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Multnomah County Chair

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Multnomah County Executive Budget Message

The 2023 Multnomah County Executive Budget is the third budget that was created under the shadow of a generational crisis that has changed our world, our communities, our methods of work, and ourselves.

The shape of the crisis we face, however, has changed from year to year, budget to budget. The County undertook the work of developing this budget with a new phase of the pandemic on the horizon. Thanks to a relatively high vaccination rate across the community, we have seemingly — hopefully — moved beyond the worst of the public health emergency.

But even as the deadly threat posed by the virus recedes, if that is the case, our community still faces numerous ongoing challenges that have emerged or been exacerbated by the disruptions, instability and trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These are the spaces in which Multnomah County must continue to do its work.

The last two budget cycles under the pandemic, like with every budget I've overseen, required us to work within deep financial constraints. Two years ago, amid a quickly evolving public health emergency, we balanced a \$58 million General Fund deficit, adopting a County budget that preserved key services and jobs in a volatile economic climate. Critically, we invested nearly \$100 million into a COVID-19 response that met the most urgent needs of our community members, especially those from Black, Indigenous and other communities of color we knew would be harmed disproportionately by the virus.

Last year, with the pandemic dragging on and facing a \$2.5 million deficit, we used the lessons we'd gained from the preceding year to craft an FY 2022 budget that would sustain our response to COVID-19. We strengthened our public health infrastructure and its programs, while maintaining or expanding the County's social services that we saw our community need more than ever before. We also began to lay the groundwork for the implementation of several historic ballot measures. All of this resulted in the largest budget in the history of Multnomah County.

Our financial situations during the pandemic would have been even more dire were it not for federal lifelines offered to us through the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. Thankfully, those federal stimulus programs have been a boon for our ability to respond to, and plan for our recovery from, the pandemic.

The County Budget Office's fiscal projections typically inform the extent of the constraint we must exercise as we build the budget. For the FY 2023 budget, however, the Budget Office offered welcome, encouraging news. Instead of a structural deficit, Multnomah County is entering the new fiscal year with the financial flexibility to add ongoing programs, thanks to a steadily recovering economy and, most notably, collections from the Business Income Tax (BIT).

I led the passage of the first BIT rate increase in decades — passed in 2020 mere weeks before the pandemic arrived in our community — with the aim of ending the County's perpetual structural deficits in the face of growing costs to operate, as well as the growing need for Multnomah County's services. That change to the BIT brings our budgeting approach into a new era, with revenues expected to grow for the next five years, starting with FY 2023.

This meant that, for the first time in my tenure as Chair, I did not ask for a constraint from County departments and offices during the budget creation process. With this new General Fund surplus, Multnomah County can begin planning for the stabilization of our services and make critical, new investments. And with the second tranche of federal American Rescue Plan funding, we can concurrently make additional strategic investments that maximize the impact of these one-time resources.

Grounded in this new position of fiscal stability, the 2023 Executive Budget leverages the experiences of the last two years. We are doing that by maintaining the County's core safety net services that have been critical for the stability and well-being of those we serve, and expanding effective strategies to meet areas of increasing need.

Additionally, many of the new programs and approaches that we stood up in our race to respond to COVID-related challenges demonstrated positive, equitable outcomes, so this budget also invests in continuing those newfound lessons and practices into the future.

And while Multnomah County must continue to show up for people in their hardest and most vulnerable moments, it's imperative that we do even more. A cascade of climate and economic crises that occurred the last two years exposed and reminded us that the normal we had been living under has always been rife with inequities and injustices. The disparities that Multnomah County works to close and the harms we seek to address existed long before the pandemic, and we are committed to offering solutions that will outlast it.

So the 2023 Executive Budget is designed to look and plan beyond the needs immediately in front of us, in order to make greater strides toward our vision of community transformation. Our investments leverage our resources to help move and empower the people we serve from a space of crisis and survival, to a place of healing, opportunity and thriving.

And while no single local government budget can alone eradicate the interconnected root causes that perpetuate community crises, the County has a meaningful and leading role to play.

At Multnomah County, our budget serves as the clearest reflection of our values and policy directions. But it also functions as a snapshot that captures the challenges, opportunities and aspirations that our community has held at a specific point in time.

It's critical that our budget decisions advance the County's work of closing the pervasive and persistent disparities we see across our community. However, I also recognize that the programs that are proposed in our budget can only push us toward more equitable services and outcomes if the process by which they are constructed has equity at its heart.

So for the second year in a row, in partnership with our Office of Diversity and Equity, Central Budget Office and departmental equity managers, we provided countywide guidance on the application of an equity analysis to the budgeting process. We are committed to centering equity during the budget process so that the product of those budget decisions helps build the stronger and more just community we all want to see.

With planful, intentional interventions, we can assure that recovery from a crisis does not leave large swaths of the community behind. Every budget that I have overseen since I became Chair has been oriented toward ensuring that Multnomah County lifts up those who would otherwise be left out from the benefits of our region's periods of recovery or prosperity.

That's why we put our resources into the services that we do — whether it's programs that help people gain a safe and stable roof over their heads, offer students most in need extra enrichment and support, or ensure those who can't afford private medical care have access to high-quality and accessible clinics. The County's comprehensive solutions aren't only intended to prevent an uneven recovery from widening the gaps but also to strengthen the long-term impacts and efficacy of all our services.

New creative programs and methods of service delivery are exciting. But partnering with those who are directly affected by the challenges we're working to address allows us to develop solutions that will endure beyond the pandemic. We need their perspectives to help us understand how the County can tailor our support to best help their communities overcome barriers, heal and build resilience.

That's why throughout this year's budgeting process, I, along with my staff, met with people from the communities and populations who are at the center of the County's work. Our conversations were instrumental to identifying County services working well, opportunities for improvement, and system gaps. Their voices are part of the foundation for the work we do to build budget priorities that support a system of services equipped to meet today's pandemic-driven needs and oriented toward closing the disparities and gaps that existed in these communities before COVID-19.

