
Community Involvement Committee

To: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (5 pages)

From: Community Involvement Committee

Date: May 20th, 2025

Subject: Recovery Subcommittee 2025 Recommendations

Background and Process

Topic and Selection:

The CIC met in an annual retreat on September 28, 2024, where we heard back from Office of Community Involvement staff about engagement work at the county, responses to last year's recommendations, and engagement topics of interest in the community. Through this conversation, community engagement around Multnomah County addiction and recovery policies, programs, and services was selected due to a high level of community interest in the issue. Members joined this subcommittee motivated by lived experience of addiction and recovery, family and community experiences of addiction and recovery, and curiosity around how the county is involving impacted and other community members in this critical issue.

The subcommittee first met in October 2024 where we brainstormed our subcommittee goals and how we would learn more about current and possible community engagement efforts at the county on this topic. Using investigation, lived experience, and interviews, we decided to strive to:

- **Increase equity, both breadth and depth, of engagement** on this issue
- Encourage **meaningful engagement of directly impacted people**, especially those involved as clients of county services.
- Engage the **whole community throughout processes** around this issue
- **Empower the public to support community response** to addiction crisis - through volunteering, public events, and other projects
- Improve **access to information on how to help and what resources are available**
- **Utilize and expand knowledge of existing resources:** mobile support teams, libraries, etc.

Process:

This subcommittee met eight (8) times between October 2024 and May 2025 to hear from county staff and community partners to better understand the County's budgeting process and how community members are and could be involved in county decision-making. Members also attended a meeting of the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) and conducted research on the Multnomah County website.

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In our learning process we invited presenters to discuss engaging the community around addiction and recovery services, policies, and programs. Those we met with are listed below:

1. **Jeff Woodward**, *East County Liaison & Community Engagement* | **Joint Office of Homeless Services** - November 2024
2. **Deandre Kenyanjui**, *Supervisor of the Office of Consumer Engagement*, and **Mario Cardenas, Roger Garth, Sadie Campbell**, *staff of the Office of Consumer Engagement* - December 2024
3. **Caroline Wong**, *Senior Deputy District Attorney*, **District Attorney's Office** - February 2025
4. **Anthony Jordan** *Interim Behavioral Health Director*, and **Barb Snow**, *Senior Manager, Safety Net Services for Behavioral Health*, **Health Department** - March 2025
5. **Steven Ciccotelli**, *Programs Unit Manager*, **Multnomah County Sheriff's Office** - April 2025

Findings/Observations

- We learned about the many programs happening in **Multnomah County**, and with other **jurisdictions**, around recovery and addiction. Programs have **diverse ranges of funding, staffing, impacted community engagement**, and engagement with other related services or programs.
- **Peer models**, where people with lived experience of recovery accompany community members **1:1 (one person in recovery helping another person experiencing addiction)** on their recovery and addiction journeys, have been **successful** in both services and supporting engagement of individuals impacted by addiction. One example of success with peers supporting community engagement is in the Office of Consumer Engagement.
- **Stigma is a persistent barrier** in both **engaging impacted communities** and ensuring their engagement is taken seriously. **Multnomah County** has an opportunity to **support education both in our communities and among staff** about **addiction and recovery**, and to **create opportunities** for people with varying relationships to recovery to be involved in the **county's** response.
- People experiencing addiction and people in recovery, along with direct service staff and volunteers, can and do provide critical insight - their **perspectives are often present, though not always centered**.
- **Long-term and short-term programs that provide CONSISTENCY and follow-up are critical to success**.
- Current service spaces can be unwelcoming, frightening, and unmaintained, as well as creating barriers by not providing access for people to store items, care for pets, and dispose of trash. This creates a lack of interest in accessing services, a dehumanizing environment, and hostility from neighbors. **This environment discourages engagement of both impacted communities and neighbors, but the built environment can offer opportunities for community engagement**.

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Recommendations:

1. Invest in targeted community outreach and education projects to destigmatize and promote active engagement in the community to support recovery.

- Create **targeted and culturally specific outreach and educational campaigns** to **destigmatize addiction and humanize** members in our community who experience addiction.
 - Utilize Multnomah County Communications to promote trauma-informed and culturally-specific storytelling about clients and programs to the board, specific stakeholders, and the public.
- Promote **targeted and culturally specific outreach** and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to **inform people of services**. These partnerships could be through TriMet and other governmental agencies, posting in County Health Centers, Libraries, Neighborhood Associations, community fairs and events, and nonprofit partners. **The goal is to meet people where they are at.**

2. Create more opportunities for those most impacted by addiction to share their voice and be engaged in county decision-making.

