



Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Equity (HOPE) Advisory Board Meeting Approved Minutes

March 27, 2024 from 4 pm to 6 pm

Virtual Meeting



- Members Present:** Jessica Andrade* (Philomath City Councilor); Karyle Butcher; Alice Carter; Cade DeLoach; Anita Earl; Matt Easdale; Ari Grossman-Naples; Barbara Hanley; Briae Lewis* (Corvallis City Councilor); Charles Maughan; Rachel McEneny* (Benton County Administrator); Pegge McGuire* (CSC Director); Andrea Myhre.
- Excused:** Bruce Butler; Nancy Wyse* (Benton County Commissioner); Joel Goodwin; Bryan Cotter; Sarah Devine (Co-Chair); Ricardo Contreras; Barbara Hanley; Ailiah Schafer; Chris Workman (Philomath City Manager); Mark Shepard*(Corvallis City Manager).
- Absent:**
- Staff Present:** Julie Arena (HOPE Coordinator); Paula Felipe (Benton County Public Health, recorder); Rebecca Taylor (Benton County Health Department); Chris McFarlane (Benton County Behavioral Health); Brigetta Olson (City of Corvallis Housing Division Manager)
- Guests:**
- *Executive Committee Members.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions.** Reminder of values such as inclusivity, curiosity, kindness, open mindedness and respect. **Changes in HOPE Board Membership: Departures:** Aaron Lewis; Catherine Biscoe. (Openings for Co-Chair – please reach out to Julie Arena). **New Additions:** Jessica Andrade (Philomath City Councilor), Rachel McEneny (Benton County Administrator), Mark Shepard (Corvallis City Manager), and Chris Workman (Philomath City Manager).
- II. **Public Comments (limited to 2-3 minutes).**
Alicia Bublitz from IHN made a public comment regarding IHN’s Community Capacity Building Funds. Feel free to reach out for more info about housing benefits and capacity building funds: Alicia’s contact email: transformation@samhealth.org
- III. **Approval of Minutes: MOTION** made by Rachel McEneny to approve the December 2023 minutes. **Seconded** by Jessica Andrade; All in favor; **MOTION** passed. **Abstained:** Jessica Andrade; Sarah Devine; Andrea Myhre; Ari Grossman-Naples.
- IV. **HOPE Board 2024 Work Plan:**
(Four Quarterly Meetings: March, May, August, October in 2024).
 - HOPE Advisory Board’s Role in Coordinated Homeless Response System:
 - ✓ **Forum** for community and stakeholder engagement, consisting of a wide array of community expertise and representation of groups working on homelessness, housing, and social determinants of health.
 - ✓ **Liaison** between the community and the member governments in collaboration with the Coordinated Office for communications, community engagement, and

informed decision-making for elected officials.

- ✓ **Input** to support the development of programs and ongoing updates of the 5-year Strategic Plan.
- **HOPE 2024 Work Plan**
 - ✓ **March:** overview of what's on the horizon for 2024. Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) and how it aligns with HOPE recommendations.
 - ✓ **May:** FHSP progress on program development – another opportunity for community partner feedback as we move forward with implementation.
 - ✓ **August:** Final community input/engagement session on the FHSP.
 - ✓ **October:** severe weather emergency response plan.
 - ✓ **Note:** *We will be seeking HOPE members to volunteer on smaller work groups for specific projects. Example: FHSP and a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Review Committee with participation from people with lived experience with homelessness.*

V. Coordinated Homeless Response Office - Community Engagement (Staff: Rebecca Taylor, Project Manager); Julie Arena, Program Coordinator). The HOPE Board and HOPE Executive Committee includes staff from four entities (Benton County, City of Corvallis, CSC, and City of Philomath); and elected officials.

- **HB 5019 (2023) Rapid Rehousing Initiative Update and Goals:**
 - Benton County was awarded \$1,266,459.05 through HB 5019 to rehouse 31 households by June 30, 2025.
 - Benton County's HB 5019 Local Planning Group met 7/12 and 7/19 to give feedback on local needs and opportunities to rapidly rehouse our unsheltered community members. This feedback informed the development of our HB 5019 Community Plan submitted to Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) in summer 2023.
 - Feedback identified engagement of property managers/owners as an important part of Benton County's HB 5019 community plan.
 - **Review of Overrepresented Groups in Local Data:**
 - Black and Native American communities
 - Families with children
 - High & complex needs: mental wellness, substance use, physical needs, aging
 - People with high needs who don't qualify for specific programs.
 - What we have heard: **Peer Support** representative of the overrepresented groups provide support through the journey of regaining and maintaining housing; **supportive services, culturally responsive housing navigation** for right fit; **engagement and incentives for property managers/owners**; and **interim solutions** were discussed.
 - Survey results from 13 local providers.
 - **Current Strategies:** Shelters; Supportive Housing Development; and Supportive Services.
 - **Current Barriers:** Inflexible Funding; Insufficient Funding/Scarcity Mindset; Need more housing to House first; Funding Silos; and Timelines for

Development.

