

Department: County Human Services **Program Contact:** Peggy Samolinski
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Requested
Related Programs:
Program Characteristics: Out of Target

Executive Summary

Multnomah County is experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis. Because of racism, discrimination, and segregation, racial inequalities continue to exist in housing. Black, Indigenous and other Communities of Color (BIPOC) continue to experience homelessness at higher rates, have less access to quality housing and affordable housing. This has only deepened during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some resources exist for renters, they may be difficult to access and often are not culturally specific or appropriate. The Peer Navigation Program can help address this gap in services; it creates a system of peer counselors that provide one-to-one support, peer coaching, resources sharing and networking.

Program Summary

ISSUE: BIPOC renters in Multnomah County experience higher rates of being rent burdened, have less access to affordable housing and have higher rates of homelessness. In September of 2020, PSU released a report that showed the 56% of BIPOC renters were owing arrears as compared to 35% of all renters. While there are resources and support programs available to support renters, knowing how to access and make your way through the systems can be difficult and create barriers. In addition, the supports and services that do exist may not be culturally specific or appropriate. Also, the staff may lack lived experience and trust in the communities where they serve. According to the Renter Relations Report, Peer Counseling is emerging as a promising practice. When Peer Counseling was combined with having renters self-select goals around their credit, eviction and budgeting, they were more likely to be successful.

PROGRAM GOAL: To develop a Peer Navigation Program that will provide culturally specific peer support to BIPOC households that focuses on housing stability and preventing homelessness.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY: The staff will provide culturally specific 1:1 peer support and coaching. This includes sharing tools and helping renters establish goals for their credit, evictions and budgeting. Peer Counselors will coordinate and facilitate culturally-specific education and empowerment groups using a trauma-informed Assertive Engagement approach. They will cover topics such as tenant protections and courses comparable to “rent ready” classes. Peer counselors will also address historical and ongoing barriers while teaching people how to advocate and navigate their way to more stable housing. While renters are in the program and learning, peer counselors are able to advocate for tenants and support communications with landlords and property managers, such as unit inspections.

A 1.00 FTE (limited duration) staff position is needed to develop and implement this program and ensure it aligns with other initiatives in the YFS Housing Stability Team.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budgeted	FY22 Estimate	FY23 Offer
Output	Number of households supported by peer mentors	N/A ¹	250	250	250
Outcome	Percent of households who experience improvement in self identified housing goals.	N/A ¹	70%	70%	70%

Performance Measures Descriptions

¹No data for FY2021. Program started in FY2022.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Requested General Fund	Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2022	2022	2023	2023
Personnel	\$0	\$115,000	\$0	\$123,403
Contractual Services	\$0	\$400,000	\$0	\$391,597
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$515,000	\$0	\$515,000
Program Total:	\$515,000		\$515,000	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$515,000	\$0	\$515,000
Total Revenue	\$0	\$515,000	\$0	\$515,000

Explanation of Revenues

\$515,000 - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Direct County Funding

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2022: 25399J ARP - Peer Support Tenant Services & Housing Stability

This program addresses the Crisis Response & Community Recovery priority by creating a peer led program that will support BIPOC tenants to retain stable housing. It also adds staff capacity to support this program's development and implementation - and other housing stability programs in the Youth & Family Services Division.