- We recommend that the board **conduct regular in-person meetings with clients, first responders, front-line staff, volunteers, and advisory committees engaged in addiction and recovery services**. These interactions should become an integral part of the decision-making process, providing county-level leaders with direct insight into the lived experiences and operational challenges within the system.
 - Example: **monthly board agenda item or site visits** to hear from community and frontline staff directly on this issue. This could be in partnership with advisory groups like the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee, departments and programs such as the Consumer Engagement program or harm reduction clinic, or a mix.
- Design a **“Community 2 County” internship program**, modeled off of College 2 County, that offers **short-term paid internships to non-student adults** in Multnomah County who are seeking a career transition, with emphasis on people with lived experience of addiction, homelessness, and other marginalized identities and experiences.
- Offer **training for community members in recovery** to offer peer support in low-barrier, mixed-commitment volunteer and/or internship roles. This could be in partnership with free peer support certification programs that exist in the community, such as at Miracles Club.
- Invite community voice into **cross-jurisdictional planning meetings** on this issue, especially directly impacted folks, through engagement of the BHRC Advisory Council, public meetings, and other opportunities.

3. Lower barriers to engagement specific to addiction and recovery impacted community members in existing volunteer and/or internship programs.

- **Create recommendations and best practices for volunteer programs to reduce barriers for people with lived experience** in volunteerism, and support staff in implementation. Flexible schedules, mentoring, employer partnerships, and stipends upon program completion, among other best practices, ensure that people with lived experience have access to the full range of county engagement and volunteer opportunities.

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- Encourage and support advisory boards specifically in recruiting and supporting members with lived experience of addiction and recovery through **developing a framework for targeted outreach and recruitment for people with lived experience** of addiction and recovery. This will ensure their voices and experiences aren't siloed in boards that work only on this issue.
 - **Support advisory boards** in addressing this topic, and in recruiting and retaining members with lived experience of addiction and recovery.
 - Support **advisory groups across the county in engaging on this topic** in intersectional ways. Find pathways for advisory committees to work together on issues that most affect people with addiction.
 - **Connect diverse advisory boards with issue- and community-specific boards**, such as the Behavioral Health Resource Center, to support their work and deepen their impact.
4. Engage diverse communities to **improve our recovery and addiction spaces** in order to **facilitate engagement of clients and the broader community in and around the service sites**.
- Engage **people accessing services, as well as neighbors, to determine service area improvements**. One project could be to survey communities using service spaces around their experiences of the physical space: is it easy to access? Pleasant and welcoming? Results of the survey could result in projects to create better walkways, trash cans, cart parking, etc, anywhere the County provides food, shelter, health, and human services. This can also include parks and art, humanize and entice clients, staff, volunteers, and neighbors to use, respect, and care for service spaces.

Backgrounds and life experiences of subcommittee members:

Quay'Roenel Matthews, Subcommittee Chair (she/her) is a Certified Recovery Mentor (CRM) 2024 graduate from Miracles with a mission to provide education/resources, support through barriers and advocacy for those who have gone through similar life experiences as she has. Since May 2024 she has been actively engaged with Multnomah County's Easter Seals where she has developed computer literacy skills to assist her work as a Peer Support Specialist. In 2023 she completed a Humanities in Perspective course and Project Independence course and also is a 2014 graduate of Project Independence at Portland Community College. Quay'Roenel has volunteered on the Our Just Future/Human Solution's Resident Advisory Committee (RAC) Member from 2021-2024; and professionally was the first LGBTQ+ Case/House Manager for Bridges to Change, proudly serving the community with support in goal setting from 2019-2020. She has also been involved in the Diane Wade House Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program (2019), Woman's First Transitional and Referral Program (2019), and Quest Center for Integrative Health (2019). As a self-described grateful recovering addict, she has also taken steps to be an engaged member of Thy Kingdom Come International Church (TKCIC) and she is committed to implementing the skills she's gained to help serve others. *First term ends 6/27/2027*

Nina Gallo (she/they/ella) is a student at Portland State University studying Criminology and Criminal Justice along with a minor in Spanish. Her passion for understanding and reforming our current legal system has led her to volunteerism in the community with Multnomah County's Victim and Survivor Services and on campus through a variety of human rights organizations such as the Student Committee for Human Rights in the

Subcommittee members: Quay'Roenel Matthews (chair), Nina Gallo, Jenny Shadley, Diego Martinez, Ann Singer
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Philippines and Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights. They hope to pursue their Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice and pursue a career in research. *First term ends 6/27/2027*

Jenny Shadley (she/her) is a Graphic Design Supervisor and Photographer at Clark College in Vancouver, WA, where she serves on many committees, including various equity-centered plans, chair of the Art Selection Committee, and is a member leader for the WPEA staff Union. Her volunteer experience includes teaching self-defense to girl-identified middle schoolers. *2nd term ends 9/9/2027*

Diego Martinez (he/him) works as a cashier at Bao Bao. He has previously interned with the Center for Migration, Gender and Justice and has canvassed for charter reform in Portland. *1st term ends 8/24/2026*

Ann Singer (she/her) is the founder and Executive Director of Rogue Pack youth theatre in Portland. She has organized and taught storytelling theatre workshops and performances for underserved populations throughout OR since 2009. She served as Vice President on the board of Soroptimist International of Portland whose mission is to improve the lives of women and children around the world; was secretary of the Sellwood Moreland Business Association and is currently on the board of The Portland Area Theatre Alliance. *First term ends 6/27/2027*

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