

**FY 2023**  
**TSCC's Multnomah County Budget Hearing Questions**  
**For June 1, 2022 Budget Hearing**

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**1. The county budget has increased by nearly \$1 billion dollars over the last two years. How much of that increase is in discretionary funds and how did you decide where to allocate those discretionary dollars? What did this process look like, who was involved, and do you think it was a successful decision-making framework?**

Presenter: Chair Deborah Kafoury

The majority of the increases – \$714 million – from FY 2021 to FY 2023 are from three voter initiatives that were passed in 2020. That includes:

1. \$417 million from the Library Capital Construction bond
2. \$191 million from the Preschool For All measure
3. \$106 million for the Metro Supportive Housing Services measure

Additionally, the County recorded over \$150 million dollars in FY 2022 and FY 2023 from American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act federal funding. And during FY 2022, we added over \$53.4 million in state and federal funding for [health and human services and public safety, which is now part of the FY 2023 budget.](#)

Finally, the FY 2023 budget increases the Burnside Bridge in Full Faith and Credit debt issuances by \$25 million that is financed with vehicle registration fee (VRF) revenue. The funding will be used to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase of the project and begin the design phase.

The County's discretionary funds, which include the General Fund and the Video Lottery fund, increased by \$71.5 million from FY 2022. However, once you take into account that transfer of the resources (previously budgeted in the General Fund) associated with establishing the new Health Department FQHC fund and the \$117 million of beginning working capital being carried over as one-time-only funding into FY 2023, there is relatively little new funding available in the County's discretionary funds. This funding increase is due to the River District URA returning AV to the tax roll and the first year of fully implementing the County's BIT reforms. According to the County's General Fund forecast, there was \$16 million of new, ongoing funding available that could support ongoing programming after accounting for the small decline in the forecast in FY 2024.

One constant in the County's approach to budgeting process is our commitment to centering equity in our decisions. Our budget is a reflection of the County's values, priorities and vision, and we want to make sure that our funding decisions help build the stronger, more equitable and more just community we all want to see, and everyone deserves. Grounding our budget process in equity ensures that we are intentional about the tools and processes we use to develop the budget; that we use data to understand how we are meeting our goals; and that we are thoughtful and transparent in how we talk about who we serve and the impact we're making.

For the second year in a row, I partnered with our Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE), the Central Budget Office and departmental equity managers to provide countywide guidance on applying an equity analysis to budgeting. This included a [Budget Equity Tool](#) to help departments discern the right questions to ask and answer as they developed their budget proposals and participated in budget discussions with me and my staff, departmental leadership and their staff, and the community. ODE also provided a well-attended training in January 2022 on how to apply the County's Equity and Empowerment Lens to budget development. Over 200 staff attended, making sure that staff across the County were prepared to actively ensure that equity was infused throughout all aspects of the budget process.

The result is a proposed budget that advances the County's work of closing the pervasive and persistent disparities we see across our community, and strengthening the long-term impacts and efficacy of all our services.

At the same time, the County's dedication and approach to building equity isn't solely focused internally. Multnomah County continues to engage in deep and effective partnerships with those who are directly affected by the challenges we work to address. Their perspectives are critical to helping us understand how the County can tailor our support to best help their communities overcome barriers, heal and build resilience. During this time of transition beyond crisis, these relationships give us the opportunity to co-create solutions that will endure beyond the pandemic and this budget.

Throughout this year's budgeting process, I, along with my staff, met with people from communities and populations who are at the center of the County's work. Our conversations were crucial to identifying the County services that are working well, opportunities for improvement, and the gaps in our systems. Their voices are foundational to the work we do to build budget priorities that support a system of services that is both equipped to meet today's pandemic-driven needs *and* oriented toward closing the disparities and gaps that existed in these communities before COVID-19.

Below are two examples from our FY 2023 budget worksessions:

Health Department Overview:

## Applying an Equity Lens How Racial Equity Informed Budget Development

Public Health & Health Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expands partnerships within BIPOC communities; adds culturally specific staffing. Shores up Communicable Disease Program to ensure future capacity, access and reach</li><li>• Adds death investigators who play a key role in documenting the leading causes of death and disparities by race/ethnicity.</li></ul>
Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritizes culturally responsive services for BIPOC and LGBTQI communities</li><li>• Builds capacity and expands technical assistance to for BIPOC led Peer Provider organizations</li></ul>
Corrections Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adds Equity Manager to support equity efforts</li><li>• Enhances Transition Services to address social determinants of health; adds culturally-specific providers</li></ul>
Community Health Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invests in Racial Equity and Diversity Initiative to monitor, analyze, and recommend policy and infrastructure to reduce race based disparities in care</li><li>• Expands transitions of care team; adds Health Engagement and Access Team to reduce barriers to care for BIPOC patients</li></ul>



## Applying an Equity Lens

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Additionally, the County used the following guiding principles for evaluating how to invest the [American Rescue Plan funding](#).

