

**FISCAL YEAR 2027**

# **EXECUTIVE BUDGET**

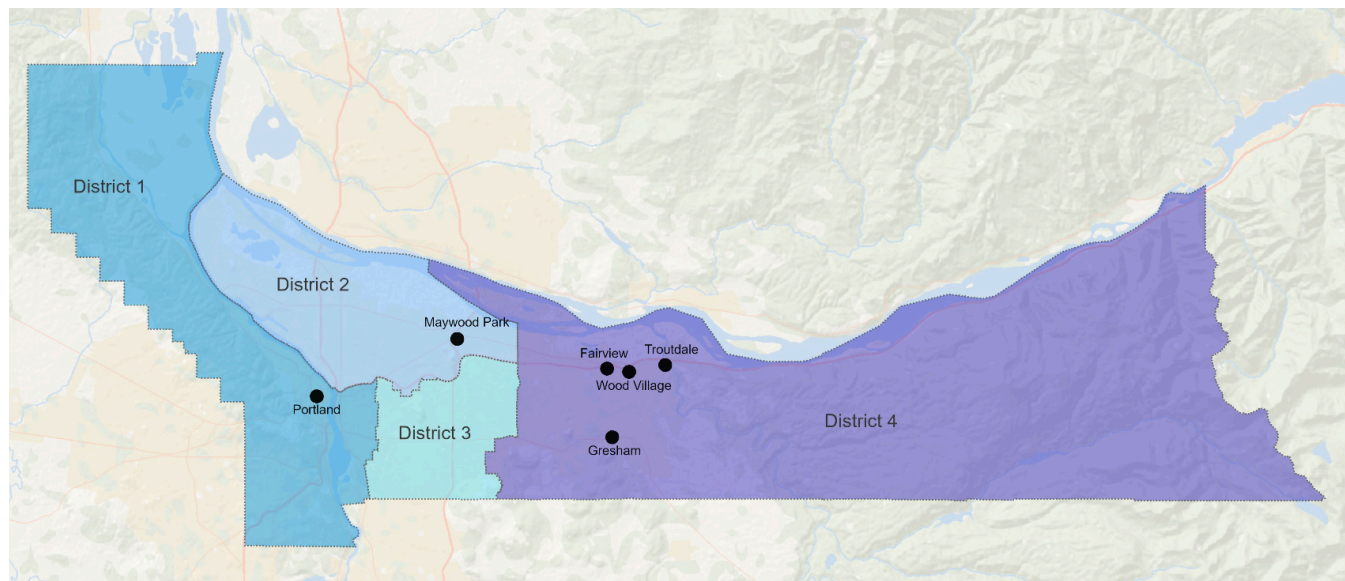
**Proposed by**

**Chair Jessica Vega Pederson**

April 16, 2026



# Multnomah County



**Population:** Approximately 800,000 residents (the largest of Oregon's counties)

**Geography:** 465 square miles (the smallest of Oregon's counties)

**Cities:** Fairview, Gresham, Maywood Park, Portland, Troutdale, Wood Village

**County Employees:** Over 6,600 people.

**Mission:** To improve the well-being of those in Multnomah County by providing accessible, high-quality, and innovative public services that create stability, enhance opportunities, and reduce disparities.

**Vision:** Multnomah County is a diverse, thriving community with a sustainable future where all are safe, connected, and empowered to contribute.

# Table of Contents

- LETTER FROM THE CHAIR.....4**
- EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT..... 6**
- KEY INVESTMENTS AND DECISIONS..... 7**
  - Youth & Families..... 7
  - Healthy Communities..... 11
  - Homelessness & Behavioral Health.....15
  - Community Safety.....19
  - Infrastructure & Governance..... 23
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... 28**

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Multnomah County,

It is my honor to present the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget. This is the fourth and final Executive Budget I am presenting as County Chair, and the last I will be voting on as a member of the Board of Commissioners after nearly ten years in office.

Our world has gone through immense change in that time, and our local community has faced major challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change in the form of wildfires, deadly heat, and historic winter storms. A fentanyl crisis and increase of people living on our streets. Growing hostility to immigrant families, people of color, and LGBTQIA2S+ community members. An unrelenting rise in the cost of living, coupled with devastating cuts to critical services, especially concerning federal funds that local governments rely on.

Through it all, the County has stepped up to defend our communities under threat. Today, the threats we face are increasingly dire. Yet as always, Multnomah County stands as the largest local safety net in Oregon. We are for everyone and always will be.