This year's budget also builds on the strong foundation Multnomah County created during the 2022 fiscal year to ensure that all three voter-approved ballot measures can deliver the results people expected when they were passed in 2020. Each of the three measures — addressing early childhood education, chronic homelessness and our library system — can help us make significant progress toward transforming our community, but only if they are implemented well, and with fidelity to the measure's language and intent. And while the execution of any significant initiative will run into challenges, Multnomah County will remain nimble in moving the goals of these measures forward and bringing our community closer to seeing the dividends from the investments voters chose to approve.

We are also investing in ways that ensure the County remains a high-functioning and high-performing government organization, ready to meet any challenge that lies ahead. That includes investments that improve our governance, support core democratic functions like elections, strengthen our infrastructure and advance our efforts to create a workplace culture of equity. Together, these investments build up organizational resilience and improve our ability to do our best work and serve our community as effectively as possible.

The crises that our community has endured over the last several years have also clarified areas where additional investments can help us become more prepared and resilient. We are continuing to make significant and strategic Public Health investments to ensure that we can prevent disease and are prepared to protect the health of our community in the face of future threats.

Just as we cannot underestimate the depth of the pandemic's impact on our community, we also cannot ignore the pre-existing traumas or the root causes that make communicable diseases like COVID-19 or extreme climate more harmful for some than others. No place have the layered impacts to our community, our economy and society been more visible than in the three crises we currently seek to urgently address: community violence, homelessness and behavioral health.

For the FY 2023 budget, we must continue to elevate and expand our efforts to meet our community where they are right now. And at the same time, we cannot lose the anchor of who we are or the north star of where we want to go.

That means investing in community members who can help interrupt patterns of violence among young people in our community and community health specialists who can provide trauma support to families **and** providing permanent funding so that there is adequate staffing in the District Attorney's office to prosecute violent crimes.

That means maintaining the increased shelter capacity built throughout the pandemic, investing in shelter bed expansion of various types **and** working to expand and adequately support the network of community partners operating shelter in our community.

That means investing more resources to accelerate housing placements and reach people with housing and supportive services while we **also** expand and grow new strategies like smaller alternative shelter partnerships, home shares and bridge housing for those preparing to move into their homes.

And it means providing a variety of behavioral health crisis interventions to meet people where they are and with the services they need.

As we begin to move beyond the pandemic, we have the unique opportunity to help define the kind of community that we step into. We have the chance to use the moment to catalyze our work to foster community health, resilience and hope. I believe that my 2023 Executive Budget is built to help our organization and our community successfully navigate this time of transition and transformation.

Growing and Diversifying our Homelessness Response Continuum

This budget marks a critical point in not only the Joint Office of Homeless Services' (JOHS) work to end people's homelessness in our community, but for the Multnomah County organization as a whole.

The Executive Budget invests \$183.2 million into a system-wide response that spans County departments to meet the current crisis head on, as well as setting the blueprint for the future. Housing instability, homelessness and behavioral health needs are interconnected crises that require comprehensive and coordinated action. These investments are a commitment to building on existing coordination, expansion of successful programs, and new interventions.

Recognizing that surviving without a home is a chapter in a much longer story in people's lives, this budget funds policies and programs to meet people before, during and after their homelessness, providing the resources needed to recover from the trauma of surviving without a home.

The \$107.1 million from the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure (SHS) combined with \$76.1 million in local, state and federal funding support a response that doesn't only begin to scale to meet the need, but also serves the variety of needs: emergency shelter, housing placement, behavioral health services and eviction prevention, while leading with racial equity in each of these efforts.

Of the \$107.1 million in SHS funding, this FY 2023 Executive Budget funds \$27.3 million in shelter and outreach investments that will help support over 2,000 beds of year-round shelter. This will include population-specific, trauma-informed congregate shelter, motel rooms, and alternative shelter settings such as pods and villages. Another \$75.9 million will be invested in housing placements, rent assistance and support services to permanently end people's homelessness. This includes case management and rent assistance to help over 1,450 additional people move into and retain housing, and support for more than 1,700 units of supportive housing for individuals and families escaping chronic homelessness.

Behavioral Health Investments for People Experiencing Homelessness

Creating long-lasting interventions that serve the whole person requires coordination across County programs and investing in the entire housing and services continuum. The first year of SHS funding created unprecedented opportunities for the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) to work with other County departments and divisions to build out new programs. These programs aim to meet the spectrum of needs that someone experiencing homelessness or housing instability may require.

Due to the trauma of homelessness, behavioral health services continue to be a consistent need among many people without a home. This budget seeks to address this intersection with a combined \$15.5 million investment in serving people experiencing homelessness, behavioral needs and other disabilities through a range of new and expanded services.

Launching this fall, the **Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC)** will be the first of its kind in our community, serving people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health needs in downtown Portland. The three programs housed at the BHRC (a drop-in day center, a behavioral health shelter and bridge housing) have all been informed and designed by people with lived experience, and will provide multiple peer-led services located in one building. SHS funding will be used to fund the first behavioral health shelter in Multnomah County on the third floor of the center.

This budget also invests \$1.9 million into a successful behavioral health pilot program that provides emergency motel room shelter and crisis case management. SHS funding will allow this program, called **Cultivating Community**, to be located at a single motel and continue well into the future, providing critical services for people with severe behavioral health needs surviving outside.

This budget also increases funding for the **Promoting Access to Hope (PATH)** program through SHS dollars. PATH connects people experiencing homelessness to treatment for substance use disorders, and helps people overcome barriers that can keep them out of housing. This includes detox and withdrawal management, ongoing recovery support services, and culturally specific care coordination for African-American, Latinx and LGBTQIA2S+ clients.

Between 2018 and 2020, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council, the Multnomah County Health Department, Health Share of Oregon and the Joint Office of Homeless Services participated in an analysis sponsored by the Corporation for Supportive Housing called Frequent Utilizer System Engagement (FUSE). Comparing data from the homeless services, healthcare and public safety systems, FUSE identified individuals who are most frequently engaged in all three of these systems and assessed how access to permanent supportive housing affected their utilization of these systems. The analysis concluded that moving into permanent supportive housing profoundly reduces an individual's criminal justice involvement and use of crisis healthcare services. Using this knowledge, the budget allocates \$1.0 million of SHS funding into a **FUSE pilot project** that will provide permanent supportive housing to up to 50 individuals who were identified by the analysis as "frequent users" of these systems.

