



Office of Community Involvement



CBACs SPEAK!

Multnomah County
Community Budget Advisory Committees
FY26 Budget Reports & Recommendations
April 2025

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Office of Community Involvement



Department of Community Justice CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson (4) pages

FROM: Department of Community Justice Community Budget Advisory Committee

DATE: March 12th, 2025

SUBJECT: Department of Community Justice Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - The Department of Community Justice Budget Advisory Committee (DCJ CBAC) supports the budget submitted by the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ). Our guiding values when considering our budget recommendations were a) to fund a comprehensive, fair, and accountable system of community safety at current levels, b) to eliminate disparities and prioritize populations adversely affected by racism, and c) retaining and hiring staff that is equipped to meet these goals, provided decreased funding and budget constraints.

The proposed budget is a bold one that addresses head-on the problems of recruiting, training, and on-boarding new probation and parole officers. DCJ's budget reallocations will allow much faster and intensive on-boarding and on-the-job training, and we commend them for taking this approach. Expediting the interview process, as well as implementing efficiencies in the onboarding process will help attract talent, as well as ensure that employees onboarding are able to support staff and add value at a quicker pace.

In addition to our support for this new recruitment structure, the DCJ CBAC also wants to highlight and support the choice to reallocate additional funding for the Victim and Survivor Services emergency fund (Program Offer 50003) and the usage of culturally responsive programming, such as the HEAT Curriculum, in the Adult Culturally Responsive Supervision program (Program Offer 50013) and the Juvenile Field Probation program (Program Offer 50058). Lastly, the CBAC recognizes the county's need to evaluate and terminate the Juvenile Behavioral Rehabilitation Assessment &

Department of Community Justice CBAC

Evaluation program (Program Offer 50063) based on the priorities of available funding. Given this cut, we strongly support the DCJ's replacement program, Juvenile Culturally Responsive Youth and Family Treatment Services (Program Offer 50064), the inclusion of which in this year's budget would go a long way towards ameliorating the loss of A&E.

PROCESS

During 2024 and 2025, the DCJ CBAC met monthly with DCJ staff, visited various DCJ sites to learn about their programs, and were educated on the County budget process. The DCJ CBAC appreciates having the opportunity to review and speak with DCJ staff about the Department's budget to gain a better understanding of the issues facing the department and the budget process. We encourage the department, the Chair's Office, and the Office of Community Involvement to continue exploring ways to increase transparency, timeliness, and engagement for the Multnomah County community in the budget process.

In order to enable better engagement, the DCJ CBAC would suggest more intentional efforts to expand the membership of the Community Budget Advisory Committees. Some good first steps towards this would be offering stipends and childcare for committee members, as well as more aggressive recruitment of affected populations. Stipends would enable more consistent attendance and participation, especially from those community members who are experiencing lower incomes, as would childcare services for those members with young children. For our CBAC in particular, an effort to recruit additional members who have directly interacted with the criminal justice system would lead to a sharpened focus on those programs that help justice-involved individuals the most. Efforts like these to expand the Community Budget Advisory Committees would lead to richer dialogue and a better representation of the community in the budget process.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS - This is a year that required difficult decisions, while maintaining a budget that reflects the values of the community. The submitted DCJ budget is a bold response to assure public safety, that not only meets the requested budget cut of 3%, but also accommodates for the unanticipated termination of the Intergovernmental Agreement between Multnomah and Washington Counties for detention facilities, which led to an effective 5.4% cut.

Members: Bryce Magorian, Terrance Moses, Thomas Karwaki, Kesean Coleman, Maria Ramos, Jasiel Lopez, Autumn Lillie Staff: Denise Pena, Colby Dixon, Micaela Thurman, Tami Wallis

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DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS -

Our specific recommendations are as follows:

Program Offer 50003 - Victim and Survivor Services

The DCJ CBAC is heartened to note that the proposed DCJ budget maintains the County's commitment to the victims of crime, as well as reallocating additional funding to the Victim and Survivor Services emergency fund. As in the past, the DCJ CBAC requests that additional funds be provided for the express purpose of providing assistance to victims when all other private or non-profit options are exhausted. These funds provide safe lodging, transportation, food & household items for victims who are traumatized and sometimes in danger.

Program Offer 50013 - Adult Culturally Responsive Supervision & Program Offer 50058 - Juvenile Field Probation

We are pleased to support the inclusion of culturally responsive and trauma-informed programming (such as HEAT) to enhance the supervision and services for adults and juveniles.

Program Offer 50063 Juvenile Behavioral Rehabilitation (BRS) Assessment & Evaluation

The proposed DCJ budget eliminates the Assessment and Evaluation Program and Behavioral Rehabilitation (A&E) and its 18 staff positions. In the 1990s, a group of women decision makers in Multnomah County asked the question: what kind of juvenile justice system would I like my child to be in? The result was the creation of many options that did not require detention except in extreme or rare situations. As a result, Multnomah County was able to offer surrounding jurisdictions the opportunity to use the Donald E Long juvenile facility to house and service their justice-system impacted juveniles. This implementation lowered the cost to Multnomah County taxpayers and benefited the other jurisdictions that didn't have to build and operate a facility. Doing so also allowed the DCJ and Multnomah Education Services District to provide superior education, vocational and behavioral modification services.

A&E currently houses a roughly 60% Black population. Due to this, the CBAC recognizes the discontinuance of A&E will most prevalently impact the Black youth population. There are also currently 6 self-identified females in A&E. It is a very rare occasion that Donald E Long Detention houses 5 females. A&E has been a successful outlet for self-identified female juveniles, rather than them being sentenced to youth prison. The CBAC hopes that these two items can be considered in the transition.

Members: Bryce Magorian, Terrance Moses, Thomas Karwaki, Kesean Coleman, Maria Ramos, Jasiel Lopez, Autumn Lillie **Staff:** Denise Pena, Colby Dixon, Micaela Thurman, Tami Wallis

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Currently, the facility is used only by Multnomah County and thus it is a stranded asset where all of the capital and operating costs are borne by the County. This results in high fixed operating costs (because of the nature of having to operate and staff three pods for different populations of juveniles), leading to an additional high cost impacting each juvenile served; i.e., costs per bed. Multnomah County currently has no options within 100 miles to send its youth, nor would it want to because the County values maintaining family and community ties with the juvenile, which are proven to reduce future crimes, detention, and incarceration.

Therefore, the DCJ CBAC members applaud the courage of the DCJ team to maintain the County's values while being burdened with reducing operating costs. However, while the steps the DCJ has taken in this year's budget go some way towards ameliorating the loss of staff in A&E (see our section on 50064 below), we also urge the Board to take further steps to fill the gap that will be left behind by the loss of this program.

Program Offer 50064 Juvenile Culturally Responsive Youth and Family Treatment Services

We believe that introducing this program as a means to bridge the anticipated gap in services, left by cutting 50063, is necessary, and we strongly urge the Board to fund this program. The services in this program will directly benefit those juvenile populations most in need of support, including Black, African American, African immigrant/refugee, and Latino/a youth, and their families. The type of interventions and therapeutic support that this program provides are essential to justice-involved youth at this stage in their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – The CBAC members applaud the courage of the DCJ team to maintain the County's values while reducing operating costs. Also, we love Tami!

Members: Bryce Magorian, Terrance Moses, Thomas Karwaki, Kesean Coleman, Maria Ramos, Jasiel Lopez, Autumn Lillie Staff: Denise Pena, Colby Dixon, Micaela Thurman, Tami Wallis

Department of Community Services CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (6 pages)

FROM: Department of Community Services (DCS) Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: DCS Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this difficult budget year, the DCS CBAC did its best to evaluate the Department of Community Services budget program offers with a lens focused on the County's core values, but also with consideration of the need to sustain key programs, to meet basic legal obligations, and to minimize risks and harms from the unfortunate but necessary budget cuts across the county.

The CBAC recommends that the County's FY26 DCS budget prioritize maintaining positive momentum in the Animal Services Division, protecting trust in the Elections Division, and supporting the Land Use Division which continues to struggle. Specifically, the CBAC suggests priorities for restoration in these divisions, along with two ongoing additions. The CBAC did not prioritize any one-time-only additions.

The CBAC FY26 program offer priorities, **by division**, are:

Elections:

- **Total restoration of funding for Ballot Tracking**
(Reduction-14, Program Offer 90010)
- **Total restoration of Voter Pamphlet distribution**
(Reduction-07, Program Offer 90010)
- **Ongoing Addition - New position for GIS support**
(Addition-02-Ongoing, Program Offer 90010)

Animal Services:

- **Total or partial restoration of funding for Foster Program**
(Reduction-03, Program Offer 90007)

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- **Total or partial restoration of funding for Enrichment Program**
(Reduction-12, Program Offer 90007)

Land Use:

- **Total restoration of funding for Planner 1 position**
(Reduction-01, Program Offer 90021)
- **Total or partial restoration of funding for contractual services**
(Reduction-02, Program Offer 90021)
- **Total restoration of funding for front desk counter position**
(Reduction-06, Program Offer 90021)
- **Ongoing Addition - New Planner 1 position**
(Addition-10-Ongoing, Program Offers 90021, 90020)

Director's Office:

- **Total or partial restoration of HR and Research Analyst positions**
(Reduction-04, Program Offers 90000, 90001)

PROCESS

The DCS CBAC was convened in November 2024 and met regularly from December 2024 through February 2025. With seamless coordination by DCS staff and leadership, the CBAC was briefed by key staff in each of the DCS divisions and the DCS Director's office. The briefings provided CBAC members with frank, transparent, and informative overviews of the responsibilities and challenges in each division, and a framework for understanding the divisions' budgeting in this difficult budget year. In a work session to develop our recommendations, the CBAC considered the Department's program offers, including constraints, ongoing additions, and one-time-only additions to the base budget.

To evaluate each budget item, the CBAC looked to the County's core values as their north star, prioritizing outcomes that equitably benefit the broadest array of community members. Because of the seriousness of this year's budget challenges, the CBAC gave special consideration to the survival of key programs, the County's obligation to meet basic legal obligations, and the need to minimize risks and harm due to budget cuts.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS

Difficult Constraints and Impossible Prioritization

It is clear to the CBAC that this is an extraordinarily difficult budget year, and we have deep appreciation for the DCS leadership's task to submit a prioritized reduction package of 12% to help cover the County's budget deficit. Indeed, with the breadth of community services being

Members: Terry Harris, Conrad Hulen, James Ellis, Peter Finley Fry, Taylor Scott, Yume Delegato, James Abeles
Staff: Denell Broncho, DCS CBAC Coordinator

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delivered by the Department, we found it practically impossible to weigh priorities for funding across the disparate divisions. We found ourselves considering reduced funding for services that will cease to function without personnel; for services at risk of legal consequences or inability to meet legal obligations; impacting the overall viability of divisions; and implication of basic moral obligations to minimize harm, not only to staff but to County residents who rely on these services.

