

Home, Opportunity, Planning, & Engagement (HOPE) Advisory Board to Benton County

Approved Minutes April 8, 2026 from 4 pm to 5 pm Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Jessica Andrade (Philomath City Councilor); Bruce Butler (IHN-CCO); Rick Crager (Benton County Administrator); Jim Moorefield (Corvallis City Councilor); Jennifer Sanders (Linn-Benton Housing Authority); Mark Shepard (Corvallis City Manager); Ryan Vogt (Cascades West and CSC); Chris Workman (Philomath City Manager); and Nancy Wyse (Benton County Commissioner).

Excused:

Absent: None

Staff Present: April Holland (Benton Health Department Director); Brigetta Olson (City of Corvallis Housing Manager); Rebecca Taylor (CHRO Program Manager); Julie Arena (CHRO); Paula Felipe (Recorder).

Community Members: None

- I. **Welcome and Introductions.** Rebecca recognized importance of collaborative work, partners, and service providers. Years of listening and planning allow the Coordinated Homeless Response Office to provide system updates today and find solutions to homelessness.
- II. **Public Comment:** none.
- III. **Approval of prior meeting minutes.**
 - a. **MOTION** to approve the 1/14/26 minutes made by Nancy Wyse; Seconded by Jim Moorefield; MOTION passed.
 - b. Abstained: Rick Crager; Mark Shepard
- IV. **Chair and Vice-Chair Election:** Chair will conduct meetings and can second but not make motions. Chair shall vote on each issue after question is called. Vice Chair can set agenda and sit in for Chair. Nominations are as follows:
 - a. **Jessica Andrade**, Philomath City Councilor. Nominated as Chair. Wants to learn more about how to help the housing insecure and engage in conversations with staff to prepare for meetings.
 - b. **Jim Moorefield**. Worked for years in the field and providing direct services; he wants to serve as vice chair, to be closer to conversations to move things forward.

MOTION made by Ryan Vogt to accept nominations; Seconded by Mark Shepard. Voting results are unanimous. **MOTION** passed.
- V. **CHRO Staff Progress Update:**
 - a. Refresher: What does our coordinated system need from HOPE in 2026?
 - Coordination between operational decision makers who have authority to include

other departments to collaborate with CHRO in work groups for system improvements.

- Liaising back to member governments and organizations for awareness, buy-in, and policy change when relevant.
- Focus on where we have local and regional control to make change.

b. **Overarching Goal 4/8: HOPE Board Feedback:**

- Recommendations to assist us in approaching these topics?
- Feedback or guidance to CHRO as we continue in this work?

c. **HOPE 2026 Priorities: Two main CHRO areas of interest for a HOPE work group:**

- **(1) Improved Referral Pathways and Accurate Data Collection (directly support household outcomes)**
 - ✓ Updating our documentation to create a Universal Intake Form for housing and supports for all providers.
 - ✓ Adopting and training on our new coordinated entry (CE) assessment tool and consistent CE data entry into HMIS.
 - ✓ CHRO has engaged providers and has support to move forward with these improvements.
- **(2) Street Outreach and Encampment Response**
 - ✓ Increased staff capacity with funding from Housing 360 grant for the street outreach and response team (SORT) side of encampment response. (Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center)
 - ✓ Connectivity to sheltering. CHRO working to make sure there is shelter capacity at Unity.
 - ✓ Coordination and collaboration with Corvallis Parks & Rec and CPD.
 - ✓ City working on rehabilitation of two properties for next step housing transition capacity.
 - ✓ Neighborhood focus areas – multijurisdictional response team included discussions with Parks & Rec, CPD, CDDC, and county BH.
 - ✓ Discussed the structure and possibilities for shared agreements between service provision and enforcement.
- **The Ask for HOPE Members**
 - ✓ Buy-in and understanding from leadership about the complexity of these two topics, how they are interrelated across multiple agencies, and the staff capacity at the CHRO necessary to move forward these system improvements to solve homelessness.
 - ✓ Funding Opportunities: collaboration to plan around other local funds so we fill gaps instead of duplicate. Partnership for any collaborative grant opportunities.

