

Multnomah County  
FY 2027 Budget Work Session Follow Up

**Office of Sustainability**

**May 14, 2026**



**Commissioner** **Moyer** ▾ ( **District 1** ▾ )

Please provide quantified outcomes/measurables for the Office of Sustainability’s key projects?

**Response:**

The Office of Sustainability provides substantial benefits to Multnomah County community members. In alignment with the County’s mission, the Office focuses on upstream policies and opportunities to address root causes of disparity and environmental harm. This is accomplished through partnerships with County departments to secure additional funding for direct services and innovation, community partnerships with a focus on populations most impacted by environmental harms, and offering subject matter expertise and advocacy on relevant policy initiatives.

**Measuring Impact:**

The Office of Sustainability is committed to transparency and outcomes-based reporting and has integrated the Office’s work into the Board approved strategic plan. The Office currently produces two annual reports to track progress and provide the public a snapshot of Office impact. In addition, the Office has an advisory committee and is in the process of finalizing a new climate plan.

- The annual Multnomah County [Resource Conservation Report](#): tracks County progress on key performance indicators related to operational sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions, energy

efficiency, water efficiency, and waste diversion rate. Key takeaway, the County's investments in resource conservation avoid **\$2.5 million in utility costs** annually. *Multnomah County Strategic Plan Indicator 3.1.3.7.*

- The Office of Sustainability publishes an [annual list of accomplishments](#) that briefly describes key outcomes and outputs of the Office over the previous 12 months. The document is shared with the public via the Office's newsletter, social media, and website, and is distributed to the Board of County Commissioners and other partners..
- The Office of Sustainability staffs the [Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation](#), an advisory committee established in County code with 13 community members confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners. Staff provide ongoing updates to the committee on their work and receive written recommendations and feedback from the committee. *Multnomah County Strategic Plan Indicator 3.2.3.2 - 3.2.3.5,*
- Additionally, the pending [Climate Justice Plan](#) combines outcome metrics, indicators, and output measures across the 12 goal areas. If approved by the Board of County Commissioners the plan would create an ongoing framework for tracking progress toward community-wide climate goals. *Multnomah County Strategic Plan Indicator 3.1.2.4.*

### **Impact Snapshot:**

The following are high impact examples from recent years of the Office's work that have directly supported community members most at risk from economic hardships and environmental harms. This is not an exhaustive list.

### **Utility Advocacy and Engagement:**

Resolutions [2017-046](#) and [2018-018](#) direct the Office of Sustainability to work on a clean energy transition that centers environmental justice. This requires participation in highly technical regulatory proceedings and conversations, as well as close collaboration with energy and energy justice advocates.

The following are examples of impactful actions that our Office either led, co-led, or strongly impacted:

- *Doubling Low Income Energy Assistance Funding (HB 3792):*
  - [The Office of Sustainability led the drafting and passage](#) of HB 3792 (2025), which doubles the annual funds for bill assistance grants for low-income customers of Pacific Power and PGE. HB 3792 brings ***approximately \$5,300,000 per year of additional funding for the Multnomah County Energy Assistance Program that directly supports low-income households.***
- *Reducing bills, energy burden, and the risk of disconnection:*
  - The Office supported a suite of energy justice policies that the legislature passed in 2021, and has since worked closely on their implementation. Among them, the Energy Affordability Act (2021) gave the Public Utility Commission the authority to approve utility bill discount programs and consider energy burden and its impacts when making decisions.
  - Staff worked tirelessly individually and in coalition for rapid, impactful deployment of bill discount programs. **Today, all energy utilities serving Multnomah County**

**offer discounts of up to 80% to low income households.**

The Office is continuously engaged in improving, defending, and increasing awareness of these programs.

- The Office is a key part of the coalition that has recently secured additional support for low-income customers, including programs to help repay utility debt and avoid disconnection.
- *Protecting critical energy access for community members with low incomes:*
  - The Office has long been a lead advocate on policies that protect our community's access to energy. In the early days of COVID-19 pandemic, the Office was a lead negotiator of a settlement that ensured no energy utility disconnections in Multnomah County through the summer of 2021, along with a host of protections that lasted through 2022.
  - Since 2022, the Office led coalition efforts in two rulemakings to secure better treatment of community members at risk of disconnection. The latest rules became effective this year, **drastically reducing the chance of disconnection during severe weather, eliminating burdensome fees, and generally decreasing penalties for poverty** for utility customers.
  - In the last three years, the Office was one of the leading organizations in securing several sets of **temporary protections and moratoriums on disconnection for customers with low incomes or with a medical need for utility service**, including during most of the 2025-2026 heating season.

- *Controlling rates, transitioning to clean energy (FAIR Act, decarbonization, CBREs):*
  - The Office supported the lead organizations behind HB 3179 (2025), the Fairness and Affordability in Rates (FAIR) Energy Act in policy development and at the legislature, and are actively engaged in its implementation.
  - The Office has provided input in most proceedings to evaluate utility proposals to increase rates in the last six years.
  - The Office has been actively engaged in the implementation of HB 2021 (2021), which requires Portland General Electric and Pacific Power to decarbonize their systems by 2040. This includes ensuring regulators and the utilities fulfill their obligations to environmental justice and their commitment to investing in community-benefitting energy resources.

