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Multnomah County **Executive Budget Message**

Introduction

Our community thrives when as many of us as possible have the opportunity to work, afford decent housing, care for our families and reach our potential. As County Chair, this executive budget reflects my commitment to the people of Multnomah County. It provides our dedicated county employees and programs the resources needed to support our collective success.

Careful management and the financial benefits of economic growth have put the county's finances on solid ground. Our reserves are funded and we have the opportunity to make longer term investments that will make our community stronger. If we invest wisely now, we can both save lives and give ourselves the chance to help more people more effectively in the future.

We must be ever mindful that the economic recovery has been uneven, bringing prosperity for some people but leaving too many others behind. Our priorities must change to prevent current gaps from becoming wider and becoming more expensive to close down the line.

We must not tolerate systems that ignore inequities; that incarcerate people with mental illness; or that treat pregnant women and children living in cars as acceptable ways of living. These experiences threaten our entire sense of community, the well-being of the next generation, and our basic values of justice, health and happiness.

A better future will require that we help families get into stable housing so that children know where they are going to school, doing their homework, and sleeping at night.

This budget adds an unprecedented \$10 million in new funding for housing and homeless services so that the dollars we dedicate later in a child's life -- on dental and medical care in our health clinics, on mental health counseling in schools, or enrichment from SUN School programming -- truly pay off.

This budget also funds mental health peer supports and addiction interventions to steer people toward treatment and recovery, not just into a jail cell.

It also acknowledges that many of our systems treat people in our community differently depending on their race and ethnicity. Improvements in our SUN schools programs and services can help improve those systems by further supporting the academic success of the children most affected by racism, poverty and trauma, and by tapping the strength of our culturally-specific community partners.

Housing and Homeless Services

This budget increases our investments in services for those who are homeless, facing eviction and experiencing housing instability. These investments are aligned with the City of Portland through A Home For Everyone, which brings together county and city resources, along with business and faith leaders and community organizations.

Joint office of homeless services: The county has been responsible for helping homeless families, while the city of Portland is responsible for helping homeless individuals. By bringing these resources under one roof, we will improve services we provide to everyone in our community who is experiencing homelessness.

Expanded shelter: Until we can find someone a permanent home, we need to offer them a safe place to sleep. This proposed budget includes \$2.4 million that will expand shelter capacity for homeless veterans, provide shelter for homeless individuals discharged from the Unity Center, for women escaping domestic violence, women and couples and for chronically homeless people.

Expanded rapid rehousing: Getting families into housing as quickly as possible makes it easier for them to get back on their feet. I am proposing to expand our investment in rapid rehousing services by \$4.4 million, including housing placement and retention services targeting east Multnomah County.

Expanded housing supports: This budget includes \$1.8 million in expanded supportive housing for people with disabilities, veterans and support services to help stabilize people once they've found housing.

Expanded homeless diversion: The budget includes \$440,000 that will help keep people from being without a place to sleep, including new flexible funds for shelter providers who can help families maintain a safe but temporary living situation with a friend or family.

Addressing Inequities

This budget continues to make investments and sustain programs that will reduce the depth of disparities faced by people of color in Multnomah County, and the economic disenfranchisement that has followed the Great Recession.

Last year, the county expanded our SUN Schools to new locations and changed the way we provide services in classrooms countywide, deepening our partnership with community organizations. This budget continues that work, as well as maintaining other important investments that will make our county more equitable.

Summer Works: This budget doubles our investment in the Summer Works internship program that is a key component of reducing school dropout rates and developing a regional workforce.

Promise neighborhoods: This budget continues our \$2 million investment in Promise Neighborhoods/Successful Families 2020, which is a collective impact effort of culturally specific and culturally responsive non-profits providing targeted services in East County. This effort is designed to improve outcomes for youth and families of color and immigrant and refugee families.

Health Equity Initiative: In order to address the root causes of the racial disparities in health we see throughout the county, I have included \$1.2 million in funding for the Health Equity Initiative which builds authentic partnerships with cross-cultural community organizations to bridge gaps in service and improve care.

Senior hunger initiative: This budget includes \$261,000 in ongoing funding to provide culturally specific meals to seniors, ensuring they have food that matches the cultural tradition of our diverse communities.

Healthy and Safe Communities

In order for our community to be healthy and safe, we need to address the disparities that we find throughout our criminal justice system and push our system to focus on the root causes of illness, incarceration and poverty.

Better outcomes in public safety: This budget starts to change our reliance on jail as the only option, reducing jail beds and investing that money in services that will prevent recidivism and make our community safer.

Youth mentoring: This budget includes \$223,000 in ongoing funding for mentors to connect with gang-impacted youth, helping them develop personally and professionally.

Anti violence program: This budget adds \$450,000 in ongoing funding for our public health approach to address violence. This work identifies youth most affected by violence and connects them to positive programming. It helps to build community capacity to identify root causes and prevent violence before it starts.

Peer support: In order to ensure more meaningful engagement and involvement from consumers, this budget includes new funding for a peer support team for those living with mental illness.

Earthquake ready infrastructure: This budget invests nearly \$25 million in replacing seismically unsound county buildings, ensuring that our facilities used by employees and the public are safe.

Conclusion

Throughout this budget I have tried to reflect the concerns and aspirations of our community. But at the same time, I know that more is needed from the county and I am

committed to continue to look for ways to be more effective, equitable and community minded.

I want to thank the Citizen Advisory Budget Committee, volunteers who spent their evenings combing through county programs and providing important insight into how we best spend taxpayer dollars.

And with that mission of constant improvement in mind, I want to acknowledge my colleagues, Commissioners Jules Bailey, Loretta Smith, Judy Shiprack and Diane McKeel for providing their perspectives and leadership to the county budget process.

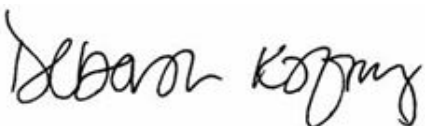
Additionally, I'd like to thank District Attorney Rod Underhill, Sheriff Dan Staton, and County Auditor Steve March for sharing their input and expertise.

But this document wouldn't exist at all if it weren't for Interim-Budget Director and County Economist Mike Jaspin and his team. Their thoughtful analysis and committed professionalism make sure that every line item is in place and every side of the ledger is balanced. County department directors, departmental leaders and budget staff throughout Multnomah County contributed countless hours to this document, which reflects their perspectives and the values of the county.

I also want to thank my staff, in particular Chief of Staff Nancy Bennett and Chief Operating Officer Marissa Madrigal for their work this year.

This budget reflects the challenges that we face as a community, but it also highlights the important work that Multnomah County can do to help those who need it. And I think it's always important to acknowledge the thousands of Multnomah County employees who go to work each day determined to change someone's life for the better. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Kafoury
Multnomah County Chair