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A mural on display at a Multnomah County Department of Community Justice facility.

Letter from Chair Jessica Vega Pederson

Even in the toughest budget years, Multnomah County's work is vital to the wellbeing of our community. That's why the budget I'm proposing makes the best use of the dollars we have to serve our community's essential needs and makes sure resources are going to the people who rely on them most and whose needs we must prioritize during challenging times.

In the pages that follow, I share how I've balanced these hard decisions and prioritized direct services, homeless services, public safety and mental health and substance use support services.

The County is the safety net for each of us — the largest community in our state. Cuts across our organization can be devastating to the individuals who rely on us as a last resort. Our job is to meet our neighbors and friends on their hardest days and help them live, rise, and thrive.

I believe in a Multnomah County where:

- Families and children are safe, healthy, and prosperous
- Everyone has a place to call home with support to persevere through a personal crisis
- Racial disparities are addressed
- All are welcome

Local government feels more important today than ever before. Our nation and our democracy are under threat. Our County must be a safe haven for our values of democracy, equity, accountability, kindness, and support for one another.



I'm raising my children in this community, and the future I'm working toward for them is something I want for everyone.

Our community is facing a grim economic forecast with fewer dollars to spend on the things our families and neighbors need. We're required to make tens of millions of dollars in cuts compared to our budget last year. The County's support and services are increasingly important as the federal government is more volatile and unstable than at any point in my lifetime.

Tough budgets require tough choices and tradeoffs.

- I'm prioritizing direct services that are most impactful and effective for people struggling to make ends meet, who are homeless, and who are ill, have disabilities, or have no access to other care.
- I'm prioritizing programs that serve children and families, and communities most impacted by disparities and systemic challenges.
- I'm continuing programs that prevent homelessness, improve health outcomes, protect public safety, and strengthen resilience.
- I'm making administrative reductions to streamline our operations, and strategic cuts to programs that are not as impactful as we need them to be.

In order to prioritize these critical services, I've made cuts to administrative costs not core to our mission with the aim of improving efficiency and reducing overhead. I also had to take reductions in case management, technical assistance, peer navigation and the elimination of programs and grants that we know serve people. With those savings, I've preserved life-saving interventions and programs to keep people housed, move people from shelter into housing, and maintain rental assistance and shelter beds so the number of unsheltered people on our streets does not increase.

The dollars we have for homelessness are significantly less than what we've had in recent years — and far less than what we need to truly address the heartbreaking and complex challenge of having so many people living on our streets. In addition to thousands of people sleeping outside, families, elders, and low-income households are on the brink of becoming homeless. There's not enough affordable housing, wages aren't keeping pace with the cost of living, and many are struggling with mental health issues and addiction. These are our friends and neighbors, and our care for them continues with every dollar we have to give to the direct services that will make the most difference.

It's not possible to make cuts to this degree and not have it affect the services we provide. Still, my budget ensures no shelter bed is lost, and no health clinic is closed. I've maintained areas where we've seen progress in recent years: investments have led to reductions in homicides and auto theft; effective initiatives to tackle the mental health and addiction crises; miles of improved roads and bridges; a pathway to rebuild animal services; countywide improvements to workplace security, information technology, and community engagement; an impressive execution of the most complex election in the County's history; and so so much more.

“Focus on the immediate needs that deliver tangible outcomes.”

— Budget Survey Response

My commitment is clear: I make every decision from deep dialogue with County leaders and extensive engagement with all of you. Our office heard from more than 4,000 people through my annual budget survey; a February community town hall; hundreds of constituent testimonies; and emails, conversations, and discussions with many local leaders, providers, advocates, and our County Community Budget Advisory Committees. Thank you for taking the time to engage with our office and the County. Your voice really matters.

While our homelessness, addiction, and community safety work are priorities, we are responsible for our safety net — from building out free preschool for every child to renovating our system of libraries to serving as our local public health and mental health authority. This work remains just as crucial.

We also know that when our streets are safe for everyone, our services are more accessible. This budget funds community safety programs — from prevention to accountability — with very few service impacts. While almost every department was asked to cut services, I fully preserved the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office budget. The Department of Community Justice took just a 3% cut, the District Attorney a 2% cut at the same time that I stabilized the District Attorney's staffing by converting 11 positions previously funded through temporary and one-time dollars to an ongoing commitment.

The world is in flux. **Under my leadership, our community can trust that the County will continue to prioritize and center people who face the most challenging circumstances. The fact that we have these services in our community is a testament to the power of our representative democracy.** This is an important moment for all of us to remember the values that drive our commitments to each other. In putting our energies into direct services, we will continue to be the Multnomah County most needed by our community.



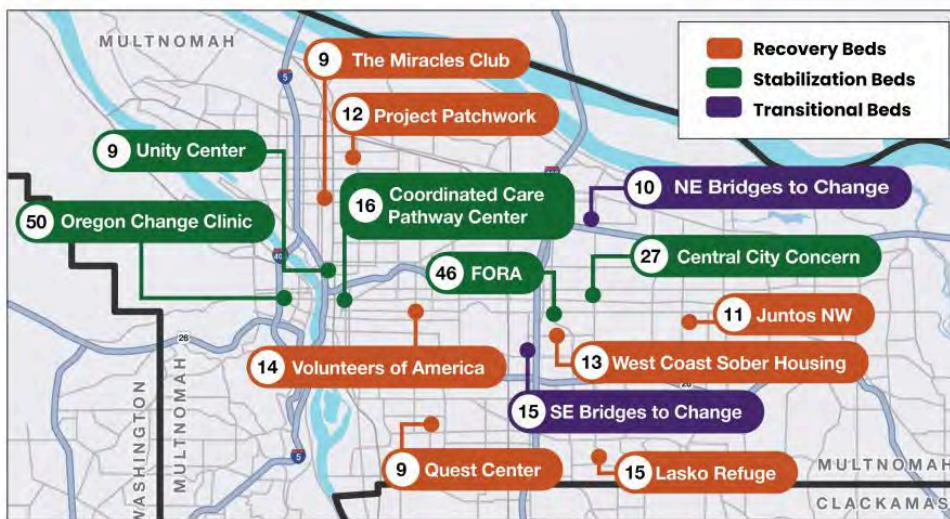
HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR ALL

Multnomah County is directly responsible for supporting the health of everyone in our community, at every stage of life. In 2025, Multnomah County ranked among the United States' healthiest communities. My priority for this budget: ensure we can continue to respond to the health crises on our streets, in our schools, and across our community, while also promoting public health and safety to prevent these crises from happening in the first place. I've protected direct services, cut administrative dollars, and refocused around how our programs affect the people we serve.