Revenue Models in DCS Divisions

As in previous years, the CBAC observed again that the funding models in several divisions result in an ongoing and widening imbalance of revenue and expenses. In last year's memo, this CBAC noted, "This committee strongly believes that the Department should prioritize development of revenue models that will (1) keep these Divisions from competing for scarce general fund dollars and (2) enable the County to easily fund projects like ADA ramps, which advance our community's equity goals." This year, for example, with general fund dollars extremely scarce, we couldn't support the ADA ramps as a one-time-only addition. Furthermore, CBAC members noted that some revenue streams generated by DCS Divisions (animal registrations, for example) are deposited into the general fund and do not necessarily return directly to the divisions themselves. This disconnect may be leading to deprioritization of developing those streams.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK

Maintaining momentum in Animal Service Division

By all accounts, there has been remarkable progress made by the Animal Services Division to fix its management problems and to restore trust in its essential programs. The CBAC believes that maintaining this forward progress is absolutely necessary, especially as capital funding for a badly-needed and much delayed animal shelter becomes a more concrete possibility.

Trust in elections remains a priority

The Elections Division delivered a first-ever ranked choice voting election in Portland in 2024 without a hitch. As Multnomah County implements ranked choice voting in 2026, the Elections Division needs to deliver again. The CBAC understands that trust, transparency, equity, and integrity are central to ensuring trust in elections processes, but the values also need to be part of the voter's experience and understanding.

The Land Use Division is struggling

The CBAC is concerned that the Land Use Division is not properly resourced, and as a result is unable to feasibly manage the breadth and the amount of work its small office is responsible for. The Division cites staffing problems, state-mandates, and its tiny budget complicating the ability to process land use applications, to do long-range planning, investigate and enforce code complaints, revise and update the land use code, and manage the county's solid waste and

Members: Terry Harris, Conrad Hulen, James Ellis, Peter Finley Fry, Taylor Scott, Yume Delegato, James Abeles
Staff: Denell Broncho, DCS CBAC Coordinator

recycling program. The CBAC understands that there is a fee study that might suggest ways to increase revenue somewhat. We would support new fee structures, but new fee revenue should be associated with new and better service. More than just a small boost in fees will be needed to provide the Division with increasingly necessary organizational stability.

Difficult Justifications for One-Time-Only Additions

Understanding the extraordinary budget pressures, the CBAC had difficulty recommending One-Time-Only additions that, in any normal budget year, would command universal support: Spay and neuter expenses for a growing population of animals that need it; Ranked choice voting implementation for Multnomah County's first RCV election; and the multi-year effort to fund design and construction of ADA ramps. With the possible exception of the RCV request, these were additions that are simply not "one time only," and they were requests that were for contractual services, and not in-house.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

Our top priorities for **Restoration**, by Division:

- 1. Elections: Total restoration of funding for Ballot Tracking**
(Reduction-14, Program Offer 90010)
- 2. Elections: Total restoration of Voter Pamphlet distribution**
(Reduction-07, Program Offer 90010)

BallotTrax is not only a best practice for vote-by-mail elections, it is an increasingly popular service with voters. It serves as a relatively inexpensive way to not merely boost confidence in elections processes, but also to reduce call volume to the elections office from voters wondering about their ballot status during the busy election season. Similarly, the Voter Pamphlet is something that County voters have relied upon for many years for reliable information on candidates and ballot measures. Voters will miss it, and many will call the elections office wondering where it is. Regardless, it should not be eliminated without at least some serious consideration of better cost recovery as an option.

- 1. Animal Services: Total or partial restoration of funding for Foster Program**
(Reduction-03, Program Offer 90007)
- 2. Animal Services: Total or partial restoration of funding for Enrichment Program**
(Reduction-12, Program Offer 90007)

The CBAC is committed to maintaining the momentum in management improvements made in Animal Services and without restoration, these two reductions would constitute a major setback for the County's animal care program, in both capacity (Foster Program) and quality (Enrichment Program).

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1. **Land Use: Total restoration of funding for Planner 1 position**
(Reduction-01, Program Offer 90021)
2. **Land Use: Total or partial restoration of funding for Contractual Services**
(Reduction-02, Program Offer 90021)
3. **Land Use: Total restoration of funding for front desk counter position**
(Reduction-06, Program Offer 90021)

Without restoration, the collective reductions in the Land Use program would be particularly difficult for the already-understaffed Division to sustain while still meeting legal obligations and providing basic services in a timely way.

1. **Director's Office: Total or partial restoration of HR and Research Analyst positions**
(Reduction-04, Program Offers 90000, 90001)

The Director's office has taken the brunt of the budget constraints placed on the Department, and without restoration, the reductions would be felt in the already difficult top-level management across such a uniquely diverse portfolio of essential county services.

Our priorities for **Ongoing Addition Program Offers** by Division:

1. **Elections: New Position for GIS support**
(Addition-02-Ongoing, Program Offer 90010)

Mapping errors in the May 2024 election demonstrated a strong need for a position focused on strategic and technical support necessary for critical geographic mapping technology for elections. Mistakes in elections, geographic and otherwise, are not only expensive and difficult to correct, especially under very strict election timelines, but they can fundamentally damage trust in elections processes, which the county cannot afford.

2. **Land Use: New Planner 1 Position**
(Addition-10-Ongoing, Program Offers 90021, 90020)

The new position is essential to handle the workload in the Division and would help to shorten timelines for land use applications. The CBAC expects that funding for at least a portion of this position could be accommodated by anticipated fee increases for land use services.

Finally, the CBAC did not prioritize any **One-Time-Only Program Offers**.

As noted previously, all of the Director's proposed constraints and program offers represent crucially important services for Multnomah County residents; however, given the severity of this year's constraint, this CBAC chose to prioritize restoration of extant services and desperately needed capacity improvements over OTO program offers in their recommendations.

Members: Terry Harris, Conrad Hulen, James Ellis, Peter Finley Fry, Taylor Scott, Yume Delegato, James Abeles
Staff: Denell Broncho, DCS CBAC Coordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, the committee would like to give special thanks to Denell Broncho, Department Deputy Director and CBAC coordinator, for her essential assistance to CBAC throughout this process. And further thanks to Rose Cervenak and Tina LeFebvre for assisting with important coordination and logistics.

The committee would also like to particularly thank the Department and Division leadership for meeting with us and providing us with excellent information and important perspective into the Department and its work:

- Margi Bradway, Department Director
- Megan Gibb, Land Use Planning Director
- Tim Scott, Elections Director
- Erin Grahek, Animal Services Director
- Jon Henrichsen, Transportation Director
- Britta Schinske, Senior Finance Manager
- D'Metri Mattocks, Equity & Inclusion Manager
- Amara Perez, Director of the Office of Community Involvement



Office of Community Involvement



Department of County Human Services CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners 3 pages

FROM: Department of County Human Services Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Department of County Human Services Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This letter represents the Department of County Human Services (DCHS or the Department) Community Budget Advisory Committee's (CBAC or the Committee) recommendations regarding the FY 2025-2026 budget.

We understand that the Office of Community Involvement is working to clarify the role of the CBAC. Members of the DCHS CBAC have considered ourselves to be the voice of the community in our budget discussions. We strive to bring a community focused and independent perspective.

Given the number of programs administered by the Department, as well as the limited time available for our review, we focused our attention on the impact of the reduction packages and the one-time-only funding requests.

As we considered current community needs, the reduced county budget dollars available, and the uncertainty of federal funding, we followed the guiding principles noted below:

- Impact on vulnerable populations
- Access to services by marginalized communities
- Protection of program services not provided elsewhere
- Past success of the program to meet current needs of the community
- Preservation of matching dollars

Department of County Human Services CBAC

PROCESS

The DCHS CBAC met monthly throughout the year and our five members have each served through at least one prior budget cycle.

During our meetings we heard updates from DCHS leadership and various program directors. We listened to the annual economic forecast by Jeff Renfro and also heard updates and provided input on changes proposed to the CBAC process. We had regular updates on the FY 2025 financial reports and reviewed any available audit reports from the County Auditor. In addition, two members of CBAC visited one of the DCHS programs.

The DCHS CBAC dedicated significant time and benefited from a continuity of members with previous CBAC experience. However, we still believe we were unable to gain an in-depth understanding of the numerous programs DCHS provides. We hope that additional volunteers will be assigned to our CBAC in the future to allow us to form informal subcommittees. These informal subcommittees would allow for a focus on specific divisions within DCHS, as opposed to each CBAC member trying to understand all divisions and programs.

Additionally, we appreciate the opportunity to provide our recommendations earlier in the budget process. However, this shortened our budget review and discussion timeline such that we had only one two-hour meeting to review over 50 program offers requesting County general funds. We continue to look for ways to provide more meaningful input to the DCHS annual budget.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS

The following issues emerged in discussions throughout the year:

- Budget reductions
- Lack of discussion and review of program impacts to understand what outcomes have been achieved
- Need for increased external communication of long-term benefits of DCHS program offers and their impacts
- Service coordination with other departments and community partners
- Need to focus on most successful and impactful programs

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK

We have the following feedback related to the budget process:

- Significant issues require consistent, reliable funding to establish infrastructure and sustain a long-term strategy. Prevention of houselessness is an example of such an issue.

Members: Ray Anderson, Illyse Ball, April Ybarra Black, Becky Graham, Barb Sorg

Staff: Mohammad Bader, Rachel Pearl, Robert Stoll, Tahira Rivera, Dr. Richard

Department of County Human Services CBAC

- Encourage DCHS to continue partnering with others in the community to ensure there are no gaps in services, eliminate duplication of efforts, and allow each entity to focus on what they do best.
- Support continued emphasis on funding upstream solutions to address the root cause of the problem at hand.
- Encourage efforts to coordinate and gather data consistent with other departments/partners to allow for cross-comparison and enhanced metrics.
- Support setting appropriate performance measures and reporting on them consistently.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

DCHS staff presented their FY 2026 Budget Submission to the CBAC at our March meeting. CBAC members had an opportunity to ask questions and gain additional insight into how DCHS staff had set budget priorities. Based on discussions at this two-hour meeting on March 4, 2025, we concluded that DCHS staff had factored in the following to General Fund reductions, the priority of those reductions, and one-time-only requests:

- Availability (or lack thereof) of program services elsewhere
- Focus on preventative measures to avoid larger, more costly issues in the future
- Focus on most vulnerable community members and the long-term impacts on them (e.g. children)
- Work towards the best access point to services with staff who fully understand the needs of the population being served and how to connect them to the appropriate services. A more informed connection provides the individual with more timely and appropriate services and is more cost-effective in the long-term.
- DCHS Equity Manager was involved throughout the budget process.