## COVID-19 Response & Recovery: Guiding Principles



- **We inclusively lead with race** in order to best serve people and populations who have been disproportionately impacted by inequities. We honor the expertise, relationships, and resilience within communities of color through our partnerships, and are committed to co-creating solutions.
- **Using an equity and racial justice approach** helps us account for the intersection of inequities, disease trends, and the belief that it is tremendously beneficial to the health of our whole community when we provide services in the languages and cultural traditions of our diverse communities.
- Providing excellent service and supporting people in our community is a hallmark of what Multnomah County does as a local government, safety net system and public health authority. At the heart of this work are our County employees and our community partners. Our work is at its best when we **engage and listen to the expertise and insight of those who are on the front lines working with community members each day.**



## COVID-19 Response & Recovery: Guiding Principles (cont.)



- **Embedding a public health approach into our spending priorities** allows us to consider opportunities to improve the health and wellness of our community at individual, community and population levels, using data and making investments that can have short-term and long-term benefits.
- We pay attention to, learn from and are guided by the experiences of the people the County serves, as well as best and promising practices. **We invest in community impact, looking at outcome data and progress indicators**, recognizing the limits of quantitative data and embracing efforts to lift up more just ways to collect, analyze and share community level data.
- **Genuine partnerships with our jurisdictional partners, community leaders and community-based organizations** are a key component to increasing the effectiveness and broadening the impact of our resources.



## COVID-19 Response & Recovery: County Priorities



- 01 Public Health Emergency Response**  
Testing, tracing, outbreak response, vaccination, call center, emergency ops, communication, education & engagement.
- 02 Core Services Supporting People in our Care**  
Uphold the welfare of people in our direct care, particularly those in congregate settings like shelter, jail and juvenile detention.
- 03 Crisis Response & Community Recovery**  
Maintain the social service safety net, and make investments that address the negative impacts of the pandemic to help our community recover.
- 04 Restore Services Impacted by Budget Reductions**  
Restore and continue important services that are impacted by budget cuts at the local, state or federal level.
- 05 Critical County Infrastructure**  
Investments in key County infrastructure like improved air quality in our buildings and expanded technology.



**2. The budget message lists an unusually high number of new programs added to the budget due to the influx of new dollars. We applaud the efforts at trying out new approaches and finding solutions for the community. Starting and managing this many new programs seems like it could be a big lift - how will you ensure success for the roll out of these new programs? How will you know what's working well, and what needs tweaking?**

Presenter: Chair Deborah Kafoury

It may appear like the County is significantly expanding the breadth of our programs, however, most of the groundwork was laid in FY 2022 through the investments we made with the first year of funding from the three voter-approved initiatives, as well as the first year of planning for and allocating our first tranche of American Rescue Plan resources.

Many of the additions you see in the FY 2023 budget are expansions of existing services. That includes investments that expand our School-based Mental Health services from a program that serves kindergarten through 3rd grade into a program that serves kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as the addition of four new County auditors to enhance our accountability.

Newer investments at the County are focused on emerging issues like gun violence, climate resilience and community justice, as well as support for the recruitment and retention of County staff.

The path to success for new programs begins early in the budget process with the evaluations that departments make before bringing forward new programs. That's followed by discussions we have regarding the need for those programs, the disparities that are driving the need for new services and the outcomes we hope to achieve.

As mentioned previously, departments centered equity as they developed program proposals. I ensured that those considerations were central to the discussions about new programs that my staff and I held with the departments, as well as representatives from the communities and populations at the center of the County's work.

We were fortunate that our starting point for the FY 2023 budget was a \$19.3 million surplus of ongoing General Funds, which allowed departments to focus on strategic new investments while preparing current service level budgets. And because of an upward adjustment of our Business Income Tax (BIT) forecast in FY 2022, as well as higher-than-normal departmental underspending in FY 2021, we also had more one-time-only General Fund resources than usual. As mentioned in the response to the

previous question, we also have significant resources from other funds, such as our new voter-approved initiatives.

With respect to the General Fund, the Budget Director's Message listed \$74.9 million in General Fund additions to programs. Almost three-quarters of that is for one-time-only activities, such as purchasing software, renovating facilities or revising our land use planning code.