- **Current Outcomes:** Wrong Doors; wrong pockets; multiple programs competing for housing.
- **System Level Strategy:** Fund, locate, and secure housing with support services for people experiencing homelessness in a more coordinated and streamlined way. (Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool)
- **Components of FHSP (want HOPE's feedback on these topics):**
 - Accessing or acquiring housing units:
 - Incentives and engagement for property managers/owners to minimize barriers to housing and increase housing options. Recruit property managers and owners as part of the solution.
 - Publicly owned housing.
 - Centralize coordination of systemwide housing resources to streamline prioritized and right-fit housing placement. NO WRONG DOOR for the provider and household.
 - Flexible funding to close funding gaps and braid disparate funding to minimize system complexity for service provider and household. A WHATEVER IT TAKES mindset to find housing and keep housing.
 - Integration with existing referral and data systems (e.g. HMIS and Unite Us) for appropriate referrals and program evaluation. Person centered outcomes.
 - Staff and System Capacity
 - Intensive (right-fit) housing navigation and tenancy supports. Find housing and keep housing.
 - Intensive (right-fit) case management. Support the person throughout their entire journey (unsheltered to housed).
- **Accessing or acquiring housing units: WHY in Benton County?**
 - The current vacancy rate is very low (1%). Meaning there are very few units available to begin with.
 - There are over 400 units of affordable housing in the development pipeline (shout out to partners!)
 - HB 5019's funding is flexible and will be able to address some of the short-term need while more units are built.
 - Feedback from our community has identified property managers/owners' engagement as a gap in our response to homelessness.
- **WHAT is property manager/owner engagement?**
 - Engagement of property managers/owners means working with property managers and owners to connect private-sector housing to our community's response to ending homeless.
 - Strong connections to property managers and owners are important in high-cost, low-vacancy markets, where affordable housing options are limited.
 - Successful partnerships are locally driven and involve ongoing engagement. No single approach is the answer - the unique needs and assets of each community must be considered.

- **Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP)** – Brigetta Olson (City of Corvallis)
 - FHSP are an emerging systems-level strategy to fund, locate, and secure housing for people experiencing homelessness in a more coordinated and streamlined way. Includes streamlining access to resources from public and private entities that offer financial assistance for rents with supportive services for tenants. The FHSP used a prioritized list with eligibility criteria to match resources and housing.
- Staff and System Capacity – Program Development for FHSP. (Julie Arena)
 - Program Coordinator to support FHSP program referrals, data collection, communications, outcomes, etc.
 - Housing Navigator for direct client support with housing navigation, care coordination, referrals and housing placement.
- Community Capacity:
 - Street Outreach to connect people experiencing homelessness with the system of care and referrals to the FHSP.
 - Case Management to support people on their housing journey and make connections to FHSP resources.
- County Recruitment: Share with Networks
 - **Housing Navigator** (PS21) placed with Harm Reduction Team
 - <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/bentonor/jobs/4436382/housing-navigator-ps21?sort=PostingDate%7CDescending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs>
 - We are looking for a Housing Navigator to support families and individuals transition from homelessness to housing stability.
 - **Flexible Housing Program Coordinator (PC41)**
<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/bentonor/jobs/4437371/flexible-housing-program-coordinator-pc41?sort=PostingDate%7CDescending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs>

Want to do meaningful work that will leave a lasting impact in our community? We are currently in search of a Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool Program Coordinator to join our team!

- Notice of NOFO (Funding Opportunity) for FHSP Support Services
 - Open March 15th – applications due April 15th
 - **Street Outreach:** Meeting people where they are at to provide harm reduction and stabilization services with the ultimate goal of connecting them to housing.
 - **Case Management and Wrap Around Supports:** Responsive support services for a range of individual needs throughout the entire journey from unsheltered homelessness to long-term housing stability.
 - <https://finance.bentoncountyor.gov/nofo-hb5019-rrh-case-mgmt-street-outreach/>

Questions/Discussion:

- Karyle: How are we informing the community about what the issues are and what is being done to address them?
- Julie: this meeting is public and promotes what is being done and we also send out press releases and emails and update the website. Would like more feedback on how to better communicate.
- Karyle: You said you did a lot of outreach already to people—mostly service providers?
- Julie: people who are familiar with what the barriers are.
- Karyle: a lot of people who need housing have low income—is there any competition among groups? What about people living with friends and looking for another place to live? Rebecca: this program has specifics related to unsheltered homelessness—scope of work are people who are homeless. State level engages other types of community groups. Julie: with crisis of homelessness, this work/focus is life saving. Brigetta: this is 31 folks getting housed and will not address all the needs of community. We need to address the entire spectrum, such as building lots of diverse units; eviction prevention; rental assistance, among others. Hope to build on lessons learned and prioritize work.
- Fred Edwards (Faith, HOPE, and Charity): regarding competition, Julie and Rebecca, this is really good; this provides more avenues for people. It is a big plus; no competition; you are getting people off the streets; if couch surfing, living in car, they are still homeless and need help getting into apartments; if working and have income, can pay rents; fundable flexing is great; this is awesome. Thank you.
- Rebecca: this program is part of how we utilize the funds that OHSC distributes—specific requirements—flexible housing program to leverage multiple housing programs. Funding now has requirements how to be used—for unsheltered homelessness. OHSC working with each continuum of care on policies on how housing status shows up in history to be eligible for housing; continue talking with continuum of care and Oregon Housing services; working on it now.
- Brigetta Olson: Hopeful we will get other resources that are flexible.
- Andrea Myhre: we housed 42 folks from shelter last year and used Measure 110 funds; lots of sources of funding to bridge gap until Section 8 or if no deposit. Sometimes need deposit right away and we were able to provide that. Managing flexible funds is a lot--having county to contact landlords is helpful. We were doing a big lift and needed help administratively. A little bit of misunderstanding to think we are not communicating; we meet with drop-in center and community, among others; homeless is about community and connection. It is not as linear as you would think. Not all working in a silo.
- Rebecca Taylor: use of silos was more referring to overarching regulatory framework with funding requirements. Phrase silos used to simplify and often overused.
- Chris McFarlane: Chris works with people experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder. Don't think people understand severity of homelessness in Benton County. Meet with clients in camps from north Corvallis to Timberhill, all the way to Willamette Park; to Philomath and east to the river, about 2,000 experience homelessness. Small percentage have access Corvallis drop-in center. Hundreds and hundreds do not receive any services. In camps 7 days a week. To reach those people

is challenging; a lot fear toward people and law enforcement; fear getting arrested again; in and out of jail for trespassing. Huge barriers to get into housing. Harriet's Low barrier model could be replicated—she houses 200 people who could not receive it any other way—she will take anyone—no barrier—no credit checks; no background checks. Her name is Harriet Hughes - Harriet's housing in Philomath.

- Chris: What defines affordable housing? Julie: don't have breakdown; Brigetta has breakdown.
- Chris has a resource—met at the Monarch House with Michael Couch, a crossroads community in Lebanon, does grant writing; several hundred units—could be opportunity to increase funding in Benton County for transitional housing and for access to group homes.
- Alice: worked with several agencies; together works better for us; Harm Reduction program's Chris Gray refers people to us. Concerned with how are we going to take care of ill people; the medically fragile.
- Chris: Benton County is building a 24-hour crisis center downtown; scheduled to be completed summer 2025—will offer opportunity for those needing shelter immediately. In crisis center we don't have enough respite beds. Fred: for center they need to be 18 years and older. Chris: Jackson Youth Center is looking to expand their shelter for under 18 years old.
- Rebecca Taylor: We will be looking at different types of housing units. Partnerships with property managers and owners to identify units for people with various needs. In talks with city now on this issue. Need continuum of housing models.
- Matt: regarding the two new positions posted, is there space to work with people with longer term goals going forward? Rebecca: right now limited duration because tied to funds—goal to continue to innovate and evolve and be flexible, so team members will provide the necessary feedback on future goals as we go forward.
- Karyle: communication is tricky part; we seem to be talking to each other and sensitive to the needs; but out of this circle, not a lot of info about how serious the issue is; and how many people there are; and what is being done about it. Reach beyond the providers; go out to different groups? Rebecca: working with service providers and key community partners and with Health Communications Team to provide resources and information. Take time to create accessible info about this program and we will continue to engage local planning groups and continue work with HOPE and Coordinated Homeless Response Office. A lot in the works right now and continue to look for feedback.
- Karyle: what do you want the communication to accomplish? Like property managers in terms of finding places, but in terms of community at large, who are not very involved, is that a group that needs to be approached? Rebecca: we are having those conversations with communications team. Who are the audiences? Got great feedback tonight for our program development and who to talk with next.
- Brigetta Olson: And, I would add we need time to do the work...working with community partners; having successes; being able to talk about the successes is really important. So getting feedback from HOPE board and getting feedback from our community is important and we need to get the work done so we can get more connected to stable housing opportunities.