After reviewing all reductions and one-time-only requests, the Committee supports the requests and priorities of the DCHS staff as listed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee understands that this is a particularly difficult and complex budget year. We realize that the work associated with budget reductions of this magnitude is very difficult. We appreciate the hard work necessary to complete this budget and recommend such significant reductions to or, at times, eliminations of certain programs. We would like to give special thanks to the DCHS staff who provided their time and information to us to better understand the programs in their department.

Members: Ray Anderson, Illyse Ball, April Ybarra Black, Becky Graham, Barb Sorg
Staff: Mohammad Bader, Rachel Pearl, Robert Stoll, Tahira Rivera, Dr. Richard



Office of Community Involvement



Department of County Assets & Department of County Management CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (6) pages

FROM: Department of County Assets (DCA) and Department of County Management (DCM) Community Budget Advisory Committee

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Department of County Assets and Department of County Management Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

The Dept. of County Management/Dept. of County Assets Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) members appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the Fiscal Year 2026 budget priorities of these two departments. The perspectives we bring come from our lived experience, professions, education, and community work. This year's members' professional backgrounds include legal services, organizational leadership, retail, advanced studies, and government contracting. We share common desires to give back to our community and to ensure fiscally responsible use of our tax dollars.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - The DCA/DCM CBAC has completed its review of the proposed departmental budgets, and we are pleased to present our recommendations for the Board's consideration. In conducting our review, we incorporated the following core values:

- Being good stewards of public funds
- Holding government institutions accountable for providing cost-effective, efficient services with measurable outcomes
- Viewing budgets as moral documents and commitments to the most vulnerable members of our community
- Supporting continual improvements toward County workforce equity, including employee health, safety and well-being
- Supporting transparency by making information about DCA and DCM budgets accessible and understandable to the general public.

Through interviews with County leadership, we obtained a broad picture of the County's financial health and priorities, as well as emerging issues—chief among them were declining tax

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revenue and the anticipated General Fund shortfall. This knowledge informed our review of proposed programs and reductions, group discussions, and ultimately the recommendations contained herein. Our recommendations prioritize the continued provision of essential services, particularly for marginalized community members, improvements to organizational and operational efficiency, and increased strategic planning. Our hope is that these programs help support the County's continued growth and service to the public despite challenging fiscal conditions ahead.

PROCESS - To develop our recommendations, we conducted interviews with county leaders from both the County Assets and County Management Departments. As a group, we engaged in discussions by asking both prepared and spontaneous questions. The meetings were conducted in a hybrid format, with some committee members attending in person and others joining virtually. Each meeting included at least two speakers who were present in person.

Most interviews took place before the release of the FY26 proposed department budgets, meaning specific program offers for the upcoming year were not yet available for review. As a result, managers were unable to discuss specific program details during our meetings.

Additional questions were submitted after our group reviewed this year's program offers. The committee received written responses to these questions, and that information was also considered while drafting this report.

Below is a list of meetings, including their dates and the names and titles of the county officials interviewed.

- January 13, 2025
 - Tracey Massey, DCA Director and Chief Information Officer
 - Mike Vaughn, DCM Deputy Director
 - Travis Graves, Interim Chief Operating Officer, DCM Director
- January 27, 2025
 - Sophie Wilson, DCA Equity Manager
 - Estelle Norris, DCM Equity Manager
- February 4, 2025
 - Travis Graves, Interim Chief Operating Officer and DCM Director
 - Eric Arellano, Chief Financial Officer
 - Christian Elkin, Chief Budget Officer
- February 10, 2025
 - Sara Ryan, Chair's Office Director of Budget and Strategic Projects
 - Dan Zalkow, Facilities and Property Management Director
 - Sim Ogle, Deputy Chief Information Officer

Members: Ben Brady, Jenna Lewis, Chuck Woods, T.J. Anderson, Terry Harris, Cormac Burke
Staff: Mike Vaughn and Beverly Ford (DCM) Nancy Artmann and Lisa Whedon (DCA)

DCA & DCM CBAC

Although the CBAC was presented with a large volume of information to consider, the short time between the release of the proposed budgets and the deadline for submitting this report prevented us from engaging in much of the substantive discussion that would have been required to provide comprehensive feedback on all aspects of the departments' budgets. Therefore, our group chose to focus on one-time-only program offers as a matter of practicality. Any lack of attention to other elements of the budgets, except where specifically mentioned in the following sections, does not indicate our tacit support of or objection to such elements.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES - Given emerging financial challenges, we have carefully evaluated how to allocate our available funds while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The reduction of ARP funding and the growing public scrutiny of government spending require a more strategic approach to budgeting. Balancing these constraints, we have assessed our priorities to ensure that our recommendations align with both immediate operational needs and long-term financial sustainability.

Understanding the difficulty of maximizing impact without appearing fiscally irresponsible, we have grounded our recommendations in a thorough analysis of our core values, evolving federal funding landscapes, and local financial conditions. This approach ensures that every dollar spent is optimized for the greatest benefit, positioning us to responsibly manage resources while still being honest to our mission promoting values and to making sure the budget while maintaining public trust during a planned 12% reduction throughout the county.

BUDGET FEEDBACK - The DCA/DCM CBAC acknowledges the significant budget constraints facing Multnomah County this fiscal year. As a general proposition, and subject to more specific discussion below, the CBAC does not recommend that any broad programs or services be "held harmless" from cuts. We would certainly expect that programs and services in the Department of County Assets and Department of County Management take their share of budget cuts. Unfortunately, the brief window of time for our CBAC consideration and deliberation doesn't allow for a deep dive into the specifics of reductions, but we respect the difficult choices and impossible prioritizations made by Department leadership, and we appreciate that the requested budget is well-considered.

But also, as a general matter, the CBAC would note that much of the Departments' work on constraints occurred as part of the internal services rate setting in the fall, well before the CBAC was even assembled. Because this rate-setting exercise is so crucial to the entire County budget, the County should consider whether this particular CBAC should be established much earlier in the budget cycle, to be able to provide at least some community review and input into the internal rates that can significantly impact budgets across all departments.

Members: Ben Brady, Jenna Lewis, Chuck Woods, T.J. Anderson, Terry Harris, Cormac Burke
Staff: Mike Vaughn and Beverly Ford (DCM) Nancy Artmann and Lisa Whedon (DCA)

DCA & DCM CBAC

In terms of budgetary priorities, we recommend focusing on preserving core services of the county as a general priority. This is why we have only prioritized a limited number of program offers. We believe that when core services fail to deliver, the marginalized population suffers more than those who can manage around those issues. The program offers that we did prioritize appear to be investments in maintaining essential services, reducing county costs moving forward, and ensuring public safety. We are also concerned about the economic vitality of the area, taking seriously the potential for further economic downturn. While some of the prioritized items aim to capitalize on current real estate market conditions, we would have favored proposals geared toward revitalizing local business and economic conditions had such proposals been presented. We encourage the chair to consider and propose initiatives that stimulate economic growth.

We additionally have not raised objections to the proposed budget reductions by DCM and DCA. We believe there may be further opportunities to streamline administration, management, and assets in alignment with the available budget. We remain concerned about significant shortcomings in critical services and commitments from Multnomah County in areas beyond DCA and DCM. Therefore, our program recommendations are guided by a focus on critical needs or initiatives that could help mitigate future costs and liabilities.

In conclusion, the CBAC emphasizes the importance of strategic budget allocations that preserve essential services, promote economic recovery, and enhance public safety. We commend the inclusion of success metrics in many of this year's program offers and advocate for further transparency and earlier involvement in future budgets. Ideally, program proposals should encompass comprehensive cost benefit analyses, detailing both initial and ongoing expenses alongside anticipated benefits. Multiple program offers only presented first year costs of design or purchase. The proposed holistic approach ensures a thorough understanding of each program's long-term value vs cost and aligns with best practices in budget prioritization. Implementing such methodologies would enhance the county's ability to make informed, evidence based decisions, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient use of resources.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS - *As stated above, our recommendations broadly prioritize maintaining essential services; however, we did not feel we had sufficient information to prioritize any one program offer over another. Consequently, Our specific recommendations are as follows, in no particular order of priority:*

Department of County Assets

1. 78245 Facilities Capital Improvement Program (CIP) \$419,208
This program is designed to ensure the quality of services provided by the county through the buildings that house them. It focuses on maintaining, upgrading, and improving the functionality, accessibility, and upkeep of these facilities. Over a five-year period, the program will implement preventive maintenance

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DCA & DCM CBAC

and necessary upgrades. The CBAC thinks the quality of services offered by the county could be negatively impacted if this program is not adopted.

2. 78233 Justice Center Electrical System Upgrade - Bus Duct - Replacement Ph2 \$3,300,000

The CBAC thinks that without this program, occupants would have to move to other locations which would make the Justice Center not operational. This would not be cost-effective, especially considering this project is in-flight.

3. N/A Complete Facilities Real Estate Plan \$200,000

The CBAC recognizes that the County is due for an updated strategic plan to help guide the County's complex real estate decision-making over the next decade. Such planning will be especially necessary in order to implement projects to advance the County's long-term vision in a much-changed real estate environment.

4. 78234 New Animal Services Building Project \$6,670,000

The CBAC strongly supports the design-phase funding for the long-delayed, much-needed New Animal Services Facility. The current facility is badly undersized, out of date, and simply unable to provide the level of services to the community, and the level of care to the animals in its charge that County residents need and should expect.

5. FPM Prophet Center Relocation/Vector Control Relocation/Downtown Real Estate... \$22,000,000

The CBAC recognizes these three projects might be important based on how they have been presented. As we have said, we are prioritizing opportunities for the county to invest in reducing future costs as well as ensuring that they preserve core services. These three projects appear to check some of those boxes. We unfortunately do not have enough of the information needed to make an informed recommendation. These are very significant investments totaling over \$22M and based on answers to some of our questions, it would appear there might be other options for these expiring leases beyond just purchasing property. It is also not clear what the full cost of these projects are projected to be. Additionally, we don't know where the "break-even" might be as compared to continuing leases or attaining new leases. We want to avoid the county from getting into a sunk cost situation where significant capital is invested in year one, therefore being trapped in future year costs. We would caution the chair moving forward with these one-time "first year" investments, without having a full projection on costs, a cost comparison to other viable options, and confidence in cost savings. Again, we are very aligned with the "intent" of these programs because they would continue critical services and potentially save the county future costs. We just don't have enough conclusive evidence to support whether these statements are true and therefore prioritize appropriately.