We have made progress. The County is moving more people off of the streets and into housing than ever before. Preschool for All is providing free, high-quality early education to thousands of children and giving families much needed economic relief. Alternatives to incarceration are connecting people to recovery. And soon, the final of the Library Capital Bond projects will be completed on time and on budget – renewing civic pride in our neighborhoods. I am proud that we continue to rise to the occasion, doing the work we do best in difficult circumstances.

It's my goal to leave us in the best position possible to continue to support our community despite federal and local challenges and a difficult fiscal landscape. I am prioritizing programs that are already working and making an impact now, and that will be sustainable for years to come. This budget seeks to find the right balance of direct service and administrative investments to best serve Multnomah County residents – in particular, those who rely on us the most.

Nevertheless, a budget deficit of this magnitude – \$11 million for the County General Fund and a \$67 million funding gap for homeless services – means that we cannot avoid painful decisions that will impact our internal workforce, community partners, and the services we provide. I made tough choices to prioritize vulnerable neighbors and improve how our government works. These are necessary to produce a sustainable budget, without over-reliance on one-time dollars. The tough tradeoffs underscore my commitment to fiscal integrity, effective governance, and most importantly – direct services.

We have faced multiple years of decreasing funding for homelessness services at the same time that the need has increased. In this context, this budget makes smart investments across the continuum of support. At a time of record evictions, my budget makes an ongoing commitment to rent assistance and homelessness prevention services that keep people housed. My budget also improves services that will move people from shelter into housing more efficiently. To do this I had to make the challenging decision to close some shelter beds after reviewing facility conditions, geographic impact, and housing placement outcomes.

The County receives significant funding from the federal and state government. As this federal administration retreats from disease fighting efforts, this budget protects many impactful local public health programs. My budget further sustains the Behavioral Health Resource Center and programs that provide critical resources to people who struggle with mental health or addiction. And it continues to fund a network of health clinics that serve anyone, regardless of their identity or economic status.

Safety remains a priority. My budget invests in maintaining jail capacity while providing pathways away from jail and towards treatment. I've also allocated dollars to support survivors of gun violence and domestic and sexual violence. And while attacks on the safety of our immigrant communities persist, we are directing assistance to families in need.

Furthermore, this budget marks significant milestones for many major projects, including the County Strategic Plan, centralizing internal coordination, shared services, and other important efforts I've led during my administration to modernize and align our organization.

I love the work of Multnomah County, and how it truly matters to our community. I have had the privilege of working alongside the very best who do so much good work every single day. From the libraries to the animal shelter. From the elections office to the operators atop the Hawthorne Bridge. From health clinics to in-home services for aging residents. From homeless shelters to work training programs. From preschool classrooms to dental services. From the deputies on River Patrol to the halls of the Behavioral Health Resource Center. From Corbett to Sauvie Island. This budget doesn't just fund systems and programs, it enables incredible leaders to make a positive difference in hundreds of thousands of people's lives. Despite the challenges we face today, this budget reflects my commitment to the thriving future of Multnomah County.

Sincerely,



**Jessica Vega Pederson**  
Multnomah County Chair

# EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT

This FY 2027 Executive Budget was crafted following broad and diverse engagement with County Departments, ten County Community Budget Advisory Committees, and the broader community.

Thoughtful guidance was shared through listening sessions with key County partners, such as contracted service providers, community-based organizations, small business owners, and leaders from local governments, courts, Tribes, and school districts.

Additional consideration was given to the results of the Chair’s annual Budget Priorities Survey, which received over 1,000 responses, and the direct feedback provided by hundreds of constituents who

attended the Chair’s budget town hall, submitted public testimony, or provided written correspondence.

As with previous budgets, a commitment to equity and eliminating disparities has been baked into the process from the very beginning. Before submitting proposed budgets, County Departments were asked to work with the Office of Diversity and Equity to include clear and explicit analysis detailing the equity impacts of any proposed reductions.

This analysis helped identify and avoid disparate impacts on vulnerable populations, and ensured that equity remains central to budget decisions. In Multnomah County, this work matters.



# KEY INVESTMENTS AND DECISIONS

## Youth & Families

This budget prioritizes children, youth, and families – addressing deficits by reducing overhead and focusing on where County services in particular have the most positive, unique impact.

These proposed investments lower the cost of living, keep families housed, and provide children with the support necessary to thrive. It protects immigrant communities, veterans, people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, and other vulnerable communities under distress from the harmful policies of this federal administration.

The Department of Human Services (DCHS), Preschool and Early Learning Division, and other departments anchor these life-changing safety net services.

## Keeping Families Housed

This budget invests in a robust **eviction prevention system** to provide emergency rent assistance for low-income families on the edge of homelessness. That includes supporting households with an eviction notice or those at high risk of losing their home within 21 days.

