

ONI Budget Advisory Committee: Program Summary

Organization / Program title

City of Portland/Multnomah County Information and Referral Program – 503-823-4000



Briefly describe the program funded with city dollars

The City of Portland/Multnomah County Information and Referral (I&R) program is a central resource for basic information and referral to all City and County programs. I&R also provide information and referral services to the community for other local community and social services. The staff of the program provides assistance primarily by phone but also to walk-in patrons of both the Portland Building and City Hall and through electronic means of communication. The program's mission is to simplify community member access to services by serving as a welcoming and knowledgeable front door for both the City and the County government. I&R program costs are shared equally between Multnomah County and the City of Portland.

Major activities and accomplishments during current budget cycle (ending June 30, 2016).

Pretty standard activity for 2015-16 in line with recent years. Call volume has been steady and consistent over the past couple of years. We continue to meet the performance goal spelled out in our Intergovernmental Agreement with Multnomah County of 90% of calls answered under 25 seconds. We are on pace to answer approximately 125,000 calls in the fiscal year in addition to provide I&R services to about 15,000 walk-in customers and 2000 email inquiries. The I&R staff also continue to provide significant and increasing amounts of administrative support to the bureau. These duties include answering the main ONI phone line and email inboxes, helping all walk-in customers to the City Hall Office, processing liquor licenses, managing content on the bureau website, taking care of supply ordering and office equipment maintenance, assistance with purchasing and timesheet processing and other miscellaneous administrative support duties.

The City's plans for implementing a 311/CRM system have not made much progress over the past year. The City's Bureau of Emergency Communication's (BOEC) consultant's report to City Council advocating for the creation of a City 311 Program on November 12, 2014 was well received and accepted by all Council Members. BOEC followed that up with a budget request submittal for some additional funding to hire a subject matter expert to work through some of the technical issues and requirements to help in preparing an RFP for 311/CRM software. This budget request was not accepted and was not part of the Mayor's 2015-16 proposed budget. The 311 Steering Committee ceased to meet after the completion of the November 2014 consultant report. Due to the lack of continued funding and a high level champion the 311 project has largely been at a standstill since the November 2014 report.

Summary of program budget and staffing

The I&R program is a 50/50 partnership between the city and county with costs shared equally between Multnomah County and the City of Portland. The current program budget of \$590,000 is funded equally by the City and County. Of the City's \$295,000 about \$130,000 is regular General Fund and the remainder is from a General Fund Overhead account. This means that the percentage of the I&R budget that comes from the General Fund is only about 20%. The I&R Program is staffed by 1 FTE Supervisor and 4.75 FTE Information and Referral Specialist staff positions. Personnel costs make up approximately 80% of the program budget.

Partnerships with other organizations

The program is a 50/50 partnership with Multnomah County. The success of the program relies on excellent communication with all city and county bureaus and departments to ensure effective sharing of information. We also have important partnerships with other information and referral providers in the area, including specialty hotlines operated by the county and nonprofit organizations such as the Senior Helpline, Mental Health Crisis Line and 211. 211Info is a key partner that we communicate with on a weekly basis to ensure consistent and accurate information sharing with all of our callers. City/County Information and Referral is a member of the NW Alliance of Information and Referral Services and the program supervisor serves on the board of NWAIRS.