Homelessness Prevention Supports

In addition to crisis intervention, this budget recognizes the urgency to prevent homelessness for thousands of households who are one emergency away from losing their housing — especially in light of a pandemic that has exposed and exacerbated existing economic inequities in our community.

When thousands of County residents were unable to maintain stable housing, the County responded with an innovative program to reach all county residents at risk of eviction. Staff from Joint Office of Homeless Services and the Department of County Human Services built out a robust and responsive network of teams to prevent as many evictions as possible by **combining rent assistance with legal services**. One of those new teams, housed in the County's Bienestar de la Familia program, even worked with attorneys from Metropolitan Public Defender and Oregon Law Center to reach households at the last possible stage of the legal process by processing rent assistance applications at the courthouse and at people's front doors.

Understanding that the economic impacts of the pandemic continue to put thousands of households at risk of getting evicted, this budget allocates \$22.8 million of American Rescue Plan funding toward ongoing direct rent assistance in FY 2023 that will be distributed by the same teams that were created for the initial rent assistance program. We also saw that pairing financial support with legal services creates an additional level of protection that can mean the difference between stability and homelessness. So the Executive Budget invests \$400,000 of ongoing General Fund dollars into these legal services to ensure that households who become at risk of eviction even beyond the pandemic can **continue to have access to legal professionals**.

Homeshare Pilot

Investing in the entire housing and services continuum requires us to examine all opportunities to secure safe and affordable housing. As the pace of housing construction fails to meet continued demand, existing vacant residential spaces can be used for low-income renters. The homeshare model — where homeowners are matched with potential renters — can provide an affordable rent for many low-income tenants, but it can also help offset housing costs for homeowners on fixed incomes. Through a one-time-only investment, the FY 2023 Executive Budget supports a homeshare model pilot in our community that will be assessed for its effectiveness at serving low-income community members.

Expanding Behavioral Health Services to Meet More People Where They Are

Multnomah County recognizes that every community member who is living with behavioral health challenges deserves access to a broad range of supportive services that are responsive to their unique needs and circumstances. As the largest social safety provider in the region, Multnomah County plays a key role in the behavioral health system by funding services like school-based mental health, crisis response, treatment for substance use disorders and jail diversion. Our collaboration with community-based organizations, the State of Oregon and health system partners are critical to ensuring the behavioral health system meets the needs of our community. Still, there are many ways in which we can strengthen and improve this system of care, especially by increasing and easing access to essential behavioral health services.

The 2023 Executive Budget makes unprecedented investments into services that naturally integrate into and across the existing behavioral health system. We are also using our resources to build and accelerate the coalition work with our system partners, as well as to advocate for a larger share of the State's behavioral health to bolster our regional efforts. Taken together, the programs funded by

the budget will amplify the impact of the services currently offered while adding capacity to reach more people, especially those who often face the highest barriers to finding treatment, including youth, people experiencing homelessness, and those who are new to recovery.

Behavioral Health Resource Center - Day Center

Once the doors of the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC) open this fall, people experiencing both chronic homelessness and behavioral health challenges will be able to access the Day Center program, which will be open 15 hours a day. Developed with a combination of input from people who have lived experience of behavioral health issues and peer providers, the Day Center will provide a safe space off the streets for individuals to have their basic needs met, and serve as an entrypoint for clients to engage and build relationships with providers and staff. Once a client feels ready, the Day Center will provide access to peer services and referrals to behavioral health treatment providers, as well as employment and housing support.

School-based Mental Health Services Expansion

Multnomah County's school-based mental health (SBMH) services have proven to be an essential component of the behavioral healthcare system for children and families. The 2023 Executive Budget expands SBMH case management services from covering kindergarten through 3rd grade, to covering kindergarten through 12th grade. K-12 case managers will provide specialized, short-term, intensive complex case management and prevention services with a focus on connection to mental health services and supports, increasing attendance and reducing barriers that interfere with educational success. These earlier interventions will help mitigate the chances that students will need to access higher levels of mental health care later.

Office of Consumer Engagement - Peer Support Expansion

Peer support services offer significant benefits to an individual's behavioral well-being, especially for people who are early in the early stages of recovery. Because peer services become even more effective when they are culturally responsive, this budget funds the creation of a new multi-organizational peer collaboration that prioritizes people from the BIPOC and LGBTQI+ communities with high mental health and substance use needs. We are also adding staff to the Behavioral Health Division's Office of Consumer Engagement (OCE) — which leads the Division's peer support work — to increase collaboration of peer recovery support services across the behavioral health continuum, with a particular emphasis on improving engagement with the Latinx community. The increased capacity will also support the success and sustainability of BIPOC and other population-specific peer support organizations.

Cultivating Community Motel Wraparound Program

This budget maintains new capacity in the Health Department's successful Cultivating Community motel wraparound program, which serves people experiencing homelessness who have been unsuccessful in shelters or other congregate settings due to their severe and persistent mental illness. Participants are connected with a motel-based emergency shelter where they receive wraparound services, including enhanced levels of crisis prevention, intervention and care coordination. The model has been effective at stabilizing individuals and reducing episodes of crisis and hospitalization, and gives people safety off the streets while they transition to longer-term housing options.

Behavioral Health Emergency Coordination Network Governance

The Behavioral Health Emergency Coordination Network (BHECN) is an ongoing multi-jurisdictional and cross-agency collaboration to develop an improved triage and assessment network for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Once it is operational, BHECN will fill the critical gaps in the

region's crisis response system that keep individuals in crisis from finding the help they need, when they need it, in the safest and most supportive environment possible. Under the County's leading role in this vital effort, the 2023 Executive Budget funds project management support within the Health Department that will support the work of developing the network.

