



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

2024

STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MULTNOMAH COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

Sharon Meieran, District 1

Jesse Beason, (Interim) District 2

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2024 State Legislative Agenda

The 2024 Legislative Session presents an unique opportunity to support essential programs and services in Multnomah county, the most populous and diverse community in the state with over 800,000 residents. In partnership with state partners, the County will work to develop innovative solutions to budget, service delivery, and racial equity challenges.

The following report details the County’s 2024 State Legislative Agenda, budget and policy priorities for this session. We aim to do the following in this session:

[Invest in Oregon’s Behavioral Health System](#)

[Expanding Housing and Shelter Capacity](#)

[Promote Community Safety & Justice](#)

[Protecting Services for Our Most Vulnerable](#)

[Support Economic and Community Development](#)

[Protect our Environment](#)

[Sustainably Fund Transportation and Infrastructure](#)

[Invest in Oregon’s Behavioral Health System](#)

Multnomah County manages a recovery-focused, comprehensive system of care to prevent, intervene in and treat mental illness and addiction issues for approximately 53,000 children and adults annually. Through culturally responsive and evidence-based practices, we serve low-income, uninsured, and houseless individuals, as well as all those experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Ensure greater equity in the Aid and Assist reimbursement rates to better account for actual costs for service delivery across Oregon and increased costs for serving violent and high-risk populations.
- Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain skilled individuals in the behavioral health workforce, including expanding programs at Oregon Higher Education institutions, scholarships, providing incentive pay and increased reimbursement for providers and expanding credentialing opportunities to expand workforce.
- Ensure greater partnership with Local Mental Health Authorities, culturally responsive Community Mental Health Programs and Coordinated Care

2024 State Legislative Agenda

Organizations, Behavioral Health Resource Networks to remove silos in substance use disorder treatment.

- Increase State Residential capacity including Substance Use Disorder and Secure Residential.
- Support “Super Siting” of residential and secure residential facilities.
- Increased State investment in Multnomah County treatment capacity.
- Support increased investments in services for individuals who have experienced or are at risk of sex trafficking.

Expanding Housing and Shelter Capacity

Multnomah County is committed to expanding capacity for Housing, Shelter and Services that give individuals the opportunity to exit homelessness. We support maintaining and bolstering an array of safety net services, all of which aims to prioritize the Black, Indigenous, Immigrants, Refugees, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Increase investments in long-term funding for local governments to provide supportive and transitional housing services.
- Invest in shelter supports to help stabilize funding resources and avoid any shelter closures due to the ending of one time federal investments.
- Increase funding for programs that prevent homelessness in the metro region and statewide.
- Support efforts to address the housing shortage by rapidly increasing housing production, including investments in infrastructure such as water, sewer, stormwater, and transportation.

Promote Community Safety & Justice

Multnomah County is committed to making this region and the state an equitable, safe, and inclusive place for all individuals and communities. We will continue to work with the Legislature to confront systemic racism and injustice through public policy and budgetary reform.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- A ban on the public consumption of illicit drugs.
- Support efforts to continue to address the shortage of public defenders.
- Correct the school funding formula to provide juvenile justice settings with equitable funding for educating students in detention.

2024 State Legislative Agenda

- Fully fund Community Corrections programs across the state for the remainder of the biennium.
- Require adequate state resources and network adequacy for treatment linked to possession of controlled substances.
- Support expansion of policies to prosecute dealers to include the “transfer” of drugs and the “possession with intent to transfer” drugs while ensuring that jails and judges have the flexibility to hold drug dealers charged with Distributing a Controlled Substance.

Protecting Services for Our Most Vulnerable

Multnomah County is committed to supporting the well-being of everyone in our community, making sure that they can reach their potential and fully contribute to our region.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Increase funding for the County Assessment Function Funding Assistance grant program to better reflect the cost to administer property tax laws.
- Support efforts to modernize the Oregon State Medical Examiner Program.
- Funding for statewide support services for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Oregon.
- Support for adequate funding for case management services for older adults and people with disabilities.

Support Economic and Community Development

Systems, structures, and institutions create barriers for diverse and low-income populations to achieve long-term economic equity. Multnomah County will support comprehensive legislative approaches that support economic stability, build financial assets and grow generational wealth for all communities by removing barriers and centering racial justice and equity.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Support the creation of a statewide landlord registry, streamlining communications and improving tenant protections.
- Improve broadband access by:
 - Increasing broadband adoption through infrastructure build-out.

2024 State Legislative Agenda

- Addressing broadband affordability challenges in areas with existing infrastructure.
- Supporting daily access to the internet.

Protect our Environment

Multnomah County works to protect the most vulnerable in our community by making the county a healthy and safe place to live, work, practice culture, and do business. We are especially focused on utilizing resources that can ensure the resilience, safety, and well-being of communities in the wake of climate change.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Support efforts to generate revenue to stand up the Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District (UFSWQD).
- Regulation of type II facilities that contain toxic inhalants to ensure community safety in the event of a catastrophic earthquake.

Sustainably Fund Transportation and Infrastructure

The County is committed to ensuring the economic vitality and safety of residents in our region and state by overseeing bridge and road maintenance, road capital improvements, transportation planning and development, and water quality surveying in Multnomah.

Budget and policy priorities this session:

- Enable counties to recover costs when issuing permits for access to county right of way.
- Assert an equitable share of transportation revenue for counties from options such as gas tax, congestion pricing, bonding, or vehicle registration fees.
- Seek a long-term and sustainable transportation funding mechanism such as the road user charge.
- Leverage local and federal funds for the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project through State investment.

2024 State Legislative Agenda

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