This response addresses a growing crisis in the community, where eviction filings have reached an all-time high. Last January, nearly 3,000 Oregon families faced eviction in court – double the pre-pandemic average. Meanwhile, two of every three tenants evicted became homeless.

Investing in eviction prevention is among the most effective and fiscally responsible ways to reduce homelessness.



## Supporting Our Immigrant Communities

Heightened federal immigration enforcement is causing family separation, income loss, and housing instability for immigrant and refugee families. In addition, ineligibility for critical social services is leaving many households without the resources to manage an unforeseen crisis. This budget dedicates funding to the **Immigrant Resilience Program**, which provides direct assistance to families in need and helps ensure housing stability.

A \$3 million investment in the **Bienestar de la Familia program** offers culturally sensitive, multilingual services for immigrant and refugee communities. This Northeast Portland hub provides a variety of services including rent and utility assistance, housing support, employment services, food distribution, youth activities, mental health and substance use counseling, and more.

## Providing Free Universal Preschool

Far too often, the high cost of early education and childcare creates a significant barrier for families. Lack of access to quality preschool impedes a child's potential, reduces family income, and slows local economic growth. To ensure all children in Multnomah County have the opportunity to benefit from free preschool, voters overwhelmingly approved the **Preschool for All (PFA)** initiative in 2020.

Since its passage, PFA has been growing rapidly to reach its goal of providing universal preschool access by 2030. This next school year will serve the most children yet, as the program anticipates nearly doubling to over 7,000 seats.

Multnomah County now ranks as one of only two Oregon counties not considered a childcare desert and remains ahead of schedule to become the first major West Coast county to guarantee free preschool for every 3 and 4 year old.



As the cost of living climbs, PFA provides direct relief for young families across all income levels – with each preschool seat saving a family \$18,000 to \$26,000 annually. The economic benefits of the program are enormous. By putting money back into the pockets of young families and allowing many parents to re-enter the workforce, Multnomah County becomes a more affordable place to live. Provider contracts account for the vast majority of PFA expenses, while administration is only 10% of the budget.

## Preserving Community Schools

Disparities in academic performance and educational attainment persist across Multnomah County. To close this gap, the County, school districts, City of Portland, and community-based organizations established the **Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Community Schools (SUN)** in 1999.

This partnership connects children and families – primarily from historically marginalized communities – to vital resources including afterschool activities, food assistance, healthcare connections, and additional support.

This budget dedicates \$11 million toward the SUN system. While this preserves 90% of current sites, 9 of the 92 locations will close. This hard decision was not taken lightly, and was made with consideration to equity, geography, and youth served.

## Mental Health Support for Students

Modern times present significant mental health challenges for youth. **School-Based Mental Health (SBMH)** provides intervention and long-term support for students. These services allow students to heal from trauma, anxiety, and depression.



This budget maintains the service by backfilling approximately \$418,000 from the County General Fund to partially cover a state funding loss. In total, \$4.9 million is dedicated to SBMH. This allocation ensures the continuation of accessible, culturally responsive mental health and outreach services across six school districts.

## Safety for Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors

Domestic violence affects thousands of people in Multnomah County each year, causing lasting physical, emotional, and economic harm. This budget dedicates nearly \$27 million toward **services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence**. This includes shelter, housing, leadership development, culturally-relevant services provided with community-based organizations, and a team of advocates embedded within Portland Police Bureau's Special Victims Unit.

## Stability for Adults, People with Disabilities & Veterans

This budget allocates \$906,000 to the **Safety Net Program** that supports housing stability for people with disabilities, veterans, and older adults – particularly those who found housing after a long period of homelessness.

These services include rent and utility assistance, emergency motel vouchers, help moving, and cleaning.

The program also helps participants pay for items like eyeglasses, dentures and medical equipment.

As much as possible, the Chair's budget preserves programs like this that receive a federal match in funding in order to maximize County General Fund dollars.



# Healthy Communities

As the Local Public Health Authority, Multnomah County directly supports the health of all community members at every stage of life.

This critical responsibility is growing as the federal government retreats from protecting and promoting the wellbeing of people across the country. As a result, the County is grappling with a consistent decline in federal and state investments for services the community depends on, particularly in public health and prevention. The loss of federal and state funding for these services required decisions to backfill investments with General Fund dollars, as was the case in many departments. This shift reduces the pool of the most flexible funding source available countywide.

In response, this budget funds core public health services provided by the Health Department. Additionally, investments ensure services fostering community

resilience – like the work of the Office of Sustainability and Office of Emergency Management – are funded to prevent, prepare, and respond to evolving threats exacerbated by a climate crisis.