**Grants:** The Office of Sustainability has helped to secure millions of dollars of grant funding for the County with a focus on addressing needs of those communities most impacted by climate change and other environmental harms.

- **ODOE Community Renewable Energy Grant Program** (active) - Build a community solar and solar powered microgrid at CROPS farm located in Troutdale Oregon (\$998,763):
  - The 254 kW community solar project will serve approximately 30 - 35 low-income households offering annual bill discounts between \$350 - \$500 annually for 20 years. The project will also reduce electricity bills and increase resilience at the CROPS farm by creating a solar

powered microgrid with battery energy storage system in support of food production for low-income households.

- **ODOE Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant** (active) - Partnership with Lideres Naturales, Familias en Acción, and the Community Energy Project (\$99,386):
  - This two-year grant supports energy outreach work by Lideres Naturales, a bilingual grassroots organization that serves East County and that has particularly deep roots in Wood Village and in Spanish-speaking communities. Community-health workers (CHWs) with Lideres Naturales developed expertise on energy issues and expanded their community outreach on energy efficiency, utility bill discount programs, disconnection protections, and other programs. In partnership with Community Energy Project, they also delivered do-it-yourself weatherization workshops to community members. In addition to managing the project, Office staff provided direct, culturally-specific training in Spanish to the CHWs programs that help community members reduce their risk of disconnection. The Lideres have and will continue to take that knowledge and multiply it in the communities they serve.
- **Woodstove Exchange Program** (completed): The Office of Sustainability secured approximately \$2 million over three years to replace woodstoves with energy efficient heat pumps to improve air quality. The program served 177 households, most of which identified as BIPOC and moderate to low income.
- **Inflation Reduction Act** (inactive): The Office of Sustainability helped to secure over **\$3 million dollars** in Inflation Reduction

Act funding to serve low income households. These funds were only partially spent before being rescinded by the Federal government. Close to a million dollars in federal incentives is still pending.

### **Innovation:**

- **CROPS Farm:** The Office of Sustainability, through a competitive process, identified Feed'em Freedom Foundation as a partner to utilize three acres of vacant land at the former County Poor Farm in Troutdale Oregon. That partnership has led to over \$1 million of investment in the site to date, introducing much needed infrastructure and innovative farming practices like hydroponics. Feed'em Freedom does not pay to use the site, but covers all utility expenses. This partnership facilitates Feed'em Freedom's direct service work, this includes directly impacting 26,000 people through the Black Community Food Center annually, as well as an additional 2,000 families through various free food markets and popup events. Furthermore, the initiative supports the livelihoods and operational resilience of 30 to 40 BIPOC farmers.
- **East County Library Microgrid:** The Office of Sustainability successfully secured a \$100,000 design assistance grant to integrate a 500 kW battery energy storage system (BESS) into the East County Library design, creating a solar powered microgrid. The design assistance led to a decision by the Library bond team to include the BESS as part of the State's Green Energy Technology. The Office of Sustainability worked with the Library District to secure ~\$600,000 of incentives from PGE for the BESS.

- **Green Gresham/Health Gresham:** Multi-year effort funded through grants secured by the Office of Sustainability that planted over 600 trees in the lowest tree canopy neighborhoods in Gresham while providing meaningful summer employment to youth.

### **Communication and Community Engagement:**

- **Climate Justice Plan (CJP):** The Office of Sustainability has led the effort to align the County's climate work with the core social services mission of the County by putting community priorities at the center. The CJP addresses the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on communities of color and other marginalized populations by working with those groups to identify policies and strategies for reducing emissions and keeping people safe in the face of climate extremes.
- **Workshops on disconnection protection:** The Office is one of the leaders in developing and providing workshops for community members and organizations to increase awareness of community members' rights and protections when at risk of disconnections. These workshops respond to limited awareness of these protections.
- **Supporting community engagement in energy decision making - the [Energy Justice Leadership Program](#):** The Office is one of the lead entities in developing and implementing this Program to support grassroots community advocates interested in energy justice issues and allow stakeholders in energy justice to root our advocacy on community experience and needs. The program is going into its fourth year, and from its inception we have partnered with Verde, the Coalition of Communities of Color, the Oregon Just Transition Alliance, and the NW Energy Coalition.

- **“Protecting your access to energy” outreach and education:** The Office developed [resources to inform community members of programs to help them reduce their bills and risk of disconnection](#). These resources include postcards translated into 12 languages that are being distributed through community partners
- **Community Resource Fairs:** Over multiple years co-hosted the community resource fair, [Learn, Share, Do](#), in SE Portland and East County with hundreds of attendees connecting to services like bill discount programs, climate resilience resources like air cleaners, and safety equipment like child bike helmets. *Currently on hold due to staffing reductions.*
- **Employee engagement:** Coordinated campaigns for staff, including in-person and online educational opportunities, to empower County staff to conserve resources while also increasing their own resilience to climate-related impacts and reducing their own environmental impacts. *Currently on hold due to staffing reductions.*