

# Appendix B:

## Public Comment

FY 2013-2014 Action Plan



**FEDERAL FUNDING OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



The Federal Funding Oversight Committee presided over the Consortiums annual Housing Needs and Community Development needs hearing on November 14, 2012. Over 70 people attended representing residents, housing services staff, and clients in Multnomah County. The attendees were asked to offer the Consortium testimony on housing and community development needs in terms of the Consortiums eight identified priorities for federal funding. Below is a summary of the testimony about each Consortium priority. In general the top themes that emerged were; more affordable rental housing is needed, permanent supportive housing is the right priority over shelter and transitional housing, more transitional housing services are needed for women than in the past, more case management and mental health services are needed, focus on living wage job creation, services in general need to be more culturally appropriate and designed to serve those most in need. The attendees made it clear that there is a heightened need to provide housing, health and economic opportunity services to domestic violence survivors. There were several mentions of how making housing or development investments that help households get more income, better education, and other basic needs in addition to making housing affordable are also important. Ideally this information can assist the Portland Budget Advisory Committee as they prioritize federal and local dollars for Portland’s housing programs.

Priority Areas focus group comments	Comment	Staff Response
Rental Housing	There is a need for more affordable housing, especially units affordable to very low income (0-30%MFI) residents, and disbursement of affordable units throughout Multnomah County not just Rockwood and North Portland.	Portland has made rental households for very low income households a top priority.  Rental Assistance in Gresham, Human Solutions, Inc. - Provide rent assistance to prevent homelessness by providing 90 very low and low-income Gresham households either short-term (1 month) or long-term (up to 4 months) tenant based rent assistance. Each month names are drawn randomly and served after eligibility determination in the order their names are drawn, without preference or discrimination. Location: Citywide Recommended amount: \$114,000  Rental Assistance Gresham, Home Forward – Project provides one-time assistance (up to 6 months) for move-in expenses and ongoing rent supplement (up to 24 months) to approximately 7 extremely low income at-risk, homeless, developmentally delayed or psychiatrically disabled Gresham Households. Location: Citywide. Recommended amount: \$24,081
Homeownership	There is still a need for closing the minority homeownership gap. There is a need for more foreclosure prevention assistance.	We agree there is still a gap and the Portland Housing Bureau has identified this issue in their strategic plan.
Homelessness Prevention	More rental assistance is needed because of the need and because it is a cost effective way to stabilize households. Foreclosure prevention and fair housing enforcement are part of the homelessness prevention strategy.	Rent assistance is an effective tool for preventing and ending homelessness. If more federal funds were available for this activity, as in past years with federal stimulus funds, our community would likely direct more funds to this strategy.

Short Term Shelter	Short term shelters need to be better organized to move people quickly into permanent housing with supportive services. Short term shelters also need to improve cultural competency and recognize the unique needs of Domestic Violence victims, women, youth, non-English speakers, people of color, people with disabilities and culturally specific communities.	Publicly-funded shelters require that the operators demonstrate effectiveness at moving people quickly into permanent housing. Effectiveness would be greatly improved if there was more affordable housing, living wage jobs, and services for people with disabling conditions. City and County will continue to review shelter outcomes to ensure equitable outcomes and cultural competency.
Economic Opportunity	Economic opportunity programs should be individualized and culturally relevant. The programs need to give priority to creating living wage jobs. There is a need to improve these programs by matching future employer needs with appropriate training, linking training services with public investments, and by matching future economic development with current investments in transportation. Economic Opportunity programs are most successful for the client when there is recognition of unique population needs, such as those of Domestic Violence survivors, single female headed households and support for addressing employment related supports i.e. childcare, transportation, etc..)	Agreed. Staff will continue to monitor funded programs to ensure that they remain culturally relevant, lead to living wage jobs, and remain responsive to changing economic conditions and workforce needs.
Gresham Economic Opportunity	Employment services need to be individualized, culturally competent and available at locations convenient for low-income job seekers. The focus should be on living wage jobs, not just “employment”.	<u>Living Solutions</u> , East County Solutions, Inc. – Provision of job placement and follow-up coaching as well as life skills and job training for 75 very low-income Gresham residents. Program graduates will be able to secure and retain living wage employment, become self-sufficient, and contribute to the economic well-being of Gresham. The program will increase the pool of skilled, reliable workers available to Gresham employers, and decrease employer training and turnover costs. Location: Citywide. Recommended amount: \$200,000
Gresham Infrastructure	Testimony was focused on job training and services that get people in transition job ready. These services were seen as an “infrastructure” of support services.	El Programa Hispano, Catholic Community Services - Provision of emergency services and life skills to assist 5,000 Latinos in Gresham to overcome short-term crises and to gain the knowledge and skills they need to become more self-sufficient. The service model of the project envisions two crucial services: Immediate help to clients in crisis and informational workshops and life skills classes to clients so that they become more self-sufficient and avoid crises in the future. Location: Citywide. Recommended amount: \$44,530