Our diligent and resilient staff often have experience with the kinds of projects that are being funded with one-time-only dollars; it's simply a matter of having the resources to make the purchase or fund the activity. For example, the budget contains \$15.0 million of one-time-only General Fund designated for strategic capital investments, which will complement rapidly expanding programming that serves people who are, or are at risk of, homelessness, and who often have serious and complex disabling conditions. During the pandemic, the County already moved to use one-time state and federal funding to acquire properties to serve programmatic needs. The Joint Office of Homeless Services is constantly looking at properties to expand our range and geographic distribution of shelter and housing options, so the additional General Funds will provide more resources for that ongoing effort. Another example is the \$1.5 million for construction of ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; that request for funding came only after extensive planning.

In other instances, one-time-only funds give us an opportunity to pilot a new way of doing things, such as the Mental Health Treatment Outreach Program (50041). That program was developed using the equity analysis and processes I mentioned before, and funding it one-time gives us a chance to see if the program can deliver on its promise. You can see how a pilot like that plays out by looking at the District Attorney's Justice Integrity Unit: While the senior prosecutor leading the unit was funded ongoing in FY 2022, additional staff for the program were funded one-time-only as a pilot in that fiscal year. After the unit demonstrated that it could successfully deliver the outcomes we desired, the additional staff are now supported by ongoing General Fund in the FY 2023 budget.

Like the Justice Integrity Unit, many additions supported by ongoing or one-time-only General Fund are not brand new programs. For example, \$4.7 million is being used to continue programs that were added during a mid-year budget action related to a surplus of one-time-only Business Income Tax funding. Another \$3.1 million continues programs that were previously supported by American Rescue Plan funds.



A lot of the funds also expand on existing work in which departments already have expertise and experience. For example, the Department of County Human Services (DCHS) has a \$600,000 increase in its Youth Stability & Homelessness Prevention program (25138B). DCHS has an established program to do this work, but the additional funding will increase the number of available emergency beds and provide the staffing needed to expand emergency shelter capacity. In other instances, new programming is being put in place for programs that have been in the planning stages for a long period of time, like the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC). While this budget adds \$2.2 million for operations at the BHRC to support its opening in FY 2023, the planning process has been going on for years.

I also believe it's important to note that many of the expansions of programs involve additional staff. These staff are needed both to do new programmatic work and to strengthen the County's ability to support that work. So we have new positions to strengthen our infrastructure and advance our efforts to create a workplace culture of safety, trust and belonging. And, as we'll discuss a little later, we also need expanded Human Resources capacity to make sure we can fill the positions in our new programs and to attend to the needs of new employees once they join the County.

I will also add that, as with many of the General Fund additions, the new services you see supported by other funds have been carefully planned for. We've learned many lessons from two years of working to plan for and program COVID-19-related funds. The Supportive Housing Services and Preschool for All efforts have involved years of community engagement and a significant amount of time preparing for their initial implementation. And now that we're in our first full year of revenues, we are in position to leverage our increased funding into strategic expansions.

As with all County programs, departments are tasked with describing what they will be doing and providing performance measures that we can monitor to help us see how well they achieve their goals. We'll also pay attention to what we're hearing from the community as to whether the programs are meeting their needs effectively, efficiently and equitably. We know that we won't get everything perfect on the first try, but we are committed to an iterative process by paying attention to the lessons we can learn and modifying practices as needed so that we can both get the best return on our investment and serve our community to the best of our ability.

**3. We have all been hearing loud and clear the community's expectations for reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in a caring, compassionate way. We asked about this last year and discussed a number of programs you planned to implement. The budget message refers to this budget as a "critical point" in the work to end people's homelessness, and unprecedented funds are being invested. It takes time to implement new or expanded programs, but the community is looking for reassurance now. What can you say about when we will reasonably see the number of folks living outside decrease?**

Response Chair's Office/JOHS/Communications

Written Response include slides from JOHS presentation: 11-13

Presenter: Chair Kafoury

While the county plays an important role in addressing homelessness, we do not play the **only** role - especially when it comes to the upstream forces that cause people to lose their homes in the first place. So when discussing the work of ending homelessness we must take into account the larger social context of poverty and affordability. Consider just the following data points

- Oregon ranked 47th in housing affordability in 2017 and we are still ranked 47th in 2022.
- Fair Market Rent in Multnomah County has risen 44% for a 1 bedroom apartment since 2017 while SSI/SSDI has risen only 14% and minimum wage has only increased by 31%. This increasing gap between income and rent is causing more and more people to fall into homelessness.
- We continue to see the impacts of structural racism evidenced by the ongoing disparities for our BIPOC community members in their rates of poverty and homelessness.

