



2013 Legislative Report

Multnomah County approached the 2013 Legislature as a rare opportunity to make gains in Salem that would help provide better programs and services to our 748,000 residents. We are pleased to report that we succeeded in passing most of our priorities and made major strides in working with our state and community partners to develop innovative solutions to budget, infrastructure and service delivery challenges.

With Multnomah County's leadership, we made significant headway on the long-stalled Multnomah County Courthouse rebuilding project; enhanced our ability to use the Wapato Jail facility for additional functions; established health policy that will reduce the number of deaths from opiate overdoses; increased reporting around bed bug infestations, and improved health inspections of restaurants. Multnomah County also led the way in gains to crack down on the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children, and to help our growing population of veterans. We supported efforts to stop Section 8 housing discrimination and to begin repairing the damage from previous changes to the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral program.

While no legislative scorecard is ever perfect, we are confident the 2013 session laid important groundwork for the 2014 session and for future sessions to lift the unfair state ban on county tobacco taxes; reform outdated state laws on gun safety and voter registration; and make more profound improvements to public safety.

Multnomah County can look forward with optimism to the 2014 session after looking back on this long list of successes in the 2013 session:

New Laws Affecting Multnomah County

Animal Services

Protects animals from abuse

- ▶ **HB 2783** limits the amount of time that dogs can be tethered and requires dogs to have appropriate shelter.

Courthouse Funding

Authorizes state bonds for Multnomah County Courthouse

- ▶ **HB 5506** provides bond funding for various capital projects around the State of Oregon. The new law includes \$15 million for the Multnomah County Courthouse as well as statutory language clarifying that state bonds can be used for such a purpose. While the full cost of courthouse replacement will be much larger, the state contribution will support planning and design activities and creates a precedent for further state assistance with construction costs.

Creates Oregon Infrastructure Task Force

- ▶ **HB 2345** sets up a task force to investigate innovative financing mechanisms, including public/private partnerships, that might help facilitate major infrastructure projects such as the Multnomah County Courthouse.

Cultural Competency

Allows health professional regulatory boards to require cultural competency

- ▶ **HB 2611** authorizes the state's health professional regulatory boards to adopt standards and require continuing education related to cultural competency for doctors, dentists, nurses and many other professionals.

Mandates standard data on race, ethnicity

- ▶ **HB 2134** requires the Department of Human Services and the Health Authority to adopt uniform standards for collection of data on race, ethnicity, preferred languages and disability status in their surveys and programs.

Economic Development

Provides grants for industrial site readiness

- ▶ **SB 253** requires the Oregon Business Development Department to establish the Oregon Industrial Site Readiness Program and provides grants for due diligence assessments and detailed development plans for regionally significant industrial sites.

Provides loans for industrial site developers

- ▶ **SB 246** requires the Oregon Business Development Department to enter into tax reimbursement arrangements with, or to make loans to, qualified project sponsors for development of certified regionally significant industrial sites.

Employee Benefits

Allows local governments access to state government health benefit plans

- ▶ **HB 2279** allows local governments to participate in benefit plans administered by the Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) and the Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB).

Elections

Creates a minority language task force

- ▶ **HB 2506** begins the process of making election materials available to voters who need information in languages other than English.

Health

Increases Naloxone availability

- ▶ **SB 384** will decrease the number of deaths due to opiate overdoses in Oregon; it allows family and friends of opiate users access to Naloxone, a drug that can save the lives of people who have overdosed. Naloxone use is estimated to have already saved 10,000 lives in other states.



New Laws Affecting Multnomah County

Health (continued)

Facilitates data collection on bed bug infestations

- ▶ **HB 2131** creates a system that will allow pest control companies to make confidential reports to public health authorities regarding bed bug infestations in the community. Health departments will be able to use the information to help control the spread of the insects.

Requires inspection of government restaurant facilities

- ▶ **SB 631** responds to food poisoning incidents at government restaurant facilities by closing a loophole in Oregon law and requiring publicly owned food-service establishments to undergo the same inspections as privately owned restaurants.

Creates Traditional Healthcare Workers Commission

- ▶ **HB 3407** provides a process to define criteria and educational requirements for community health workers, doulas, personal health navigators and other healthcare workers that are not now licensed by the State of Oregon. These workers provide culturally competent, cost-effective services and this law gives them a voice in defining their roles in the healthcare system.