6. N/A Downtown Real Estate Acquisition and Renovation \$15,000,000

The CBAC concurs with the plan outlined in the recently completed Downtown Real Estate Study and supports the effort to implement the plan. The project's plan to acquire and renovate a building in downtown Portland, which would accommodate DCJ and DCHS programs, would also create an ability to sell the Mead Building and exit the Five Oak lease, all of which seems to make good business sense.

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7. 78244 DCJ Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) Security Foyer Project \$1,500,000
The CBAC supports the program offer. There will be safety enhancements that will increase security measures to the lobby area that are not there now.

Department of County Management

8. 72059 Finance & Risk-Purchasing Contract Redesign/Process Improvement \$161,421
The CBAC acknowledges the results of the County's prior assessment of its procurement and contracting functions and endorses the County's further steps to implement those recommended changes. Without a robust system for administering contracts in place, and the requisite training for such systems, there is the potential for significant cost overruns and project delays. The County may very well recoup the cost of this additional FTE through small improvements to contract oversight alone. This program also supports the standardization of training for the entire procurement lifecycle, an essential for any public organization engaged in considerable contracting activities.

9. 72063 Common Application Enhancement \$126,000
Common Application, which allows the public to apply for multiple programs and services within a single application, may have significant equity impacts, including reducing barriers to access, streamlining assistance to vulnerable populations, increasing awareness of available services, and centralizing data to identify and reduce service gaps. The CBAC supports the County's efforts to further study the operational efficiencies that may emerge through the adoption of this program.

10. 72033 DART - Commercial and Industrial Appraisal \$100,000
The CBAC concurs with the need for assistance in property tax appeals for downtown properties, particularly as the number of appeals has significantly increased. With this year's constrained budget, it is more important than ever to preserve taxable value downtown, and to resolve appeals fairly and efficiently.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – The Committee would like to give special thanks to Lisa Whedon, Nancy Artmann, Mike Vaughn, Beverly Ford, and others for their support, coordination, facilitation, responsiveness, and enthusiasm. They were essential to the organization and scheduling of our discussions and provided excellent perspective on all of the budget requests discussed. We would also like to acknowledge and extend our gratitude to the guests/presenters for their time, informative presentations, and responsiveness to our questions. County leadership was particularly diligent in providing us with comprehensive responses to our final written questions in a very short timespan, and those efforts were greatly appreciated.

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Health Department CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners 13 pages

FROM: Health Department Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Health Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FY26 marks a significant transition for our CBAC committee as we welcome four new members following the conclusion of our previous members' tenure. We extend our deepest gratitude to our committee members who have moved on, for their dedication, expertise, and commitment to advancing health equity over the past several budget cycles. Their contributions have shaped critical investments in behavioral health, corrections health, and workforce support, leaving a lasting impact on our community.

As we move forward, we enthusiastically welcome our new committee members and look forward to their insights and leadership in guiding the next phase of our work. Together, we remain committed to advocating for transformative investments that address systemic health disparities and strengthen the department's ability to serve our community effectively.

Additionally, workforce support across the department remains foundational to maintaining high-quality health services. Chronic vacancies and turnover place an unsustainable burden on existing staff, jeopardizing service delivery. Investing in recruitment, retention, and professional development is essential to ensuring long-term sustainability.

As we develop this report and our recommendations, we reaffirm our commitment to equity, dignity, and ethical leadership.

Your Health Department CBAC presents these recommendations with deep appreciation for the Department's ongoing efforts. We also acknowledge the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration to strengthen CBAC's role in shaping an equitable and impactful budget process.

Health Department CBAC

PROCESS

The Committee kicked off the planning year in September 2024 with monthly presentations from Division Leadership and other subject matter experts, including:

- Rachael Banks, Health Department Director
- Derrick Moten, Interim Director of Financial & Business Management Division
- Andrea Hamberg, Interim Public Health Director
- Kirsten Aird, Public Health Director
- Heather Mirasol, Behavioral Health Director
- Valdez Bravo, Interim Corrections Health Director
- Richard Bruno, Multnomah County Health Officer
- Aaron Monnig, Multnomah County Health Officer
- Jessica Guernsey, Health Department Project Support

To orient new members who joined the Committee after Divisions had already presented, Director Banks gave a thorough review of Health Department services at the January meeting. Director Banks returned twice more to provide an overview of the Health Department’s budget process and orient the committee to FY26 details, once they became available.

When deliberating and developing the report the Committee remained grounded in our shared [values](#), summarized by the following guiding principles:

- We are transformative leaders
- We offer expert knowledge
- We uphold racial justice
- We operate with dignity and respect
- We believe in intercultural intelligence
- We hold ethics at the core

In previous years, the team primarily focused on analyzing and making recommendations for programs and requests that fell outside of target funding. However, with the shift to reviewing and recommending restoration priorities, the process required a significantly different approach. Budget reductions inevitably impact services—often affecting the most vulnerable

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populations—or place additional strain on county staff by requiring them to maintain operations with fewer resources.

To ensure well-informed recommendations, the committee grounded its review in the Health Department’s budget rubric and the CBAC values. This framework provided a clear foundation for evaluating priorities.

- The committee conducted a thorough review of 16 program offers, beginning with an initial assessment on 2/27/25. During this phase, members documented questions and engaged in discussions that leveraged the diverse expertise and perspectives within the group. These conversations helped surface key considerations and ensured a more comprehensive evaluation.
- Each committee member ranked their priorities in an individual document based on the information available at that time. They also reviewed each program offering’s alignment with CBAC values as well as reviewed for Health Department alignment with its rubric. Members were able to document notes on their prioritization decisions.
- Following the initial review, the team received further clarifications and context from county leadership and staff. Department leaders were then invited to meet with CBAC, offering an opportunity for direct engagement, clarification, and deeper insight into program needs.
- With updated information the team once again reviewed restoration priorities individually in order to support a final ranking list.

The effectiveness of this process became evident on March 13, when the team was informed that the Health Department had updated its restoration priorities. While multiple factors may have influenced this shift, it was clear that the committee’s clarifying questions and discussions played a role in shaping these adjustments. This outcome reinforced the value of a rigorous, collaborative, and transparent review process in making budget decisions.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS -

Over recent budget cycles, the operations and funding of the department have been notably influenced by the COVID-19 response. The department is committed to actively restoring its core services. At present, we are seeing a decline in property tax revenue, and shifts in federal administration may impact federal and state funding sources, alongside rising healthcare costs. Consequently, we must thoughtfully consider the proposed 12% reduction as presented by the Health Department leadership.

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Members of the Community Budget Advisory Committee recognize the impending budget cuts, the reduction in available revenue sources, and the increasing demand for services within the community. The committee expresses its support for the department's rubric, as highlighted in the transmittal letter, to prioritize significant investments in health, address racial disparities in service delivery, and promote plans for the restoration and stabilization of the workforce.

In light of the proposed reduction, committee members have collaboratively identified key priorities for restoration and investment, including:

- Prioritizing the restoration of the STI Clinic, School-Based Mental Health Services, and Harm Reduction Initiatives to maintain critical service to our most vulnerable, mitigate potential increases in demand on emergency and crisis systems.
- Investments in workforce retention and safety initiatives aimed at rebuilding and sustaining a skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce to effectively meet public health demands.
- The strengthening of community partnerships through financial administrative support to ensure timely invoicing and payment to local organizations and culturally specific providers can continue to deliver essential care to those in need.
- Ongoing commitment to data-driven performance and efficiency enhancements to bolster financial sustainability and workforce efficiency through skilled technical personnel.

Our committee has consistently advocated for earlier and more meaningful engagement in the budget process. Throughout the FY25 budget cycle, we sought clarity on how our contributions influence decision-making. While there were initial delays in responses, department leadership and the Chair's Office have acknowledged our outreach and expressed their commitment to enhancing engagement. Additionally, the Office of Community Initiatives (OCI) has outlined plans to improve the community engagement process.

The committee appreciates these commitments and encourages ongoing efforts to ensure that community voices are truly incorporated into the budget process.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK -

The Multnomah County Health Department is confronting significant budgetary constraints in the FY 2026 cycle, necessitating reductions across various important programs and critical

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operational infrastructures. As representatives of the Health Department CBAC, we understand the difficult decisions that result from funding reductions and limited resources. Reduction decisions, while never easy, present Department leaders and CBAC members with profound responsibility and care in centering equity in our decision making. With that, we are deeply concerned about the potential impacts the proposed reductions may have, particularly on culturally specific services and the foundational operations that support our community's health initiatives.

Impact on Culturally Specific Services

Our community's strength lies in its diversity, and culturally specific services are essential in addressing the unique health needs of various populations. Budget reductions threaten programs tailored to communities of color, immigrants, refugees, and other marginalized groups, potentially widening existing health disparities.

Of specific focus and concern for the CBAC, the STI clinic and the vital services the staff provide encompass an integrative, holistic, and culturally specific approach to healthcare. The reduction or elimination of culturally specific STI services will directly impact already marginalized community members and reduce trust of the health system at large.

School-based mental health services may also be impacted or eliminated. These services offer language-specific mental health counseling, pre-engagement support, and community health outreach utilizing culturally relevant and responsive approaches. Such reductions could lead to decreased trust and engagement between these communities and the health department, hindering efforts to promote preventive care and early intervention.

The CBAC recommends that culturally specific services be preserved and/or prioritized for restoration should the budget allow.

Concerns Regarding Operational Infrastructure

As echoed by many of the Department's leaders, operational infrastructure underpins the delivery of all health services, ensuring efficiency, compliance, and quality. Budget cuts affecting administrative functions, data management systems, and workforce development can have cascading effects on service delivery. Of specific concern to the CBAC are potential reductions in facility security, safety, and strategic operations across Health Department facilities. Such security infrastructure acts as the bedrock of employee and community safety, health access,

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and trust. Interruptions and loss of strategic leadership could have dire implications for county and department health equity initiatives.

The CBAC underscored our concerns regarding proposed reductions to the office of Financial & Business Management, specifically the position(s) that support the timely processing of Community Based Organization (CBO) invoices. We know that small CBOs rely on timely payment for their lifesaving services and that interruptions or delays could reduce the efficacy and continuity of key health services.

Additionally, reductions in administrative data support may slow down the processing of vital health data, delaying responses to emerging public health threats. Further, constraints on workforce training and development can impede staff readiness to adopt best practices or respond to health emergencies effectively.