# Ongoing Social Structure Pressures

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## Affordability Rank

2017: OR ranked 47th  
2022: OR ranked 47th

Only 26 affordable units available for every 100 extremely low-income households



## Rent to Income Disparity

**Increase from 2017-22:**

**Fair Market Rent:**  
**1 Bedroom: 44%**  
SSI Income: 14%  
Social Security: 14%  
Min. Wage: 31%



## Mental Health Need/Services\*

2017: OR ranked 48th  
2022: OR ranked 48th



## Racial Disparities

Poverty rates in County for **Black, Native, Latinx** households twice the rate for Non-Hispanic White households.

\* <https://www.mhanational.org/state-mental-health-america-past-reports>



# Rental Market Challenges Persist, Drive Inflow

KEY FACTS

**133,049**  
OR  
**22%**  
Renter households that are extremely low income

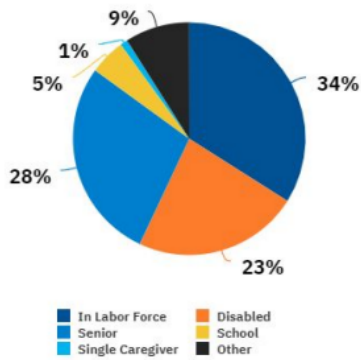
**-97,993**  
Shortage of rental homes affordable and available for extremely low income renters

**\$26,200**  
Maximum income for 4-person extremely low income household (state level)

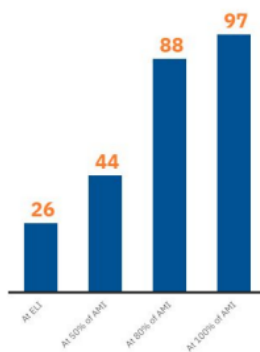
**\$52,296**  
Annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at HUD's Fair Market Rent.

**76%**  
Percent of extremely low income renter households with severe cost burden

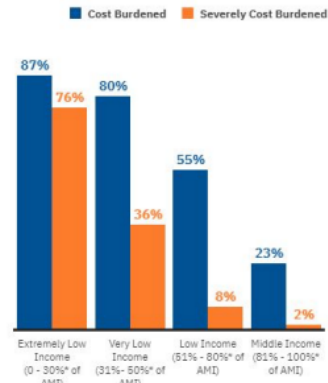
**EXTREMELY LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS**



**AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE HOMES PER 100 RENTER HOUSEHOLDS**



**HOUSING COST BURDEN BY INCOME GROUP**



Images adapted from [nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/oregon](https://www.nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/oregon)

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## Snapshot of Homelessness in Multnomah County

5,228

people experiencing homelessness on  
night of PIT

4,340

people who accessed homeless services  
for the first time in two years (FY21)



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The County's role is to ensure that we have the range of services to meet people's needs so that they can return to a home as soon as possible. And this budget - along with my previous budgets - seeks to rapidly expand those services while ensuring that we continue to tighten the coordination among all of our programs. For example, \$25 million of my budget will fund a range of behavioral health services specifically for people experiencing homelessness, including behavioral health shelters, dedicated housing for people who are frequent users of emergency rooms and the justice system, and two housing projects for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

**Our job** is to be there for our community members who are forced to live without a home - and meet their needs, whatever they might be. Thanks to the voters, we now have the funding to address homelessness at a scale that is unprecedented in this community, and this budget demonstrates our commitment to ending people's homelessness as soon as possible - through outreach, shelter, services, and ultimately, housing.

**4. The budget message indicates that there is movement forward on the services front of the Supportive Housing Services plan in the new budget, including the new Behavioral Health Resources Center facility. Is there any move toward expanding treatment beds across the Multnomah County system - both mental and behavioral crisis beds and addiction treatment beds?**

Presenter: Chair Kafoury

For the first three quarters of FY 2022, our prevention programs have supported 2,500 people and diverted them away from entering homelessness and experiencing the trauma that comes from being displaced from one's home. Over 70% of the people we served identified as Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander and other people of color.

Acting on behalf of the Local Mental Health Authority, the Behavioral Health Division convenes and collaborates with providers across the county to map out a system that is responsive to the needs of our community. To that end, we have partnered with a variety of providers throughout the county to plan for behavioral health housing needs. The actual licensure and funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment, including residential programs, is administered by Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and through the Oregon Health Plan.

The Behavioral Health Division works to support non-treatment housing facilities. Our two new initiatives, the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC) and the Motel Wraparound program, are non-treatment facilities. The BHRC will offer 33 beds of low-barrier shelter and 19 beds of transition "bridge" housing for persons who have severe mental health issues, often accompanied by substance use disorder. Additionally, the BHRC will provide Day Center services for people experiencing homelessness with significant behavioral health challenges. The voices of peers have been integral to the BHRC planning efforts, and the program will be staffed primarily by peers with some clinical support on the shelter and bridge housing floors.