## Protecting People’s Health

Following a highly effective vaccination campaign, the United States declared measles eliminated in 2000. Yet due to political negligence and declining trust in health expertise, cases are on the rise. Oregon is currently on track to top the state’s worst outbreak in three decades. Similarly, cases of food-borne illnesses, tetanus, whooping cough, and hepatitis all appear to be on the rise nationally, posing active threats locally.

To stay prepared, this budget responds to state and federal cuts by maintaining investments in a range of interventions that prevent disease outbreaks and address emerging public health risks.



\$4.7 million is dedicated to the County’s **Communicable Disease Services**, which collects data, coordinates with state, national, and global partners, and responds to outbreaks. This budget also invests \$2.2 million for **Vector Control** to prevent diseases by monitoring mosquitoes, rats, birds, and other animals for pathogens harmful to humans – an important function as a changing climate causes vector-borne diseases to emerge in new areas.

The budget allocates \$8.4 million to the **Health Inspection & Education** program, which conducts regular health inspections of restaurants, food carts, hotels, pools, and spas to prevent the spread of illnesses by food and water. The law requires these activities, and fees from inspected facilities fund the program.

An investment of \$4.6 million in the County’s **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Clinic** provides stigma-free sexual health services and community testing to prevent STI and HIV transmission.

## Promoting Family Health

Multnomah County provides services addressing “upstream” root causes of illness rather than symptoms. These initiatives improve long-term health outcomes, reduce health inequities, and lower healthcare costs.

An example is the **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** program that provides healthy food, nutrition education, health screenings, and breastfeeding support. In 2025, the program served 19,058 participants across four clinics and partner locations. This budget dedicates \$8.4 million of both County General Funds and federal dollars to the WIC program, supporting the growth and development of parents, infants, and children throughout the community.

This budget also dedicates \$12 million to the **Parent, Child, and Family Health programs** that support pregnant and parenting families through home visiting



and case management, and provide culturally specific services for Black and African American families to address health inequities in birth outcomes. Collectively, these efforts improve pregnancy and postpartum health, enhance mental wellness, and prevent infant deaths, preterm births, and neglect.

## Community Health Clinics

Multnomah County contributes to healthy communities by providing a variety of services at **community health clinics**.

Supported by \$218 million in federal funding and billing revenue, this budget preserves neighborhood clinics that deliver high-quality primary, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and wrap-around services. The network comprises eight **primary care** clinics (including the **HIV Health Services Center**), with eight **dental** clinics, eight **pharmacies**, and nine **student health centers** located in high schools.

Beyond these neighborhood locations, the mobile clinic “**Wheely McHealy**” can reach every corner of the region. These services provide direct healthcare to anyone, regardless of insurance or documentation status.

## Corrections Health & Transitions

Multnomah County is responsible for the **health and wellness of adults and youth in custody** within County jails. A combined investment of \$37 million between General Fund, federal, and state dollars provides medical, dental, and mental health services, alongside substance use treatment for thousands of people.

The budget allocates \$2.3 million to a streamlined **Transition Services Program**, preserving supportive services for people leaving custody. This program connects people with health services and life-saving medications to facilitate successful transitions and reduce recidivism.



## A Sustainable, Resilient Future

Climate change threatens clean and healthy air, water and food. Hotter summers, wetter winters, and extreme weather events create significant public health challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations.

The **Office of Sustainability** leads Multnomah County's efforts to build resilience to climate change. This work ranges from adopting sustainable internal government operations, such as fleet decarbonization and battery energy storage, to external efforts through community partnership and grantmaking.

This budget maintains the Office's work in developing the County's first **Climate Justice Plan** and supports community initiatives like the **East County CROPS Farm**. It also allows the office to continue advocating for critical County priorities like **utility bill assistance** and **consumer protections**.

A \$2.6 million investment in **Environmental Health Community Programs** is monitoring climate and health data, working in partnership with frontline communities to build neighborhood resilience to climate impacts.

## Preparing for Emergencies

When natural or human-caused disasters strike, the **Office of Emergency Management (OEM)** coordinates the response with a budget of \$6 million. OEM's work ranges from preparing for major earthquakes and wildfires to coordinating responses to federal immigration policies that are destroying families and disrupting the local economy.

In partnership with the City of Portland, OEM plays a key role in our local response to severe weather events. The office coordinates across departments to clear County roads, maintain safe building operations, and shelter hundreds of neighbors during the most dangerous weather conditions.



# Homelessness & Behavioral Health

Thanks to funding from the voter-approved Supportive Housing Services (SHS) measure, as well as increased investments of County General Funds, the County has dramatically expanded its homeless services. Every month, Multnomah County is sheltering and housing thousands of people while preventing thousands more from living on the street. The system is improving and frequently exceeds its benchmarks for housing placements, retention, and supportive housing.