The CBAC recommends operational infrastructure be preserved and/or prioritized for restoration should the budget allow.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

CBAC's Position and Recommendations

The CBAC acknowledges the fiscal challenges and emphasizes the importance of preserving services that directly impact the health outcomes of our most vulnerable populations. We recommend exploring alternative cost-saving measures that do not compromise culturally specific programs or critical operational infrastructures. Investments in preventive care and community-based interventions often result in long-term savings by reducing the need for more intensive services.

The CBAC has carefully reviewed the proposed budget reductions and their potential impact on critical health services and departmental infrastructure. In collaboration with Health Department leadership, the CBAC has developed a set of recommendations and priority rankings for reduction and/or restoration. Our prioritization framework is rooted in the principles of health equity, service accessibility, and long-term community impact, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations continue to receive the care and support they need.

While we recognize the fiscal constraints facing the county, we strongly advocate for strategic investments that uphold public health priorities and minimize disproportionate harm to marginalized communities. The following recommendations reflect our commitment to

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maintaining the Health Department's capacity to serve all residents effectively while addressing the budgetary challenges ahead.

Our specific recommendations are as follows, in priority of restoration:

1. 40010B - STI Clinic

The HIV/Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) program is foundational to public health practice and part of a statutory role to protect the health of the community. The STI Clinical Services component focuses on providing sexual health services and community testing/prevention to prevent STI and HIV transmission and ensure access to treatment, particularly for underserved and marginalized populations. It provides low barrier, stigma-free services to people who may not otherwise have access to services or who are hesitant to access their typical provider. The STI Clinic works closely with the Disease Intervention Team and Community Epidemiology Services to collaborate on data related to STI trends and spread of disease.

2. 40082 & 40068 - School Based Mental Health (MH) & Related Quality Management (QM)

40082: School Based Mental Health (SBMH) and K12 Case Management are essential components of the system of care for children and families. Our 21 SBMH clinicians and 9 Case Managers serve over 1,000 children and teens with mental health needs in 34 schools across six school districts: Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham Barlow, Reynolds, Parkrose, and Portland Public Schools. Mental health professionals provide evidence-based treatment, utilizing an anti-racist equity lens, in school and Student Health Center settings and via telehealth. K-12 Case Managers help students and their families meet unmet needs by connecting them to mental health services, housing, clothing, and food access. These additional case management services will also seek to reduce racial and health inequities and support increased attendance and educational success.

40068: The Quality Management (QM) Unit provides critical infrastructure support for the entire Behavioral Health Division. QM includes five individual programs: Compliance, Evolv (Electronic Health Record (EHR) system), Records, Reporting, and Revenue. The teams work collaboratively to provide statutorily required, essential, functional, and safety services to the client-facing programs within the Division. These teams advance racial equity by providing real time information and data on systems, programs, and policies that perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for BIPOC and underserved populations.

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3. 40003, 40040, 40039A, 40044 - Facilities, Safety & Security, Operations, FBM

Newly bundled and resubmitted as Restoration Priority #3, this package includes FTE supporting Health Department infrastructure from the following program offers:

40003: This program provides facilities, safety, and administrative support for the department and includes the Health Department (HD) Headquarters at Gladys McCoy. The work is executed by the Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist and one Office Assistant Senior. The Senior Strategist conducts safety planning, coordinates contracted security personnel and leads development and revisions of department safety and security policy and procedures, collaborating with the office of Workplace Security to ensure compliance. In 2023, the Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist implemented the Health Department Safety & Security Advisory committee. The Committee utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach to safety and security, emphasizing collaboration and creativity with collaborators, to strategize, develop procedures and policy, and identify best practices. The Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist also leads and facilitates Health Department activation and response to critical incidents, facilities emergencies, and inclement weather operations. The Senior Strategist Supports and tracks Health Department relocation efforts, liaises with Safety Committee,s and ensures proper operations at each HD location/building in collaboration with Risk Management.

40040: This program offer supports the essential financial and business management services of the Health Department. Services include financial reporting and forecasting, grant accounting, fiscal compliance, budget development, cash management and accounts payable services. Teams collaborate with the County's Budget Office and Central Finance units. Teams follow the County's budget, financial and administrative procedures, policies and practices. By managing complex federal, state, county, and funder requirements, these fiscal stewards help ensure the department can achieve its mission.

40039A: Health Department Human Resources (HR) provides expertise, consultation, and leadership to ensure a highly skilled workforce reflective of the communities served is hired and retained while upholding the department's core values of non- discrimination and valuing varied lived experiences and perspectives, managing the compliance of personnel rules and legal requirements, and developing and maintaining partnerships with labor unions and community stakeholders. The HR team is staffed with individuals of diverse educational, professional, cultural, and lived backgrounds to offer a high level of expertise and competency

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to support a well-rounded and effective workforce.

40044: This program offer includes a team of developers, analysts, and project managers who provide report development and analytic services to the department. In addition, the annual cost of the Epic practice management and the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system used by the Health Department is budgeted here.

4. 40052 - Medical Examiner

The County is required to perform death investigations and those services are housed within the Health Department. The State Medical Examiner's Office (SMEO) is the lead agency for death investigations in Oregon operating within the Oregon State Police. The County Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) is involved in all deaths, with the exception of natural deaths occurring directly under physician care greater than 24 hours in a hospital or hospice setting. As most deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner (ME) are sudden and unexpected, the MEO is in a unique position to identify unusual and emerging causes of death and injury, and to contribute to preventive public health interventions. While the SMEO is part of the Oregon State Police in a legally focused investigative position, the County MEO is housed within the Health Department. This remains a close connection between public health, public safety, and fatalities and identification of the leading causes of death and prevention efforts.

5. 40008, 40061SA, 40096 - Vector Supplies; Harm Reduction supplies & FTE; WIC Gateway Clinic Supplies

40008: The Vector Control and Code Enforcement program protects the public from vector-borne diseases through the collection, monitoring, and testing of mosquitoes, rats, birds, and other animals for pathogens harmful to humans. The program also works to enforce health-based nuisance codes like keeping of small livestock (chickens, pigs, bees), rodent harborages, and illegal dumping. Vector Control and Code Enforcement are core public health services that protect the public from diseases carried by and transmitted through contact with animals. ORS 431.141 stipulates that Environmental Public Health Programs must be included as a foundational program for a public health and safety program. Furthermore, ORS 431.143 (2) specifically mandates that an Environmental Public Health Program must protect the public from biotic and abiotic factors in the environment including but not limited to vector borne diseases. Additionally, ORS 452.240 provides additional measures to the county to perform the functions mandated. This is accomplished through: Mosquito Control – Active suppression of

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mosquito populations to lower the risk of West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, and increase community livability through the direct reduction of mosquitoes using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program.

40061SA: The program goal is to improve the quality of life for people who use drugs by reducing the potential harms of drug use. Harm Reduction serves people who may not be ready to stop substance use, offering strategies to mitigate negative outcomes from drug use for individuals and the larger community. Services use trauma-informed risk reduction counseling and culturally appropriate referrals based on client readiness. The program educates clients regarding one-time use of injection supplies, which is critical to reducing HCV, HIV, and bacterial transmission. The program distributes those supplies and offers used syringe takeback at field-based and clinical sites in targeted locations. Staff provide opioid overdose prevention education, and naloxone and fentanyl test strip distribution help reduce fatal overdoses. The program subcontracts with Outside In to duplicate these listed activities at their fixed location in SW Portland.

40096: The Office of the Director supports the Board of Health (BOH) to set health policy for Multnomah County and provides administrative support and project management to ensure that the Public Health Division (PHD) fully performs its unique governmental role and achieves legal requirements for Multnomah County's local public health authority. The PHD is responsible for systems that promote and protect the health of, and prevent disease for, diverse communities within Multnomah County. The PHD accomplishes this work through policy interventions; prevention initiatives; public education and communications; community partnerships; planning; and research, evaluation, and assessment. The main goal is to improve the health of the entire population and reduce inequities experienced by BIPOC communities, especially in chronic disease and injury, and to lower rates of the leading causes of preventable death.

6. 40040 – FBM (*Finance Specialist Sr. now bundled in #3*)

This program supports the essential financial and business management services of the Health Department. Services include financial reporting and forecasting, grant accounting, fiscal compliance, budget development, cash management and accounts payable services. Teams collaborate with the County's Budget Office and Central Finance units. Teams follow the County's budget, financial and administrative procedures, policies and practices. By managing complex federal, state, county, and funder requirements, these fiscal stewards help ensure the department can achieve its mission.

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7. 40000A - Director's Office

The Health Department (HD) Director's Office provides executive leadership and strategic direction in service to the HD's mission, vision and values. The Director holds the statutory role of Local Public Health Authority, and supports Behavioral Health Division as the Community Mental Health Program, to ensure the HD performs its unique governmental role, achieves legal requirements, and advances equity. The Office convenes the HD Leadership Team to meet strategic objectives and foster a culture that supports a diverse, qualified workforce; acts as a liaison to Federal, State, County and local elected officials; collaborates with non-profits, health systems, and other agencies to provide and obtain funding for services to improve the county's health; and supports divisions in core capability areas such as equity, communications, policy, and partnerships.

8. 40003 - Facilities, Safety & Security *(Administrative Analyst Sr. now bundled in #3)*

This program provides facilities, safety, and administrative support for the department and includes the Health Department (HD) Headquarters at Gladys McCoy. The work is executed by the Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist and one Office Assistant Senior. The Senior Strategist conducts safety planning, coordinates contracted security personnel and leads development and revisions of department safety and security policy and procedures, collaborating with the office of Workplace Security to ensure compliance. In 2023 the Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist implemented the Health Department Safety & Security Advisory committee. The Committee utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach to safety and security, emphasizing collaboration and creativity with collaborators, to strategize, develop procedures and policy, and identify best practices. The Facilities, Safety & Security Senior Strategist also leads and facilitates Health Department activation and response to critical incidents, facilities emergencies, and inclement weather operations. The Senior Strategist Supports and tracks Health Department relocation efforts, liaises with Safety Committees and ensures proper operations at each HD location/building in collaboration with Risk Management.

9. 40044 - Health Data & Analytic Team *(Development Analyst now bundled in #3)*

This program includes a team of developers, analysts, and project managers who provide report development and analytic services to the department. In addition, the annual cost of the Epic practice management and the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system used by the Health Department is budgeted here.

10. 40039A - HR Learning & Development *(Two HR Analysts now bundled in #3)*

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11. 40054 - Nurse Family Partnership

Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) is a nurse home visiting program under the Parent, Child, and Family Health (PCFH) program, which offers services to first-time pregnant people living on low incomes. It is delivered through two Multnomah County teams that serve the entire County. The goals of NFP are to improve pregnancy outcomes by promoting health-related behaviors and to improve child health, development, and safety by promoting competent caregiving. Funding provided in this budget will maintain NFP for this fiscal year while PCFH considers a possible restructuring of home visiting programs with community input.