The Motel Wraparound program, which is the first behavioral health shelter in Portland and Multnomah County, sets aside an entire facility to serve up to 36 persons who have severe mental illness and/or a substance use disorder, and who are not able to use congregate care settings due to the severity of their needs. The motel program is completely operated by a community provider that has extensive experience in this work.

Another area of expansion that the County started mid-year is the Old Town Inreach program, as well as support for programs that meet basic needs for individuals experiencing homelessness in the Old Town neighborhood. These services take place during peak service delivery hours when clients are gathered to access services. The Old Town Inreach program focuses on fostering relationships, assisting in connections to behavioral health and harm reduction services, and minimizing conflict.

**5. District Attorney Schmidt recently wrote that “the criminal justice system is at the breaking point”. The DA cites case backlogs and increasing workloads as just some of the challenges currently facing the system. Can you tell us more about the issues being faced, and how these challenges are being addressed in the upcoming budget? What impacts will we see from the additional funds?**

Presenter: District Attorney Michael Schmidt

TSCC Members,

You asked for additional information regarding a recent public statement I made that “the criminal justice system is at the breaking point”. This refers to the system-wide strain brought on by the pandemic, resource issues, and a surge in gun violence. This strain is felt among our police (including Portland, Gresham, the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office, and Oregon State Police), our public defense system, and within my office. This is particularly true of the public defense system, which is facing historic caseload and funding challenges and is now unable to even offer representation in some cases. These are three critical pillars of our justice system, and each is experiencing challenges.

Police clearance rates, meaning arrest rates for property crime, theft, and robbery, are critically low leaving hundreds of victims without justice and perpetrators without accountability. On any given day there are upwards of 100 defendants without legal counsel, which precludes our office from the ability to fully prosecute cases due to a defendant's constitutional right to counsel. Attorneys in our office are enduring historic caseloads, [averaging 95 felonies per felony attorney](#), as an example. The causes for this increase in caseloads are two-fold: first, two years of court restrictions in response to COVID-19 which has led to a large backlog, and second an increase in referral rates of the most time-consuming crime types such as child abuse, domestic violence, and homicide.

Our office received funding for four additional prosecutors focused on gun violence as a result of ARP funding and prioritization by the Chair. With this investment, the Chair answered the call of gun violence victims in need of additional prosecutorial resources to see justice for their loved ones. It was a bright spot in an otherwise devastating year for our community and for workloads in my office that allowed us to keep our heads above water amidst a crisis.

Heading into FY 2023, we continue to feel the impact of high caseloads and the spike in homicides. Every additional prosecutor added to our office means a wider distribution of labor for each case, allowing attorneys to spend more time reviewing facts and evidence for stronger cases, and supporting victims by giving them the individual attention they need to both seek justice and mitigate further harm within the system. One of the most important elements to our ability to hold perpetrators of homicides accountable is our presence at crime scenes. That means, every time there is a loss of life suspected to be criminal, night or day, weekend or on a Monday morning, a prosecutor responds to the scene side by side with other law enforcement. This is in addition to their full work weeks. The volume of homicides in the last two years has meant that these call-outs occur around twice a week as compared to twice a month. They require hours of work from going to the scene of a crime, sitting with families in their homes or in hospitals in what are often the worst moments of their life, and attending autopsies. It is not uncommon for entire days to be spent doing this work in the aftermath of one fatality.

This work, too, immensely benefits from the additional resources found in the Chair's FY 2023 budget. In all, more resources mean better cases, more support for victims, and added capacity to do the critical work of attending homicides. It lifts one critical lever of the criminal justice system towards stability in a moment where system-wide breakage is impending.



**6. The District Attorney's office is one part of a large system. Are you seeing similar struggles in the Sheriff's Office to cope with increasing crime? What is included in the budget to respond to recent increases in violent crime, traffic fatalities, and other issues? What do you anticipate telling us about the impact of these budgetary items in next year's TSCC hearing?**

Presenter: Commissioner Stegmann (District 4)

Multnomah County remains committed to the long term transformation of the criminal justice system. At the same time, we're focused on reforms and improvements to address immediate public safety concerns. That's resulted in a budget with diverse and integrated investments across Departments.

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Division is responsible for providing police services in unincorporated Multnomah County, as well as the cities of Troutdale, Fairview, Wood Village, and Maywood Park. Overall reported crime trends in those areas have remained fairly consistent over the last five years.