Regulates payment for alternative health services

- ▶ **SB 724** modifies the rules for Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to bridge the gap between the fee for service methodology and global budgets. The law creates a process for CCOs to pay providers for cost-effective services.

Creates a task force on regional health authorities

- ▶ **HB 2348** establishes the Task Force on the Future of Public Health Services to focus on recommendations that create a public health system for the future, enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public health services and explore the creation of regional structures.

Housing

Restricts Section 8 housing discrimination

- ▶ **HB 2639** prohibits landlords from refusing to rent to families solely because they receive subsidies from the federal government's Section 8 housing program.

Extends single-unit tax exemption

- ▶ **HB 2349** continues and modifies a program that uses property tax exemptions to stimulate the development of low-income housing.

Exempts government-owned low-income housing from taxation

- ▶ **HB 3112** clarifies state statutes regarding property tax exemptions for subsidized housing that is owned by a local government.

Human Services

Launches Early Learning Hubs

- ▶ **HB 2013** is the next step in the development of the early childhood portion of Governor Kitzhaber's efforts to transform Oregon's education system. The law moves funding decisions on early learning services to a series of geographically based hubs that replace the local Commissions on Children and Families. About half of the hubs will be formed in the first year of the biennium with the other half established in the second year.

Restores Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral

- ▶ **HB 2489** marked the Legislature's first step in undoing the damage from changes to the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral (SDPTD) program that were enacted in the 2012 legislative session. The law permanently reinstated about 1,500 previous program participants who had been excluded because they had reverse mortgages on their homes.
- ▶ **HB 2510** allowed another 700 previous participants to reenter the program. Additional issues with the SDPTD program will need to be addressed in future sessions.



New Laws Affecting Multnomah County

Human Services (continued)

Expands ombudsman scope

- ▶ **SB 626** expands the duties of Oregon's Long Term Care Ombudsman to include monitoring of care provided to about 8,500 Oregonians with developmental, intellectual, mental health or behavioral disabilities.

Expands abuse reporting

- ▶ **HB 2205** adds attorneys, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists and members of the legislative assembly to the list of individuals required by law to report abuse of Oregon elders.

Funds afterschool nutrition

- ▶ **HB 2729** provides \$300,000 in state grants to local schools to provide afterschool snacks to students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.

Expands funding for summer meal programs

- ▶ **HB 2730** expands state support for summer meals to include breakfasts as well as lunches.

Human Trafficking

Enables prosecution for attempting to compel prostitution

- ▶ **HB 2334** expands the statutory definition of compelling prostitution to include attempting to compel prostitution.

Land Use

Transfers Area 93 to Washington County

- ▶ **HB 3067** represents a successful negotiation among Multnomah County, Washington County and Metro to resolve a persistent problem for a small group of residents at the eastern edge of the Bonny Slope community. Comprehensive plan changes over the years have included this land in the urban growth boundary but then isolated it from the rest of urbanized Multnomah County through the creation of a rural reserve area in 2012. The legislation allows the shift of the territory into Washington County, uniting Bonny Slope and providing improved options for services.

Property Taxes

Continues tax cancellation for low-value manufactured structures

- ▶ **HB 2676** saves Multnomah County money and prevents evictions of low-income people by allowing tax collectors to write-off accounts where collection costs would exceed receipts.

Public Safety

Requires insurance cover treatment for drunk drivers

- ▶ **HB 2385** removes a statutory exemption and thereby requires health insurance providers to cover addiction treatment for people charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants.

Modifies offender sentences

- ▶ **HB 3194** was the product of an effort to shift funds from expensive prison beds to more cost-effective community supervision programs. The law was developed by a special committee on public safety that built on the work of a Public Safety Commission appointed by Governor Kitzhaber. The measure will move \$18 million from prison construction and operations and to community programs. Multnomah County supported a much larger shift in funding and further action in future sessions is anticipated.

Allows alternative uses of Wapato

- ▶ **HB 2480** modifies the statutes regarding tax-exempt public bonds to allow Multnomah County to pursue options for the use of the Wapato facility without endangering the tax exemption now provided to bond holders.



