

Clackamas County Provider Update and Engagement Session Minutes

Date: December 13th, 2021

Time: 5:30-6:30 PM

Panelists

Moderator: Dylan Blaylock – Community Relations Specialist

Vahid Brown – Supportive Housing Services Manager

Abby Ahern – Policy, Performance & Research Analyst

Jaymi Stark – Senior Management Analyst

Cody Thomas – Management Analyst

Erin Fernald – Management Analyst

Attendees

Representatives from the following community-based organizations were in attendance:

Cascade Aids Project, Central City Concern, Clackamas Women’s Services, Clackamas Workforce Partnership, College Housing Northwest, CWS, DevNW, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Promise of Tualatin Valley, Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers, HereTogether, Homeless Solutions Committee of Clackamas County, Impact NW, Northwest Family Services, Northwest Housing Alternatives, The Father’s Heart, the Living Room, Unite Oregon

Supportive Housing Services Progress Update

Vahid Brown, Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Manager, reviewed the agenda for the night’s meeting before providing an update on the program’s activities to date and the planned expansion of the program through the remainder Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Mr. Brown began the presentation by updating the attendees on the program’s progress in the first quarter of the fiscal year. The first quarter was focused on stabilizing two high-performing emergency/transitional shelter programs which were time-limited and at imminent risk of losing funding. Stabilizing these programs ensured that current program participants did not exit into homelessness. These two programs are the Serenity and Haven Houses and the Hotel/Motel Emergency

Shelter Program. Serenity and Haven Houses are supportive mental health homes which shelter and support some of the most vulnerable people in the County. The two Houses are operated through a partnership with Clackamas County Community Corrections and Bridges to Change. The Hotel/Motel Emergency Shelter Program is a time-limited emergency sheltering program which began in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide a safe shelter-in-place option for people experiencing homelessness with high risk factors for adverse effects from contracting COVID-19.

On November 2nd, the Board of County Commissioners approved the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cover the cost of the Hotel/Motel Emergency Shelter Program. These leveraged funds will allow the SHS Program to reallocate approximately \$2.23M in funding to new/expanded services. Without stabilization these two programs would have ceased to function due to a lack of ongoing funding. These shelters are providing 63 units of emergency and transitional shelter and in the first quarter they provided assistance to 140 households – 135 of whom were identified as the most vulnerable Population A.

The progress update continued with a brief presentation on the program's continued implementation and roll-out of new services through the second quarter. The new services which began rolling-out in the second quarter were the result of a procurement which awarded five organizations, including two culturally specific providers, with contracts. The following service providers are contracted to provide a housing navigation/placement for 102 households, supportive housing case management for 205 households, and short-term rent assistance for 10 households.

- Clackamas Women's Services
- El Programa Hispano Catòlico – Culturally specific and new to Clackamas County
- Greater New Hope Family Services – Culturally specific and new to Clackamas County
- Impact NW
- Northwest Family Services

In addition to these new services, the SHS Program began providing Regional Long-term Rental Assistance (RLRA). As of December 13th, 31 households were leased and receiving rental assistance while 27 more households had been approved for the assistance and were actively looking for housing.

Moving forward into the second half of the fiscal year, the approximately \$2.23M in reallocated SHS funds will enable the SHS Program to move into another stage of new/expanded services beginning at the end of the third quarter. This next stage of program funding will be done through a Tri-County Request for Programmatic Qualifications (RFPQ). Washington County, in cooperation with Multnomah County and Clackamas County, opened the Tri-County RFPQ on December 1st. This is a comprehensive procurement which seeks to qualify providers to create a pool for which future solicitations can procure services from. Community based organizations outside of the Metro UGB in rural Clackamas County are encouraged to apply, as this RFPQ can also be used to procure services funded by other, non-Metro fund sources. Mr. Brown reiterated that the purpose of the engagement portion of this meeting was to receive feedback from the provider community on what types of services these funds should be prioritized for once the RFPQ closes.

Mr. Brown then reviewed the System-wide Investment Priorities which are outlined in the County’s Local Implementation Plan (LIP). The five investment priorities listed below have informed the Program’s Year 1 investments and will continue to be prioritized throughout this year and beyond.