Tackling Our Mental Health and Addiction Crisis

A neighbor walking down the street exhibiting signs of psychosis, a family member dying from a fentanyl overdose — all of us know the toll that the mental health and addiction crisis has had on our community. There is no single cause or solution to these issues, and a range of efforts — from prevention measures to treatment services and recovery support — is needed to meet the needs of our community.



Substance use has worsened dramatically in the last few years, driven by fentanyl and methamphetamine, and a lack of state investment in adequate substance use disorder (SUD) services. To treat the drug addiction crisis, this budget dedicates \$131 million for substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery programs and services offered by our departments in collaboration with more than 100 community partners.

Community members struggling with mental health and addiction will continue to have access to the medication and treatment they need, when and where they need it — as part of a system of care that increasingly reflects the unique cultural and linguistic needs of the diverse communities we serve. We're maintaining transitional support for people entering or being released from a mental health facility or jail, and we are preserving our culturally specific Mobile Behavioral Health Team, which provides focused care for our Black community. These investments reduce suffering in our community and improve conditions for everyone.

It means the County can continue investing in promising practices that increase access to mental health and drug addiction services.

“We must invest urgently and heavily in addiction prevention and recovery support programs.”

— Budget Survey Response

One example: adding sobering services to our deflection program, which connects people to treatment instead of sending them to jail.

It also means we can continue funding collaborations that meet people on the streets with aid instead of arrest, including the Provider-Police Joint Connection Project in partnership with the Portland Police Bureau.

Addiction and overdoses continue to impact our community deeply. Multnomah County has made great strides in expanding the availability of treatment, support, and public education to prevent addiction, and this budget maintains that progress.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$9.9 million to continue services at our downtown Behavioral Health Resource Center

Our homelessness crisis has hit downtown Portland particularly hard. People living outside have few places to take care of their basic needs.

That’s why Multnomah County built the downtown Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC). The BHRC is a day center, shelter and bridge housing program for adults with mental health or addiction challenges who also live outside. It’s a place where people can take showers, do laundry, and connect with services they need.

Not only does this program meet basic human needs in the short term — but it also has helped hundreds of people move from the streets to housing and connect with long-term support. It’s become a vital downtown resource that is improving conditions in the neighborhood for everyone.

\$891,189 addition to support planning work for a permanent drop-off sobering & crisis stabilization center



Multnomah County has been without a sobering center for over five years now. This budget will soon change that.

We have purchased a building in Southeast Portland to serve as a 24-hour Sobering and Crisis Stabilization Center. The property will provide a permanent location for sobering and withdrawal management — as well as deflection and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) — that connects people to treatment and recovery services, helping keep them from emergency rooms or jails or being left intoxicated on our streets.

In the meantime, we’ll operate 13 sobering stations at the temporary Coordinated Care Pathway Center while we renovate the permanent facility.

This has been made possible with investments from our State partners, including \$25 million of one-time-only state funding from State House Bill 5204 (\$10M) and Senate Bill 5701 (\$15M) that was directed to Multnomah County to support the construction of a drop-off receiving and sobering center.

\$6.2 million to provide people caught using drugs the choice of seeking treatment instead of arrest

Multnomah County faced a mandate when our drug laws changed in September 2024. We've created a program that ensures people struggling with addiction have an accountable pathway from the criminal justice system toward recovery.

\$7.0 million to prevent overdoses and save lives

Many of us know someone who has struggled with drug use. We invest in services to both prevent overdoses and treat people experiencing addiction.

Many of the lessons applied in these investments come from the 90-day fentanyl emergency Chair Vega Pederson declared in collaboration with the Mayor of Portland and the Governor.

\$1.8 million to connect people experiencing unsheltered homelessness with recovery

Addiction is one of the many compounding factors that can make it more difficult to find housing for

people experiencing homelessness. Promoting Access to Hope (PATH) connects people seeking culturally specific recovery services to treatment and support.

\$2.3 million to provide detox services, connect people to recovery & housing resources

Medically supervised detoxification from harmful substances saves lives. After detox many people are ready for their recovery journey but struggle with a lack of health insurance or stable housing. This investment connects people at highest risk of continued instability to stable housing and ongoing recovery support.

Last year, the program served over 2,280 clients – 80% of whom successfully transitioned to another level of care.

\$4.6 million to provide behavioral health services to adults and youth in custody

Healthcare is a human right that should be accessible to everyone — including adults and youth in our jails and detention centers.

Around 40% of youth and adults in custody have significant mental health conditions. Each year, Corrections Health provides direct services, such as medical, dental,

mental health, and substance use disorder treatment to the thousands of people who enter their care.

\$20.3 million to provide a lifeline and the right response when someone is having a mental health crisis

When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, they need an immediate response.

Our Behavioral Health Division is responsible for a 24/7/365 crisis system that provides mobile crisis intervention, operates a crisis call center in many languages, and staffs an urgent walk-in clinic. This service prevents emergency room visits and mental health crises — saving money long term.

\$3.2 million to provide mental health services to Black and African American community members

Multnomah County provides services that focus on the unique needs of different cultures. This investment supports a Black/African American mobile behavioral health team that provides mental health support for those who are reentering the community from incarceration, which helps create pathways to stability.



Promoting Community Health and Wellbeing

Community Health is also about prevention. Upstream investments that promote the health of our entire county are especially important in a time when federal investments in public health are sharply declining and disappearing, science is under constant attack, and health inequities are ignored, at risk of becoming worse or more entrenched. Now more than ever, our neighbors depend on our local resources — and our values — to support a healthy, resilient community.

This budget invests \$292.2 million to support quality health services for youth, families and people across the county. This means you can continue to access quality medical, dental, and pharmacy services through our network of health clinics. It means you can visit a restaurant or a public pool, confident that you won't be exposed to food or waterborne diseases. And if you're a new parent, it means you can find healthy food and caring support during those critical early childhood years. The work to create a healthy community — so often unseen and uncelebrated — is essential for Multnomah County, and this budget preserves and protects it.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$217.0 million to serve neighborhoods through Community Health Clinics

Multnomah County operates Oregon's largest federally qualified [Health Center](#), with 18 clinics providing quality medical, dental, and pharmacy services to over 50,000 patients each year, more than 60% of whom identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Color. Clinics welcome anyone to establish care, regardless of insurance, ability to pay, or documentation status. Our health center prioritizes culturally and linguistically appropriate care, supporting patients in a way that works for them.