- ✓ We need continued leadership support for areas beyond CHRO's purview.

VI. Coordinated Homeless System Update:

- a. **Regional Coordinator Role**
- b. **Statewide Sheltering Program**
- c. **Shelter Bed Survey**
- d. **PIT Count**
- e. **City and County coordination**
- f. **Property Manager Outreach**

VII. CHRO Progress Updates:

- CHRO has been selected to serve as Regional Coordinator for Benton County.
- CHRO is supporting a Local Planning Group process to create a Regional Assessment of gaps and needs.
- CHRO is utilizing prior local plans from HB 5019 and our Strategic Plan which aligns with the HOPE Recommendations.
- CHRO is engaging our Local Planning Group which includes homeless service providers, health care, behavioral health, supported housing, school district, day use and hygiene providers, etc.
- This outreach and engagement will be a heavy lift throughout the spring to meet our state requirements and ensure our local community partners remain involved at every step.
- Informing the Statewide Sheltering Program (SSP) with ongoing feedback to the state about the structure and funding.
- CHRO staff are directly informing and impacting state guidelines and program structure with our attendance and involvement in a variety of meetings and work groups. CHRO staff communicate local community feedback in these state forums.
- We elevate issues to the county Board of Commissioners (BOC) where elected leadership is necessary for advocacy.
- The CHRO conducted a shelter bed survey to identify all funding sources, scope of services, and available beds to provide the state with accurate data and information.
- CHRO staff engaged shelter providers (Unity, COI, Jackson Street Youth Services, and Faith Hope & Charity) to ensure accurate information is being provided to our state partners.
- The annual Point in Time (PIT) count for unsheltered and sheltered homelessness occurred during January 28-February 6, 2026.
- During December and January, CHRO staff provided leadership, coordination, outreach and training for volunteers, communication with all PIT counting site leads, and assignment of over 40 volunteers to sites throughout Benton County.

- The CHRO provided funding for incentives to engage over 300 unsheltered individuals to take the PIT survey.
- CHRO staff will be giving an update to the Benton County Board of Commissioners (BOC) in May 2026 and will share more accurate data counts from the PIT.
- CHRO continues to engage property managers with coordination from City partners.
- CHRO coordination with the City of Corvallis includes ongoing coordination around key properties, such as Van Buren and Harrison, to ensure local infrastructure planning complements our regional obligations.
- CHRO staff are working closely with the City of Corvallis to align the scope of services supported by city and county homelessness funding with the expectations of the Statewide Shelter Program (SSP).
- This collaboration is focused on creating consistent, integrated service standards that strengthen our regional system and ensure local investments directly support our shared state-mandated shelter and rehousing objectives.

DISCUSSION/COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Jim:** Where is the money flowing and what is the pathway for shelter and related services? And how does it get to those organizations and the regional coordinator? **Rebecca:** Referral pathways now have funding for overarching coordination and leadership with HB 4123 funding, which provides foundational support for my position and for grant writer/researcher. Funding from state for Oregon rehousing initiative allocation: We met our goal of 51 households; we were able to rehouse 58 households (about 120 people) in total. With grants comes admin and street outreach funding; it is related to our ability to create universal referral and provide trainings; data collection and quality and technical assistance; to build capacity in our program.
- **Rebecca:** With those grants comes administrative funding. It also comes with street outreach funding. It comes with unit access, various different eligible activities within those grants that are directly related to our ability to take on projects like creating universal referral and providing trainings for how to use that referral in a one-on-one with households. It also provides for data collection and data quality and the technical assistance that our providers need. With the Oregon Rehousing Initiative, there's actually direct funding that goes to providers who provide the supportive services for the households that we've rehoused through the rental assistance available. So, they could provide case management services, wraparound support services. So in Benton County, there is the shelter funding and rapid rehousing funding. By us having those two together, it allows us to provide connectivity between our shelter and our housing. And then we also pursued the housing 360 because that was a very specific grant that was focused on people with high complex needs. What we are seeking is guidance on how do we standardize these processes so when we have a multi-agency response to unsheltered homelessness, that each player knows their roles and responsibilities, and that improves the outcome for the households that we are trying to navigate out of unsheltered homelessness.
- **Mark Shepard:** working with service providers, what kind of response are you getting with improved pathways and accurate data and street outreach? Are you seeing any resistance or understanding

