity in the delivery of homeless services requires that all communities have equitable access through multiple pathways into services, and that services are culturally specific and responsive. All JOHS investments are evaluated using an equity lens.

Changes to Program

In March of 2020, following public health guidance, the Joint Office of Homeless Services took immediate steps to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the homeless population and otherwise mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on those experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness. These activities, which include operating physical distancing and medical isolation shelters, safety on the streets outreach, and support for contracted service providers, continued throughout FY 2021-22 . With the ongoing impact of the pandemic on people experiencing homelessness, the JOHS expects to continue some parts of its COVID-19 response in FY 2022-23.

In May of 2020, voters across our region reaffirmed their commitment to addressing homelessness by approving Metro Measure 26-210, a tax on high-income earners and businesses, which will generate revenue for supportive housing services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The Supportive Housing Services Measure (SHSM) funds important services to address chronic homelessness, as well as placement, prevention, and support services for the non-chronic population, including case management, rent assistance, employment services, mental healthcare, and addiction and recovery treatment. These services are to be prioritized in a manner that provides equitable access to people of color and other historically marginalized communities. The SHSM tax went into effect on January 1, 2021, and Metro began distributing revenue to counties in FY 2021-22. The JOHS budgeted \$52.1 million in SHSM revenue in FY 2021-22 and has been developing and launching the programs and services funded by the Measure. Metro expects collections to gradually increase over time as individuals and businesses adjust to the tax and the JOHS anticipates budgeting an additional SHSM revenue in FY 2022-23, which will fund further expansion of important programs and services .

Program Budget

	Actuals FY 2019-20	Actuals FY 2020-21	Revised FY 2021-22	Requested Base FY 2022-23	Requested with DP FY 2022-23
Bureau Expenditures					
External Materials and Services	433,319	406,373	5,690,415	2,796,164	2,796,164
Bureau Expenditures Total	433,319	406,373	5,690,415	2,796,164	2,796,164
Requirements Total	433,319	406,373	5,690,415	2,796,164	2,796,164

Budget Narrative

Resources	The City's proposed contribution to the JOHS budget includes resources from the City's General Fund and two federal grants: (1) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and (2) Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).
Expenses	City funds are pass through payments to JOHS and are used to support office staffing and service charges for facilities, information technology, distribution and records, and materials and supplies for office operations. City funds are passed through to the JOHS. The total JOHS budget is represented in the Multnomah County budget where the office is hosted. For more information, please see the Multnomah County JOHS budget.
Staffing	For specific FTE detail, please see the Multnomah County JOHS Budget.
Assets and Liabilities	The City has no assets or liabilities associated with this program.

Program Information

Program Contact:	Marc Jolin
Contact Phone:	503-988-5531
Website:	multco.us/joint-office-homeless-services