- Alice Carter: I have a database of all churches on my computer to send messages. One helpful tool. Met with representative in Salem and talked about housing issues; connect with elected officials. It is a federal problem. We struggle; issue too big for city, county, state, and hope we can keep pushing.
- Barbara: Julie, Rebecca, Brigetta, you all have such a heavy lift; not going to make everyone happy. This is a very sound plan, and I reviewed the positions posted—looked at the income for housing navigator position—they would not be able to live in Corvallis; reach out to OSU. Will be competing with whatever landlords can get from students. No easy answer to that. Julie: OSU has a student housing development across from the library which is exciting news.
- Andrea: from a provider perspective, when large entities like the County make moves like this, it makes us nervous, we worked hard to develop infrastructure; doing our best to work together; not replicating wheels to serve community the best we can. Please reach out to providers for advice and ask us also what we need. Important to have good coordination and relationships all around.
- Julie: this is being pursued because of feedback from providers like Andrea.
- Jessica: A graph or timeline of communication would be helpful. How can people help or who to talk to? Julie: People can reach out to elected, government officials about programs to advocate for housing and getting more funding at local level.
- Brigetta Olson: we reach out to affordable housing developers and how to increase supply. 400 new units in Corvallis; the city is happy to work in partnership with others about timing to leverage state and federal resources; complex issue; more money at the state now.
- Peggy Lynch via the chat: Housing Alliance is working on their 2025-27 budget requests. OHCS budget requests should show up soon so hope you can engage with them.
- Barbara: Affordable housing should be serviced by public transportation, so it can't be too far outside the Corvallis Transit/Linn-Benton Loop, etc. service area.
- Peggy Lynch via the chat: Relatively new OR Emergency Management Agency is looking at their roles related to emergency response--another agency to engage with.
- Karyle: Severe Weather Emergency Response—what is that about? Julie: It is about building a plan for next ice storm; how to build standard operating procedures—we are having meetings now.
- Chris: have contracts with multiple churches to provide immediate shelters during ice, wildfires, smoke; heat; looking to better communicate and access resources as well as provide resources within the shelters; food, cots, electricity; water; city, cert teams, sheriff, police; county city; doing best we can with limited resources to house at drop of a hat; didn't know ice storm would hit; got hit hard; faith community opened up doors to unhoused. Want to make the next emergency to run much smoother.
- Karyle: wondered about plans to provide shelter in wintertime? Julie: we will have updates about sheltering in future meetings.
- Peggy: \$2,500,000 to Benton County for housing units as part of the county's coordinated response to housing and homelessness. I thought this was to meet the

county's "promise" to the Gov on housing units you can provide for this amount of money.

VI. Community Updates

- Severe Weather Emergency Response: We learned so much from recent ice storm, so working on this—more updates in October.
- Legislative update: \$2.5 mil housing funding from state; support housing goals in Benton County.
- Continuum of Care (CoC) update from Community Services Consortium (CSC) (Pegge McGuire): Official notices that CSC is representing Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties for a Tri-County Continuum of Care, has been issued to HUD and to Rural Oregon Continuum of Care and they have acknowledged receipt. Meeting next week with HUD office folks to begin talks with us to verify we have systems and plans in place. And, to talk about funding. Important to have point time count to have baseline for future. Trying to recruit for position to support continuum.
- 5-Year Strategic Plan for HB 4123 was approved and submitted to Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

VII. New County Website and Central Points of Communications:

- All old links/bookmarks, favorites, etc. will direct to the new website, but will encounter a “404 error” and folks will have to navigate through the site to find what they’re looking for.
- Here’s the link to the sign-up form for updates (it is a Constant Contact link so no change): <https://bit.ly/HOPENewsAndUpdates>
- HOPE Advisory Board Website: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/advisory-committees/#hope-board>
- The former Housing and Homelessness page now redirects to: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/coordinated-homeless-response/>
- Central Points of Communications:
 - [Central point of communication](#)
 - [Coordinated Homeless Response Office](#)
 - [Subscribe to HOPE News & Updates](#)
 - [Amplifying aligned messaging through partner engagement](#)

Closing Remarks:

- Rebecca: Good to have the leadership support represented and think of how far we have come.
- Karyle: This is impressive work, congratulations!
- Barbara: hope to have housing data for homeless system and health system for HOPE board by next meeting.
- Next HOPE meeting in May.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:45 pm