and support? Rebecca: A great process has started with gaining a shared language. Folks want to move towards the coordinated entry and utilizing the universal referral form. Our goal is to provide a draft to them by the 10th to get feedback. In addition to the street outreach, I worked very closely with the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center to reach an agreement on a contract.

City of Corvallis Leadership:

- Coordination with Parks & Rec and Corvallis Police Department. We are seeking leadership support to enable coordination and collaboration with Parks and Recreation staff on tools and practices that would strengthen shared understanding of encampment locations, service needs, and outreach activity.
- CHRO staff are prepared to work directly with Parks staff on technical and operational components.
- Leadership-level endorsement to open and sustain this collaborative conversation
- **Comments: Mark:** Parks Dept does have a process for geo referencing camps and track when they encounter them; and willing to provide that for PIT count. Parks will continue to provide data to help target work where they are in park system. Rebecca: Neighborhood Focus area: to sit down with agencies who respond to encampment; want to make sure provide resources to staff response to plan out and create a scope schedule include parks and police—will seek once that contract is finalized. Mark: That should work. I can't imagine why parks would not engage that more formal process. Will have a dedicated police staff, essentially a park ranger, a point person with police department, at least initially.

Benton County Leadership:

- Support to enable county staff to work with the CHRO on standard operating procedures regarding connecting justice involved individuals and the health and housing systems.
- Specifically, this includes county staff who interact with justice involved households (drug court, deflection, diversion) and behavioral health (BH).
- CHRO is already in communication at the staff level with these programs.
- **Comments: Nancy:** clarify what is being asked: **Rebecca:** A work group may need to be established, so is that on staff to come back and identify those folks? At the county level, continuing to support the lines of communication that are happening here and understanding the connection between these other programs. On a staff level, potential funding resources that may become available where housing is one component of that and other programs could seek supporting the housing connection part. We've taken the lead on pursuing funding sources to have a primary housing and shelter focus. We would love to be part of a more shared approach for funding resources, and then we can specialize in the housing component of that. In addition to that, it may be memorandum of understanding with some of these other programs, specifically to make sure that referral pathways and releases of information and the ability to have specific staff capacity in these other programs committed to a level of response that is necessary for the housing component to be successful. So this would require staff being able to access resources that are beyond our scope and our purview.

CSC & Cascades West COG Leadership

- CE HMIS support – the CHRO is transitioning into the lead facilitator role for CE case conferencing. CHRO will continue to rely on the expertise and technical skill of CSC during this transition. We may need to evaluate what ongoing technical assistance looks like from CSC.
- Referral pathways: ADRC COG support for housing transitions for older/disabled individuals. Timeline for assessments for activities of daily living (ADLs) and personal care attendants (PCAs) – can we explore ways to improve access to assessments to minimize delays in care for vulnerable households transitioning out of homelessness?
- **Comments: Julie:** the reason we are covering each of your roles in this joint meeting is so all of you see the coordination all of our agencies are having at staff level with the CHRO.
- **Ryan Vogt:** On CSC side related to HMIS support, keep working with Dina. Important for lens of coordinated entry not being disconnected for each county. Looking to see how we can extend what is worthwhile; coordinated entry; support with HMIS, Deena can speak more to where we go in future. Committed to getting together to discuss assessment and what can we do to move timelines forward.

Philomath Leadership:

- Continuing to inform how the CHRO can expand this work to address rural needs. Continued dialogue as the affordable development moves forward.
- The CHRO is working on a universal intake and referral pathway. We are already working with Harriet's Housing for households and with Philomath Community Services (PCS).
- Crossroads is adding some support services onsite in Philomath.
- **Comments: Jessica Andrade:** Good to hear thanks! Can't think of what to contribute at the moment. Will check with staff and get back to you.