Furthering Changes to the Criminal Legal System

The Multnomah County criminal legal system, like most of those across the country, leans too heavily on arrest, prosecution, and incarceration as tools for changing behaviors. This punitive approach has led to an overreliance on the criminal legal system for solving social problems, and has resulted in the disproportionate policing and imprisonment of people of color, people experiencing homelessness and those with behavioral health challenges. This Executive Budget addresses these challenges in both the near term and long terms through investments aimed at increasing accountability, encouraging healing and restoration, and efforts to transform the public safety system.

Transforming Justice Initiative

The Transforming Justice initiative was launched in January 2021 with the goal of creating a new vision for public safety that is rooted in racial equity, shrinking the criminal legal system footprint and expanding supportive services, and will outlast election cycles. The initiative will complete the visioning process this summer, after which the task will be to operationalize and implement that vision. This budget supports ongoing project management of Transforming Justice through FY 2023 to ensure that the momentum continues without interruption.

Case Management Support through Local Public Defender Offices

Individuals accused of committing a crime often require the assistance of a public defender to navigate the criminal legal system — a daunting task that's even more difficult if the individual has significant needs like behavioral health treatment, housing, healthcare, employment and child care. The FY 2023 Executive Budget funds case management services through local public defender offices that will assess the service needs for clients. The assessment will result in an immediate referral to services or a connection to the defense attorney for future referrals and/or release planning. This program also prioritizes hiring people with lived experience of the criminal legal system who, as case managers, will be able to connect in a way that members of the defense counsel can't. Their personal experience with barriers will also allow them to offer advice based on their own struggles with substance use disorder, plug clients into existing recovery support networks, and mitigate distrust and skepticism.

District Attorney Body Worn Camera Program Expansion

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office currently reviews and stores body worn camera video footage from several local law enforcement agencies. This budget funds an expansion of the Body Worn Cameras team in the DA's office so that it can properly meet the core county, constitutional and ethical prosecution obligations required by the growing practice of using body worn cameras in policing.

Supporting Training

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office is required to meet statewide training standards for sworn personnel that are designed to equip public safety officers with the tools to do their job safely and equitably. The State of Oregon and the Legislature often add new requirements as the need arises. Funding used to ensure personnel continue to meet new requirements has often come from the agency's overtime budget. This budget adds \$500,000 in ongoing General Fund dollars to increase access to necessary training for every public safety officer.

Responding to Community Violence

Multnomah County, like many communities across the country, has seen a dramatic increase in gun violence over the last two years, including a spike in shootings, injuries and homicides. The dramatic disruptions of everyday life caused by the pandemic set the stage for this crisis: isolation, a loss of connection, and the sudden halt of traditional social and community networks. The County is responding by making new investments to pilot innovative new strategies, and making previous one-time-only investments that have proven to be successful permanent with ongoing funding.

Community Violence Intervention Programs

Last year, using American Rescue Plan funds, Multnomah County funded a wide range of responses to the increase in community violence that leveraged proven and successful intervention models in our Department of Community Justice. We expanded the **Elevate program**, part of the widely recognized Community Healing Initiative (CHI), to the Latinx and African immigrant communities at risk of community violence. We also funded expansions of **CHI** so the program could reach additional communities of color, and the groundbreaking **Habilitation, Empowerment, Accountability, and Therapy (HEAT) curriculum**, a culturally responsive cognitive behavioral intervention program. This year's Executive Budget recognizes the critical nature of these expansions, and provides ongoing General Fund support.

New and Innovative Violence Interventions

The County is funding the continuation of the **Gun Violence Prevention Incubator Pilot** with American Rescue Plan funding. Started last year, the pilot is building capacity in community-based organizations by providing them with the necessary skills and experience to create effective intervention programming. We are also going one step further by investing in the development of a **new Gun Violence Interruption pilot program**, also with ARP resources. The pilot intends to offer stipends to individuals on supervision and people committing acts of gun violence to help them build economic stability that steers them away from the need to participate in dangerous behaviors. The program will also leverage the use of credible messengers in communities heavily impacted by gun violence.

District Attorney Prosecution and Investigation Investments

The increase in incidences of gun violence has led to a corresponding need for more prosecutorial resources dedicated to investigating and trying cases, especially homicides. These investigations often take months, if not years, to move through the legal system. FY 2022 ARP allocations added four new deputy district attorneys and two investigators, allowing the DA's office to shuffle casework and dedicate more DDAs to gun violence cases. The FY 2023 budget **continues funding for two of the DDA positions** with General Fund resources, ensuring a level of certainty and ongoing support, and **maintains the two remaining DDAs and two investigator positions** with 2023 ARP funds.

Coordinating Violence Prevention and Intervention Efforts

Our response to the rise in gun violence spans across multiple County departments and divisions. In order to align those diverse efforts, the Executive Budget creates a coordinator position in the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Office that will work between departments and external agencies to monitor, track and coordinate existing and new efforts to reduce violence. The position will be a resource regarding each department's violence prevention policies, programs and outcomes, and will also serve as a point of contact and liaison with local advisory bodies, work groups and steering committees on violence prevention efforts in Multnomah County.

Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure and Community Health

The lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic have reinforced the need for a robust public health system to help protect our community from communicable diseases and respond when they occur. As we launched the FY 2023 budget, I am grateful to see the State of Oregon's renewed investment in the modernization of our local public health systems. These investments will ensure we have the public health strategies and expertise to meet today's community health needs. Investing in our public health infrastructure also means adapting and responding to new realities.

Public Health Modernization

With nearly \$6 million of new state dollars, Multnomah County Public Health will **add capacity to improve our ability to prevent, track, report and respond to all communicable diseases**. Nothing has proven itself more vital than our ability to pair our understanding of what's happening in our local community, where it's happening and how it's happening, with the response tools that use data and best practices equitably and effectively to drive policy and program change.

Along with **building our communicable diseases and epidemiology infrastructure**, we are also focusing on **building up the community coalitions and culturally specific partnerships** that have proved invaluable in our efforts to reach people with information, services and support.