12. 40040, 40042, 40037B – FBM Supplies & OT; Contracts & Procurement Technical Assistance for CBOs; Gas-Powered Leaf Blower (Not prioritized for restoration by HD)

40040: This program supports the essential financial and business management services of the Health Department. Services include financial reporting and forecasting, grant accounting, fiscal compliance, budget development, cash management and accounts payable services. Teams collaborate with the County's Budget Office and Central Finance units. Teams follow the County's budget, financial and administrative procedures, policies and practices. By managing complex federal, state, county, and funder requirements, these fiscal stewards help ensure the department can achieve its mission.

40042: This program includes the vaccine depot where vaccines are received, stored, and distributed. The depot processes on average 85+ orders per month. This is the primary point of contact for routine vaccine services management. The depot has a key role in emergency public health responses that require vaccine prophylaxis to reduce the spread and severity of disease.

40037B: Starting on January 1, 2026, gas-powered leaf blowers will be prohibited, except during the fall and winter. In 2028, gas blowers will be banned in the fall and winter as well. Those who violate the policy will face a fine of up to \$1,000. The City of Portland and Multnomah County

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are negotiating an intergovernmental agreement that delegates enforcement authority to the County. The program increases awareness and compliance with the City of Portland's gas leaf blower phaseout ordinance. It will engage leaf blower operators to better understand their perspectives on issues, needs and opportunities to inform policy and communications, and to learn more about the need or desire for occupational health interventions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee would like to give special and sincere appreciation to the members of the previous Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) for their significant contributions. We would especially like to recognize volunteers Jimmy Mak and CJ Alicandro for their commendable support during the committee's transition and recruitment efforts. Their dedication has helped ensure continued community engagement in the budget process. The Committee would also like to thank its newest member, Dema Abu Alia. We look forward to fully collaborating with you for FY27.

Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation to Director Banks, CBAC Support Staff Jonathan Livingston and our Health Department Division Directors for their presentations, and their responsiveness to the committee's concerns and inquiries.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Amara Pérez as the new Director of the Office of Community Involvement. Special thanks to Sara Ryan and Natalie Minas from the Chair's Office for their insightful presentation on the ways the community can provide feedback on the budgetary process. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration aimed at enhancing community participation and promoting transparency.

Thank you all for your ongoing commitment to advancing public health within our community.

Members: Rosalie Lee, Courtney Wood, Gwyneth Punsoni, Hannah Studer **Staff:** Derrick Moten, Jonathan Livingston

Joint Office of Homeless Services CBAC Report

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners
FROM: JOHS Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)
DATE: March 14, 2025
SUBJECT: JOHS Community Budget Advisory Committee Report

The JOHS CBAC plans to continue reviewing the JOHS budget proposal over the next several weeks, ask questions, and submit a second letter after the Chair's budget is released.

PRIORITIES

Overall, should more funding be made available for JOHS, these are the kinds of programs we would like to see prioritized:

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Eviction Prevention
- Culturally Specific & Responsive Services,
- Rent Assistance
- Wrap-Around Services to Families and Singles
- Accountability, Transparency
- Employment Services

We did not have sufficient time to review the JOHS budget to provide more extensive review. This process was disappointing. To have so little time to review an accurate budget dishonors the memories of the hundreds of people dying on our streets each year and the hundreds more we expect will perish this year.

CBAC MEMBERS

Members of the JOHS CBAC this year include:

1. Nicki Dardinger
2. Nathan Williams
3. Christine Hermann
4. Anisa Ali
5. Darius Mani Yaw
6. Cameron Foster

7. Daniel DeMelo

The following additional members served but were technically not appointed. Their term begins March 15, one day after this letter is due.

1. Amanda Garren
2. Lisa Drennan
3. Wendy Lear

This report was approved at the March 10, 2025, meeting by Nicki Dardinger, Darius Mani Yaw, Anisa Ali, Cameron Foster, and Daniel DeMelo (other CBAC members were absent).



Library Community Budget Advisory Committee

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (4) pages
FROM: Library Advisory Board
DATE: March 14, 2025
SUBJECT: Library Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Advisory Board (LAB) fully supports the Multnomah County Library's (MCL's) proposed Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget. This budget continues to allow MCL to fulfill promises of the Capital Bond Project and library mission while supporting ongoing bond work, addressing a deficit, and incorporating aspects of MCL's Future Staffing Initiative. In considering difficult financial decisions in this deficit environment, we are especially appreciative of the effort MCL has taken to ensure the final proposed budget did not result in the elimination of any staff. We recommend adoption of the FY26 budget as proposed.

PROCESS

In accordance with Chapter 19 of the County Code, LAB serves as the Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) for MCL. LAB holds monthly meetings throughout the year and is kept up to date on library operations, programs, policies, priorities, and the budget. This year, the CBAC subcommittee of LAB met four times, beginning in December, to explore specific budgetary issues, including economic forecasts, internal service charge projections, staffing and personnel, and program offers. MCL Director of Finance & Facilities Katie Shifley led these sessions and provided information, reports, and budget briefings for the committee's review, supported by Maddelyn High, Management Analyst. The CBAC subcommittee updated LAB at regularly scheduled meetings throughout the process. Based on these discussions, LAB approved this report on March 4, 2025.

EMERGING ISSUES AND CHANGES

The FY26 budget prioritizes services that improve equity while addressing a deficit with targeted reduction proposals. It seeks to hold non-personnel budgets flat while balancing short-term costs with longer-term needs that will arise as bond projects come to fruition.

LAB would like to highlight the following developments in the FY26 Budget:

Library CBAC

- Like all county departments this upcoming fiscal year, MCL was tasked with creating a budget within the constraints of a challenging economic forecast. MCL and LAB discussed and decided on reductions or eliminations with MCL's [service priorities](#)—particularly, those that take place in MCL's physical spaces as new bond projects come online—in mind.
- LAB supports the use of MCL's robust fund balance for special projects and one-time costs; namely, projects that address bond-related operating needs:
 - Limited-duration positions will work on materials handling work for new and reopening libraries, and change management.
 - New staff technology and capital equipment purchases (specifically new play area installations), which were included in previous operating budgets and have been allocated in this area, with support from The Library Foundation.
- LAB applauds the library's Future Staffing Initiative, which studies and adapts staffing and service models to better address new needs arising from bond projects, and positions the library to keep personnel costs down as ongoing library district revenue growth slows. In collaboration with an external consulting firm, MCL developed this initiative to maintain its commitment to strategic priorities that improve equity within the library community. **The initiative shuffles existing staff and resources, sunsets three small programs, changes in-house security positions to contracted positions, and results in no layoffs at this time—a huge accomplishment given the current budget outlook.**
 - This initiative allows MCL to have only a 1% increase in personnel costs between FY25 and FY26 requested budgets, and provides more staff to new and reopening bond locations.
 - The three sunsetted programs are **School Corps**, **Books2U**, and **Listos para el Kínder**. While valuable to those who use them, these programs serve a relatively small population, duplicate other community services, provide services that can be incorporated into other library operations, or provide services that do not directly align with MCL's service priorities. LAB is interested in continuing to monitor the impact of these eliminations over the next year to ensure no disparities in service emerge.
- **LAB supports MCL's proposed \$1.4 million in deficit cost reductions.** We appreciate that these budget reductions are designed to minimize service impacts, protect staffing levels outlined in the Future Staffing Initiative, and avoid reductions that would have negative

Finance Committee Members: Cassie Duprey, David Jarvis, Ingrid Jacobson, Kate Fleming, Kelsey Fong, London Sorcinelli, Madison Riethman, Tia-Theo Thompson

Staff: Katie Shifley, Director of Finance & Facilities; Maddelyn High, Management Analyst

Library CBAC

effects on library equity commitments. This is important as the library opens significant new spaces in FY26. These reductions include:

- Reducing the size of the substitute staffing fund (substitute services are covered in the new staffing plan)
- Reducing the travel and training budgets and the branded materials budget
- Lowered hold allowances for digital materials and some databases
- A small reduction in contracted coverage of janitorial and security services; and
- Reductions in contracted Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP) support at Central Library.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

We recommend that the Library District Board adopt the proposed budget of \$123.5 million and 541.75 FTE for FY26. LAB recommends adopting all Library program offers as proposed.

LAB's further comments and recommendations are as follows:

- **LAB applauds the rollout of the Future Staffing Initiative and its commitment to equity for MCL services.** We hope that future staffing decisions and potential layoffs will be considered in light of MCL's priorities and commitments to its community.
- In light of the forecast of reducing budgets for MCL and County departments on the whole, LAB implores more transparency of internal services costs. **Specifically, we recommend inviting customer departments to collaborate on policies and decisions that determine internal service costs that will impact them.** As these costs continue to grow, especially with the new and expanded facilities included in the Library Bond project, better forecasts of and flexibility in these costs prove to be essential in developing future budgets.
- **LAB applauds MCL's efforts to request Supportive Housing Services funds to support two dedicated Peer Support Specialists at Central Library.** These specialists provide resources, support, and referrals to community members facing mental health or substance use challenges—services that are particularly impactful when delivered in a community setting. By supporting this resource at Central Library, MCL reinforces its commitment to provide a safe and accessible environment for all patrons as well as staff; these positions ensure crucial support to librarians in the current precarious climate.

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Staff: Katie Shifley, Director of Finance & Facilities; Maddelyn High, Management Analyst

Library CBAC

Further, these positions also mitigate the impact of the 50% reduction made to an existing contract with QMHPs to address this year's deficit.

- As the County economic forecasts project continued sluggish property tax revenue growth, departments will continue to face challenging decisions around how to maintain programs and personnel. LAB appreciates the efforts of MCL to meet the demands of this restrictive budgetary environment, and feels that MCL has made the best possible decisions given the conditions; however, additional fiscal years with these restrictions will severely impact the long-term stability of services, ultimately hindering MCL's ability to honor the commitment made to our communities. **We strongly urge Commissioners to evaluate and implement timely policy initiatives that address this revenue growth decline.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Library Advisory Board wishes to give special thanks to Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley and Management Analyst and LAB staff liaison Maddelyn High, who provided outstanding support for the work of the board. LAB also thanks County Economist Jeff Renfro for his time in aiding LAB's understanding of the economic forecast implications. We thank the Library's Executive Management Team for their support throughout the year.