Just as our response to homelessness reaches new heights, the ending of one-time-only funding has created a \$67 million budget deficit impacting current service levels. Simultaneously, record eviction rates, rising living costs, and persistent mental health and addiction challenges are hurting the community.

With these challenges in mind, this budget sets a balanced, sustainable, and strategic course for the future of homeless services. It prioritizes investments in the “outflow” of people from street corners and shelters to housing. By sustaining the **Homelessness Response System (HRS)**, this budget aims to maximize the impact of existing resources and accelerate people’s transitions into stable homes.

## Improving System Alignment, Data and Accountability

First established in 2024, HRS is focused on bringing the work to address homelessness closer together across departments, jurisdictions, and community partners. That includes the intersections of homelessness and behavioral health, our criminal legal system, and housing development. HRS also consults with people who have lived experience of being homeless.

In partnership with the City of Portland, this system is working to implement the



**Homelessness Response Action Plan** that sets collaborative goals and policies to accomplish them. Given the difficult landscape, it is all the more important that decisions are evidence-based. Investments in improved data and research offer a strong foundation, helping to understand the scope of the issue and the strategies that can help the most people. HSD continues to utilize a by-name list of people experiencing homelessness to tailor individual services and measure success.

With both Multnomah County and the City of Portland facing significant budget deficits, it is vital to shared success that this work is aligned to avoid duplication and promote efficiency.

### **Increasing “Outflow” From Homelessness**

In response to a significant reduction in SHS revenue, this budget includes \$10 million in one-time funding to the Homeless Services Department to help **move people**

**through shelter to housing faster.** A recent County report on shelter outcomes concluded that increased efficiency in housing placements out of shelter is a critical gap that needs to be addressed to ensure proper balance in our system. This investment is expected to place nearly 800 more people into their own home from shelter and will be integrated with all available shelter resources. Additional resources funded in this budget provide assistance with housing navigation. Moving people into housing is a top priority.

### **Preserving Shelters with Best Outcomes**

Shelters are critical in ensuring people have a safe place to stay off the street. All Multnomah County **shelters** provide 24/7 safety with varying levels of attached services that help transition people from a bed in a shelter to a bed in their own home. Shelters best contribute to ending people’s homelessness when utilized as a temporary stop on the way to a stable home.



Given significant reductions across major funding sources, hundreds of Multnomah County shelter units will close in FY27.

Backfilling the total loss with County General Fund dollars is not possible while retaining other County core services, which is why it's so important to increase the efficiency of the shelters this budget preserves.

Even with the budget constraint, some shelter models are being expanded in this budget, such as our investment in the soon to open **Harrison Shelter Village**, as well as an investment with a community provider that is supporting safe **shelter space for survivors of domestic violence**.

Overall, this budget ensures nearly 1,700 County-funded 24/7 shelter units will remain open. The shelters being maintained are those with a combination of the best outcomes and facility conditions, to be paired with investments that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of housing placement.

## Sustained Housing Placement

One of the most successful programs in Multnomah County's work to reduce homelessness is **Permanent Supportive Housing** services. Right now, the County is sustaining nearly 9,000 people in short and long term housing who might otherwise return to the streets, and 83% of people placed into supportive housing have remained housed for more than two years.

This budget makes a \$70.9 million investment in **permanent supportive housing** that ensures no formerly homeless neighbor currently served through a County housing program will end up back on the street due to a loss of funding.

## Mental Health, Addiction & Homelessness

Almost everyone knows someone who has suffered from the impacts of mental health or addiction challenges. The relationship between mental health, drug use, and



homelessness is complex, and not always direct. Where they do intersect, a series of investments throughout Multnomah County provides specialized support. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to this care.

To address the needs of people with behavioral health challenges, this budget dedicates \$46 million for **substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery programs** provided in collaboration with more than 100 community partners.

Downtown Portland’s **Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC)** is prioritized in this budget, with a \$9.3 million investment. The BHRC combines a drop-in day center with shelter and temporary housing for adults with mental health or substance-use challenges who are experiencing homelessness.

Last summer, the BHRC welcomed its 100,000<sup>th</sup> visit.

This budget ensures no reduction in service levels by increasing a General Fund investment to backfill losses from other funding sources.

This budget also invests \$9.4 million in **specialized outreach teams**. Their core assignment is to meet people where they are and build the trust needed to connect them to housing, a shelter, a day center and other services like substance use and mental health treatment, health care services, food assistance, and job programs. An example is the **Homeless Mobile Intake Team (HMIT)**. HMIT helps individuals with mental health needs navigate barriers to accessing benefits and services available to them.