Finally, with these investments, the State has also directed that we dedicate additional dollars to the kinds of environmental health threats that Multnomah County has been focusing on for decades. From climate change research and policy to transportation justice, **additional staffing in Environmental Health** will deepen our ability to combine research and analysis with our emergency response initiatives and prevention efforts.

Additional Medical Examiner Capacity

This budget adds an additional deputy medical examiner to support the 24/7/365 operations of the Office of the Medical Examiner, bringing Multnomah County in line with comparable jurisdictions. The additional staffing will help ensure Multnomah County's team is adequately staffed and has the necessary equipment to respond to the volume and complexity of death investigations.

Additional Vector Control

The Executive Budget provides ongoing funding for an expansion of rat abatement efforts initiated during a mid-year budget action. With three additional vector control specialists, Environmental Health will be able to work with partner jurisdictions and community-based organizations to implement short-term and long-term strategies to reduce the risk of environmental health hazards and improve the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as communities near homeless encampments.

Sustainability and Resilience

Over the last several years, our community has experienced numerous extreme weather events, including historic and life-threatening heat waves, bouts of dangerous cold, raging wildfires and toxic air. The consequences of human-driven global warming and climate change that we anticipated would happen someday are putting our community members in harm's way right now, and they will happen again. The 2023 budget puts resources into tailored efforts that can provide our community members who are most at risk of climate-related harms with the tools and resources to remain safer and healthier.

Supporting Community Resilience in East County

The Executive Budget continues funding for a community-driven feasibility assessment that will result in a set of recommendations on the kinds of services and physical infrastructure needed in East County to enhance the daily resilience of its residents and neighborhoods. The planning, focused on and partnering with underserved and marginalized communities, will contribute to a better understanding of what a resilience hub can look like, services such a hub would provide, and the physical characteristics it would need to operate during and after natural disasters like severe weather and wildfire.

Wood Stove Replacement

Smoke from burning wood is a major cause of air pollution that can lead to adverse health effects. Higher levels of wood smoke in the air have been connected to higher levels of heart and lung illnesses, making the issue particularly concerning for Black, Latinx and Indigenous people who have higher rates of asthma than other populations. Studies have also shown that people chronically exposed to elevated levels of particulate matter, one of the main pollutants from wood smoke, are more likely to get sick and die from COVID-19. Investing state American Rescue Plan and local one-time funds into a program that replaces wood stoves with new heat pumps won't just reduce air pollution; it can also improve the health of those living in the homes with better heating and improved indoor air quality, improve air quality for those living in nearby areas, and people of color who are prone to both higher levels of air pollution and higher rates of respiratory issues.

Cooling Support

The lack of air conditioning was a primary reason for fatalities among people with low incomes, and especially those who were older, during the 2021 heat dome. In response to the high likelihood that our community — and particularly East County — will continue to experience dangerous heat, this budget funds a new pilot program in East Multnomah County to provide portable air conditioners to 1,000 households that are unable to afford one on their own, lack the necessary transportation to secure one, or can't get help from their landlord. The program will also provide 8,000 to 10,000 cooling kits to people who have emergency needs during a heat wave.

Climate Resilience Coordinator

While short-term interventions focused on addressing people's immediate health and safety during a climate-driven crisis are critical, we also need medium-to-long-term policy interventions that can help our community mitigate and prepare for the worst effects of climate change. That includes work like updating wildfire mitigation zoning, developing equitable low-income weatherization policies, and coordination with local governments on strategies to mitigate heat islands. A new Climate Resilience Coordinator position in the Office of Sustainability will coordinate and catalyze these critical programs and policies.

Climate Justice by Design Initiative

Multnomah County's Office of Sustainability launched Climate Justice by Design in 2021, an initiative to create a "third space" that brings government and frontline community organizations together to co-design and co-create climate justice strategies. The approach recognizes that frontline communities can be the source of the most innovative multi-benefit solutions, and reflects a shared commitment to equitable processes and outcomes. Funding from the 2023 budget will support the ability of frontline community-based organizations to participate in a new iteration of Climate Justice by Design that prioritizes the inclusion of voices that were missing from the 2021 efforts, notably youth of color. Their work will result in the development of a new climate action community justice framework that succeeds the 2015 Climate Action Plan.

Building Community Strength, Connection and Assets

Offering safety net services to individuals, households and people experiencing crisis is just one strategy that Multnomah County leverages to help create stability and opportunities to thrive. The 2023 budget invests in the work of fortifying the resilience of communities, creating avenues to make connections with people who are vulnerable and helping to build up generational wealth.

Building Capacity of Culturally Specific Community-based Partners

Both the **Pacific Islander Coalition** and the **Future Generations Collaborative** are supported by the Office of the Public Health Director's Community Partnerships and Capacity Building Unit, which coordinates and implements culturally specific and cross-cultural community engagement and partnership strategies to address community and public health priorities.

The Pacific Islander Coalition addresses health disparities experienced by Pacific Islander community members by convening and supporting community-based organizations that work specifically with that population. Similarly, the Future Generations Collaborative is a partnership between Native and Native-serving organizations, institutions, systems, governments, and individuals that centers traditional Native values in their work to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, promote health and healing across the lifecourse and for the collective Indigenous community; and serve as a key convener for the Native community in Portland.

This budget includes funding that will be used to enhance contracts that can build up the capacity of our community-based partners to continue and expand their work.

Community Capacity Expansion: Physical Infrastructure

Multnomah County partners with myriad community-based organizations to provide critical services to our residents. As our county continues to grow and diversify, we have an opportunity to support the growth of community partners that have worked to create deep relationships with specific communities through culturally tailored services. As part of that commitment, we will support community capacity building by helping to fund the capital expenditures of 10 or more organizations that serve communities who have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

LGBTQIA2S+ Housing Forum and Engagement

Community members who identify as trans or non-binary continue to be disproportionately affected by housing instability and over-represented in the homeless population. A forum that convenes members of the trans and non-binary communities and centers their voices will significantly inform the ways we can best invest the ongoing funding set aside to support the housing needs of this population.

