



Chair's Executive Budget for FY 2021

May 7, 2020



**Multnomah
County**



Deborah Kafoury

Multnomah County Chair

May 7, 2020

Multnomah County **Executive Budget Message**

Two months ago, I was building an executive budget with ambitious goals for fiscal year 2021: shrink our deficit, protect and strengthen core programs, and invest in new services or bring back previously cut programs. In March, the Board of County Commissioners updated the Business Income Tax rate for the first time in more than three decades — a move that we anticipated would help provide much-needed stability for our critical safety net services, in addition to providing nearly 20,000 small businesses with additional relief or an outright exemption.

Once the global COVID-19 pandemic touched our community, however, nearly every aspect of Multnomah County changed: from how our programs deliver services and the amount of revenue we receive, to the increasing needs of those who lost connection, jobs and the ability to put food on the table for their families.

The next year of the County's work — and likely beyond — now looks starkly different.

Over the past two months, our projected deficit increased by \$37.5 million, from \$7 million to \$45.3 million. The structural deficit and revenue loss, coupled with the need to stand fast on core services for the community during a pandemic, opened a \$58 million hole in the General Fund.

Although this executive budget addresses that shortfall, we know there is still much work ahead to address the full impact of COVID-19 on our revenues, as well as the state's budget.

And despite the rapid shifts and broad uncertainties brought on by COVID-19, the core goal of the executive budget remains intact: to ensure the health, safety and resilience of our community members and of the organization through smart, equitable investments of the County's resources.

The way Multnomah County will do that over the next year is two-fold. First, we are seeking to preserve essential County services to the fullest extent possible. This includes housing stability, behavioral healthcare and culturally specific wraparound services. More than ever, these services are lifelines for individuals and families. Second, we will continue to respond to the urgent needs surrounding the pandemic, especially as we move towards reopening and the increased need for detection and containment of this virus. Investing in a more robust public health infrastructure and responsive emergency management is literally a life-saving measure.

The increased revenue from the Business Income Tax helped mitigate deep cuts at this time, but some reductions were still necessary. I accepted reductions proposed by department leaders and eliminated

vacant positions where possible. We also reprioritized certain capital projects to free up money for services in the near term.

In the executive budget, I have also eliminated cost of living adjustments for non-represented employees. In addition, those non-represented staff earning over \$100,000 will not receive a merit increase.

The County's response so far has leaned heavily on our existing assets: program leaders have skillfully adapted to new public health guidance while facing increased demand. But as we continue to learn more about our community's needs, emerging best practices and the state's directives, Multnomah County will need capacity and funding to expand or add programs that are not reflected in this executive budget. A specific addendum at the end of this document reflects some of the values, priorities and emerging details of that work.

This budget does, however, provide the critical foundation of County services upon which our community relies — especially now.

- We prioritized fully funding programs in public health and emergency management. Leading our community's response to this public health emergency is anchored in these vital programs.
- We maintained core programs that support those living in our congregate settings, such as shelters, juvenile detention and jail.
- Our role as the main provider of safety net services is more profoundly needed than ever as many in our community face increased housing insecurity, food instability, trauma and inadequate access to healthcare. The COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated these inequities that have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. We sought to preserve and increase, where possible, our ability to provide these critical services.

Grounding all of our work is Multnomah County's commitment to equity in our community and in our workplace. The County continues to use an equity lens to think critically and proactively about how our decisions, values and programs impact marginalized groups, particularly communities of color.

The plans we develop with our partners and community to reopen and recover must not perpetuate the same inequities that have put communities of color at greater risk of experiencing disproportionately severe health and financial outcomes linked to COVID-19.

Further, the County's capacity to advance equity in our community is bound tightly to our ability to work toward equity inside our organization. By maintaining, and in some places increasing, equity resources and personnel, the County can carry forward the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan and our efforts to foster safety, trust and belonging for all employees.

The challenges we are preparing to face are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. Our world has changed quickly and will likely continue to do so. But the compassion, service and commitment I've seen from colleagues, neighbors and businesses reminds me that together, we have a deep well of strength, resilience and hope.

Housing, Stabilization and Shelter

The importance of having a safe, stable place to live has never been more clear; COVID-19 has reinforced that having a home, a place to sleep, is a key component to health. The executive budget maintains several critical sources of housing and rental assistance, while also making new investments in projects that seek to meet the housing and shelter needs of groups historically underserved by homelessness programs.