One of, if not the most, visible concern is gun related crime. That includes shootings incidents, gun inflicted injuries, and homicides. The County has responded by making a number of investments. We are continuing funding that started late last year (thanks to an increase in business income tax revenue), to support an additional detective working on gun related crimes, as well as two deputies in the civil unit focused on serving family protection orders and dispossession of firearms and ammunition when ordered by the court because they may pose a risk to themselves or others. These deputies are also working with the Gun Dispossession Sergeant to increase the successful service of a protection order and the removal of firearms from volatile situations.

We're seeing more firearms removed by the Gun Dispossession Unit's. In fact, deputies assigned to this unit have removed 86 firearms, between January 1 and May 17, 2022, nearly doubling last year's rate. And overall 285 firearms have been seized or recovered by the Sheriff's Office this year.

Investments in the Sheriff's Office are only one part of a robust strategy to curb the uptick in crime. We have for a long time even before the pandemic seen a concentration of crime and violence in communities with higher rates of poverty, lower median incomes, higher health disparities, higher eviction rates, and generally less economic opportunities for residents. When we talk about the work that addresses the root causes we are talking about anti-poverty initiatives, emergency housing, trauma-informed therapy, drug treatment, school-based services, youth employment

programs, hunger relief and health care clinics. We have also increased intervention services significantly to support the work of law enforcement, build resiliency in the community, and address the public safety needs of the community. Our specific goals have been to:

- 1) Help community members re-establish connections and interpersonal relationships to increase resilience in individuals, families and communities.
- 2) Address the impacts of trauma, both generational and recent, for survivors, offenders, family and community members affected by crime and violence.
- 3) Expand and enhance access to high quality, culturally competent and coordinated mental and behavioral health supports to ensure the emotional and social well being of all community members including and especially those working and living on the front lines of the crisis.

This budget includes investments across multiple departments that support these goals.

For example, the County is funding a coordinator to work between departments and external agencies to monitor, track and coordinate existing and new efforts to reduce violence. In addition, the budget includes the continuation of the **Gun Violence Prevention Incubator** Pilot. Started last year, the pilot is building capacity in community-based organizations to create effective intervention programming. For this next fiscal year, we are going further by investing in the development of a **new Gun Violence Interruption pilot program**. The program will leverage the use of credible messengers in communities heavily impacted by gun violence, offering stipends to individuals on supervision and people committing acts of gun violence to help them build economic stability that steers them away from the need to participate in dangerous behaviors.

And notably, this budget moved \$1.2 million of **Community Violence Prevention Programs** from ARP funding in FY 2022 to the general fund in FY 2023 to ensure it has ongoing support. That investment includes expansions of the Elevate program, part of the widely recognized Community Healing Initiative (CHI), to the Latinx and African immigrant communities at risk of community violence and the groundbreaking Habilitation, Empowerment, Accountability, and Therapy (HEAT) curriculum, a culturally responsive cognitive behavioral intervention program.

**7. The budget funds over 400 new positions. We are hearing of hiring and retention challenges across nearly all industries right now. Are you anticipating that filling these positions will be a challenge? What about retention of existing employees? What is included in the budget to address issues of recruitment and retention, and how are these efforts informed by the Workplace Equity Strategic Plan you approved in 2019?**

Presenter: Commissioner Meieran (District 1)

Large FTE increases are a reflection of the increased funding that we have been discussing throughout this hearing. While hiring 400 new positions would seem like a daunting task for any organization, it is important to remember that much of that funding came to the County mid-year 2022. Between the adoption of the FY 2022 budget and today, the County has been able to add 160 annualized positions. Additionally, we have converted close to 50 limited duration positions (hired with CARES ACT funding in 2020 and extended with American Rescue Plan funding) to full time equivalents. For both the mid-year additions and the conversion of limited duration assignments, most if not all of these positions will be filled before July 1, 2022.

Along with nearly every industry and company, the County is navigating a challenging labor market. With low unemployment rates and inflationary pressures on wages (not to mention the burnout and trauma of the last two years), we are focusing on hiring and retention.

Looking back at the last two years, we realized several things. First, the County hired extensively for new programs and expansions of existing programs in response to our pandemic response. This effort often took a great deal of our HR capacity, which came at the cost of hiring for regular or existing positions. Second, we found that we didn't experience the "great resignation" that impacted many other industries and sectors. What we did experience was normal attrition combined with less capacity to fill those vacant positions because of acute hiring needs in Public Health, shelter operations and other areas of our emergency response.

And while it was encouraging to realize that we did not experience higher turnover than we had generally seen in the past, it does not change the fact that we had, and continue to have, many critical vacancies at all levels and across the entire organization. This results in impacts similar to the "great resignation" because we have less staff capacity, yet the County continues to have a similar, if not higher, work load.