Finance Committee Members: Cassie Duprey, David Jarvis, Ingrid Jacobson, Kate Fleming, Kelsey Fong, London Sorcinelli, Madison Riethman, Tia-Theo Thompson

Staff: Katie Shifley, Director of Finance & Facilities; Maddelyn High, Management Analyst



Office of Community Involvement



District Attorney's Office CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (3) pages

FROM: District Attorney's Office Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: MCDA Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Having reviewed the District Attorney's budget request for FY 2026 the MCDA CBAC feels that it is incumbent on the Board to consider a full funding of this Office and to remove the standing request for a 3% reduction in total dollars allocated to the DA's Office.

We respectfully request that all of these proposed reductions be restored:

Proposal for Reductions to Meet 3% FY 2026 General Fund Target Allocation			
Reduction Package # in priority order for restoration	Brief Description and Program Offers	General Fund Reduction	FTE Reduction
1	Homicide Unit (15305) - 1.00 FTE DDA 3	(\$291,000)	-1.00
2	Treatment Court Unit (15209) - 1.00 FTE DDA 2	(\$217,000)	-1.00
3	Domestic Violence Unit (15305) - 1.00 FTE DDA 2	(\$222,000)	-1.00
4	MCDA Access Attorney Program (MAAP 15207) - 1.00 FTE DDA 3 (North Portland)	(\$261,000)	-1.00
5	Juvenile Unit (15101) - 1.00 FTE DDA 1	(\$198,000)	-1.00
0	Multiple Program Offers - Accumulated budget savings from across the office, including as a result of salary savings from turnover.	(\$100,000)	0.00
Total		(\$1,289,000)	-5.00

District Attorney's Office CBAC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

We recognize from personal experience and a review of local and national media, that Multnomah County has suffered a devastating loss to its reputation as a place where people can safely visit for meetings, conventions, and vacations, where they can safely raise a family, or are able to conduct a successful business regardless of its size.

It is evident that Multnomah County faces a number of serious ongoing challenges, and that the County's ability to manage them successfully is now being hampered by a large shortfall in its revenue.

We recognize that you as our leaders are constantly being pushed and pulled away from our most important and urgent needs by the loudest voices in the room. One of the top priorities per our Board of County Commissioners is to protect our community.

While we are aware that the current lack of funds is going to require a reduction of services and benefits to many individuals who desperately need them, it is important that the safety of the community as a whole be considered as the most essential component in preventing even larger funding losses in the future, losses resulting in additional reductions in services and support to those who need them most.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK:

This DA's Office is crucial to the public safety system and must be funded adequately in order to ensure fair and efficient justice, which ultimately benefits the community and upholds the rule of law.

With this in mind, MCDA CBAC supports the DA in his list of new requests and their prioritized order. However, we would like to speak on these program offer requests specifically:

- *Strategic Prosecution & Service Unit SPSU Expansion:* MCDA CBAC strongly supports this new request. This committee sees the value in the use of technology, intelligence, and data analytics in innovative ways that enable prosecutors to focus resources on the people and places associated with high concentrations of criminal activity.
- *Sr. Legal Assistant Expansion:* This is another program that would increase efficiencies within the DA's Office. By adding legal assistants to each of the seven felony units, this would free up administrative work currently being performed by the more expensive prosecutors, to be done by a less expensive legal assistant. Prosecutors would leverage this administrative workload shift by increasing their caseload capacity.
- *Body Worn Cameras Unit:* MCDA CBAC is shocked that this was not included as an ongoing program offer in the FY 2026 budget, as this would seem to be both constitutionally and ethically required. At the current level, only 17% of felony level body

District Attorney's Office CBAC

worn camera footage is currently being reviewed. That number would go down to zero if this funding does not continue into FY 2026.

- *Civil Commitments DDA*: This is difficult and complex work with the criminal justice system. The prosecutor is dealing with criminal defendants that are not mentally fit in a system with not enough mental health resources, including the Oregon State Hospital, which is chronically full, and the county jails acting as a de facto mental health facility.

In closing, we MCDA CBAC members understand that these are challenging budgetary times, but the fundamental importance of public safety leads us to our conclusions. We greatly appreciate the Chair and Commissioners considering our thoughts on these important matters.

CBAC Members:

Babak Zolfaghari-Azar

Chuck Sparks

Mike Delman (Chair)

Renai Bell (Central CBAC Representative)

Tim Larson

Staff:

Michelle Myers, MCDA Finance Director

Lindsay Smith, MCDA Finance Spec. Sr.

Sheriff's Office CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Multnomah County Sheriff's Office CBAC

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: MCSO Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MCSO CBAC appreciates the opportunity to share its views on MCSO budget priorities and the direction of the County more broadly. All four committee members are new to the CBAC process and look forward to learning more about County operations in the years to come. This letter includes a brief description of this year's process, committee-identified key opportunities for the County, and a comment on one specific program offer from MCSO.

PROCESS

The MCSO CBAC met five times between December and March. With all four CBAC members being new to the role, initial meetings were spent learning about the CBAC process, the work of MCSO, and the process by which the County budget is created.

MCSO Chief of Business Services Jon Harms Mahlandt was the primary staff point of contact and scheduled and attended each meeting. Member Erica Gregg was voted committee Chair at meeting #2.

In preparing this letter, MCSO's CBAC focused on several issues that represent significant opportunities for the County to improve its service to the public.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Public Safety Standards

The MCSO CBAC was concerned to learn more about the critical failure of County public safety systems, including the dire state of County jail facilities and their emergent staffing crisis. MCSO is in many ways the County's first line of defense across multiple crises, and any failure of MCSO

Sheriff's Office CBAC

has significant downstream impacts on the community. The County must provide adequate investment to ensure its jails can both accommodate law enforcement efforts and ensure highest possible quality of life for those in custody. To that end, the MCSO CBAC was encouraged to see investments in hiring and recruiting to support the County jails but is adamant that those investments grow and continue into the future.

Homeless Services

Homelessness is at the center of so many of the challenges facing Multnomah County. MCSO members offer critical services to unhoused residents of Multnomah County through the Homeless Outreach Programs Engagement (HOPE) Team. This committee recommends additional investment in the HOPE team and similar programs that provide proactive outreach to unhoused persons.

Community Mental Health

County jails have become a flashpoint for mental health care in Oregon. Multnomah County Jails in particular provide housing for numerous high-acuity persons with significant mental health needs. While Multnomah County has reduced the size of its jail population over the last decade, the needs of the typical person in custody have grown substantially. The County must meet this need with significant and ongoing investment.

Attracting and Retaining Talent

Addressing MCSO's staffing challenges through expanded hiring efforts is not a comprehensive solution. The committee was troubled to learn that, despite hiring 60 corrections deputies in 2023, 58 corrections deputies separated from MCSO in the same period. Clearly, MCSO must address its staffing challenges from both the hiring side *and* the retention side. To that end, many area public safety agencies have committed dollars and positions to wellness and retention programs. The committee would love to see comparable investments from Multnomah County.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

60215B Human Resources Expansion \$1,766,315

As noted above, the committee was encouraged to see the County's mid-year investment in MCSO hiring and recruiting. Continuing this funding through FY2026 is absolutely critical to

**Members: Erica Gregg, Justin Hobson, Fay Reynolds, Rachelle Ross
Mahlandt**

Staff: Jon Harms

Sheriff's Office CBAC

restoring core staffing at the MCSO and ensuring County jails can continue to serve the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CBAC would like to thank the Sheriff's Office and the Office of Community Involvement for the opportunity to participate in this year's budget process. The committee would also like to thank MCSO Chief of Business Services Jon Harms Mahlandt for coordinating committee meetings.

Respectfully,

Erica Gregg
Justin Hobson
Fay Reynolds
Rachelle Ross

***Members: Erica Gregg, Justin Hobson, Fay Reynolds, Rachelle Ross
Mahlandt***

Staff: Jon Harms



Office of Community Involvement



Non - Departmental CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners 8 pages

FROM: Non - Departmental Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Non - Departmental Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Non-Departmental Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)** focused on critical areas where budget cuts and resource allocations directly impact the effectiveness of County services and the community's well-being. Our committee's recommendations aim to prioritize programs that foster long-term sustainability, equity, and community engagement, while acknowledging the constraints posed by the County's budget deficit. In light of the 8-12% cuts across various departments, we approached our recommendations with an understanding of the complex political landscape at both the state and national levels, which could further affect County funding and services and highlights the important role of the County as a safety net for our community.

Key Program Areas Prioritized:

- **Office of Sustainability:** We support maintaining funding for programs like the Enterprise Plan, Utility Policy, and Climate Justice by Design, while recommending a shift in resources for the Climate Resilience Coordinator role.
- **Office of Government Relations:** We support cutting 1 FTE in the grant-writing position but recommend distributing grant-writing responsibilities across departments to maintain funding streams.
- **Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE):** We emphasize ODE's critical role in supporting equity and recommend preserving its resources for continued guidance, especially as other departments face increased reliance on equity expertise.
- **Auditor's Office:** We advocate for maintaining community engagement in audits and protecting staff expertise to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Office of Community Involvement (OCI):** We recommend transitioning a temporary position to an FTE and securing resources for internships to support OCI's community engagement efforts.

Non - Department CBAC

Core Values Guiding Our Recommendations: We consider the below values in alignment with Multnomah County's stated mission, vision, and values.

- **Equity:** Ensuring all programs are accessible and responsive to vulnerable communities.
- **Sustainability:** Emphasizing long-term planning, particularly in environmental and climate resilience programs.
- **Community Engagement:** Ensuring community voices are central to decision-making.
- **Efficiency:** Advocating for strategic budget reductions that preserve essential services.

PROCESS

We met with representatives from five County departments to review their budgets and discuss essential services. Our discussions were guided by values of equity, community engagement, and climate resilience. Departments were transparent in presenting their budget cuts, but concerns arose about the loss of key staff and the impact on service quality.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS

- **Securing Functionality:** Protecting core functions and staff expertise is critical, especially given potential state and federal cuts.
- **Maintaining Institutional Knowledge and Expertise:** Reductions primarily affect staff positions, risking the loss of institutional knowledge and expertise.
- **Commitment to Equity:** Across departments, we emphasized the need to prioritize equity-driven programs, especially those supporting marginalized communities.
- **Climate Resilience:** Cuts to climate-related roles, like the Climate Resilience Coordinator, could undermine long-term sustainability goals.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging community members and residents, particularly marginalized groups, in decision-making remains a top priority.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our committee considered all of the departments we met with as essential to the business of the County and to the continued thriving of our community, and the following recommendations are listed in no specific order

The Auditor's Office Recommendations

We understand the need for budget cuts but recognize the Auditor's Office as crucial to the County and its communities. We urge the Chair and Board to consider supporting the Auditor's staff despite cuts to cost-of-living increases, as their experience is vital to the County. We also recommend collaborating with the Auditor's Office to find ways to maintain resources for

Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator

Non - Department CBAC

community engagement, such as sharing resources with other departments already engaged in similar work. Community and lived perspectives are invaluable to the Auditor's work and the effectiveness of County programs. Additionally, we support transitioning to online training to reduce costs and suggest exploring low-cost training options, such as Union Plus.