Adult System Redesign Culturally Specific Services

Multnomah County's most recent Point-in-Time count demonstrated that people in adult-only households who identify as Native American, Black, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, are much more likely to be experiencing homelessness than those who identify as white. This program intends to offer a range of culturally specific housing services for adult-only households from these overrepresented communities of color. Although this program offer was developed before the pandemic, we now know that Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities are at higher risk of severe health and economic consequences associated with the virus. This new investment will support culturally specific COVID-19 responses in FY 2021.

Safety off the Streets — Trans-specific Services

A small but growing number of the people counted as unsheltered in the last Point-in-Time count identified as transgender. Members of the transgender community are especially vulnerable living outside, and have experienced difficulties engaging with traditional shelter programs. This initiative would offer transgender-specific housing supports. This program will also support our COVID-19 response during FY 2021 with a focus on marginalized communities.

Family Unification Program Scale

The Family Unification Program is a strategic partnership between the Oregon Department of Human Services, Home Forward and the County's Youth and Family Services division. The goal of the program is to support families who have child welfare involvement to obtain housing vouchers, and engage them in supportive case management services with nonprofits. Black, Indigenous and other people of color have been especially hard-hit by this pandemic, and this \$200,000 investment will enable 66 families from the Black and Native American communities to find stable housing as they seek to regain custody of their children.

Public Health and Emergency Services

From contact tracing and disease investigation to organizing volunteers, staffing community call centers and distributing protective gear, this public health emergency has showcased the core work of public health and emergency management. Supporting capacity in these areas is critical to continuing the quality of our response now and into the future.

Public Health Administration and Quality Management

The funding of two full-time Public Health Administration and Quality Management staff will enable the Public Health Director and Public Health Division programs to continue to meet their foundational roles and legal requirements to act as Multnomah County's local public health authority, which includes promoting and protecting health, and preventing disease among all residents within the county. These roles are currently part of our COVID-19 response. The intensity and length of this current public health emergency underscores the importance of continuing to support a robust Public Health Division.

Emergency Management

The budget adds a full-time training position, allowing the Emergency Management department to provide additional support to our most vulnerable communities. Some of this capacity has been added during the COVID-19 response. In light of the pandemic, this training capacity will be redeployed in FY 2021 to support the ongoing needs for the public health emergency and within the Emergency Operations Center.

Suicide Prevention

A current priority area under the Board of Health's injury prevention focus is suicide, one of the leading causes of death in Multnomah County. To support this priority area, a Suicide Prevention Coordinator

will track and understand trends through data collection and analysis and psychological autopsies to better understand the scope and depth of completed suicides, and inform prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts.

Public Safety

The 2021 budget maintains investment in programs that continue to move our understanding of public safety from incarceration toward jail alternatives like diversion, treatment and rehabilitation. It also strengthens our services that support victims during particularly vulnerable times.

Diane Wade House

The Diane Wade House, which provides transitional housing services for justice-involved Black women, is an essential part of the County's commitment to offer alternatives to jail that promote behavior change. Initially funded by the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge grant, this budget commits to funding ongoing support for the program.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

I've committed ongoing funding for the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program. Giving local law enforcement the option to divert low-level drug offenders away from jail and toward opportunities for treatment and housing has shown great benefits, including reducing recidivism rates for low-level offenders and decreasing the number of people of color prosecuted for low-level drug possession.

Close Street Supervision and Jail Capacity

The budget also restores funding for the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office's Close Street Supervision program, which provides community supervision for individuals being held pre-trial. This service supports my long-term goal of safely and effectively supervising people in the community and reducing the overall impact on the jail population. This budget also provides funding to maintain current jail capacity after state cuts eliminated this funding.

Elections

Maintaining the public's confidence and trust in the elections process by protecting the integrity of our election system is critical to voter engagement, especially as we head toward the 2020 presidential election. Further, the County is committed to removing barriers to voter participation so that all eligible residents have equitable access to exercising their right to vote.