These outreach teams make thousands of connections to people living outside every year, often serving as the starting point of a journey through the system of services designed to end people’s experience with homelessness.



# Community Safety

Safe, thriving communities require more than just law enforcement – they depend on a well-functioning public safety and legal system that is nimble in how it responds to changing trends.

The County funds multiple parts of a shared system of community safety – including investments that prevent crime, hold people accountable, support victims, and reduce recidivism. This includes the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), District Attorney’s Office (DA), Department of Community Justice (DCJ), and Corrections Health. Altogether, budgets for these entities account for approximately 50% of our General Fund spending.

Unlike after the previous fiscal year’s budget process – when the Board of Commissioners held the Sheriff’s Office harmless, and the District Attorney’s Office saw a budget increase – this proposed

budget asks all departments to share in the responsibility of difficult decisions to produce a balanced budget. Overall, this budget focuses on ensuring balance across all County departments that serve a critical role in an effective system of community safety.

## Someone to Call, Someone to Respond, Somewhere to Go

A safer, more effective community safety system ensures that the right responder is available for people in crisis to rapidly provide support, ensure safety, and coordinate follow-up care. This budget supports a well-rounded continuum of care that increases access to mental health and substance use support.

Through a combination of funding sources, this budget invests \$19 million in the Multnomah County **Behavioral Health Call Center, Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams, and Urgent Walk-In Clinic** to improve



coordination and reduce law enforcement intervention by focusing on service connections for people. These services reduce emergency department usage and provide evidence-based treatment that maintains community safety while reducing public suffering.

A combined \$30 million investment funds an evolving **deflection program** and will build a permanent **Sobering and Crisis Stabilization Center** – filling a major gap in the local response to illegal drug use. Deflection is already allowing law enforcement and first responders to stop public drug use on our streets while connecting people to a path of recovery.

This budget also maintains investments in solutions that address the underlying causes of substance use that impacts conditions in our community. This includes a \$150,000 allocation of one-time-only funding for **behavioral health focused outreach** to engage people around the perimeter of the Central Library.

## Justice and Accountability

While the Board votes on the overall budget for MCSO and the DA, and recommends which programs to prioritize, the Sheriff and District Attorney are independently elected officers who can decide what to prioritize for the unique roles their offices play. Decisions about any programmatic reductions within their allocations are ultimately up to them.

This budget maintains funding for core functions of the District Attorney’s Office and funds the DA’s highest priority programs, despite a proposed reduction commensurate with other Departments this fiscal year. It provides long-term stability by turning some temporary, one-time funding into an ongoing commitment. The Chair’s budget allocates a total of \$1.3 million to expand the **Digital Evidence Management Unit** that ensures body-camera footage documenting the work of law enforcement is reviewed and prepared for legal purposes.



## Maintaining Jail Capacity, Investing in Alternatives

Jails are central to public safety infrastructure, and are often tasked with caring for people who have complex social needs that fall outside of traditional public safety services.

A longstanding goal of Chair Vega Pederson's tenure is lowering reliance on jail and, when appropriate, connecting people to rehabilitation.

These efforts reduce recidivism, provide long-term savings, and foster safer neighborhoods.

Even with alternatives, **Multnomah County's jails** require adequate staffing to operate a 24/7/365 facility. The Chair's budget provides full funding for staffing and no reduction in jail capacity.

In line with the Chair's direction to reduce overhead and prioritize direct services, this budget includes a reduction of \$500,000 from the Sheriff's administrative and business office budgets. This amounts to a reduction of less than 0.5% of the total MCSO budget of \$234.3 million.

For people leaving incarceration who need a high level of support, this budget provides an ongoing investment of \$1.2 million in the Department of Community Justice's **Stabilization and Readiness Program (SARP)**.

SARP serves people with severe and persistent mental illness who have been convicted of a crime – providing case management that helps connect them to treatment, skill development, and housing after they complete their time in jail or prison.



## Pretrial Transition & Monitoring

Pretrial monitoring programs are essential for managing jail capacity by offering viable alternatives to detention before adjudication. The fundamental goal of an effective pretrial system is to ensure a defendant's return to court and ability to remain in the community without new arrests or jeopardizing community safety. They also are an opportunity to engage individuals with necessary services.

Currently, Multnomah County is unique in providing pretrial monitoring compared with other counties in Oregon.

This is no longer sustainable.

This budget invests \$1 million in one-time funds to transition these services into the state circuit court system, enhancing efficiency by aligning with the standard approach across the state.