<p>Multnomah County Infrastructure</p>	<p>Housing providers need Multnomah County to play a larger role in gathering service outcome data, best practices, and coordination of support services, including mental health. Domestic violence advocates need more support investments in East Multnomah County and continued support for female focused programs.</p>	<p>Multnomah County funds Human Solutions programs of Transitional housing with services for homeless families.</p>
	<p>In general there is a need for more investment in growing resources for affordable housing and support services, collaborative budgeting between City &amp; County, a shared and common vision and prioritization in budgeting a balance between decentralization of services (e.g., not all downtown) vs. the efficiency of geographically concentrating services, and alignment of investments with existing transportation corridors.</p>	<p>Staff agrees with this comment, we try to have those conversations about collaborative budgeting as they present themselves.</p>

**Get the complete November 14<sup>th</sup> Hearing Public Comment**

Full list of Public Comments from November 14, 2012 Consortium One Year Action Plan hearing can be found online on the Portland Housing Bureau webpage for the [Consolidated Plan](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/51008). <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/51008>

**FEDERAL FUNDING OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



The Portland members of the Federal Funding Oversight Committee presided over the Portland Action Plan hearing on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013. The attendees were asked to offer the Consortium testimony on housing and community development needs in terms of the Consortiums eight identified priorities for federal funding. Below is a summary of the testimony about each Consortium priority. Ideally this information can assist the Portland Budget Advisory Committee as they prioritize federal and local dollars for Portland's housing programs.

Commenter	Comment	Staff Response
	No Public Comment was offered.	Minutes of the meeting can be requested.

Public Comments from April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 Portland One Year Action Plan hearing

**FEDERAL FUNDING OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



**April 17 Consortium Hearing**

All comments were made as a collective conversation about the Action Plan priorities. Most participants were FFOC members, or CCEH members

		Third One Year Portland Action Plan Housing Strategies and Priorities Hearing Comments
Topic	Comment	Staff Response
Rental Housing	Rental Housing Focus group comments	See responses to the Needs Hearing
	Our rental housing strategy may need to be more precise about who we want to serve. For example, do we want to serve, specifically of folks at 30% AMI, or those with disabilities, or with other barriers? How about large families that can't find adequately sized affordable units, or some other group that is challenged in a way we don't normally think about. It seems that we'd want to be a bit more precise esp. if these definitions will drive funding decisions.	Notices of Funding and other competitive processes help us focus our funding on address particular barriers.

	Homeownership focus group comments	Staff Response
	<p>Are our homeownership programs addressing community needs?</p>	<p><b>Portland Housing Center (PHC)</b>  PHC has two advisory committees: one composed of Latinos, and the other of African-Americans. PHC has focused primarily on Latinos and African-Americans because they were hardest hit by the recession. These advisory committees provide ongoing input about community needs and best strategies to respond to those needs. They regularly review PHC’s performance reports, and set goals for the number of people of color they think PHC should reach.</p> <p>PHC has also partnered with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Garcia;</li> <li>• APICIA (Asian &amp; Pacific Islander Community Improvement Association) which targets its services to Russian immigrants as well as Asian and Pacific Islanders;</li> <li>• The Urban League;</li> <li>• Black United Fund;</li> <li>• Hacienda CDC (on their homebuyer fair); and</li> <li>• “1145”, a group of African American pastors taking a broad approach to the well being of their community—they address housing, health care, education, and gangs.</li> </ul> <p>PHC designed a culturally specific financial fitness program for African-Americans that was evaluated favorably by PSU. (This helps low to moderate income families purchase homes they can afford and retain for the long term.)</p> <p>PHC provides financial literacy and homebuyer education classes to Habitat’s homebuyers.</p> <p>PHC also has the highest rate in the state of households with IDA’s that use them to purchase homes.</p> <p>About 33% of PHC’s clients are from communities of color, and PHC reflects on their board of directors and their staff the communities of color it seeks to serve.</p> <p>Few Native Americans have taken advantage of PHC’s services, so PHC refers some Native Americans to NAYA Family Center</p>