Presidential Election

Multnomah County Elections has seen significant growth in voter registration since the last presidential election cycle that, combined with anticipated high turnout, could lead to more than 100,000 more ballots returned for the November 2020 general election. My \$450,000 investment will support increased ballot processing capacity, critically urgent technology upgrades and enhanced security for ballot drop sites. The funding also ensures that the Voting Center Express site in Gresham can continue offering access to in-person voter support and services for more than two weeks leading up to the general election.

Election Access and Education

The executive budget restores funding for two key strategies to increase voter access, engagement and education. The County voters' pamphlet gets basic information about voter registration and voting into the hands of every household, and makes it accessible with translations into the six most commonly spoken languages in the County. The pamphlet is also an inexpensive advertising option for candidates who may not otherwise be able to afford conventional election advertising. BallotTrax, a ballot tracking

program that provides voters information about the location and status of their ballot throughout the election cycle, provides transparency that helps voters feel confident that the elections process is working.

Wraparound Safety Net Services

At Multnomah County, we ensure that critical efforts like elections, tax collection and library services are managed with integrity and excellence. Most often, however, we meet people at a point of crisis or deep need. But it's not just services we provide — these contacts are turning points for community members and opportunities to shift the health, wealth and stability for entire families and generations. This executive budget invests in programs that are essential to helping community members, from legal services and case management to vital healthcare and support for children and youth.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

The current climate has introduced a new, broader and more complex set of mental health issues within populations of older adults and people with disabilities. The Aging, Disability and Veterans Services Division's Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) brings together mental health professionals with a wide range of specialties (including psychiatrists, clinical nurses, social workers and occupational therapists) to meet the growing and diversifying mental health needs of this population. This modest \$40,000 investment is one way Multnomah County is retooling our workforce to be nimble and responsive to the expanding needs of priority populations.

Helping Survivors of Domestic Violence

The executive budget funds a position at the Gateway Center that specifically works with immigrant and refugee survivors of domestic violence, helping them navigate complex systems and linguistic and cultural barriers so survivors can receive the legal support they need. This position was previously funded with one-time-only money. We are also funding a domestic violence Deputy District Attorney position in partnership with a federal grant. This person will work with traditionally underserved victims of domestic violence and coordinate services with law enforcement, advocates and project partners to ensure long-term victim safety.

Culturally Specific Navigation Services for Immigrant Families

Limited access to accurate immigration information and support has increased fear among immigrant and refugee communities, raising the already-high barriers they experience to accessing health and social services. With an investment of \$250,000, this program will continue legal intake and referral services, family planning services, and system navigation. This program is part of a local and statewide initiative to connect undocumented and mixed-documentation families to navigation and legal services. These services, previously funded with one-time-only dollars, play an even more important role now.

Legal Services Day

The executive budget provides ongoing funding to this program that helps community members address the economic burden of fees and fines, as well as the barriers to housing and employment that often accompany those penalties. Last year, Legal Services Days throughout the county helped waive more than \$2.6 million in fees and fines.

Crisis Services

During this unprecedented public health emergency, it is essential that services for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis remain intact. The executive budget restores proposed reductions to the Crisis Assessment & Treatment Center, County-supported behavioral health crisis services like the Cascadia Urgent Walk-in Clinic, and the Mental Health Treatment & Medication for the Uninsured program. These services — already in high demand — represent an important foundation and spectrum

of mental health services that must be a top priority now and as we continue our COVID-19 response and recovery.

Reynolds Student Health Center Ramp Up

Multnomah County's Student Health Center (SHC) program is an incredible partnership with schools, healthcare providers and community organizations that provides comprehensive preventive primary care for school-aged youth to keep them healthy and focused on learning. The newest SHC site at Reynolds High School expands these services to where they are needed most. One-time-only ramp-up funds will be used to get the center to full operational capacity once schools reopen. The funds also support a position that will engage diverse Reynolds students through a Youth Action Council that will promote health equity, health and wellness, and generate demand for SHC services.

County Management Infrastructure

The executive budget funds several key areas of the County's operations and systems that will help the organization remain efficient, resilient and focused on equity.

Multco Align — Workday Support

This budget continues our investment in the effective implementation of Multco Align — the project that has transitioned our human resources and finance systems to a new cloud-based system with greater functionality. The positions will continue to support the centralized and departmental management of the new payroll, compensation, talent, recruitment, benefits and learning elements of the system. These supports maintain current capacity and were previously funded with one-time-only funding.