A well-functioning monitoring system requires a strong commitment from all system partners. Success hinges on ensuring all involved are fully informed, share data, participate in regular coordination, and adopt policies that promote the effective use of limited resources.



## Infrastructure & Governance

Multnomah County’s work to maintain and improve infrastructure, governance, and local democracy are essential services.

This budget maintains funding for a variety of core County infrastructure including the County’s Elections, Land Use Planning, Transportation, and Animal Services Divisions. It further sustains upgrades to technology, procurement, and public records initiatives that increase transparency. New investments deepen ties to Native and Indigenous communities, and other initiatives lay the groundwork for the next Charter Review process.

These investments are made through the lens of advancing “One County” reforms to increase government efficiency and enhance service delivery to the constitutions of Multnomah County.

## Protecting Democracy

Multnomah County plays a vital role in protecting democracy by conducting fair and safe elections. Despite acts of intimidation in 2024, the Election Division executed the most complicated election in the region’s history due to an overhaul of Portland’s elected offices and introduction of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). This required extensive voter education and outreach. The effort paid off, with 91% of voters reporting they understood how to fill out their ballots.

This year, RCV will also be implemented for all County candidate elections. To support a successful launch, this budget fully funds voter education and outreach, saves the voter pamphlet from elimination, and fully funds the **Elections Division** at \$8.7 million. This amount preserves current staffing levels, with enough funding to hire up to 300 on-call workers to administer elections as needed.



## Speeding Up Permitting

The County's Land Use Planning Division ensures the protection of forest lands, farm and nursery production, wildlife, streams, scenic views, and the beautiful Columbia River Gorge.

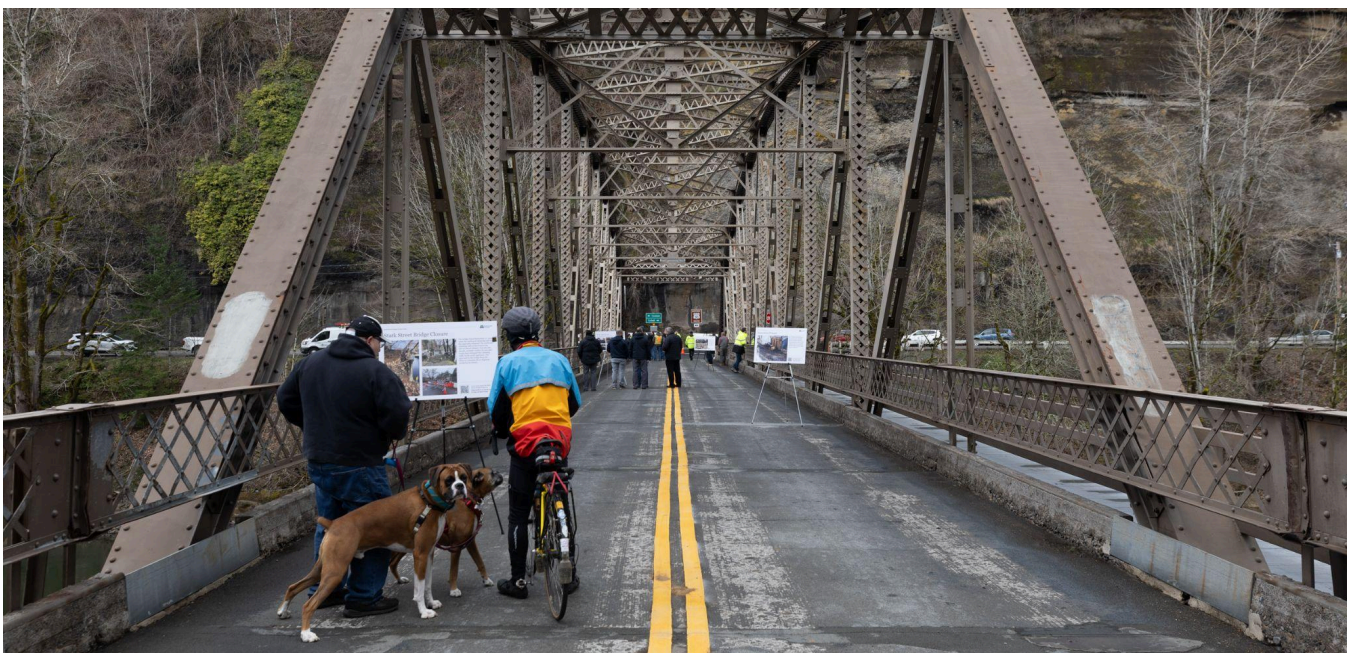
Last fiscal year, an increase in the Division's budget led to a significant reduction in permit wait times. To continue this momentum, this budget invests \$3 million in the **Land Use Planning Division**, maintaining increased staff capacity so that this small-but-mighty team can continue with improvements that make this work easier for both customers and staff.