- *Building Community Based Organization (CBO) Capacity*
- *Evaluating the System and Program*
- *Collecting and Sharing Data*
- *Navigating the System and Coordinating Access*
- *County Program Implementation Capacity*

Mr. Brown also reviewed the Priority Program Investments which are outlined in the County’s LIP. The eight priority program investments listed below informed the Program’s Year 1 goals and will continue to be prioritized for future funding opportunities.

- *Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity*
- *Expand And Establish Culturally Specific Services*
- *Expand Wrap Around Support Services*
- *Increase Housing Placement Services*
- *Expand Existing, High Performing, Contracted Programs And Services*
- *Convert Vouchers That Are Time-limited*
- *Allocate Funds For Outreach*
- *Increase Internal Capacity*

Mr. Brown concluded the update by reviewing the projected progress the program is currently on pace to achieve with executed contracts and RLRA funding as of December 13th, 2021. The table below demonstrates the projected progress the Program will make in each service category contrasted with the goal in the County’s LIP. These numbers do not account for the influx of reallocated funds following the ARPA decision in November, 2021.

Services/Programs by Type	Contracted/Projected Progress (HH/units)	Goal in LIP (HH/Units)
Supportive Housing Services/Case Management (HH)	205	200
Long Term Rent Assistance – RLRA (HH)	200	250
Short Term Rent Assistance – STRA (HH)	10	130
Eviction Prevention (HH)	0	110
Housing Placement/Navigation (HH)	102	200
Emergency Shelter/Transitional (Units) Includes Hotel/Motel Room Rentals (43 Units) & Serenity-Haven House Programs (20 Units)	63	65
Outreach (HH)	0	500

Questions and Answers

Following the SHS Update, Mr. Blaylock opened the floor for a general Q&A period:

Q) Which services listed in the previously shared goals and progress table are new services being funded with SHS revenue?

A) The supportive housing case management, long-term rent assistance, short-term rent assistance, and housing placement/navigation are all new services using SHS revenue. The emergency and transitional shelter units provided through the Hotel/Motel Emergency Shelter Program and the Serenity-Haven House Programs had lost their funding sources and were at immediate risk of ceasing operations without stabilization with other funding sources. SHS funds are now being used to operate the Serenity-Haven House Programs and ARPA funds were leveraged by the Board of County Commissioners to cover the projected cost of the Hotel/Motel Emergency Shelter Program.

Q) Many folks who have been screened through Coordinated Housing Access (CHA) are currently on wait lists and need services. How will those folks be served and prioritized?

A) Many of the folks currently sheltered in the Hotel/Motel Emergency Shelter Program are also on the CHA waitlist and will be connected to permanent supportive housing through the contracts we have already executed. We also anticipate a small amount of surplus capacity from these current contracts in addition to any future capacity which will be created through newly contracted services. This extra capacity will assist households on the CHA waitlist and staff will be working on that specific process to ensure households which meet the program's eligibility standards are matched with providers.

Q) When the Program has finished issuing RLRA to the previously identified populations, how will it ensure that the next population who has access to RLRA are from diverse populations?

A) The Program will need to first ensure that any households meet Measure 26-210's criteria of who is eligible for assistance. 75% of the Measure's funds must be used on the most vulnerable in our community, classified as Population A in the Measure. These are folks who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing long-term or episodic homelessness, have extremely low incomes, and one or more disabling conditions. This of course includes individuals from historically marginalized communities who are more at risk of experiencing long-term episodes of homelessness. The Measure heavily focuses on equity and inclusion, and it is engrained in all aspects of the program's implementation.

We are also actively partnering with culturally specific organizations and looking into outreach systems that can reach the County's BIPOC communities. Additionally, we are tracking and reporting on the racial demographics of the program's outcomes and we will be evaluated on whether or not we're able to serve an equitable population. We are designing our processes and systems to ensure people from BIPOC communities are prioritized and we will be evaluating the program's outcomes to determine whether or not those measures have been successful.