New Laws Affecting Multnomah County

Public Safety (continued)

Insures some inmates

- ▶ **HB 2087** will allow corrections managers to apply for Medicaid or other federal medical benefits on behalf of inmates, who are otherwise eligible, when the inmates are hospitalized for more than 24 hours.

Coordinate state and county prison reentry services

- ▶ **HB 2685** allows closer cooperation between the Oregon Department of Corrections and county corrections in providing transition services that help reduce recidivism.

Veterans

Creates document fee for veterans housing

- ▶ **HB 2417** institutes an additional \$5 document recording fee that is expected to ultimately raise about \$9 million per biennium to provide housing for low-income veterans.

Coordinates public services for veterans

- ▶ **HB 2422** aims to insure there is “no wrong door” for veterans seeking services by increasing information sharing between the Oregon departments of Human Services and Veterans’ Affairs.

Allows nurse volunteers from other states

- ▶ **HB 2691** modifies licensing statutes to enable veterans’ stand down organizers to use volunteer nurses from other states.

Budget changes affecting Multnomah County

Oregon Health Authority budget

Creates document fee for veterans housing

- ▶ **HB 5030** includes an additional \$26.6 million from the General Fund for the community mental health system and \$21.8 million for the children’s mental health system. The total budget for 2013-15 is 22 percent higher than the 2011-13 budget, primarily as a result of Medicaid expansion.

Oregon Youth Authority budget

- ▶ **HB 5050** includes funding for the East County Gang Enforcement team at current levels and an 8.2 percent overall increase in juvenile corrections programs.

Oregon Department of Human Services budget

- ▶ **SB 5529** increases General Fund spending on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) by 25.2 percent and adds \$6.9 million from the General Fund to Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). The total DHS budget is \$9.1 billion, up 5.9 percent from the current biennium.

The program change bill

- ▶ **HB 2322** allows counties to shift some funds from law libraries to mediation services, partially restores cuts to developmental disabilities providers and authorizes an additional \$5 million for provider rate increases.

The budget rebalance bill

- ▶ **HB 5008** appropriated \$4 million from the General Fund to the Department of Justice for programs to assist victims of domestic and sexual violence.



Unfavorable bills that didn't pass

HB 2533 would have awarded attorney's fees in tax court.

HB 3187 would have changed arbitration rules.

HB 2548 would have established a commercial bail system.

HB 3309 would have created a process to authorize the OHA to remove Board Members from Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) under certain circumstances.

SB 373 would have required CCOs to contract with Dental Care Organizations (DCOs) under unfavorable circumstances.

SB 645 would have preempted local land use rules.

SB 750 would have restricted the time for land use actions to take place.

Unrealized Opportunities

Lifting the ban on county tobacco taxes

HB 2870 would have allowed counties to create local tobacco taxes with limitations on the amount of the tax and the use of the revenue. The bill narrowly passed the House of Representatives on a 31 to 29 vote and had a hearing in the Senate Revenue Committee. Late in the session, the bill was part of negotiations that included consideration of a statewide tobacco tax increase. Strong opposition from the tobacco lobby prevented the final passage of this legislation.

Improving public safety

HB 3259 and **SB 70** were among the bills that would have further shifted spending away from expensive prisons and towards more cost-effective strategies.

Requiring insurers to cover some inmates

SB 457 would have reversed the cost-shifting that occurs when private health insurers stop providing coverage to policy-holders who become incarcerated. When private health insurers do not pay the health care costs for these inmates, taxpayers have to pick up the tab. Although the bill failed, there is substantial support and the issue is likely to be reconsidered in the 2014 session.

Regulating chemicals in children's products

HB 3162 would have required the state to maintain a list of dangerous chemicals and begin the process of eliminating those chemicals from toys and eating utensils used by children. The measure passed the House of Representatives but did not get a vote on the Senate floor.

Registering voters with existing government information

HB 352 would have registered thousands of potential voters based on the records of the Department of Motor Vehicles. The bill narrowly passed the House of Representatives but failed by one vote in the Senate.

Clarifying local gain share from Strategic Investment Program

SB 223 and **SB 314** would have strengthened the statutes requiring the state to share increased income tax receipts with local governments that have foregone property taxes to support the creation of the jobs that generate the income. While neither bill passed, some of the problems with the program have been resolved administratively.

Preventing gun violence

SB 347 and a number of other firearm safety bills were introduced, but none passed.

