

Central CBAC

To: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners

From: Multnomah County Central Community Budget Advisory Committee

Date: April 27, 2023

Subject: Central CBAC Report & Recommendations

Executive Summary

CBAC Members:

- Department of County Assets and Management: Ben Brady, Shani Harris-Bagwell, Jenna Lewis
- Health Department: Rosalie Lee
- Multnomah County Library: Clare Wilkinson
- Joint Office of Homeless Services: Dani Vogel
- Non-Departmental: Dustin Kight
- Department of Community Services: Conrad Hulen
- Multnomah County Sheriff's Office: Patrick Pangburn & Jenny Leis
- Department of County Human Services: No representative
- Multnomah County District Attorney: No representative
- Department of Community Justice: No representative

Executive Summary

The Central Community Budget Advisory Committee (CCBAC) faced significant challenges this year which hindered the committee's ability to fulfill its mandate effectively.

It is crucial for the county to ensure proper support is provided to the Central CBAC in the future, to facilitate a more efficient and collaborative budget advisory process. We remain hopeful that, with these recommendations implemented, the Central CBAC and the

county can foster a stronger, more productive partnership in the budget advisory process.

Process

We did not have the opportunity this year to take the time to confidently deliberate on and establish our mission and values. We did not have the opportunity this year to establish a process for reviewing the county budget.

Emerging Issues

MCSO CBAC and the JOHS CBAC experienced significant challenges due to lack of adequate and timely budget information, lack of support to have a full and representative committee and confusion about our role.

The county is facing challenges in recruiting and retaining specialized staff. This point was mentioned in both DCA's and DCM's list of key issues that affect the budget. The County is facing challenges around filling vacancies in a competitive labor market across all departments, particularly in Information Technology (IT). Retaining experienced and knowledgeable staff and reducing heavy workloads remain top priorities. With a significant number of vacant and un or under-filled positions, the committee supports investing in department capacity to fill key vacancies and retain highly-qualified staff.

As departments continue to shift away from COVID response and back to core service delivery in this proposed FY24 budget, the committee recognizes that significant health disparities existed in our community prior to the pandemic, and many of those disparities have deepened over the past three years. These offers represent a significant step towards expanding access to care and services in BIPOC communities through external program investments and direct client assistance.

By investing in culturally specific services and addressing the unique needs of marginalized communities, these programmatic offers will help improve the health outcomes of those who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on communities around the world, and the Multnomah County residents are no exception.

As the pandemic continues, the behavioral health acuity rates have remained high, resulting in an ongoing need for mental health and addiction services and resources. The pandemic has exacerbated stressors associated with isolation, economic instability, and other factors, leading to increased rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and violence. This initiative is critical in addressing these pressing concerns and expanding access to care and services in BIPOC communities through external program investments and direct client assistance.

Budget Feedback & Program Offer Recommendations

We would like to make the following specific recommendations for updating the CBAC process:

- There should be a centralized knowledge base on the county website for providing training and continuing education for CBAC members. This should include the county's expectations of the CBACs.
- The Central CBAC should be engaged in a process to update the County's program offer template, with an eye towards making the documents produced more accessible to county residents including CBAC members. The county could provide a glossary of terms non-county staff might not know, or at least spell out acronyms and explain what different programs, projects, etc., referenced in program offers entail.

- Existing outputs and outcomes (especially as provided to the JOHS and non-departmental CBACs) often lack a clear indication of the change we can achieve using these resources. This absence of clarity makes it difficult for us to determine which aspects should be prioritized in our budget feedback. That said, there were a range of experiences across our CBACs this year; some feel they were greatly supported.
- The county auditor should consult with the Central CBAC and engage all CBAC members in her audit of the county's budget process.
- We recommend that the county continue to prioritize culturally-responsive and appropriate services, both internally and in collaboration with community partners.

We appreciate the Chair's desire to improve county engagement with the CBACs moving forward. We look forward to working with the county in this matter.