Supporting and Making Connections with Refugees and Immigrants

Refugees who wish to apply to become a lawful permanent resident in the United States must submit form I-693 to report their medical examination and vaccination record. While the form itself does not have a cost associated with it, the cost of the exam can be up to \$1,000 per individual, presenting a significant financial hardship for people who are only starting to find their footing in their new home. Our budget allocates funding to help **offset the cost of the exam required for the I-693 form process** and ease this burden on refugees being resettled in Multnomah County.

Multnomah County also recognizes the need for improved communication and connections to county and community resources for our immigrant and refugee communities. This budget supports a **new position that will be dedicated to moving, refining and advancing recommendations** that emerge from an FY 2022 analysis of existing immigrant and refugee services available in the County and community.

Multnomah Mothers' Trust Project Implementation

As we continue to respond to the immediate needs of our community during the pandemic, we must equally focus on how we will build the pathway to a racially just and equitable economic recovery. Multnomah Mothers' Trust Project (MMTP) partners with approximately 100 Black, woman-headed households with children to provide an unconditional monthly basic income. The 2023 budget funds a second year of the project and the first full-year of implementation. MMTP partners also serve as participant researchers in equity- and human-centered collaborative design processes that help the County plan for the future implementation of a Baby Bonds pilot program, as well as efforts to reduce debt, become a homeowner and other asset building initiatives.

Regional Construction Workforce Diversity Funder Collaborative

The Regional Construction Workforce Diversity Funder Collaborative consists of committed public owners who work together to invest in activities that directly support increasing the racial and gender diversity of the regional construction trades workforce. By aligning our support with others in the region, we can make a greater collective impact in our efforts to simultaneously grow our construction workforce and make well-paying construction careers more accessible to people of color, women and veterans.

Youth and Family Partnerships

Timely interventions and crisis response are critical parts of Multnomah County's work to ensure that every person at every stage in life has equitable opportunities to thrive, especially when it comes to the ways we serve children and families who continue to struggle with the acute harms and instability caused or worsened by the disruptions of the pandemic. Each point of contact between a young person or adult in need and the County or our community partners is an opportunity to strengthen the community and to build up health, stability, opportunity and safety for the whole family, not just today, but for the next generation.

Maintaining and expanding the services that support the needs of youth and families remains a top priority in this budget. However, oftentimes the best interventions come before people reach a crisis point, which is especially true when it comes to children and their families. So this budget also makes investments in upstream interventions and prevention that have been designed with equity in mind. These programs give families the tools and resources that give them the best chance to not just weather hardships, but to thrive.

SUN Community Schools: Family Resource Navigators

The Family Resource Navigators (FRN) program was launched in FY 2022 to help SUN Community School sites keep up with the rising level of basic needs experienced by families during the pandemic. FRN staff work alongside families in culturally responsive ways to help reduce barriers in the home and help them meet their need for food, housing, employment, healthcare and more — efforts that can grow a student's ability to learn and thrive. We are continuing investing American Rescue Plan funding into the Family Resource Navigators to ensure that the program can continue making critical contributions to the stability, health and well-being of students and their families.

Youth Stability and Homelessness Prevention Expansion

The Executive Budget provides new ongoing funding to expand access to homelessness prevention services and emergency shelter for youth under the age of 18. This expansion will increase the number of emergency shelter beds from four to eight, and will expand staffing to support additional case management, recreation and supervision of youth and staff.

Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Even before the pandemic sowed the conditions that have led to a notable increase in both the frequency and severity of domestic violence incidents, Multnomah County was working to support survivors in, and after, their moments of crisis. The Executive Budget ensures that our system can continue responding to the increased need and urgency for **domestic violence services** by using American Rescue Plan funds to maintain the additional victim advocates in culturally specific community organizations who provide population-specific support and services that we added last year.

We are also responding to the increase in calls to the Gateway Center, a drop-in service center that serves as a primary access point for domestic and sexual violence services in the county, as well as its plans to move back to more in-person services by **adding capacity to the center's Intake Team**.

Bienestar de la Familia Staff Expansion

As families of color experienced disproportionately high levels of instability and harm throughout the pandemic, the work of Multnomah County's Bienestar de la Familia program has grown exponentially to keep pace with the level of need. Bienestar staff have worked without interruption to maintain, expand and even create new culturally responsive housing stability and behavioral health services, food supports and other safety net programs. Their growing scope of work has stretched the supervisory, administrative and case management capacity of the program. The 2023 Executive Budget invests in an expansion of Bienestar de la Familia staff so that the program and its dedicated workforce can continue to do their best work.

Preschool for All Implementation

Preschool for All, housed in the County's new Preschool and Early Learning Division, is a community-altering initiative that takes a two-generation approach to supporting children and working parents, especially mothers who have dropped out of the workforce to take care of their young children. In FY 2023, resources from the Preschool for All measure will be used to focus on implementation by establishing foundational structures and processes to stabilize and support the growth of our ambitious universal preschool program. The goal is to build capacity and trust within this new system recognizing the ongoing toll that the pandemic has had on children, families and childcare providers.

- The **first Preschool for All slots** will open this September. We anticipate that in the first year, we will be able to serve more than 600 children with high-quality, culturally responsive, inclusive preschool from 36 Pilot Site Providers across 48 locations. These first PFA slots will be offered at childcare centers, Head Start sites, in-home providers, and school districts, and will include funding to stabilize infant and toddler slots in these settings. Pilot Sites will work closely with the Preschool & Early Learning Division to share feedback and refine the program.
- One of the ways that we are addressing pandemic impacts is by **increasing the number of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants** who can provide a comprehensive continuum of culturally relevant and responsive mental health services to children and their families in PFA sites. Their services include early childhood classroom consultation with educators, child mental health assessment and family-centered treatment, case management services, crisis triage, referral to community supports, and parent support and education.