Q) Is there any emphasis or vision for expanding youth specific emergency shelter beds in Clackamas County with the currently anticipated funding levels?

A) There is not a specific plan at the moment to expand youth shelter but it is something that can be achieved through the Tri-County RFPQ process. One of the Program's Year 1 goals in the LIP was to

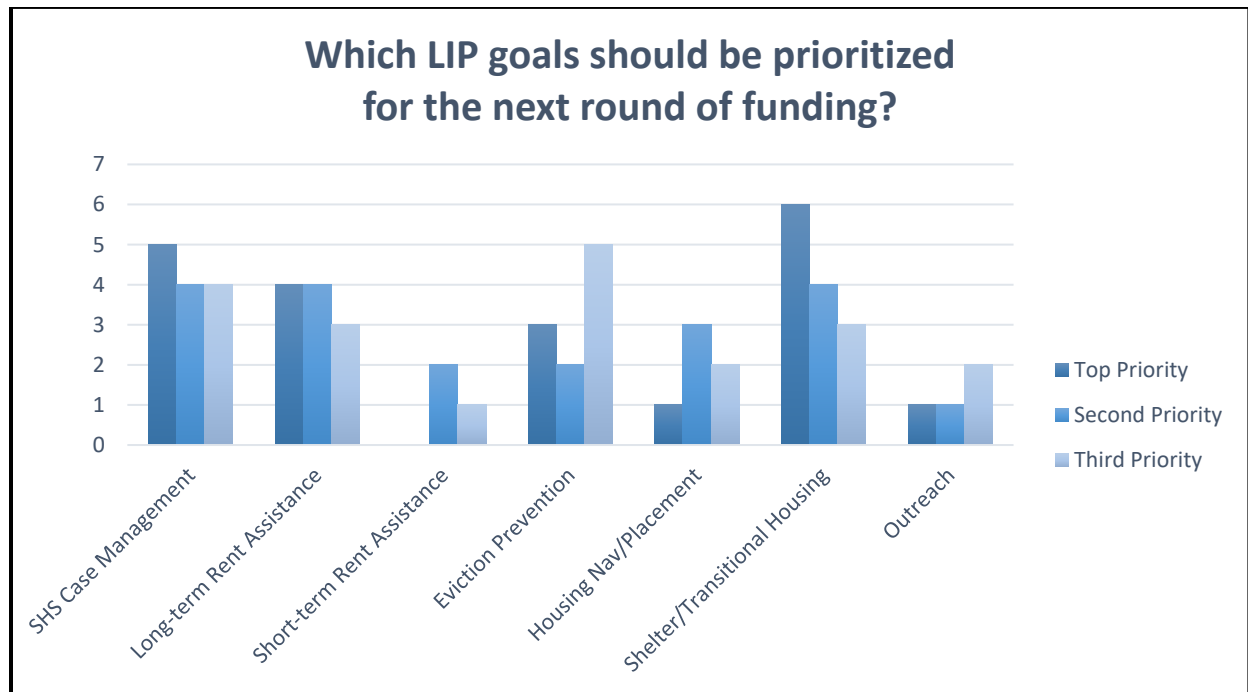
expand emergency shelter and transitional housing. This goal was not population specific, but feedback on which populations need expanded shelter resources is valuable as we plan the next round of funding.

Q) Are there certain marginalized groups the County would like to focus on or expand services for?

A) Our LIP identifies the greatest disparities faced by different racial and ethnic groups in Clackamas County and the BIPOC community faces the greatest level of disparity at the moment. That is an area of concern and the County is working on addressing that, two new culturally specific providers have already been brought on to provide services to Clackamas County residents. This is not the only disparity but it is the largest which was directly identified in the LIP.

Provider Feedback

Following the Questions and Answers segment two exercises were done to solicit feedback from the Clackamas County provider community – 20 representatives from community based organizations provided feedback. A ranked-choice poll was done to identify which LIP Goals they believe the program should prioritize for future funding. Attendees were also asked to provide additional feedback on three questions regarding prioritizing services, identifying gaps in the SHS Program’s current priorities and plan, and how racial equity could be advanced. The results of the ranked-choice poll are detailed in the graph below. The feedback received in the additional engagement activities are listed with their corresponding question and have been organized by theme/topic.