\$3.4 million to fund the STI Clinic

Multnomah County's Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Clinic provides low barrier, stigma-free sexual health services and community testing/prevention to prevent STI and HIV transmission.

The clinic is a known, trusted institution that serves people who



have been historically marginalized and underserved, and increasingly face stigma, harm, judgment, and discrimination.

This budget funds the STI Clinic, with a focus in the next year on identifying opportunities to stabilize funding to continue supporting this critical service.

\$6.7 million to prevent the spread of communicable diseases

Controlling communicable diseases is a core public health function of the Health Department. Outbreaks often start in everyday locations where people gather — restaurants, long-term care facilities, schools, daycares, and shelters.

Communicable diseases are investigated and reported by Health Department staff, who also work closely to identify and trace contacts, minimize exposures, recommend interventions, and, ultimately, halt the spread of diseases.

\$7.9 million for health inspections to ensure food from restaurants is safe

Eating out in Multnomah County comes with a sense of pride in our many fabulous restaurants, food carts, festivals, and farmers' markets.

Regular health inspections ensure that when people eat at their favorite place or venture out to try something new, they can trust that the food and water are safe.

The benefits of this work also extends to pools and spas, where the risk of illnesses caused by Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and E. coli is reduced.

\$2.3 million for vector-borne disease prevention

Vector Control protects public health and enhances livability across Multnomah County. The program controls vector-borne diseases by collecting, monitoring, and testing mosquitoes, rats, birds, and other animals for pathogens that are harmful to humans.

Effectively controlling mosquito populations is even more important in a warming climate, which provides ideal conditions for mosquitos to thrive and makes it more likely for dangerous diseases to spread.

Vector Control also plays an important role in community education and code enforcement around health-based nuisance codes like the keeping of small livestock (chickens, pigs, bees), rodent harborages, and illegal dumping.

\$19.2 million to support better health for infants and children, along with home visiting services

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program supports families in Multnomah County. More than a nutrition program, WIC provides health screening, offers breastfeeding support, and serves as a core access point for referrals to other services such as prenatal care, immunizations, and childcare.

Multnomah County's home visiting programs serve hundreds of families each year.

One of these programs, Healthy Birth Initiative (HBI), has supported Black/African American perinatal health for over 25 years. HBI's core goal is to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy and eliminate the disparities experienced by the Black/African American community in infant death and adverse perinatal outcomes.

\$400,000 to improve and stabilize ambulance services

When you call 911 for immediate medical care, you expect and deserve a timely response. Multnomah County does not directly provide ambulance services, but we oversee the system that serves our County and gets people to the hospital. This is a system we care about and will continue to improve.

Last year, Multnomah County launched an early reassessment of our Ambulance Service Plan — the guiding document that structures emergency medical services in our community. This work will continue in this budget, and is expected to produce recommendations for system change to improve stability, quality and accountability.

Increasing Community Safety



All of us deserve to live in a safe community. Multnomah County plays a key role in promoting safety through investments that improve conditions in our communities and neighborhoods, and through services that directly respond to crime, hold people accountable, protect people and property from harm, and support victims. The County is also responsible for ensuring the health and safety of adults and young people in our custody. Our approach rehabilitates people held accountable for their crimes, reduces racial disparities, and sets people up for success after they leave custody. Funding community safety is critically important to our society.

I support investments into programs and services that prevent violence and crime, and I also support non-law-enforcement programs that intervene once a crime has been committed. But I want to be clear that I also support direct funding for law enforcement. We must have sufficient resources to move people quickly and fairly through the legal system and then support them once they leave. Our community safety departments, especially the Sheriff's Office, are navigating challenges around the hiring and retention of sworn deputies. Without sufficient staffing, people in custody have a harder time accessing medical care and receiving the services that set them up for success upon release.

In the face of significant uncertainty last fiscal year — including changes in jail holds because of changes in Measure 110 and new requirements from the Presiding Judge Order — I worked closely with the Sheriff to keep all current jail dorms open and fully staffed. To manage the constant turnover of corrections staff, I invested in human resources staff dedicated to recruitment and retention. In addition, I converted 11 positions in the District Attorney's Office to permanent funding to ensure sustainable resources for the DA over time.

Our Department of Community Justice supervises and treats over 7,000 adults and nearly 800 youth each year, using restorative practices to divert individuals from jail and prison and helping them regain stability, reducing recidivism and further system involvement. This department is a national leader in juvenile justice reform efforts, reducing the county's average daily population of youth on probation and detention year-over-year while making facilities and programming investments to make spaces for youth that truly serve them.

Overall, this budget will secure our progress and improvements in community safety over the last several years. Since 2022, we have seen fewer shootings across the county, including a 39% decrease in Portland and an 82% decrease in Gresham. After I helped launch our Auto Theft Task Force, a partnership that included funding from Multnomah County, vehicle thefts in 2023 dropped from record highs in the two years before back to where they were in 2014. Reported crime in the central city is down 84% year over year, and public perception of safety in downtown has improved by 20% in the past year.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$142.5 million to maintain jail services at current capacity

Providing a safe environment for people in custody requires well-trained deputies, well-maintained facilities, and specialized resources for those with special medical or mental health needs so that people experience a successful reentry into the community upon release.

The Sheriff's Office has faced staffing shortages for years.



This investment includes \$1.8 million for additional 12 FTE to provide human resources and background processing to address this challenge. It also places \$1.2 million in contingency in the event our jail system needs to expand capacity.

\$4.0 million to support crime victims and survivors

Victim and survivor services are a collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community partners to lead a coordinated response that ensures crime victims' rights are upheld, and that victims receive support they need to navigate the legal system.

\$4.0 million to keep our major waterways safe

The River Patrol Unit works with regional and federal agencies to keep safe 110 miles of waterways along the Multnomah Channel, and the Columbia, Willamette, and Sandy rivers. These services help people enjoy themselves safely and protect the millions of tons of cargo that move through our local facilities each year — which is crucial to our economy.

\$7.9 million to continue specialty courts

Specialty courts provide tailored intensive supervision and services for those who are justice-involved, helping to address the root causes of why many individuals found themselves engaged with our system in the first place. These courts have led to reduced recidivism.

\$3.8 million to early intervention and prevention of youth violence

Supporting families with early intervention is an upstream strategy that pays dividends. The Community Healing Initiative provides culturally specific case management, intervention, and prevention through community-based services to youth and families who have recent involvement with high-risk activities and behaviors.

\$1.5 million to investigate homicides

Every homicide is a tragedy. To increase our accountability to victims and prevent future criminal

activity, this budget continues to invest in the District Attorney's homicide unit, including preserving a prosecutor position that was proposed for elimination.

