

Program #80027 - Library Peer Support Specialists - Supportive Housing Services FY 2026 Department Requested

Department: Library **Program Contact:** Shelly Jarman

Program Offer Type: Operating Program Offer Stage: Department Requested

Related Programs: 80001

Program Characteristics:

Program Description

In FY 2024, Multnomah County and the City of Portland launched the Homelessness Response Action Plan (HRAP), a strategic reset of the community's response to homelessness. The library, Behavioral Health, and Homeless Services Department teams have collaborated to develop a program to bring new support into the library system, meeting patrons with higher needs where they are already seeking services.

ISSUE: The downtown population has seen an increase in houselessness, behavioral health issues, addiction and illicit substance abuse and violence. BIPOC members of our community are disproportionately impacted by all of these issues and often look for support at the library, a County department that can feel more accessible and trustworthy for some populations.

PROGRAM GOAL: The library currently contracts with a local organization to bring Qualified Mental Health Professionals (QMHPs) into libraries across the county and to bring certified Peer Support Specialists (PSS) to Central Library. QMHPs provide direct crisis intervention, resource connection support to patrons and staff, and supervision of PSS staff. PSS workers are individuals with lived experience with mental health diagnoses, substance abuse disorder and/or homelessness who are in recovery and have completed specialized training. They use their story to establish valuable rapport, share common experiences and strengthen engagement in care.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY: PSS staff build relationships through shared lived experience, providing support with identifying resources, system navigation, advocacy, service coordination and skill development. They also connect patrons with community social services such as treatment, housing and basic needs providers, and respond to behavioral health related challenges with the goal of reducing disruptions and facilitating successful use of the library

RACIAL EQUITY ADVANCEMENT: All library locations are actively engaging in equity work to create open access without barriers to library spaces. The Peer Support program helps at-risk populations, including BIPOC populations, who are disproportionately impacted by houselessness, behavioral health issues, addiction and illicit substance abuse and violence, be successful using the library. The PSS works from a trauma informed and harm reduction based approach, which supports de-escalation in incidents and on-site drug use.

Performance Measures									
Measure Type	Performance Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budgeted	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Target				
Output	Total number referrals	N/A	N/A	100	500				
Output	Total number of peer support sessions with patrons	N/A	N/A	300	1500				
Output	Total number of incident intervention support interactions performed by Peer Support Specialists	N/A	N/A	20	100				

Performance Measures Descriptions

FY 2025 metrics represent a partial year of program activity, as program and contract development work delayed the start date for this pilot program.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Department Requested General Fund	Department Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2025	2025	2026	2026
Contractual Services	\$0	\$180,000	\$0	\$191,665
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$180,000	\$0	\$191,665
Program Total:	\$180,000		\$191,665	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues						
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		

Explanation of Revenues

\$191,665 Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Fund 1521. Tax revenues are budgeted in the Joint Office of Homeless Services program 30000 Administration and Operations.

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was:

Contract development and finalization impacted the original program start date, and the first full year for this program will be FY 2026. This program aligns with the Crisis Intervention Services program with Qualified Mental Health Providers at Central Library. The continuation of the Peer Support Specialist program will help mitigate the partial reduction in the QHMP program (80001, Central Library).