Q) Are there any other types of services or programs which should be prioritized?

Affordable Housing

- Development of actual housing instead of emergency shelters.

Elder Care

- Seniors are the fastest-growing population coming through our doors.
- Access for seniors who are not on subsidy in low income units but cannot afford rent increase. Eviction prevention as part of landlord incentive to offer seniors diversion plan.

Eviction Prevention/Diversion

- Prevention and diversion
- Eviction support. People are getting evicted and need Legal aid support and rent assistance
- Prevention/Education (for example, budgeting classes, workshops where people can learn about low-cost housing properties and get support with applications, etc)
- Focus on diversion and prevention
- Prevention & diversion support with housing navigation/case management/wrap around services.

Outdoor Shelter

- Tent city or sanctioned parking sites
- Low cost/high impact immediate term programs such as organized camping/car camping with navigational supports

Population Specific Services

- DHS-involved families (especially if Child Welfare involvement and housing would help with reunification)
- Services specific for domestic violence, trafficking and sexual assault.
- Navigation and outreach that is based on meeting people's unique and individual needs.
- Ensuring that DV/SA survivors safety and confidentiality needs are protected and met
- Former foster care youth

Transitional Housing

- Re-entry programs for those exiting incarceration
- There seems to be a lot of focus on low-barrier emergency shelter, but there should also be focus on programs/organizations that are moving people through to higher-barrier opportunities.

Wrap-around Services

- Long term robust support services
- Resident services
- Mental health and wellness support

Q) What do you see as the biggest gaps in the SHS Program's current priorities and plan?

CHA Accessibility

- CHA waitlists are large and many households were contacted last spring in anticipation of SHS funding and they are still waiting. Some have been waiting years
- Making CHA accessible for those who are most vulnerable

Community Coordination

- Intersectionality and connectivity

COVID-19 Services

- I have been hearing that Section 8 tenants that get covid-19 have many needs, like getting food delivery and medications expenses, because of that sometimes they don't have money to pay their portion of the rent. I think this is a gap that needs to be cover.

Data Collection/Analysis

- Data & Mapping. It is hard to know what the gaps are without a data-driven mapping of existing and planned services.

Elder Care

- Aging in place/elder care safety planning
- Aging in Place

Enhancing Service Provider Infrastructure

- Ensuring that local CBOs can pay their staff housing wages and have an appropriate infrastructure in place.
- Training for how to serve participants of different backgrounds (even if not a culturally-specific agency)
- There is a commitment to nonprofit infrastructure- that should include supporting and prioritizing the nonprofits located in this county that have been working with the population for years. Yes, we need more providers but do not discount or overlook the many agencies already here doing this work in some cases for decades.

Population-Specific Shelter

- Youth specific emergency shelter options.
- Would be good if County Commissioners prioritized any future turn key opportunities. Shelter with dignity as a transitional option is critical

Q) What should the SHS Program prioritize to help advance racial equity throughout program implementation?

Community Engagement

- Participant/Community voice (in planning, in feedback, in review)
- Working with community resources for culturally-specific assistance
- Engage communities directly and frequently for feedback

Culturally Specific Service Providers

- Racial Equity - Early investment/contracting with culturally specific groups to pay for their capacity to respond to the RFP/Q, undertake planning activities, and engage in this process.
- Contract with BIPOC organizations to make sure Immigrants and Refugees get the necessary help to stay housed.
- Accountability with all contracted agencies to ensure that what gets contracted for gets achieved
- Prioritize both culturally and population-specific agencies AND programs within other agencies that are culturally specific and population specific- both models have a critical role.

Data Collection/Analysis

- Data data data and more data
- Critical review of the data

Internal Training

- Train the current Board of Commissioners in Implicit Bias and Trauma Informed Care to help them understand why this work is important

Participant Choice

- Preference policies to reach marginalized populations LGBTQIA, BIBOC, seniors, chronically homeless