\$8.2 million to help people leaving jails and prisons

People should not leave jails or prisons into homelessness. The Department of Community Justice's Transition Services Unit provides culturally specific and responsive services to people leaving custody to get them to shelter and housing, and reconnect to health care, family, and community.

\$2.5 million to preserve neighborhood District Attorneys

Our residents want to feel connected to our system of public safety, and that's what our Multnomah Access Attorney Program (MAAP) does, providing a hands-on resource for neighborhoods and businesses to address local safety concerns. These attorneys work directly in our neighborhoods to help people report crimes, provide updates to impacted individuals, connect crime victims to resources, and connect one neighborhood to another.

SUPPORT FOR THOSE IN THE MOST VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

***"Do not forget the
"invisible" populations.
Seniors, people with
disabilities, un-housed,
undocumented workers –
people without a voice."***

— Budget Survey Response

We all want to see people in our community living lives full of respect, safety, and dignity. Many populations across Multnomah County face barriers to making this kind of life possible. When you think about your County government, providing programs and services that support each one of these people is our reason for being here and our most fundamental daily call to action.

Despite our shortfall, this budget maintains a significant investment in critical services. We will continue to prevent thousands more people from sliding into homelessness by preventing their eviction. We are not reducing a single shelter bed or supportive housing apartment.

And we will continue to provide services that help people regain confidence, find a job, and provide for themselves. Also, we must continue increasing the equity and inclusion of our programs, partnering with culturally specific organizations, opening access to inclusive shelter, and reducing the differences in outcomes between populations who need these services.

Providing Pathways Into Shelter and Housing



One of the County's primary functions in this crisis is to *prevent people* from becoming homeless in the first place by providing them with emergency rental assistance. At the same time, people experiencing homelessness cannot end their homelessness without affordable housing and rental assistance. They also benefit from supportive services to maintain housing and improve health outcomes.

Shelter provides people with an immediate place to stay instead of the streets or other highly vulnerable situations. To make this more possible, this budget preserves every single shelter bed in our current system as well as ensures that people who have been placed in housing will not be displaced.

Our work to interrupt every part of the cycle that makes and then keeps people homeless is the core work of our Homelessness Response Action Plan — which has brought a comprehensive, accountable approach to helping people and reducing suffering. In the past year, this has included an intense overhaul of the data we collect, analyze and distribute regarding homelessness, including more transparent and accurate numbers of households. This budget meets Action Plan goals: funding 832 shelter beds (of a total of 1,000 targeted), adding 49 family shelter beds, and keeping 230 congregate shelter beds open; maintaining permanent housing units for every person currently housed in one; and maintaining funding levels for our work to help more people move through shelter and back into housing.

To preserve direct services that move people off our streets and into warm, safe places, we prioritized a total of \$28.9 million in general fund dollars to help fill the gap created by the loss of Supportive Housing Services and other revenue. We did this to ensure that when someone needs rental assistance, we can help them return to housing, and when someone needs a shelter bed, they receive a bed that includes services that help people move towards stability.



These are the choices I made to fill the gap in Supportive Housing Services funding:

- Keep people housed, sustain shelter beds and add previously planned new beds where feasible in alignment with our Community-wide Shelter Strategy – a joint plan with the City of Portland to add 1,000 shelter beds to our system.
- Keep existing shelter beds supported with resources to move people through the shelter system and into stable housing as part of our Homeless Response Action Plan goal of improving the number of people who transition from shelter to permanent housing by 15%.
- Ensure that people moved from homelessness to housing with County resources — through rent assistance and support services — are not displaced from their homes because of a loss of funding.
- Use funding from the improved General Fund forecast in March to help lessen the gap.

Importantly, this budget maintains a commitment to our jurisdictional partnerships, because if we aren't working together, we're not going to help people successfully. We are allocating an additional \$10 million to the City of Portland for the next fiscal year to support their direct efforts on shelter — supporting my commitment to keep shelter beds open. Gresham is another key partner in this work which is why I've dedicated \$1.0 million to their efforts.

“As the Trump administration's cuts start to impact our community, we will have to get very creative in how to help those most vulnerable. Putting homeless people in jail is the least effective way of working on the problem, and will only create more budget problems in the future.”

— Budget Survey Response

Despite these efforts, due to volatile budget predictions and declining revenue streams, our overall spending on homeless services will be reduced. We have begun right-sizing our investments after temporary funds helped us respond with urgency. This includes growing a shelter system that we are working with the City of Portland to expand to 3,622 publicly funded beds every night, and an overall system that prevents people from falling into homelessness and moves hundreds each month into their own apartments. This includes helping more than 2,600 additional people move out of homelessness to housing, helping nearly 6,000 households remain housed and avoid becoming homeless, and offering just shy of 10,000 people access to a shelter bed.

Our budget constraints also require some reductions, including support for landlords in our Risk Mitigation Program; housing assistance for people leaving difficult domestic violence situations; and eliminating our Community Workforce Stabilization grants program and Rose City Resource guide. These cuts are painful, but they make clear just how serious I am about preserving our direct services.

We also know that better data leads to more-informed decisions, and many difficult decisions await us in our continuing work to tackle our homelessness crisis. Our recent release of a far-more-accurate by-name data set and dashboard is a major milestone that provides increased transparency and accountability while helping frontline workers, decision-makers, and the whole community make progress that we can more easily track and therefore achieve. The data also makes clear that our work is more important and necessary than ever.

This budget also understands our persistent homelessness crisis is primarily driven by a housing shortage that can be exacerbated by behavioral and physical health challenges. Investments in our Behavioral Health Resource Center and programs that move people into housing with supportive services meet some of those challenges.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$133.4 million to preserve a system of 24-hour shelters

For thousands, shelter is the front door to stability. This budget increases our current number of shelter beds, including 49 units for families, and maintains our commitment to the Community Sheltering Strategy developed with the City of Portland to open additional shelter beds.

That includes increasing shelter dedicated to families, homeless youth, and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.



\$74.1 million to move people living on the streets and in shelters into housing

Our most impactful work at Multnomah County ends people's experience with homelessness by providing keys to their very own home — and making sure, once they have their keys, they stay in housing.

This work includes helping people search for housing, providing apartments with built-in support such as treatment for mental health challenges or addiction, and offering recovery housing.

\$18.3 million to prevent renters from becoming homeless

Economic turmoil and rising costs of living are pushing more and more people to the brink of homelessness. Rent assistance directly keeps people from becoming homeless.