	<p>Have equitable outcomes been considered?  Habitat affirms that homeownership is an important, if often neglected, part of the response to the affordable housing shortage in our community:</p> <p>Homeownership is an important method to counteract gentrification in low to moderate income communities and traditional communities of color. Without affordable housing, communities of color will continue to emigrate from Portland.</p> <p><b>Shelter Focus group comments</b></p>	<p><b>Habitat:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% of Habitat’s buyers are people of color, and 10 to 15% are disabled;</li> <li>• Homeownership is a hedge against rising rental prices;</li> <li>• 26% of Habitat’s buyers come from subsidized housing.</li> </ul> <p>Habitat’s goal in the next 3 to 5 years is to impact 150 to 200 homes in Cully, the most diverse and one of the most gentrifying neighborhoods in the city.</p>
<b>Shelter</b>	<b>Shelter Focus group comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>
	<p>Concern that people of color do not go to shelter. For people of color and others who have been incarcerated shelters may seem like a repeat of prison (or extension of prison). -Are shelters culturally appropriate? Should they be? Do we need to do both? Can we make shelters more culturally aware and deploy resources that meet the needs of communities of color.</p>	<p>Jurisdictional staff will continue to monitor publicly-funded shelters to ensure equitable access and outcomes, as well as cultural relevance. Staff will continue to work with communities of color to identify those interventions, for preventing and ending homelessness, that are culturally relevant.</p>
	<p>Mental health /addictions are often misdiagnosed for black people.</p>	<b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b>
	<p>Trauma informed services. Mobile mental health services. Expecting people to make it to a clinic is unrealistic. The fee-for –service system is not a person-centered; does not allow serving people without insurance.</p>	<b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b>

	<p>Anti-stigma work (for mental illness) so people are more willing to come forward .Training around signs and symptoms of mental illness</p>	<p><b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b></p>
	<p>We use shelters constantly in a healthcare setting. Shelters are often the beginning of a long-term solution.</p>	<p>Our community’s plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>There is a lack of shelters for women. What is our response to individuals endangered by living in crowded situations or in places where they experience violence?</p>	<p>Our community has both public and privately-funded shelters for youth, families, adults and domestic violence survivors. The City directs federal and local general funds to 2 shelters for adult men and 2 for adult women. Our community also uses federal and local funds for a Short-Term Rent Assistance program, operated by Home Forward, that can be used for eviction prevention or housing placement rent assistance.</p>
	<p>Shelters are a place for people to stay while where in the process of connecting them with housing and treatment.</p>	<p>Our community’s plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>Concern about 30-day stay limit at some shelters; sometimes go from one shelter to another. Agreement that we need much more funding,</p>	<p>Our community’s plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>Agree with funding both shelter and short term rent assistance (for eviction prevention a housing placement from street and shelter)</p>	<p>Our community’s plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>Can we make a Single waiting list at SAFES/Jean’s place for women? Interested in hearing from providers, how might that work?</p>	<p>City staff will evaluate whether this is possible, in the next several months.</p>

	<p>Conversations are happening about how homelessness presents itself among communities of color. Are people of color missing out on housing resources that are only available through Shelter? There is a belief that staff diversity results in more diverse clients. What is being done to increase the diversity of staff at shelters?</p>	<p>Most housing resources are not available through shelter, but through our community's Short-Term Rent Assistance program, operated by Home Forward. Funds are used for eviction prevention or housing placement rent assistance. These funds are provided through 19 nonprofit organizations.</p>
<p><b>Homelessness Prevention</b></p>	<p>Homelessness prevention focus group comments Are current homelessness prevention strategies effective?</p>	<p><b>Staff Response</b> Our community's plan to end homeless evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>Group agreement that homelessness prevention is effective. Discussion about more or less effectiveness depending on household types and barriers. Challenges: tight rental vacancy rate, willingness of landlords to rent to people with barriers. City flexible funding allows us to take advantage of housing opportunities.</p>	<p>Our community's plan to end homeless evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>
	<p>Short term rent assistance program – specifically HOME/ESG: General problems with vacancies and lack of housing options made worse by regulations that slow the process down, costing housing opportunities, and limit housing choices – FMR standards for ESG make it very difficult to use. Lack of flexibility and ability to deploy quickly limits choices.</p>	<p>Our community's plan to end homeless evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.</p>