- At this moment, there are not enough early childhood teachers or physical spaces in Multnomah County for universal preschool. Childcare providers struggle to find facilities that meet their needs, which are often prohibitive in cost. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even harder to find and retain preschool staff. This budget funds an **increase in the money set aside to support facilities and workforce development**. Having enough early educators and preschool spaces is essential to ensuring universal access.
- We will use **partnerships with community-based organizations** that have established relationships in the community, cultural knowledge and experience building partnerships for two key roles. “Intermediary Organizations” will partner with small childcare businesses to support their participation in PFA, while “Family Connector Organizations” will perform outreach to families and guide them through the application process.

Library Building Bond

The \$387 million Multnomah County Library capital bond that was approved overwhelmingly by voters in 2020 gives us the resources to renovate and expand existing library sites, and build a new flagship library in East County. The impacts of these changes, however, transcend the construction or modernization of physical spaces. By re-balancing the sizes of library spaces and the scope of services the Library offers to patrons, we are transforming our treasured library system into one that will serve our entire community equitably far into the future.

With many of the capital projects already underway, this coming fiscal year is poised to be pivotal to their progress.

The new **Library Operations Center** in East Portland is the first project in the bond program, making it the “Preface” project. The center will feature Automated Materials Handling that will distribute library materials to patrons in an efficient way, reducing overall materials handling costs and expediting delivery of patron holds. Construction is slated to start in early FY 2023.

“Chapter One” projects that are expected to complete design, obtain permits, establish the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) and start construction in FY 2023 include:

- The **Holgate Library** project, which will result in a brand new, approximately 21,000-square-foot new library building on its existing site.
- The **Midland Library** project, which will renovate the existing library with an approximately 6,000-square-foot addition on the existing site.
- The **Albina Library** project, which will build approximately 42,000-square-feet of library space and administrative offices on the existing Knott Street/Isom site.
- The **North Portland Library** project, which will renovate 8,700-square-feet of the existing library and builds an approximately 1,500-square-foot addition.

These projects also give the County the opportunity to equitably distribute our resources back into the community by building a diverse workforce. Through intentional contracting, we will continue our practice of requiring prevailing wage jobs on all construction projects and opening employment opportunities to people in our community for whom the trades have been traditionally inaccessible.

Good Governance

This executive budget invests in key areas of the County's core operations that reinforce our ability to serve the community as an effective, equitable and accountable local government. That includes bolstering internal functions like auditing and creating workplace equity, as well as external-facing responsibilities such as elections, emergency preparedness, land use planning and capital improvements.

Workforce Equity

The County's capacity to advance equity in our community is deeply connected to our ability to work toward equity inside our organization. By maintaining, and in some places increasing, resources and staffing focused on building equity, Multnomah County can continue to move forward the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP) and our efforts to foster safety, trust and belonging for all employees.

When Multnomah County made historic investments in workforce equity in FY 2020, we knew that it wasn't a one-time action. As a community, we set the vision with workforce equity and began to invest to make those goals meaningful and real throughout our organization in a way that impacts the culture of our work units, performance and accountability, recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion, and overall decision-making.

We created the Complaints Investigation and Civil Rights Policy Units, and supported equity teams and equity practitioners in our departments, as well as deeper supports for equity work within Central Human Resources. This budget **maintains these critical investments** but also recognizes that implementing the goals of workforce equity, in addition to other recommendations that have emerged from our workforce, takes sustained commitment, courage and dedicated resources.

This budget includes **new staffing within several departments**, including the Department of Community Justice, District Attorney's Office and Department of Community Services. These new roles will be focused on supporting specific WESP goals for managers; developing equity cohorts for managers; embedding practices related to inclusively leading with race into recruitments, procurements and training; and tracking progress on workforce equity related initiatives such as onboarding and retention.

With the launch of the Complaints Investigations Unit (CIU), the County has already learned lessons about the need for additional support once an investigation is completed. Through a **new CIU position** this coming fiscal year, we will be piloting deeper case resolution services that could include mediation, team building, training and restorative justice.

The 2023 Executive Budget also includes \$200,000 of one-time dollars to launch the **engagement and development process to revisit the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan**. Launched in 2018 and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2019, Multnomah County's four-year plan will be due for a review and update in 2023.

Community-based Organization Partnership - Contractor Wage Equity

The County relies on an extensive and committed network of community-based organizations to provide health and human services to our community members, including shelter services, outreach, and assistance for seniors, youth and families. Recruitment and retention challenges among our nonprofit partners, however, have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The County is engaged in several efforts to address issues related to wage equity within our partner organizations to mitigate barriers to building and maintaining the necessary workforce.

The difficulty of attracting and retaining staff for essential direct service work in emergency shelter and outreach settings is among the most critical obstacles to meeting system-wide goals related

to expanding outreach and shelter capacity. In the height of the pandemic, we approved an hourly wage increase in base pay for workers carrying out essential shelter and outreach functions. This budget — through a combination of ongoing general funds and Supportive Housing Services measure funds — **maintains and makes those wage increases permanent.**

In addition, with new investments in the FY 2023 budget, Multnomah County will **conduct compensation evaluations** of certain contracted services that will include a review of regional and local suppliers, particularly those with services relevant to County operations, such as homeless services, human services and healthcare services. The evaluations will help County policy-makers understand the market for specific job types and determine the appropriate compensation to ensure community-based organizations can attract and retain employees to provide critical County services.

We will also **support efforts by Oregon Solutions** to take a more comprehensive look at how our community and the State can address contractor compensation issues. That study is anticipated to recommend courses of action for state and local policy-makers.

Elections Staffing Expansion

In the last 10 years, the number of registered voters has increased almost 50%, totaling approximately 600,000 registered voters in the county. **Adding three new full-time positions** will ensure the Elections Division can successfully meet its mandated responsibilities, reduce risks and continue to safeguard the trust of Multnomah County voters during normal operations and during election periods.

With several state and local races and the addition of charter measures submitted by both City and County charter review commissions, the November 2022 General Election is slated to produce one of the most crowded ballots in recent history. For the first time in 22 years, the Elections Division expects to print a two-page ballot for almost every voter in Multnomah County. This budget fully funds the **additional ballot printing, production and processing costs** of this rare occurrence.