\$12.5 million to provide daytime services for those experiencing homelessness

When you are homeless, much of your daily life is dedicated to survival and finding ways to meet your most basic needs of food, hygiene, and safety.

Our system of places where people can receive help during the day provides these basic services, ranging from showers, laundry, meals, peer support, and opportunities to connect to more services.

This budget funds new and continuing services for daytime support, including culturally specific services for members of our LGBTQIA2S+ community experiencing homelessness.

\$23.4 million to support City of Portland's Safe Rest Villages & TASS Sites

These County and state funds support shelters that offer immediate safety off the streets for people living in encampments or moving night-to-night.

Each provides individual sleeping structures and common areas for gathering, eating, and hygiene, and each shelter focuses on providing the wraparound services needed to support transitions to permanent housing.

Two of these programs — which opened as COVID-19 shelters in 2020 and were later folded into the Safe Rest Villages program — are designed to serve members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

\$3.6 million for better data, research, and evaluation

The better our data, the better our programs can serve people experiencing homelessness. After taking over the region's data system in March 2024, we've transformed decades of inadequate data and created an accurate by-name list of people so we can

support and track their progress. Research and evaluation projects also help advance racial equity and inform policy and budget decisions.

\$707,345 for the Homeless Outreach and Programs Engagement (HOPE) Team

The Sheriff's HOPE team works with people who are homeless in

places like East County and the Sandy River Delta, connecting them with services and helping them on a path toward long-term housing.

This team is highly respected in the community and uses patience, empathy, compassion, and understanding to build trust as they work with community members on an individual basis. Last year this team made contact with 2,423 community members.

Protecting and Preserving Programs for Youth, Families, and Seniors

A thriving community is created not just with a place to live and a meal on the table, but also through social ties that create connections made by supportive professionals and welcoming places to gather with others.

The Department of County Human Services (DCHS) provides resources that enrich environments for youth and young adults, particularly resources that address risk factors.

For adults, we support people as they navigate threats to their housing stability, survive and preserve beyond experiences of domestic and sexual abuse, and live independently with intellectual and physical disabilities. For elders, we help make community connections, including veterans services and local senior center programming, and offer protections for older or disabled people who may be experiencing abuse. This adds up to over \$973 million of investment to provide a strong foundation for our communities, which will pay dividends into the future through improved health, increased income, and reduced legal system involvement.



The Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) System helps support the education and stability for thousands of young people and families across Multnomah County each year. It is a priority for me to preserve resources in local schools where we have the greatest chance of meeting students and their families where they are. The County's partnership with six school districts includes more than just SUN after-school programming; it also includes mental health experts, health clinics co-located on campuses and people who can help families obtain support services, to name a few. I find our partnerships with schools so valuable as we work together to provide a healthy and supportive environment for youth and their families to thrive.

Recent estimates show that 15% of the county’s residents are 65 and older, and 10% of residents live with disabilities. Alongside the estimated 34,387 veterans who live here, these residents combine to represent the Multnomah County Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division’s (ADVSD) primary service populations. Our programs for these residents promote independence, dignity, and choice. Multnomah County also hosts the Aging and Disability Resource Connection, a 24-hour information and assistance hotline that helps individuals, families and professionals who are looking for resources to address current or future long-term needs.

My budget maintains current service levels and programming for a wide array of vital services for elders, meeting the needs of more than 50,000 of our friends and neighbors in person-centered programming, long-term case management, special needs support, prescription assistance, emergency rides, and short-term intensive housing case management.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

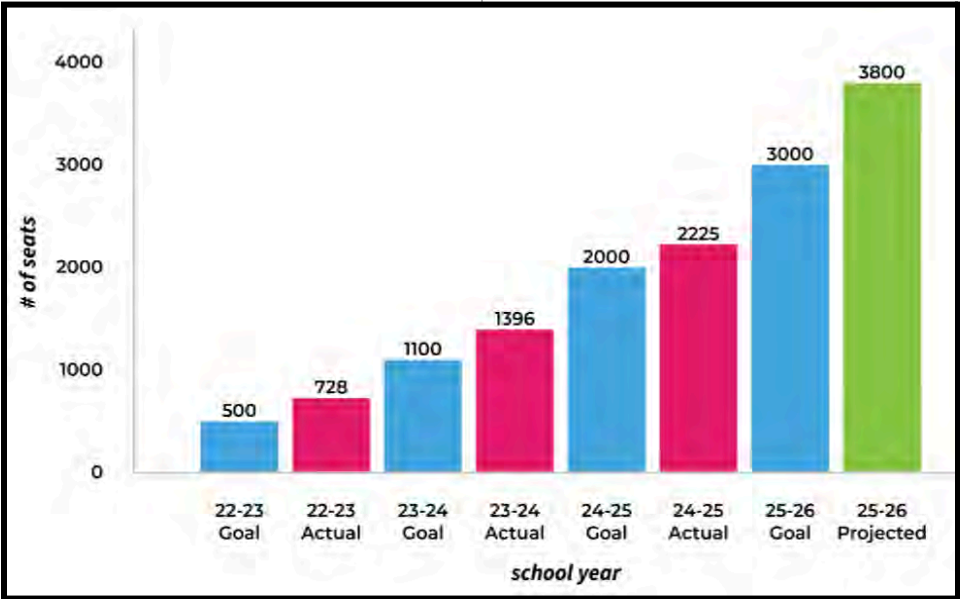
\$143.0 million to expand free quality preschool

We are well on our way to free preschool for every Multnomah County child. This is an investment not just in the future but also in the economic health of this region — guaranteeing a free seat to every child, living wages for early childhood educators, and new facilities and capacity across our system.

Preschool for All will provide free, quality preschool for 3,800 children in the 2025-26 school year. Each year we’re offering more fully paid preschool seats by developing the workforce, building new childcare facilities, and supporting childcare providers. Every Multnomah County child will have access to free preschool by 2030.

\$21.4 million for neighborhood school supports and programs (SUN)

The SUN Service System ensures families are healthy so they can champion and support their children. During the 2023-24 school year, this program served almost 18,000 students across 6 school districts, with nearly 3,000 adults



participating in workshops or learning opportunities. Schools serve as a hub to connect families and youth to supportive resources and services. For the 5,000 students who attend after-school programming, 73% had regular attendance. Almost 3,000 adults participate in educational workshops.

SUN provides free meal sites, food pantries, culturally specific case management, and connection to health and mental health services in schools for nearly 18,000 students annually.

\$32.7 million to support children and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness

We’re maintaining existing shelter capacity across our county AND we’re expanding beds that serve children and families.