In response, our departments have increased their human resources capacity to focus on recruitment by nearly \$2.8 million in FY 2023. This includes investments like

\$620,000 of new one-time-only General Funds in Central Human Resources to hire and train an additional cadre of recruiters to deploy across the County. We have already begun the hiring process in order to hit the ground running and intend to provide these new recruiters with equity-focused training that we believe will help us catch up on our vacancies. Our departments have already done an amazing job increasing the rate at which they hire and we are excited this new program will continue to accelerate that pace.

Additionally, Central Human Resources is currently in the hiring process for a Career Development Coordinator who will focus on supporting employee retention efforts by developing and facilitating professional development courses, coaching and partnerships aimed at supporting career growth at the County.

Departments are also engaged in different variations of “stay interviews.” This practice, as described in the County’s [Workforce Equity Strategic Plan \(WESP\)](#), uses multiple methods to consistently assess morale, inclusion, supportive environments and cultural responsiveness with a certain percentage of staff annually. Stay interviews are an employee engagement tool designed primarily to discover why a current employee continues to work for their company or organization, what motivates and engages them, and why they opt to stay with the employer rather than seeking employment elsewhere. Unlike an exit interview – during which an employer asks an employee why they are leaving the organization – the stay interview focuses on the present and seeks to find ways to build employee engagement and retention.

One specific area of retention that we are paying close attention to is the turnover of our managers – particularly our managers of color. Our Office of Diversity and Equity piloted exit interviews with managers as they left our organization, with a focus on our leaders of color. This allowed us to gather feedback and insight into their departures. We expect to have detailed information about this workforce trend this fall covering hiring, promotions, retention, position reclassifications, exits and other relevant HR data.

One final retention-related intervention is the one-time incentive payment of \$1,500 paid to our amazing frontline employees who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our employees provided exceptional service to our most vulnerable communities and this was one way to thank them for keeping critical County services open to the public throughout a public health crisis unprecedented in modern times.

**8. Preschool for All is entering its second year, with plans for placements slated to begin this fall. Are your revenue estimates for this program on target? We understand there are challenges with hiring and finding physical space - how does the county plan to address these issues?**

***Follow up question: Can you tell us more about the interface between the public “slots” and the existing private capacity? Do you think public “slots” could affect pricing of private pay participants or crowd them out as the public program expands?***

Presenter: Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson (District 3)

Yes, revenue estimates are on target for this program.

As this is the first year of a new tax, our revenue estimates were conservative. Mandatory withholding did not begin until January 2022 and we incorporated a high delinquency rate into our estimate. We anticipate that the Preschool for All tax revenue will be higher than expected this year, due in part to a surge of capital gains related income.

The lack of early learning spaces and early educators are major hurdles to the full implementation of Preschool for All. In order to address these challenges, Multnomah County will make investments in Workforce Development and begin a Facilities Fund. Fiscal Year 2023 workforce development investments will include: navigators at Portland Community College and Mt. Hood Community College to recruit and retain students in the early childhood education programs; scholarships for community based training and higher education; additional capacity and support for a new state-funded substitute pool; and professional development for existing educators through individualized coaching from Child Care Resource & Referral. These investments are being planned with a specific focus on Black, Indigenous, and Early Educators of Color, so that the future workforce reflects the diversity of children in Multnomah County.

The Preschool for All Facilities Fund will be administered by a third-party organization that will fund infrastructure projects for home-based preschool programs, child care centers, non-profit organizations, and school districts. A procurement for the third-party administrator for the Facilities Fund will be released early in fiscal year 2023. The Chair’s proposed budget includes \$8 million dollars for the Facilities Fund. Investments in individual programs will range from \$50,000- \$1.0 million dollars depending on the project needs and preschool setting type. Investments will require a service

commitment to Preschool for All and funding of over \$250,000 will require matching funds.

#### *Follow-Up*

*The pandemic had a devastating impact on child care providers and made it shockingly clear how unstable our child care system is. As we build a new system that provides universal access to preschool, it's essential that we do that with intention and a focus on racial equity. The Preschool for All Plan created a framework for implementation that included stabilizing existing providers, creating opportunities for new providers, and offering support for providers to expand their businesses.*

*Preschool for All is growing to universal preschool access in 2030. Each year the number of participating preschool providers and the number of slots will grow. The investments will include a mix of slots that are being stabilized and slots that are brand new. Investments to stabilize slots mean that providers will be able to count on consistent revenue and families who have previously struggled to pay for child care will suddenly have money for their increasing rent and grocery costs. Existing slots include slots that may be vacant right now and slots that families with low-incomes would not be able to access without Preschool for All. We have already heard from one home-based provider that she had planned to close one of her locations if she hadn't received Preschool for All funding for next year.*

