

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Protect and Expand Programs that Help Our Most Vulnerable

The COVID-19 pandemic has made crystal clear the connections between physical health, behavioral health, food security, and housing -- and how critical all of these are for the safety of everyone. We support maintaining and bolstering the service array for the following program areas, all of which **should prioritize the BIPOC communities**, including:

- Oregon Health Plan Benefits
- Behavioral Health Services
- Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services
- Older Adults Supports
- Housing and Shelter Supports
- Designate funding for Universal Representation
- Fund community based violence prevention programs

Invest in Oregon's Behavioral Health System The pandemic has forced people to isolate and has cost many people their jobs. Stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness are on the rise. Without normal coping mechanisms, more are turning to substance use and behavioral health needs have increased. The 2021 Legislative investment in residential and behavioral health transformation needs to be invested in local solutions. The behavioral health workforce has been stretched to a breaking point and additional investment is needed to retain and recruit more professionals.

Fund Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing

When the current rental assistance and eviction safe harbor period runs out, there will be a dire need for additional permanent supportive housing. As such, we seek an increase in investments in supportive housing, affordable housing and workforce retention.

Promote Equity and Justice

Addressing systemic racism and injustice is critical to ensuring all people in our region are able to prosper. We must eliminate policies that disproportionately burden people of color and low-income communities and promote restorative justice. Some ways we can do this include funding programs to keep people out of the justice system and reforming the juvenile justice system, especially by improving the funding model for juvenile justice education and transitional services.

Fully Fund and Support a Robust Public Health Response

We have all recently learned the importance of a good and modern public health system and what the consequences are when this critical infrastructure, which includes our community health clinic system, is underfunded. As we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to support additional funding for public health and support improvements within Public Health and the community health clinic systems.

Protect our environment

The Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub, located in the Linnton neighborhood of Portland, is the fuel hub for the state of Oregon. More than 90% of the state's liquid fuel, including gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, pass through the tank farms there. This system is extremely fragile. Almost all the tanks predate modern seismic regulations, as do the pipeline and the docks that serve them. We support state action to help make this hub more seismically resilient to reduce safety and environmental hazard concerns during future seismic events.

We support efforts to combat environmental racism by establishing the Environmental Justice Council, which will have explicit authority to engage with natural resource state agencies on environmental justice issues. This Council will work towards a cohesive and well-coordinated model to insert Oregon specific health related data, socioeconomic information and environmental disparities across all state agencies to inform on environmental justice parameters.

Support more equitable revenue

Make no mistake, this pandemic is widening the wealth gap. We will have more people in need of the above programs and we must have additional resources to serve them. As a county, our revenue raising options are severely limited. Therefore, we need the state to step up and support raising revenue including making our current property tax and fee system more equitable.