This includes an expansion of 49 shelter spaces to serve families, including pregnant and parenting youth, experiencing homelessness.

\$150,000 to invest in a State of the Child report

We need a comprehensive assessment of how children are doing in our community and what they need. This will strengthen County resources to meet the needs of children, youth, and families.

\$3.1 million for Bienestar de la Familia

Bienestar de la Familia offers culturally responsive services focusing on Multnomah County's growing immigrant and refugee communities in the Cully neighborhood.

Key services include housing stabilization, rental assistance, mental health assessment and counseling, alcohol and drug counseling and prevention, energy assistance, and advocacy to help address families' needs ranging from the basics to a crisis.

\$30.0 million for mental health services for young people

When young people and their parents have access to linguistically and culturally responsive mental health services, the benefits are significant. Our community and school-based mental health offerings serve youth from toddlerhood through young adulthood across multiple school districts

UPHOLDING OUR VALUES AND PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY

Upholding Our Values

Our mission is to improve the wellbeing of those in Multnomah County by providing accessible, high-quality, and innovative public services that create stability, enhance opportunities, and reduce disparities. Our vision is a diverse, thriving community with a sustainable future where all are safe, connected, and empowered to contribute.

During these tough times, we must uphold our County values: accountability, social and environmental justice, inclusively leading with race, equity and inclusion, and safety and wellbeing. These values underpin our work and foster a sense of safety, trust and belonging, ensuring our actions consistently reflect our stated principles.

A positive employee experience is vital. Our employees are the backbone of Multnomah County, directly delivering services to our most vulnerable populations. Therefore, it's crucial to remember that when our employees feel supported, valued, and equipped to succeed, they are better able to provide high-quality services to those who need them most.

The County created its internal, protected class Complaint Investigation Unit (CIU) in 2019, directly responding to the need to elevate protected class complaints to the highest operational levels of our organization, and to create a system that provides as much compassion, efficiency, and transparency as possible. Six years of this work has highlighted the benefits of an independent unit while also revealing challenges. The Chair is dedicating resources to create a robust recommendation regarding the structure of Human Resources at the County.

The Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP) continues to guide the County's policies and practices. The plan provides concrete actions for our workforce that promote access, fairness, and belonging, and address racial disparities. This budget ensures our core values of equity and inclusion are embedded throughout our work.



PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$123.0 million to continue operating and improving our library system

Multnomah County has one of the country's most beloved library systems — for good reason. We enjoy one of the highest circulations nationwide and, thanks to the Multnomah County Library Capital Bond passed in 2020, we are in the middle of a once-in-a-century modernization project that touches every library and community. The updates to these historic libraries, as well as the entirely new libraries joining our system, use state-of-the-art, community informed design, local art, and family-friendly spaces to remake how we'll think about libraries, books, and community for generations.

In just three months since the new Midland Library opened, community members booked rooms there 1,624 times. This impressive undertaking will continue to pay dividends in every neighborhood.

\$8.0 million for fair and safe elections

Multnomah County plays a key role in protecting democracy. This past November, acts of intimidation sought to undermine and disrupt our right to a free, fair, and safe election. The Elections Division remained undeterred and executed the most complicated election in our region's history — supporting the overhaul of the City of Portland's elected offices and introducing ranked-choice voting (RCV).

This was a tremendous undertaking, and the workload will grow as the County prepares for its own transition to ranked-choice voting in 2026.



\$2.6 million for equity- and inclusion-focused positions

Multnomah County remains committed to building a more equitable and inclusive government. This year's budget retains all filled positions within the Office of Diversity and Equity to support the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan and ensure we continue to support and elevate a dynamic, diverse workforce.

\$14.1 million for data security, innovation, and access

Multnomah County's Information Technology is a leader among government agencies in our approach to IT. In the last year alone, insulated us from the CrowdStrike crash — potentially the largest IT outage in history — while also positioning the County as a leader in Artificial Intelligence testing and integration.

Information Technology is also completing an overhaul of our website and adopting complicated data systems such as the Homeless Management Information System.

\$15.8 million to care for our animals

As Chair, my investments in Animal Services have led a major rebuild and transformation. A strategic plan to guide this work is 80% completed.



Major accomplishments include hiring 14 employees to restore operations to pre-pandemic levels and offer full geographic coverage for field officers to respond to concerns; the creation of an animal

enrichment program; restoring an in-house spay/neuter program; and improving the overall experience for staff, volunteers and animals in our care. This budget will maintain progress on completing our strategic plan and also allow us to add veterinarian staff.

\$4.4 million to maintain safe spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ community

This remains an especially challenging time for our community. We are all witnessing serious threats at the national level and in many states and local jurisdictions that undermine rights and safety.

Hostile actions aimed at curbing basic freedoms and denying access to essential services are only getting worse.

This is one reason among many, that this budget commits to maintaining affirming spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ members of our community, including gender-affirming shelter spaces, day centers and support services for youth and adults.

\$1.0 million to help address past harms

This budget also helps address past wrongs, dedicating \$1 million to the memorial that honors the unrecognized stories of Chinese Americans originally buried at Lone

Fir Cemetery, which was managed by the County when many of the harms occurred. More than 2,800 Chinese and Chinese American people were buried in Lone Fir Cemetery between the 1860s and the 1920s. While many were exhumed and returned to China in accordance with their cultural practices, some of their bodies remain in unmarked graves.

The memorial, funded by Metro's parks and nature bond, is being shaped by input from the community. Multnomah County's Chinese American community has been deeply involved in the effort to remember the history of this sacred space and seek redress for past harms.

Planning For Resiliency and Prosperity

While prosperity may not always feel achievable for everyone in our community, it should be. Preparing for a sustainable future takes looking across many small but meaningful investments designed to make sure each of us is safe, connected and empowered to contribute. I believe every Multnomah County budget should balance the things we need today with the things we're likely to need tomorrow. With \$92.9 million to maintain and improve the physical conditions of Multnomah County buildings, we take pride in being a public agency that maintains high-levels of investment to address concerns before they become too long-standing or costly.

We strive to make sure our spaces are safe and welcoming for both the public and our employees, with an eye toward efficient, flexible use of space to lessen costs and enhance public services. Even with constrained resources, we must be able to look back at what we funded in FY 2026 and see that we took seriously what is needed in the decade, or longer, ahead and took steps to grow our resilience in active and healthy ways.



PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

\$33.0 million toward building an Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge

This work will move us further through the design phase of the bridge when we'll learn the overall cost, timeline, and community impacts.

It's imperative that this project moves forward, despite uncertainty over federal funding — to meet critical community mobility and resilience needs.