	Group agreed it would be good to maximize amount of ESG that is used for programs other than rent assistance and to put as much flexible city money into rent assistance as possible.	Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.
	Equity Lens: The lack of federal flexibility and Fair Market Rent standards limit choice and leave often leave little choice but to move people out of their neighborhoods. Local funding helps offset this because agencies can move quickly and can honor people's desire to remain in a neighborhood even in non-conventional housing arrangements (shared housing etc.).	See the Portland Housing Growth Opportunity and Analysis
	Short term rent assistance is particularly good at meeting the diverse housing needs of different communities, including communities of color. Discussion of culturally specific outreach dollars in Short Term Rent Assistance program.	Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.
<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	<b>Economic Opportunity Focus Group Comments</b> EOI – In terms of capacity the program does not address the number of people who need the program. Programmatically does not meet the need for the service.  Is EOI outreaching to culturally specific agencies?  What level of these funds are reaching communities of color?  Communities of color are over represented in incarceration, unemployment and underrepresented in education. The EOI grant, however, cannot fully compensate.	<b>Staff Response</b>  Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.  Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.  Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.  Our community's plan to end homelessness evaluates outcomes and reviews and promotes effective practices.

	Need to coordinate w/ other systems (e.g. TANF) to support people who are gaining economic opportunity. Acquiring benefits could also potentially de-incentivize economic opportunity. Income discrimination affecting loans and ability to get housed. Figure out ways for people to be able to receive addiction supports without it counting negatively against them, i.e. a transition period.	<b>We agree that this is an important value to follow.</b>
<b>City of Gresham Infrastructure Development Economic Opportunities</b>	<b>City of Gresham Infrastructure Development Economic Opportunities focus group comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>
	Lack of mental healthcare from 205 East. Need good mental health care systems east of I205.	<b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b>
	Zero resources other than Oregon Health Plan for mental health care for low income households.	<b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b>
	Law enforcement is frontline, need something like Acadia 24 our walk in center in E County	<b>Mental Health concerns are addressed by the County</b>
<b>Multnomah County</b>	<b>Multnomah County focus group comments</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>
	Many communities need special outreach to take advantage of Unlimited Choices resources such as: Outreach workers that have capacity to speak languages other than English must be a part of the agency. Agency should review census data to locate underserved communities of color.	<b>Multnomah County has translation services.</b>
	Agency should be responsible to collect data to determine who is being served vs. who is not. Program outputs/ outcomes.	<b>The Urban League has released a report on the State of Communities of Color in Multnomah County.</b>
		<b>County and federal funds typically involve the collection of demographic data.</b>

	<p>Agency must be sensitive to communities/people who do not trust government officials. They should help these folks be counted by providing culturally competent, sensitive employees.</p>	<p><b>Multnomah County has created an Office of Diversity and Equity that will begin to address these concerns.</b></p>
<p><b>General Comments related to equity issues.</b></p>	<p><b>General Comments related to equity issues.</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Response</b></p>
	<p>The Equity Forum sponsored by CCEH served a very broad audience.</p>	<p>The City of Portland through the Office of Equity and Human Rights is exploring ways integrate equity measures into all city work.</p>
	<p>The forum brought up the issue of how people of color experience racism or aggression in subtle ways.</p>	<p>The City of Portland through the Office of Equity and Human Rights is exploring ways integrate equity measures into all city work.</p>
	<p>How our contractors mitigating racism and inequity when they have the power to do so?</p>	<p>The City of Portland through the Office of Equity and Human Rights is exploring ways integrate equity measures into all city work.</p>
	<p>How are government workers, social workers exercising their sphere of influence so as to not be the tools of someone else's aggression or a policy that is perceive as perpetuating or not interrupting "gate keeper" behavior. Can we develop a common product to teach workers how to be allies? Is there a training for people who supervise to talk about how racism surfaces. For example the forum "Race talks". Are we asking those who need services, what would be equitable to them?</p>	<p>The City of Portland through the Office of Equity and Human Rights is exploring ways integrate equity measures into all city work.</p>

	<p>Can Multnomah County expand their new Equity expertise to include the providers? Multnomah County uses “Conversation Cards” for each work unit meeting. They read a question or topic as a conversation starter and then staff share their thoughts on the issue. Because they are not specific to the work unit it becomes less confrontational. People of color reinforced the comment that micro- aggressions are daily and have unintended consequences.</p> <p>The small groups at the CCEH Equity forum were effective but the experiences were varied. It may help to offer trainings that are tailored to the experience of the attendees.</p>	<p>The City of Portland through the Office of Equity and Human Rights is exploring ways integrate equity measures into all city work.</p>
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