1. Program Recommendations to Maintain Funding:

- **Support for Auditor's Staff:** We recommend that the Chair and the Board of Commissioners consider how to support and maintain the Auditor's staff in light of budget cuts, particularly in the face of cuts to cost-of-living increases. The staff's experience and expertise are critical to the success of audits and the integrity of County programs.
- **Community Engagement Resources for Audits:** We ask the Chair and the Board to work with the Auditor's Office to ensure resources for community engagement, which is key to informing audits. This could include exploring ways to combine resources with other offices that are already positioned to conduct similar community engagement work.

2. Rationale:

- **Experience and Expertise of Auditor's Staff:** The loss of staff expertise due to budget cuts and the lack of cost-of-living increases would significantly impact the quality and thoroughness of audits. Maintaining experienced staff in the Auditor's Office ensures that the County can continue to have effective oversight and transparency.
- **Informed Audits Through Community Engagement:** Community engagement is essential for understanding how programs affect the people they serve. Incorporating lived experiences into the audit process is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of County programs and to address the needs of residents more comprehensively.

3. Concerns and Supports:

- **Concern:** Reductions in the Auditor's Office staff compensation and resources could compromise the quality and depth of audits, as well as reduce the ability to gather meaningful input from community members. It's essential that resources for community engagement are preserved or found through collaborative partnerships with other departments.
- **Support:** The recommendation to transition to online training and seek out low-cost training opportunities is a practical step that can reduce costs while maintaining staff skill development. We also support efforts to integrate

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Non - Department CBAC

community engagement into audits to improve the relevance and impact of County programs.

4. Suggested Follow-Up Actions:

- **Support for Auditor's Staff Retention:** We recommend that the Chair and Board prioritize maintaining the Auditor's staff by considering strategies to support staff through retention incentives other than cost-of-living adjustments included in proposed cuts, as their expertise is invaluable for the County.
- **Collaboration on Community Engagement:** We suggest further discussions between the Auditor's Office and other departments to explore opportunities for pooling resources for community engagement, ensuring that audits remain well-informed by community perspectives and lived experiences.
- **Staff Training:** We support the transition to online training opportunities to cut costs, and recommend looking for additional low-cost training opportunities such as Union Plus (a reduced cost training program for union members).

The Office of Community Involvement (OCI) Recommendations

We support the OCI budget request to transition funding from a temporary position to a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) role, ensuring that the office can rely on a consistent and experienced professional to further develop its program offers. We also strongly support OCI securing the resources needed to hire or host an intern, which would not only support the office's workload but also provide a valuable training opportunity for a community member.

1. Program Recommendations to Maintain Funding:

- **Transition to FTE:** We recommend transitioning funding for the LDA position to an FTE, allowing OCI to build and sustain long-term, effective community engagement efforts across the County.
- **Internship Opportunity:** We encourage the allocation of resources to hire or host an intern for OCI, providing both valuable assistance to the office and a hands-on learning experience for a community member.

2. Rationale:

- **Stability and Consistency:** By transitioning the temporary position to an FTE, OCI will have the stability and consistency needed to develop and implement effective community engagement strategies across various County departments.
- **Training Opportunities:** Providing internships creates an opportunity for community members to gain skills and experience, while simultaneously supporting OCI's critical work in engaging the public in County decisions.

Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator

Non - Department CBAC

- **Essential Role of OCI:** The work of OCI is vital to the County’s overall function, as it supports all departments in their community outreach efforts and provides a vital link between the County and residents. OCI is uniquely positioned to support advisory groups as well as County staff, and foster meaningful participation in decision-making processes that impact our community.
3. **Concerns and Supports:**
- **Concern:** While OCI plays a crucial role in community engagement, we recognize that this is a budget-constrained year. However, we believe that continued investment in OCI will have long-term benefits for the County and the community it serves.
 - **Support:** We strongly support the long-term sustainability of OCI’s work. Investing in the office's capacity to consistently engage with community advisory groups and department staff is essential to ensure that County programs are responsive to the needs and perspectives of residents.
4. **Suggested Follow-Up Actions:**
- **FTE Transition and Staffing:** We recommend that the Board consider prioritizing the transition of the temporary position to an FTE to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of OCI's community engagement efforts.
 - **Internship Program:** Work with the OCI team to identify potential funding sources and partnerships to create an internship program that serves both the office and the local community, enhancing capacity and providing valuable learning opportunities.

The Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) Recommendations

We support ODE’s budget requests and acknowledge that, with the deep budget cuts, ODE will become an even more crucial resource for other departments. The ODE’s role in supporting equity across all County departments should be prioritized, as it provides essential guidance and expertise in fostering diversity, inclusion, and equitable practices in both internal and external operations.

1. **Program Recommendations to Maintain Funding:**
- **Continued Support for ODE:** We recommend that funding for the Office of Diversity and Equity be preserved, as its work is vital for promoting equity within County programs and services, especially during a time of significant cuts.
 - **Collaboration with Other Departments:** ODE should continue to be a resource for other departments, ensuring that their programs are inclusive and equitable, even with reduced resources across the County.

Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator

Non - Department CBAC

2. Rationale:

- **Increased Demand for Equity Guidance:** As the County faces budget cuts, the demand for ODE's expertise will only grow. The ODE is integral to ensuring that all County programs are responsive to the needs of diverse communities, and its work must continue without interruption.
- **Support for Organizational Culture:** The ODE plays a crucial role in shaping an inclusive organizational culture, promoting diversity, and ensuring that the County's policies and services are equitable and accessible to all community members.

3. Concerns and Supports:

- **Concern:** While the ODE is critical, there is concern that the office may face challenges in maintaining its current level of support for other departments with reduced resources. It's important to ensure that the office remains adequately staffed to fulfill its expanded role during this period of deep cuts.
- **Support:** We strongly support the continued funding and growth of ODE's role in supporting equity and diversity initiatives across all County departments, particularly in times of financial constraint.

4. Suggested Follow-Up Actions:

- **Ensure Adequate Resourcing:** We recommend that the County evaluate the resources available to ODE to ensure that it can continue to effectively serve as a resource for other departments, especially as those departments face cuts and greater reliance on equity expertise.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Continue to foster strong collaboration between ODE and other County departments to help integrate equity considerations into their budget and program decisions, ensuring that equity remains central to the County's response to budget cuts.

The Office of Sustainability Recommendations

We support the Office of Sustainability's proposal to reduce the Climate Resilience Coordinator position to half-time. However, we recommend that the City of Portland and State of Oregon be engaged to help cover the environmental resilience work currently managed by this position, specifically the work related to the "CEI Hub." This transition could help ensure the continuity of critical programs without compromising the overall impact of climate resilience efforts.

1. Program Recommendations to Maintain Funding:

- **Enterprise Plan:** Essential for ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience of the County's operations.

Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator

Non - Department CBAC

- **Utility Policy:** Critical for managing energy and water use, which impacts both environmental and community health outcomes.
 - **Environmental Health Protection Programs:** Vital for safeguarding the health of community members, especially in underserved areas.
 - **Climate Justice by Design:** A crucial program that addresses climate equity and works to ensure that vulnerable communities are protected from environmental threats.
- 2. Rationale:**
- These programs collectively have a significant impact on improving the quality of life, enhancing public health, and addressing long-term environmental threats that could disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. We believe these programs are essential and must be fully funded to ensure the County’s ongoing commitment to sustainability and equity.
- 3. Concerns and Supports:**
- **Concern:** Reducing the Climate Resilience Coordinator to part-time may compromise the County’s ability to fully implement its climate resilience goals. We encourage finding ways to ensure this work continues at full capacity through partnerships or external funding.
 - **Support:** The recommendation to maintain funding for the core sustainability and climate justice programs is supported, as these areas are critical to long-term health, equity, and resilience for all community members.
- 4. Suggested Follow-Up Actions:**
- **Explore DEQ Funding:** We recommend further discussions with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to identify potential funding opportunities that could support the work of the Climate Resilience Coordinator and other climate-related efforts.
 - **Engage State and City Partners:** Collaborate with the City of Portland and State of Oregon to ensure that environmental resilience work can continue to be supported across jurisdictions, particularly in the “CEI Hub.”

The Office of Government Relations Recommendations

We align with the Office of Government Relations’ recommendation to cut 1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position for the current grant writing role. However, we propose that specific offices and staff members be designated to take on the responsibility of writing both large and small grants, such as those critical to our community programs (e.g., LIPSC). This strategy would help maintain the essential funding streams for our community programs without losing the expertise needed for successful grant writing.

Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator

Non - Department CBAC

1. Program Recommendations to Maintain Funding:

- **Grant Writing for Community Programs:** We recommend identifying specific staff persons across departments who will take on grant writing responsibilities. These staff members should focus on securing both large and small grants that support critical community programs.

2. Rationale:

- **Preserving Grant Funding:** Grant writing is essential to securing external funding for critical programs. By assigning responsibility for grants across departments, we can continue to access these funds without the need for a dedicated full-time grant writer position.
- **Sustainability of Community Programs:** LIPSC and other similar grants are vital for the continuation of community-focused programs. It is important that resources be allocated to ensure that these grants remain a reliable funding source.

3. Concerns and Supports:

- **Concern:** The reduction of a dedicated grant writing position could impact the overall efficiency and quality of grant applications. Without a specialized FTE, there is a risk that grant writing may be deprioritized or that existing staff may struggle to balance these duties alongside their regular responsibilities.
- **Support:** The proposal to identify key staff across departments to take on grant writing responsibilities, provided they are given the necessary support and training, would help ensure that the County continues to secure critical funding without the burden of a full-time, dedicated position.

4. Suggested Follow-Up Actions:

- **Staff Designation and Support:** We recommend that the Office of Government Relations work with department heads to identify specific staff persons who are well-equipped to take on grant writing duties and provide them with adequate training and resources to succeed.
- **Monitor Impact:** Track the effectiveness of this approach in maintaining the County's grant funding, and assess whether additional resources or support are needed to ensure the continued success of grant applications.

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Members: Jen Mair, Zackariah Sloane, Liz Leon, Cree Bort **Staff:** Amara H. Pérez, Office of Community Involvement Director; Gabriela M. Trinidad, Policy and Resource Coordinator