Labor Compliance

In pursuit of our goal to ensure that all workers on County-owned projects are paid the full wages they earn, the executive budget continues a pilot labor compliance program that provides education and support for workers and construction contractors on wage theft prevention. The program will also assemble data to ensure contractors are delivering on the workforce equity objectives for the County's capital projects.

Conclusion

I am confident that our organization will persevere through this crisis. But I want to do more than make it through this pandemic. With our collective strength, vision and values, I believe we can emerge from COVID-19 as a better government, as a proven partner, and as a thriving community with more resilience, more creativity and more justice.

Though the development of this budget was full of trials and challenges, the collection of voices and wisdom that informed the process gives me great hope for making this journey together.

I want to thank all the Community Budget Advisory Committees for their work with each of our departments spending countless hours learning, asking questions, and evaluating programs and outcomes.

I also want to thank Commissioners Sharon Meieran, Susheela Jayapal, Jessica Vega Pederson and Lori Stegmann for their partnership, leadership, and steady dedication to compassion, justice and equity: the values that make us all proud to be a part of Multnomah County.

I'm grateful for the relentlessly exceptional work of my Chief of Staff, Kimberly Melton, as well as my entire policy team: Liz Smith Currie, Anna Marie Allen, Adam Renon, Liam Frost, Nicole Buchanan and Raffaele Timarchi.

I also want to express my gratitude to Interim Chief Operating Officer Peggy Brey for her insight and leadership.

This document likely wouldn't exist at all, however, without the work of our Central Budget Office. Thank you, team. I would like to especially thank former Budget Director Mike Jaspin, new Budget Director Christian Elkin and economist Jeff Renfro. Though the County's financial landscape has been constantly shifting beneath our feet, this budget remains a reflection of your diligence and commitment to excellence.

Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the thousands of employees at Multnomah County. We are in unprecedented times, yet you haven't stopped supporting one another or serving our community — whether in a building or facing clients or teleworking.

For some of you, the financial implications of this budget will be felt firsthand, especially as the County settles on how we will meet the needs of a community profoundly reshaped by this ongoing pandemic. While departments have tried to direct cuts toward vacant positions, that was not always possible. I prepared this budget remembering that you are the ones who transform these program offers and funding investments into life-changing services for our community members.

Thank you, all, for your dedication to serving the residents of Multnomah County, the ways in which you show up for our neighbors daily and your commitment to being part of work that matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Deborah Kafoury



Deborah Kafoury

Multnomah County Chair

May 7, 2020

Multnomah County **Executive Budget Message: COVID-19**

Just over a year ago — March 20, 2019 — we dedicated and opened the new Gladys McCoy Health Department Headquarters. And almost exactly a year later, I moved my office into this building so I could work in closer partnership with my Health and Emergency Management leadership teams to battle a pandemic with global reach and deep local impact.

I feel truly grateful that Multnomah County began preparing for COVID-19 before it even had a name. We launched our initial response team on January 28, a week after the first case of the virus was recognized in the United States, in Washington state.

And for more than two months, our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been fully activated and we've been working around the clock to meet the emerging needs of this public health emergency.

In this time, we've acted to give public health guidance to our community and trained trusted community health workers to share information and foster engagement. We've investigated positive COVID-19 cases and utilized that information to better understand profiles, risks and connections. We've developed an online destination to share news and answer questions, including a data dashboard that gives critical insight into how the virus is moving through our community.

Over the last several weeks, it's become abundantly clear that we will be living with COVID-19 in our community for some time — at least until there is a vaccine. To live, to work, to connect and to rebuild our community, we must continue many of our current efforts and lean further into the health, social service and communication strategies that help manage the spread of the virus and provide stability and support in a time marked by uncertainty.

But these strategies fall short if we apply a one-size-fits-all approach to our response and recovery. While this public health emergency has touched every part of our community, we are also seeing that some groups of people — particularly communities of color — are experiencing the pandemic in a different way. People of color live in communities with higher rates of chronic disease and are more likely to work in essential public-facing jobs, receive lower pay and have more tenuous housing. The pandemic causes all these inequities to be experienced more deeply and more acutely in these communities — in fact, people of color are more prone to exposure to the virus and more serious illness if they do become sick with COVID-19.