\$150,000 to prepare Walnut Park for future revitalization

Building upon the decades-long struggle of local Black community members to revitalize this area in Northeast Portland, and specifically the Multnomah County complex at N.E. Martin Luther King Boulevard and Killingsworth Street, this investment will support the creation of a redevelopment proposal for County and community leaders to consider.

\$20.0 million to expand childcare facilities

When voters approved Preschool for All by a large margin in 2020, we knew we would also need to create physical locations in our early childhood education systems to support our expansion to universality. Through targeted investments in classrooms across the system — expanding existing preschools and building new ones — we are adding capacity to make sure there's a seat built for every child who needs one in 2030.

\$500,000 to maximize Medicaid funding

Multnomah County should do more to access and maximize federal Medicaid funds. This is a short-term investment in long-term cost savings. The more we can access federal funds, the more we can use our local dollars to fund other critical services.

We know many of our services may be eligible for reimbursement from Medicaid. We also know Oregon is

applying for a State Plan Amendment to allow Medicaid billing for services provided on the streets. The County's investment will advance and expand our work to better understand and develop Medicaid financing strategies to continue maximizing federal dollars.

\$8.5 million to be prepared and resilient during emergencies

We are first responders during emergencies — as we must be. Multnomah County supports a robust Emergency Management office and preparedness resources across County departments that help us respond responsibly to disasters and emergencies.

Even as the federal government dismantles its investment in a resilient, responsive country, Multnomah County will continue creating a just, equitable, livable, resilient, and low carbon community — one where disasters are less likely to occur and, when they do, don't disproportionately impact marginalized frontline communities.

INDEPENDENTLY ELECTED OFFICES

This executive budget sets spending parameters for the County's independently elected officials: the Board of County Commissioners, the Auditor, the Sheriff and the District Attorney. Even in a year when we're making tough decisions across many policies and programs, I believe our elected officials should retain substantial budgets to accomplish their important work. For our Board, I have kept their budgets whole with no cuts. For the Auditor, I have kept her base budget intact and maintained service levels across her office, including adding a position. However, I have made cuts to my own office, including one position and a reduction in the materials and supplies budget.

Public safety is a top priority. Community safety programs and the Sheriff's Office have not taken cuts, and I added to the District Attorney's ongoing General Fund investments. Eleven positions in the DA's office were funded with one-time-only funding in FY 2025; this budget permanently adds those 11 positions, increasing the District Attorney's base budget by \$2.2 million prior to taking any reductions.

In the Sheriff's Office, this budget sustains 12 human resources positions, for a total of \$1.7 million, to support the hiring and retention of staff. This investment has led to progress, filling many vacancies.

With a new Board of County Commissioners — each of whom have embraced the work before us and are developing great ways of working together — we must continue our collaborative focus on making sure work we do together is the most effective in getting results. I've appreciated learning about their priorities and areas of focus and look forward to this next step to undertake the work of adopting a final budget together. As a part of our next phase of work together, this new Board is also working diligently to modernize our Board rules, which we're updating for the first time in more than a decade. To help streamline Board meetings and the sharing of Board materials, we will invest in improving the systems that support the work of our Board Clerk.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

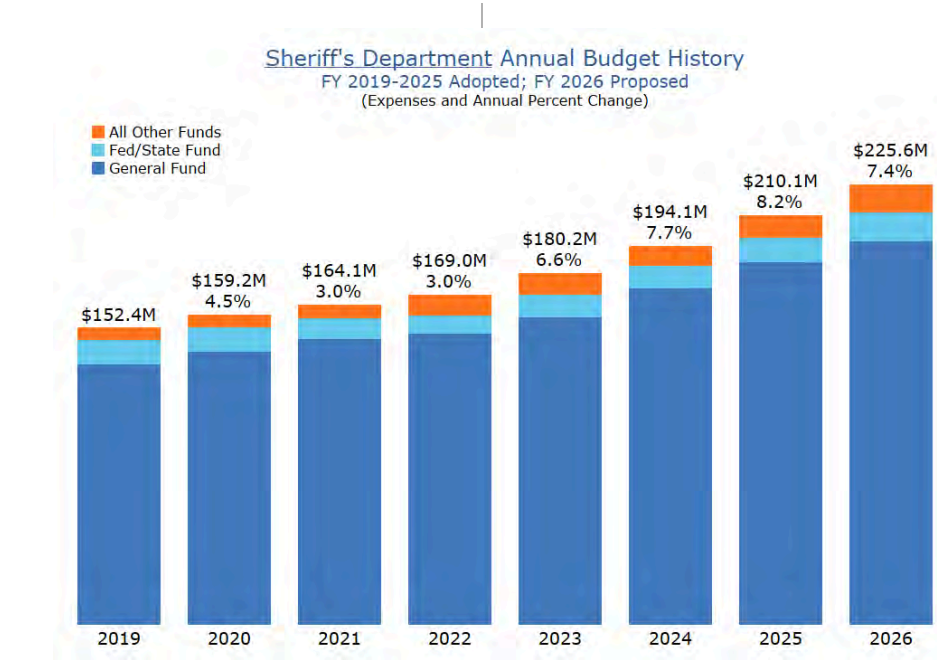
\$225.6 million to fully fund the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

This budget continues a strong investment in the Sheriff's commitment to community safety, with the hope that a strong Sheriff's office will drive continuing increases in perceived and real safety for our community.

The budget also preserves spending for current jail capacity and law enforcement patrols covering 290 square miles and 110 miles along waterways. The coordinated efforts of patrol and other specialty units deliver comprehensive services that meet the needs of residents and visitors.

\$54.2 million to support our District Attorney's Office

Our independently elected District Attorneys help keep this community safer every day. My proposed FY 2026 for the District Attorney is 56.4% larger than the office's budget in 2019, including a steady increase in staffing levels. And as a publicly elected official, the District Attorney has decision-making power to reallocate funds within the overall allocation the Board of County Commissioners approves for his office in June.



The District Attorney's Office is responsible for reducing crime through strategic prosecution, diversion, and rehabilitation, and in 2024, received referrals for more than 7,500 misdemeanor cases and 5,000 felony cases.

The office also provides victims of crime with meaningful access to justice, trauma-informed support, and advocacy at every stage of the legal process.

\$3.5 million to support our independent Auditor's Office

The Auditor's Office is an independent elected office that oversees crucial performance audits of County programs; receives and investigates reports of fraud, waste, and abuse; and provides an impartial resource to help people resolve issues with County programs.

