



Addressing homelessness in greater Portland

Regional Supportive Housing Services program

In recent years, homelessness and housing prices have both increased dramatically in the Portland area. Metro’s supportive housing services program is designed to help people find and stay in housing.

The region’s voters approved a regional affordable housing bond in November 2018, funding the creation of thousands of permanently affordable homes throughout the region.

In May 2020, voters in greater Portland approved a measure that would raise money for supportive housing services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Community members and leaders from around the region developed the measure, recognizing that individuals and families need support to find and stay in their homes.

Supportive Housing Services Program

Metro’s supportive housing services program will provide the much-needed wraparound services to help reduce homelessness across greater Portland.

The program provides services for as many as 5,000 people experiencing prolonged homelessness with complex disabilities, and as many as 10,000 households experiencing short-term homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Multiple studies have shown that supportive housing services increases housing stability among many other benefits. Metro’s supportive housing services program will pay for services that effectively and permanently elevate people out of homelessness, such as:



- case management
- mental health care
- addiction and recovery treatment
- job training
- housing assistance and
- culturally-specific services

How is the program funded?

The program collects a 1 percent tax on all taxable income of more than \$125,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for joint filers. It also collects a 1 percent tax on profits from businesses with gross receipts of more than \$5 million. A tax on business profits does not tax business income that pays for such expenses as payroll, rent, equipment and inventory purchases.

How many people need assistance?

Estimates of homelessness in the region range between 6,000 and 12,000 people.

In January 2019, officials counted 5,711 people experiencing homelessness in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Education counted more than 7,000 students who experienced homelessness in the 2018 school year in Metro-area school districts. These reports undercount people experiencing

homelessness while staying with a friend or family, or living in vehicles.

In recent years, more people are experiencing 'chronic' or prolonged homelessness. Approximately 3,123 to 4,935 people in the region experience homelessness related to complex and disabling conditions.



Who becomes homeless in the Portland region?

The January 2019 count found that the majority of those surveyed in Multnomah County are longtime Oregonians who lost access to housing because of rent increases. A quarter of people experiencing homelessness in greater Portland were born in the region; more than half had lived in the region for more than two years. Thirty-six percent were people of color, including 14 percent of indigenous ancestry. More than three-quarters had a disability. Nearly half had experienced domestic violence.

Local communities use funds

Revenue is distributed within the portions of Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties that are inside Metro's district. Revenue is distributed proportionate to the tax revenue estimated to be collected from individuals in those counties.

Agencies addressing homelessness in Multnomah County receive 45.3 percent of the revenue, Washington County agencies receive 33.3 percent, and Clackamas County agencies receive 21.3 percent of the collected revenue.

Each county develops a Local Implementation Plan based on local need. Funds are distributed as rent assistance through local housing authorities, and service contracts with local social service and health care providers who serve people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Accountability and oversight

Oversight is provided by a 20-member committee that broadly represents the diversity of the region and lends expertise to the program. Members provide policy and programmatic guidance, monitor programmatic expenditures and evaluate outcomes. All meetings and materials of the community oversight body will be available and accessible to the public.

Metro is required to have an annual independent financial audit and for the results to be made publicly available.

The program restricts administrative expenses incurred by Metro to no more than 5 percent after collection expenses.

Administrative funds pay for oversight and accountability, data collection, coordination, and other costs associated with management of the regional program.

Learn more

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For more information email
housingservices@oregonmetro.gov