*Our strategy of stabilizing existing providers is also directly tied to Preschool for All's racial equity goals. It is easiest for school districts and large organizations to expand. In order to build a system where the business owners and teachers reflect the children in Multnomah County, we must strengthen home-based providers and small centers. Our investments and stable funding in these early years will create the foundation that they need for future expansion.*

*Participation in Preschool for All is optional and there will always be providers and families who choose not to participate. In these early years, the focus is on preschool programs who are currently serving families who experience barriers accessing preschool. In addition, one of the key expectations that the Preschool & Early Learning Division has communicated to providers is that no families currently in care should lose their slots based on their program's participation in Preschool for All.*

**9. As we move into the next stage of the pandemic, how are county health services shifting out of immediate pandemic response into something that may be more long-term? As the federal money tapers off, how are you investing in programs or services that position us well for the future?**

Presenter: Commissioner Jayapal (District 2)

**Public Health**

The pandemic has brought our Public Health Division together, recently activating a hub that includes four key areas of focus: 1) vaccine operations, 2) community wisdom and partnerships, 3) data rooted in racial equity and 4) community based education. This collective includes staff across all units within the division for the purpose of providing guidance and direction on plans forward towards our long-term COVID response/recovery strategies. This platform also serves as an effective and efficient space where we come together to formulate plans of action in real time as we respond to the ebbs and flows of the unpredictability experienced during this pandemic.

Together we have developed a Request for Pre-Qualifications (RFPQ) where we were able to pre-qualify over 80 community based organizations who are connected to our Black, Indigenous and other people of color communities throughout Multnomah County. This enhancement will allow us to more quickly allocate funding to our partners, that they are in turn able to provide various supports and resources to families.

Another internal system enhancement to note as a result of our collective is developing an adolescent health specific response to COVID. This response brings together leaders from across divisions to develop a department-wide framework that will guide development and implementation of COVID recovery efforts focused on reaching youth/adolescents. This framework will rely on guiding principles: to reduce and eliminate racial inequity and disparities in access to resources and care that has deepened for our adolescents from BIPOC communities; embrace adolescent wisdom as drivers of change; and to share a positive sense of self and healthy behaviors centering education and resources, alongside consistent interest and engagement from their perspective and needs aiming to positively affect life outcomes, including health, learning, finances and more.

Our prevention and health promotion combined with our community partnership and capacity building efforts will continue to use the wisdom and connections with communities of color through CDC Health Disparities grant funding. Over the next year, we will use this funding to build, leverage and expand infrastructure support for COVID-19 prevention and control among underserved and higher risk populations. We

will continue to mobilize partners and collaborators on the advancement of health equity and addressing social determinants of health as they relate to COVID-19 health disparities. This work entails implementing health literacy and communications to reach our diverse audiences and by increasing partner capacity to disseminate scientifically accurate, culturally and linguistically responsive information.

The external investments in coalition building will better position us in the future with the increased reach within African Immigrant and Refugee, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and Latinx communities in particular. The funding and resources provided to these coalitions aim to support sustainability and capacity building in part through training, technical assistance and consultation on their infrastructure development and advance community priorities, including strategies focused on COVID-19 recovery and improvements to overall community health by addressing the impacts of racism and social determinants of health such as education and economic opportunities. To-date our African Immigrant and Refugee coalition includes at least 14 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that represent 38 various languages within our county and continues to meet bi-weekly to develop and implement change activities.

We've also been able to build and cultivate relationships with health systems (Providence, Legacy, Medical Teams International, OHSU and Kaiser), connecting them with our coalitions and community partners and continue to facilitate discussions on wellness hubs, increasing access to other preventative care and health promoting structures.

### **Integrated Clinical System (ICS)**

In addition to Public Health, the County also runs the largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Oregon. COVID-19 pushed us out of our comfort zones to adopt technology in ways we haven't previously, including telehealth. In our clinical system, both client and staff comfort with telehealth options have seen a remarkable increase. Telehealth parity and expanded reimbursements for telehealth will allow us to continue serving clients using technology, creating innovative pathways to health care further aided by our targeted American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund investment into improving clinical infrastructure that will have a lasting impact on our client and staff comfort, safety, and care.

ICS has been diligently working to integrate COVID-19 services and treatments into our operations for the past six months. While we still hold specific vaccine clinics and testing opportunities, COVID-19 services have become part of our regular services. The FY 2023 Integrated Clinical Services FY 2023 budget reflects our commitment to future



planning, financial sustainability while also addressing recovery from COVID-19. We have incorporated new roles into the budget that are dedicated to client outreach, engagement, and enable clients to seek missed care. In addition, we have also added roles dedicated to population health, and nurse triage support for clients that will also prepare us to meet new value based care agreements with Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) partners.