In the last year, the office has provided invaluable feedback and recommendations that continue to lead to improvements for our Homeless Services Department (formerly JOHS), Animal Services, contract monitoring system, workplace culture, and more. This budget maintains a consistent service level for the office.

CONCLUSION

Balancing the Budget

Any budget built when resources are constrained requires tough tradeoffs and we've had to make many of those here. I want to take this moment to recognize the difficulties that may result from these decisions, especially for County employees and clients who are directly affected.

In order to preserve frontline services, we identified opportunities to streamline operations and took cuts to administration across many departments. We've taken staff reductions across all departments, with a loss of 102 total full-time equivalent positions, focusing on reducing vacant positions as much as possible.

We're also seeing cuts to programs we love but are more difficult to sustain at this challenging moment when we must continue to fund so many other services that people need to stay safe, healthy and thriving. Losses include our Public Campaign Finance program, the resources to enforce the City of Portland's gas-powered leaf blower ban, the Nurse Family Partnership program and our Passport and Photo ID Program. As government services move online, our hope is passport renewal may be something that can be accessed within the comfort of your own home. The Public Campaign Finance program was new to our budget in FY 2025. As someone who has run for multiple elected positions, I understand the financial burden on those who feel the call to serve and run for office. In a time where this County is facing incredibly tough choices to potentially cut direct service programs, I'm making the difficult decision to pause developing the program this year, while keeping its structure in place. I greatly appreciate the work of an advisory committee who delivered a report on needed next steps. I have also long been a champion of our work to improve air quality by phasing out the gas-powered leaf blowers, which made the decision all the more difficult. Despite the loss of this program, our Public Health Division and Office of Sustainability will continue to work with and support City of Portland leaders as they implement the City's ordinance to diminish the noise and air-quality impacts of gas-powered leaf-blowers. Lastly, our Nurse Family Partnership program will not be continued. This program is part of a larger ecosystem of home visiting services where other capacity is being preserved.

“The county needs to improve its community involvement work and seek community input in a variety of ways including online and through information meetings throughout the county.”

— Budget Survey Response

Next Steps

The release of this executive budget on April 24, 2025, begins the next phase of the budget process. The Board of County Commissioners will hold weeks of consecutive deep dives on all aspects of this proposed budget, providing a public opportunity for people across our community to learn more, ask questions, express concerns, and continue sharing their priorities.

In May, we will host three public budget listening sessions to hear more from community members and learn more about everyone's top priorities. From there, the Board of County Commissioners will continue discussing and negotiating to be sure to incorporate all the feedback we've gotten from the community. The process will finish when the full Board of Commissioners adopts a final budget in June.

Thanks and Appreciation

I want to thank in advance my colleagues on the Board — Commissioners Meghan Moyer, Shannon Singleton, Julia Brim-Edwards, and Vince Jones-Dixon — for their critical role in this next phase of the budget process. For most, it will be their first budget as a County Commissioner. The depth of expertise they each bring, and their collective commitment to serving and elevating the voices and concerns of the people of Multnomah County, will be invaluable to passing a budget that rises to the challenge of this moment.



So much work has already gone into reaching this point. This has been a hard budget for everyone involved, and I want to express my sincerest gratitude for the many people who've walked alongside me and my team. Our work at Multnomah County is so meaningful. I want to thank the thousands of County employees and contractors who do this work, day in, day out, with compassion and dedication. People who treat diseases in the community, and help those with disabilities gain a sense of autonomy. Those who provide health support to those in jail, who repair rural roads and look after stray animals. Who make free preschool seats available to thousands of children and families. Who house the homeless, and feed the hungry. Who respond to calls made in crisis, and prepare our region for emergencies.

Thank you to all of the members of the County's Community Budget Advisory Committees (CBACs), including the Central CBAC members who took on double duty. Your contributions ensured the community's voice was present in every budget conversation. Thank you also to the many County staff who support our CBACs, and to the Office of Community Involvement led by Director Amara Pérez. In her short time with the county, Director Pérez has led reforms requested by former CBACs that have already improved this year's budget process, such as the ability for CBACs to provide their input and recommendations on department budgets prior to the decisionmaking that goes into putting together the executive budget.

Thank you to the dedicated staff in my office: Chief of Staff Jenny Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff Stacy Borke and our team members Sara Guest, Stephan Herrera, Renee Huizinga, Heather Lyons, Natalie Minas, Garet Prior, An Bui, Matt McNally, and Diana Gabaldón — with special thanks to my Budget & Strategic Partnerships Director, Sara Ryan, for her tireless stewardship of this process.

My gratitude goes out to the entire Multnomah County Central Budget Office, led by Budget Director Christian Elkin and County Economist Jeff Renfro, for the exceptional tools and insights they provided every step of the way to help us thoughtfully and strategically navigate this constraint year. I am also thankful for Chief Financial Officer Eric Arellano, whose commitment to fiscal stewardship keeps this County on stable financial footing year after year, and for the daily partnership with our Interim Chief Operating Officer Travis Graves and his team during this period. I so appreciate insightful and consistent Chief Diversity and Equity Officer Joy Fowler, who works with us every step of the way to ensure that equity is woven throughout our organization.

Thanks also to Multnomah County Communications Director Julie Sullivan-Springhetti, Denis Theriault and the entire County communications team for their commitment to communicating this information so well.

I want to thank new Chief Operating Officer Chris Neal, who joined us at the end of these executive budget decisions but will be instrumental in both our budget process from here and in implementing this year's budget inside of each department's work. Thanks also go to our very hard-working department directors, Mohammad Bader, Rachael Banks, Margi Bradway, Dan Field, Tracey Massey, and Denise Pena, as well as County Attorney Jenny Madkour and Library Director Annie Lewis, for their consistent leadership.



Lastly, thank you to the thousands of community members who participated in our virtual town hall, responded to our online budget survey, shared your stories and concerns through emails, phone calls, public testimonies, and in-person meetings. You showed up out of concern for your neighbors, and each engagement was a powerful reminder that, despite the challenges around and ahead of us, we remain a compassionate community. Thank you for your commitments to our diverse community, and for the accountability you ask of us on so many pressing issues.

It is now the responsibility of myself and the Board of County Commissioners to pass a budget that reflects your priorities and our shared values — delivering the programs and services that get us closer to our vision of what this county could and should be. Then, the hard work can begin to bring that vision to life, and I look forward to working and walking besides you through it all.

Jessica Vega Pederson

This message was prepared for the FY 2026 Proposed budget. There have been some funding changes since the Proposed budget was released, as reflected in Board and Department amendments. For additional information, please see "Getting to the Adopted Budget" in the Budget Director's Message.