Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Engagement (HOPE) Advisory Board

Staff Report for November 10, 2026 HOPE Meeting

Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a refresher on the role of the Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Engagement (HOPE) Advisory Board, update members on progress within Benton County's coordinated homeless response system, and discuss emerging state funding uncertainties that may impact shelter, rehousing, and housing stabilization efforts across Oregon.

Over the past several years, Benton County has worked to move beyond a collection of individual homelessness programs toward a more coordinated regional system. Through the Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO), local governments, service providers, healthcare partners, housing organizations, and community members have partnered to align resources, strengthen accountability, and improve pathways from homelessness to housing.

HOPE plays an important role in this work. No single organization oversees the entire homelessness response system. HOPE exists to provide a forum where partner organizations, policy makers, funders, and community leaders can coordinate efforts, identify system-wide barriers, and connect regional priorities to actions within their own organizations.

Community concerns, ideas, and emerging issues may arise through many forums, including public comment, local governments, providers, healthcare organizations, housing partners, and community groups. HOPE does not replace those forums. Rather, it provides a structure for regional coordination when issues affect multiple organizations, jurisdictions, funding streams, or systems.

As HOPE members, representatives serve as liaisons between their organizations and the coordinated system by:

- Bringing community concerns, organizational priorities, and emerging issues to HOPE.
- Staying informed about ongoing system efforts.
- Sharing HOPE discussions and recommendations within their organizations.
- Helping connect new ideas to existing initiatives and partnerships.
- Supporting coordinated action across organizations where regional collaboration is needed.

As this coordinated system continues to mature, HOPE members play a critical role in helping their organizations and the broader community understand how existing efforts connect and contribute to shared regional goals.

Building a Coordinated System: Progress to Date

State and local investments over the last several years have enabled Benton County to strengthen coordination across the homelessness response system.

Through CHRO leadership and collaboration with community partners, Benton County has:

- Built partnerships across housing, healthcare, local government, behavioral health, and social services.
- Aligned programs and funding strategies across multiple agencies and jurisdictions.

- Developed and initiated implementation of a Universal Referral Process to improve coordination and housing access for people.
- Strengthened provider accountability and performance expectations through formal partnerships through the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP).
- Improved coordination between shelter providers, outreach teams, housing programs, behavioral health services, and local governments.
- Expanded partnerships with affordable housing developers and property managers.
- Attempted to pursue opportunities to leverage Medicaid funding through Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) services.

These efforts are already producing measurable outcomes. Since implementation of Benton County's coordinated rehousing approach, more than 120 individuals have successfully exited homelessness through coordinated housing interventions. While these results are encouraging, the system remains in the early stages of implementation and continues to require sustained investment, partnership, and refinement.

State Funding Outlook and Advocacy Priorities

At prior HOPE meetings, discussions focused heavily on Benton County's Fiscal Year 2027 shelter funding shortfall and the resources necessary to sustain local shelter capacity.

Since that time, additional state-level funding uncertainty has emerged.

Potential reductions affecting the Statewide Shelter Program (SSP), Oregon Rehousing Initiative (ORI), and Long-Term Rental Assistance (LTRA) programs may have impacts extending beyond emergency shelter capacity alone. These investments support interconnected shelter, rehousing, and housing stabilization efforts that communities across Oregon have spent years building.

As a result, CHRO's advocacy messaging has evolved.

The central concern is no longer limited to the number of shelter beds that can be funded in a single fiscal year. The broader concern is whether communities will have sufficient stability and time to fully implement coordinated systems before key investments are reduced or eliminated.

The success of these investments depends on the partnerships, referral pathways, accountability structures, and coordinated service delivery systems that local communities like Benton County have spent years developing.

Significant reductions in shelter, rehousing, or housing stabilization investments could:

- Increase returns to homelessness among households currently receiving housing supports.
- Reduce shelter and rehousing capacity.
- Undermine local partnerships and service infrastructure.
- Shift costs to healthcare systems, behavioral health services, emergency departments, law enforcement, courts, jails, transportation systems, and local governments.
- Reduce the return on public investments already made toward building coordinated systems.

What the Coordinated System Needs from HOPE

CHRO continues to facilitate coordination and system development; however, lasting system improvements cannot be achieved by a small staff team alone.

The coordinated system requires active leadership from the organizations represented on the HOPE Board.

Current priorities include:

- Universal Referral Process implementation.
- Shelter and rehousing system stabilization.
- Long-term rental assistance and housing retention.
- Development and implementation of Street Outreach and Encampment Response best practices that take a services first approach to illegal camping in Benton County.
- Housing access through landlord and developer partnerships.
- Improved provider accountability and service quality.
- Leveraging healthcare funding opportunities through HRSN and/or Medicaid.
- Alignment of local investments around shared outcomes.

To support this work, HOPE members are encouraged to:

- Understand ongoing work before creating new forums, initiatives, or workgroups.
- Connect their organization's resources, expertise, partnerships, and influence to existing efforts.
- Identify opportunities where their sector can support housing stability and homelessness reduction.
- Bring barriers, emerging issues, and opportunities for collaboration to HOPE.
- Champion coordinated investments and solutions within their own organizations.
- Help transform coordination into organizational action.

The value of HOPE is not simply discussing community challenges. The value of HOPE is helping organizations remain connected to the broader system and ensuring that regional efforts are reinforced, expanded, and sustained through collective leadership.

CHRO Progress Updates

The CHRO has an open Request for Proposals (RFP) that closes November 19, 2026. This RFP involves transitional housing and community based supportive services for a residential location in Corvallis, in collaboration with the City of Corvallis. All RFP details are available on the RFP website: https://www.demandstar.com/app/limited/bids/552262/details

The Universal Referral Form (URF) and coordinated referral process continues to pilot this form with new FHSP enrolling households. The CHRO hosted four training sessions in August and September for community partners who use the homelessness management information system (HMIS), as well as partners who may interact with households experiencing homelessness but do not utilize HMIS. The CHRO continues to incorporate community feedback from these sessions into the form and into the process for coordinated referrals for supports and housing.

CHRO staff presented at the statewide Oregon Public Health Association (OPHA) annual conference in Salem in October to educate statewide partners on the value of outreach and engagement to property managers as part of the solution to homelessness. This pilot to fund staff for landlord outreach and engagement was supported by investments from IHN-CCO.

United Way has launched a new volunteer platform to coordinate, track, leverage, and publicize volunteer opportunities across the tri-county area. Benton County will be utilizing this platform to recruit and coordinate point in time (PIT) count volunteers for the 2027 PIT count in late January. The CHRO collected feedback from homeless service providers following a season of intense severe weather sheltering activation. That provider feedback highlighted the need for increased volunteers who are trained to support people experiencing homelessness. The CHRO has worked with United Way over the past two years to share this feedback and community need to move forward with this volunteer platform. https://uwlbl.galaxydigital.com/