IHN-CCO Leadership:

- Benton County still remains without a contract for HRSN per member per month tenancy supports.
- Leadership support to elevate the importance of coordinated and sustainable funding for this work would be greatly appreciated.
- OHCS continues to encourage leveraging HRSN rent and tenancy support for funding.
- **Comments: Bruce Butler:** new information: Alicia on team; there's been recent forward motion; had communication with April yesterday and believes that our contracting team will have something to put in final review tomorrow.
- Ryan: Given that HRSN currently provides tenancy support for eligible individuals and IHN CCO does a funding mechanism for that, do we see that going to a per member per month situation that allows for a flexible spending pool will change the delivery of the current system? Rebecca: Yeah. Bruce Butler: Yeah, that's one thing we'll have to look at what the coordination of funding between those two streams would be and how many individuals would be impacted. In other words, what do we really mean by member?

In this case, and I'm suspecting it's like per resident, not like across all IHN members necessarily. Rebecca: I will follow up. There's a lot of complexity to this topic that is definitely not at all even closely given justice in the amount of time we would need to in this presentation that all those considerations about making sure that there aren't dual enrollments across different agencies. We've been thoughtful about how we can leverage this with our existing supportive service contracts with our community-based organizations. And so it's a way to centralize resources through the Court and Homeless Response Office as it relates to folks in our flexible housing subsidy pool.

LBHA Leadership

- Continue to be a CHRO partner to advocate to the state to ensure state funded housing assistance fits effectively within existing housing programs and fills service gaps.
- Formal partnerships and referral pathways to improve transitions between limited duration rental assistance programs and the housing choice voucher.
- CHRO will follow up regarding state funding for supportive services and the HCLGP. (Housing Choice Landlord Guarantee Program): Julie: it's a financial safety net for property managers who rent to folks who have a Section 8 voucher. And it did apply to FHSP households that were rehoused by a certain date.
But that safety net is now up in the air for our FHSP households that will be enrolled going forward. And so we are learning more about that as we go.
- **Comments: Jennifer Sanders:** I understand the complexity of that and we're totally in support of getting this going. The one thing I wanted to give input on is the LBHA's role and specifically in the ones that we've had success with recently. It's important that we're coordinating on the reporting on those families and making sure that one is tracking after they fall into the permanent housing world or the voucher. We can connect to make sure that's happening, some sort of a tracking system or that we're coordinating that piece, I think that would be fantastic.
- Rebecca: Excellent. We've also been able to secure tables at the state to provide feedback around some changes that we are anticipating potentially around how they may fund the supportive services moving forward. And, you know, having LBHA potentially provide some anecdotal content to say how important the supportive services are that come from agencies to make sure that your programs are sustained and for the household outcomes that you're hoping to achieve. There might be some opportunity to do some shared advocacy between the county and LBHA on this topic.
- Julie: HCLGP is the Housing Choice Landlord Guarantee Program, and it's a financial safety net for property managers who rent to folks who have a Section 8 voucher. And it did apply to FHSP households that were rehoused by a certain date.

Next Steps:

- Julie: May 12th, you can hear an update from us at the Board of Commissioners Office. The BOC will include pit count data from our continuum of care. And in July, we plan to return with updates about how it's going as the regional coordinator with our statewide shelter plan and our regional

assessment of needs. Once we know what our funding allocation is, we have 60 days to submit our regional plan. We should know by July. And we also plan to have further progress with both of those work group topic areas.

- We may need further guidance from you in leadership about how to move things forward or formalize things.
- There's also lots of ways to stay updated for anybody who is tuning in. You can subscribe to get updates. Follow up with Julie or Rebecca if you have any questions.

HOPE Website: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/advisory-committees/#hope-board>

Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) Website: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/coordinated-homeless-response/>

Meeting Adjourned at 5:14 pm