

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Protect and Expand Programs that Help Our Most Vulnerable

The COVID-19 pandemic has made crystal clear the connections between physical health, behavioral health, food security, and housing -- and how critical all of these are for the safety of everyone. We support maintaining and bolstering the service array for the following program areas, all of which **should prioritize the BIPOC communities**, including raising new revenue to do so:

- Oregon Health Plan Benefits
- Behavioral Health Services
- Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services
- Older Adults Supports
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victim Services
- Homelessness

Improve Oregon's Behavioral Health System & Permanent Supportive Housing

The pandemic has forced people to isolate and cost many people their jobs, and thereby increased stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Without normal coping mechanisms, substance use has risen and mental health needs have increased. When eviction moratorium ends, there will be a dire need for additional permanent supportive housing for many as well. As such, we support the Governor's recommendations to increase investments in peer respite, supportive housing, and workforce retention.

Fully Fund a Robust Public Health Response

We have all recently learned the importance of a good and modern public health system and what the consequences are when this critical infrastructure is underfunded. We support OHA's request for **\$68 million statewide, including \$35 million for local public health.**

Address Systemic Racism in Public Safety

Systemic racism is a public health issue. Eliminate policies that disproportionately impact BIPOC communities, including: 1) Parole and Probation Supervision fees for adults and children (MULTCO LC); 2) High student to teacher ratios in juvenile detention facilities. Instead, provide youth with equitable, and sustainably funded, access to education while in custody and other tools necessary to

succeed post-incarceration; and 3) Bail. Create a more equitable justice system through barrier removal and use of best practices.

Support New Revenue

Make no mistake, this pandemic is widening the wealth gap. We will have more people who need the above programs and we cannot serve more people without additional resources. As a county, our revenue raising options are severely limited. Therefore, we need the state to step up and support raising revenue in a variety of ways: 1) A large increase in alcohol tax or fees; 2) Reform of Measures 5 and 50 to create an equitable property tax system; 3) Additional funds for property tax assessors and other county functions; 4) Increased fees for Concealed Handgun Licenses (CHLs); and 5) Fees or other mechanisms to reduce emissions.

POLICY PRIORITIES

EQUITY

- Justice -- remove fees, bail, and provide better education to juveniles in detention. MULTCO LC
- Curb “predatory tactics” by brokers and developers (through board sanctions) to protect homeowners & prevent further gentrification. MULTCO LC
- Require state agencies to do a racial equity analysis for new OARs. MULTCO LC

HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING

- Enable county collaboration to respond to, and prevent, youth suicide. MULTCO LC
- Increase communication and collaboration with DHS IDD workload analyses. MULTCO LC
- Expand regulation of tobacco sales to curb use through retail licensure, increased taxes and flavor bans.
- Support efforts to reduce harmful emissions and clean up the environment.
- Improve population health through support for vaccinations.
- Protect public health and clean up parks and streets through proper disposal of sharps.
- Fight poverty with jobs, training, cash and food assistance programs and needed services.
- Support low income families through income-based utility rate discounts.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

- Ensure County Animal Services can protect public health and provide flexibility to dog owners in the licensing process. MULTCO LC
- Increase flexibility and functionality at the East County Courthouse. MULTCO LC

JUSTICE

- Support protections for sex trafficking victims.

REVENUE

- Ensure utilities pay their fair share when accessing the county right of way.
- Remove Measure 5 & 50 from the constitution, or other means to increase fairness through property tax reform.