## Workforce & Economic Development

More than ever, the County is committed to promoting economic advancement and expanding opportunities for historically marginalized communities.

That's why this year's proposed budget invests \$250,000 to transform **Walnut Park** – an area of historic significance to the County's Black community – into a new health clinic and space for community services and small businesses. With Board approval, construction could soon begin on this exciting project, which was developed in close consultation with neighborhood partners.

Meanwhile, the \$15.2 million **Preschool For All Facilities Fund** combines flexible capital with hands-on technical assistance to strengthen small businesses and build a sustainable pipeline of high-quality preschool spaces. Since launching in 2024, the program has provided \$21.5 million in grants and \$5.7 million in loans to 63 preschool programs. This budget also invests in growing a needed workforce and paying a living wage, with \$7.2 million dedicated to **Preschool For All's Early Educator Workforce Program**.



## Convening Tribal Leaders

Multnomah County is committed to deepening relationships with our local and regional tribal government partners to address critical issues like housing, public safety, and health. To do so, this budget allocates \$20,000 for a **Tribal Nations Summit**, where County leaders and staff can listen to and learn directly from tribal leaders about how to better engage as allies and partners.

## Preparing for Charter Reform

The Multnomah County Home Rule Charter is the local version of a constitution, establishing the governance framework for the County. This requires a **Charter Review Committee (MCCRC)** to be convened every six years to comprehensively study the charter and propose changes that voters ultimately decide on.

To coordinate this effort, this budget dedicates \$215,000 for a **Charter Project Manager**, who will be responsible for

implementing an accessible and transparent communications plan to inform community members of progress while soliciting ideas and feedback for the 2027-28 Charter Review process.

## Caring for Animals

**Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS)** is undergoing a steady transformation, and this budget maintains investments key to that change. Since the first day Chair Vega Pederson took office, she has worked closely with MCAS leadership to address historic underinvestment. This work culminated in the **Animal Services Strategic Plan**, outlining specific recommendations to improve animal care. In the three years since, MCAS has successfully addressed 90 of the 108 recommendations from the Chair's 2023 review and subsequent audits.

This budget maintains progress by allocating \$15.7 million to MCAS. That includes a small reduction while preserving



investments in animal enrichment, field services, in-house medical and spay/neuter staff, and overnight care. Staffing levels are maintained to support engagement with volunteers, the **MCAS Community Advisory Committee**, and a newly launched **Community Design Advisory Committee** that is working on the proposal for a **new Animal Services facility**.

## Creating a More Streamlined and Efficient Government

Chair Vega Pederson started her term with the goal of building a **One County** approach to all of the work at Multnomah County, from services for and with the community, to the internal services provided to departments, to decisions on prioritizing limited resources.

The One County vision is that through strategic coordination across departments, Multnomah County will make improvements, function at a higher level,

and strengthen the ability to consistently and effectively deliver essential services.

Over the last several years, County leaders have built a strong foundation for success through this initiative. A new **Countywide Strategic Plan** links work across the organization to specific outcomes. A robust **Chief Operating Officer's Office** is enhancing services across departments and a newly formed **Executive Cabinet** is providing cross-departmental leadership to advise on countywide operations.

The **Homelessness Response System** aligns the County's response to homelessness across departments and jurisdictions, serving as another example of this work to improve coordination and efficiency.

More recently, a **Federal Impacts Workgroup** activated a coordinated emergency response to monitor and address the harmful impacts of this Federal administration.



Multnomah County is more prepared than ever to deliver on the promise of a One County vision.

This budget supports the next phase in this work, known as the County's “**Shared Services**” projects. This takes Multnomah County from crafting a shared vision, mission, values, and strategic plan to operationalizing them.

That’s accomplished by aligning and centralizing departmental **Human Resources** (HR) under the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), and placing departmental finance, purchasing and contract management services under the **Chief Financial Officer** (CFO).

This is a historic undertaking that will address the challenges stemming from a decentralized model and usher in new organizational structures and practices that are more suitable for an organization of this size and complexity.

Overall, these investments are dedicated to the future of Multnomah County, setting up internal and external service delivery for continued and improved success in a resource-constrained environment.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reflecting on my time at Multnomah County, I am so proud of what we've managed to accomplish. I am incredibly grateful for the hard work of County employees under historically difficult circumstances.

As always, there is more work to be done. This budget models what a responsive and compassionate government looks like, led by the thousands of people who prove every day just how much this work matters.

Thank you.

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**The thousands of dedicated Multnomah County employees.**

