



Office of Community Involvement



Central Community Budget Advisory Committee

TO: Chair Deborah Kafoury and Board of County Commissioners 4 pages

FROM: Central Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: April 29, 2022

SUBJECT: Central Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Community Budget Advisory Committee (CCBAC) is composed of members of each of the nine departmental CBACs. We appreciate the Central CBAC members for their commitment to the CBAC program and the additional time they invested to represent their CBACs on the central committee.

Central CBAC Chair: Shani Harris-Bagwell

Department of Community Justice: Rebecca Fisher, Na'ama Schweitzer

Department of Community Services: Christina Avila, Matt Tucker

Multnomah County District Attorney: Wayne Graham

Department of County Assets and Management: Shani Harris-Bagwell, Kent Zook

Health Department: Alysia Cox

Department of County Human Services: Jeff Scroggin

Non-Departmental: Z Sloane

Multnomah County Sheriff's Office: Ted Tosterud

Multnomah County Library: Erin Cooper, Clare Wilkinson

The committee agreed on the following values statement to guide its recommendations:

We assert that budgets are moral documents, and numbers on a report aren't just money - they are people and their lives. We maintain that Oregon is a state built on white supremacist values, and Multnomah County has a responsibility to decenter Whiteness and break the generational curses of oppression. We represent committees studying the County's public safety systems, health and human services, public infrastructure, and services for the most vulnerable in our community. We are here to ensure that the needs of our diverse communities are voiced. We prioritize people whose voices have historically been silenced. We uphold:

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- Budgets can be used to oppress - and often are.
- Valuing intercultural intelligence, recognizing the unique needs and barriers faced by different communities and effectively engaging and serving communities excluded from and harmed by dominant culture practices
- People who work for the County should be a reflection of the people it serves
- The budget should be used to protect our environment and our public spaces
- By centering those most historically excluded: Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, people with disabilities, neurodivergent folks, LGBTQIA+ people, people who are experiencing houseless, people affected by addiction and mental illness, people experiencing a lack of financial resources - we are able to afford more to everyone.
- We need to think generations ahead and how what we do now is going to affect future people. What we do now will affect our children, our grandchildren and their children's children. We want to make sure we continue to improve our community.

PROCESS

The Central CBAC met four times between January and March 2022. We met with the following staff:

- February 23rd meeting: Office of Diversity & Equity staff Neisha Saxena, Interim Director, and Alejandro Juárez, Workforce Equity Manager, presented an update on the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan. Christian Elkin, Budget Director, provided an overview of new County revenue streams and the impacts on the FY23 budget.
- March 9th meeting: The committee met with Chair Deborah Kafoury to hear her priorities for the FY23 budget, and members shared initial recommendations and concerns from their department CBACs.
- March 30th meeting: Joint Office of Homeless Services staff Marc Jolin, outgoing director, Shannon Singleton, Interim Director, and Adam Brown, Business Services Manager, provided an overview of JOHS' our core programs and services, the composition of funding, and a review of the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure funded priorities.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES - The Committee recognized that this budget cycle was unique in that County revenues grew substantially. Most departments have asked for additional funding, with a reasonable expectation that at least some of their requests will be supported, and this Committee was not in a position to evaluate each and every funding request. Instead the Committee focused on understanding progress on the recent voter-approved ballot measures due to their role in addressing critical public priorities. A member of the committee was particularly focused on ensuring that East Multnomah County was fairly represented in the

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Staff: Dani Bernstein

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distribution of funding from these initiatives. With this context, the Committee believes the investments in the following section are the key priorities of the 2023 budget.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

Priorities:

- **Improve Housing Stability and Security.** We encourage the County to continue investing in our urgent housing crisis response and to direct additional funding towards culturally specific and responsive service and program models that demonstrate success in helping people make sustainable transitions from homelessness to permanent housing. In particular, this Committee encourages the County to do this work in a coordinated manner so that we can create an equitable community where all have access to safe, affordable and accessible housing. We believe this should be the essential priority of the 2023 budget.
- **Invest in Mental Health Care.** Two years of pandemic-induced stress and disruption have increased the mental health challenges of many in our community at the same time that care became more difficult to deliver. We must invest more in our public health infrastructure, with a particular focus on our Behavioral health system. This Committee believes the County's goal should be to ensure that all people who struggle with mental health and substance abuse have appropriate and straightforward access to the services they need to get well. We have neglected this population for far too long, and increased investments are necessary.
- **Emphasize Culturally Relevant and Specific Programs.** We support the County's efforts to rethink and reprioritize government services to better address the needs of underrepresented communities. Due to the extent of the historical harms that need to be addressed, we urge the County to treat this as an ongoing process and part of governance. We encourage the County to invest in and seek out opportunities to engage these communities in a co-design process to ensure that their needs are addressed in culturally relevant and specific ways.
- **Reduce Violence in Our Communities.** Gun violence and homicides are at record levels and this violence disproportionately affects neighborhoods in which we have historically disinvested. There are many root causes for this situation, and we believe that investing in the work of the Departments of Community Justice and Human Services will help to address many of them. Additionally, it is critical to repair trust between the most

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affected communities and the County's criminal justice system so that we can work together to solve problems. With proper oversight mechanisms in place, the Sheriff's office request for additional training and implementation of body worn cameras can improve accountability and safeguard the rights of those who interact with law enforcement. Further, re-opening local DA offices can improve justice outcomes through better partnerships and collaboration with the community.

- **Continue our History of Transparent and Accessible Elections.** The Multnomah County Elections Division is run with impressive integrity, transparency, and professionalism, and sustaining that performance is critical to maintaining public trust in our local government. Increasing staffing and investment in voter outreach will both reinforce the Division's efforts against forces that cast doubt on election integrity and expand accessibility and participation to all parts of our community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee would like to give special thanks to Dani Bernstein, who is a glowing example of the kind of servant leaders which make Multnomah County the caring and productive place it has become.

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