Audit Capacity Expansion

The mission of the Auditor's Office is to ensure that the Multnomah County government is efficient, effective, equitable, transparent and fully accountable to all who live in our county. This budget invests in the addition of four new staff auditors in this coming fiscal year so that the Auditor's Office is able to keep pace with the County's growing complexity and scope, allowing it to fully meet its Charter-mandate responsibility to audit all county operations and financial affairs.

Communications and Public Records

Timely, transparent, relevant and community-centered communications are a bedrock of Multnomah County's engagement with employees, media and the community. Investments in the FY 2023 budget will increase staffing to support internal communications and communications in the area of housing and homelessness programs. The budget also includes one-time funds to invest in public records software that will move the County from a manual to an automated system of accepting, responding and tracking public records requests.

Land Use Planning

The County's Land Use Planning program makes every effort to issue land use decisions within the state-mandated timeline of 150 days. However, land use applications with complex or unique issues increase the difficulty of meeting that deadline. The Executive Budget funds the **establishment of an on-call contract** that the Land Use Division can use to access specialized technical consulting for subjects like geotechnology, biology, and civil engineering in a timely manner.

Among the findings of a Multnomah County Zoning Code assessment conducted over the last year was that the code's bias towards property ownership and reliance on complicated and lengthy processes created barriers to participation by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and underrepresented community members. Our **Land Use Planning Code Equity Analysis and Update** effort will start with an equity audit, followed by a comprehensive update of the Multnomah County Zoning Code, ultimately removing the structural barriers that have created racial inequities in the land use planning process.

Updating and Improving County Facilities

The Executive Budget allocates resources to keep the County's buildings operational, efficient and safe for our workforce and the members of the public who visit our facilities. That begins with **replacing the electrical Bus Duct system at Multnomah County's Justice Center.**

Planning for a **new Multnomah County Animal Services facility** will continue this coming year. Currently operating out of a building constructed in 1968, a new building can be designed to meet the program's current and future needs in a way that ensures equitable services to County residents and high-quality care to the animals in the shelter.

Building on the results of a feasibility study that was conducted over the last two years, we are investing in consulting services that will help the County **develop a plan for modernizing our Walnut Park property** in Northeast Portland.

Funding has also been set aside for **building improvements at the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Center** that will allow the facilities to become more trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate.

Strategic Capital Investments

Throughout the pandemic, Multnomah County has acted with urgency and innovation, quickly implementing new ways to serve some of our most vulnerable community members. This included using different types of properties to provide a safe, stable place to be for people experiencing homelessness with serious disabilities. With these lessons in mind, and as we manage a rapid expansion of programming, we now have a cost-effective opportunity to secure locations throughout the county.

The Executive Budget invests \$15 million toward a strategic capital fund that will secure new properties for the purpose of supporting our response to homelessness and behavioral health crises. These projects could include spaces for shelter, treatment, day centers, motels, shared housing and other strategic real property investments, and they would all represent long-term investments in directly serving our neighbors with some of the highest needs.

Emergency Preparedness

Recent public health and climate emergencies have demonstrated the clear and critical need to continue improving our preparation and planning to respond to crises. This budget adds permanent staffing in the Health Department and Department of County Human Services (DCHS) to support this work.

In the Health Department, a role initially created with American Rescue Plan dollars will now have a dedicated focus on **continuity of operations planning, training and support** for managers and supervisors. In DCHS, a new **Emergency Management Analyst role** will support the work needed to serve people during severe weather events. The position will also focus on developing a robust pool of staff and volunteers who are available to support shelters during an emergency or disaster.

Conclusion

I am proud that this particular Executive Budget, built at this particular moment in our community's history, is the final one that I am proposing as Chair. Working together with colleagues from across the organization and people from across our community, my FY 2023 Executive Budget has been built with care, intent and an enduring belief in the central role that Multnomah County has and continues to play in the lives of our residents. This budget offers the County a roadmap that keeps us grounded in our values, ensures that we can continue to effectively meet the needs of our neighbors long past the pandemic, and holds us steady on the path to transforming our community into one that is stronger, more resilient and more equitable. It reflects the challenges that we continue to face, but it also reveals how Multnomah County will help our community rise above them.

I want to thank all the Community Budget Advisory Committees for the many hours they spent with County departments, asking good questions, processing the answers, and evaluating their programs and outcomes. The countless community members and County staff who took their time to graciously share their perspectives and insights were also crucial to shaping this budget.

I also want to extend my gratitude to Commissioners Sharon Meieran, Susheela Jayapal, Jessica Vega Pederson and Lori Stegmann. Their partnership and commitment to serving the people of Multnomah County have been extraordinary, especially as we worked together to help guide our community through trying times.

As always — but perhaps more this year than ever before — I am profoundly grateful for the tireless dedication and exceptional work of my Chief of Staff, Kimberly Melton, as well as my entire team: Liz Smith Currie, Adam Renon, Liam Frost, Nicole Buchanan, Raffaele Timarchi, Paul Park, Becca Uherbelau, Allison Conkling and Piset Sao.

Without the work of the County's Central Budget Office and all of its staff, this document likely wouldn't exist at all. I'd like to especially thank Budget Director Christian Elkin and County Economist Jeff Renfro for their expertise and steady guidance throughout an incredibly complex budget process and an economic landscape that continues to shift. I am also thankful for Chief Financial Officer Eric Arellano, whose prudent and strategic leadership helps ensure that the County remains on stable financial ground. I also want to express my gratitude to Chief Operating Officer Serena Cruz, who offered immense support and insight during her first Executive Budget process.

And finally, I want to share my deepest gratitude to the 6,000 employees of Multnomah County. Your resilience and unshakeable dedication to serving our neighbors has carried our community through the most challenging chapter of our history. You have leaned into your work with courage and compassion to stabilize, and even save, lives.

Thank you for all the ways in which you show up for our community members and for being part of work that truly matters.

Sincerely,



Deborah Kafoury