



**City of Portland**  
**Office of Commissioner Dan Ryan**



**Multnomah County**  
**Office of Chair Deborah Kafoury**

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**MULTNOMAH COUNTY CHAIR DEBORAH KAFOURY & PORTLAND HOUSING COMMISSIONER DAN RYAN  
ANNOUNCE JOINT EFFORT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HOUSELESS PORTLANDERS**

**Thursday, May 27, 2021**, As we enter a new and more hopeful phase of the COVID-19 pandemic that coincides with our multi-jurisdictional responsibility to budget for the coming fiscal year, both Multnomah County and the City of Portland are approaching a critical stretch in our community's response to houselessness. Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Portland City Commissioner Dan Ryan — the elected officials responsible for the Joint Office of Homeless Services (Joint Office) — are prepared to take on this challenge together.

Multnomah County and the City of Portland remain committed to our shared goal of ending houselessness in our community. We recognize that housing is a human right, and that no one should be forced to survive without a safe, stable, affordable place to call home. And we have a shared vision for how that work should be done — we believe the Joint Office can lead this work.

With support from Commissioner Ryan and partnership with the City of Portland, Chair Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County, and the Joint Office will deliver on the will of Multnomah County voters who passed the Supportive Housing Services Measure last May — the Joint Office will distribute what is projected to be up to \$1 billion over the next 10 years for housing services in our region. These resources will be focused on funding quick-turnaround rental vouchers, behavioral health services, and case management, while also creating new shelter beds and remaining accountable to our community with improved data collection and reporting.

With support from Chair Kafoury, the Office of Commissioner Dan Ryan is leading our effort to address the immediate and acute needs of people experiencing houselessness. Commissioner Ryan is working with Mayor Wheeler and the Portland City Council to direct emergency federal resources to an urgent response that complements the City and County's shared work to end houselessness.

**This relationship has been the foundation of our best work.** Since its inception in 2016, the Joint Office has progressed toward our shared goal of ending houselessness in our community by supporting people on their journey to permanent housing and by meeting people where they are.

In coordination with Mayor Wheeler’s office — and Mayor Hales before him — Chair Kafoury and the Joint Office have more than doubled the number of shelter beds in our community and doubled the number of people in housing who would otherwise be experiencing houselessness.

And yet, due to the ongoing housing crisis, the crises of untreated mental health and substance use disorder, inadequate disability compensation, and the pervasive economic and social damage of systemic racism, the challenge to provide safe housing for Oregonians has never been greater. This challenge is why Chair Kafoury helped launch the [Here Together](#) ballot measure that passed last May to permanently end houselessness through supportive housing. This challenge is also why Commissioner Ryan launched the Streets to Stability Task Force earlier this year.

“The Streets to Stability Task Force is a terrific example of what we can accomplish as a Council and with regional governing bodies when we work together,” said Housing Commissioner Dan Ryan. “I want to thank Chair Kafoury and every one of my colleagues on Council for contributing to this work. Together, we are realizing our shared vision to create safe, compassionate spaces for our unhoused neighbors, and collaborating in good faith as we modify city code and advance safe rest villages. I am thrilled to move forward on building outdoor shelter villages with baseline services, including hygiene and case management. I am committed to meeting every person experiencing houselessness where they are, and I will continue working with the County to provide the wraparound services unhoused Portlanders need to survive and ultimately thrive.”

With a challenge as large and complex as houselessness, it will take all of us coming together and continuing to coordinate our efforts across our jurisdictions. The bulk of the County’s funding from the ballot measure will go toward housing vouchers and case management while Commissioner Ryan, Mayor Wheeler, and the Portland City Council will focus resources on an emergency response to the acute need for basic services. Efforts will be supported or managed directly by the Joint Office of Homeless Services to coordinate our system designed to end houselessness in Multnomah County.

“The last year has been one of the hardest chapters in our community’s history, but I believe the tide is about to turn. We are entering a new, unprecedented phase in our efforts to end houselessness and I am optimistic about the progress we’re going to make,” said Chair Kafoury. “Through the Joint Office, Multnomah County is about to launch the largest investment in rental vouchers and supportive housing services we’ve ever seen — a model that we know works in ending houselessness permanently. With Commissioner Ryan’s leadership at the City, I am confident that we will be able to meet people’s basic needs on the streets while connecting people to permanent homes at the same time.”

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