But simply recognizing the inequities isn't enough.

We have worked to intentionally integrate Multnomah County's values around equity and racial justice into our disaster and emergency response by shifting how we work internally and by embedding staff within our EOC who can connect directly with many of our most-impacted communities. And without a doubt, there is more work to do: partnering with our communities on culturally specific COVID-19 responses will be a critical component of how we support our overall community's health and wellness.

I've specifically asked our health and human services leaders to work collaboratively on a set of culturally specific approaches to address testing access, contact tracing, access to care and basic needs in communities of color. And I expect that culturally specific strategies will be part of all of our COVID-19 response initiatives. The path forward is one that we travel in partnership — lifting up community wisdom and solutions.

- Distributed nearly **4 million pieces of personal protective equipment** to health systems and community partners.
- Paid for more than **18,500 meals** a week.
- Issued more than **16 pages of health guidance in 25 languages.**
- Answered nearly **500 calls and emails** to the call center in April alone.
- Deployed more than **250 County employees to cover shifts** in the Emergency Operations Center or emergency shelters this week.
- Hired **31 case investigators** to track COVID, up from seven March 1.

FY21 COVID-19 Response: Initial Areas of Focus

Supporting the **Public Health Division's response** is essential to slowing the spread of the virus, protecting the most vulnerable and moving our community towards reopening. Contact tracing and case investigation are critical parts of our work.

But the way we do this work matters. We're building a contact tracing model that also prioritizes partnerships with trusted community health workers and culturally specific community organizations. These health workers, navigators and case managers can help individuals and families manage isolation and ensure they have access to supportive services such as rent and food assistance. Early estimates indicate this will cost \$20 million to \$30 million over the next year.

Part of our responsibility at Multnomah County is to uphold the welfare of those who are in our direct care, particularly those in our **congregate settings like shelter, jail and juvenile detention.**

That means minimizing the risk of exposure to a virus that thrives on people being together. We are committed to continuing to implement public health guidance and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines that best protect these individuals, families and young people.

For those experiencing homelessness, our shelters are often a respite. With our partners at the City of Portland, we remain committed to running a shelter system that follows best practices prescribed by public health and supports, to the greatest extent possible, helping individuals move into permanent housing. Continuing this work, we estimate, will cost \$36 million to \$45 million over the next year.

Wraparound services and meeting basic needs are the core work of Multnomah County, and we are needed more now than ever. As our community's routines and ways of life have been upended by the pandemic, our neighbors and friends have lost income and stability, and faced increased worry, anxiety

and loneliness. We are committed to maintaining our social service safety net and, as much as possible, investing in services that increase access to food, housing assistance, healthcare, mental health services and case management. Early estimates indicate these resources may cost an additional \$3 million to \$5 million.

How we **communicate, educate and engage our communities** has been a key component of our work, and will be especially important in the future. For some, communication is most effective through social media posts and videos. Others might be best reached by cell phone, radio and public service announcements, or flyers and direct mail. Still other communities thrive on receiving information through the community centers and places of worship they trust.

As we move towards the reopening of our community, making information, advice and opportunities for feedback as accessible as possible will be of paramount importance. We are still assessing the scope and scale of the additional resources we will need to ensure that our methods of communication leave no community behind.

We anticipate the needs in our community will far exceed even the preliminary numbers I am sharing here. Our community has done herculean work in following guidance to stay home and stay safe, and in supporting those continuing to serve our community on the front lines. But the impact on the fabric of our community's economic, physical and mental health has been significant. And with no cure, no treatment and a vaccine still years away, these challenges will be ongoing.

We are continuing to work diligently with partners to identify funding streams to help support the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in our community. We will be working in collaboration with the City of Portland, our regional partners and the State of Oregon to support key elements of this shared community work. Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Multnomah County directly received \$28 million. In addition, we have so far identified about \$5 million in additional federal or state revenue that can support expanded services for some of our wraparound programs. And we will continue to examine our own budget for opportunities to make additional reductions or reallocate resources to where they are needed most.

There are many unknowns ahead and we don't know how long this pandemic will last. We don't know when our economy will recover. And we don't know how many people will ultimately be exposed, become ill and need our help.

But Multnomah County will be there — a leader in our community response and a partner in recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "K".

Deborah Kafoury