

Portland's Housing Bond

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Portland's Housing Bond Community Engagement Plan

The Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) is committed to an open and transparent community engagement process focused on informing the public and conducting targeted outreach to underrepresented communities throughout the implementation of Portland's Housing Bond.

Statement of Need

A central tenet of public participation is the belief that public entities have a responsibility to inform and engage communities about decisions which are likely to impact them. The Stakeholder Advisory Group for Portland's Housing Bond developed the Policy Framework which identifies priority populations to be served by bond investments. These communities include:

- Communities of Color,
- Families (including families with children, immigrants and refugees, intergenerational families and families with foster youth)
- Households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, and
- Households facing imminent displacement.

In the process of identifying priority populations, the Stakeholder Advisory Group consulted data from the Portland Housing Bureau's annual *State of Housing in Portland Report* and Multnomah County's *Point in Time Count of Homelessness*, which show Portland's housing crisis disproportionately affects people of color, low-income families and those experiencing homelessness. Among other noteworthy indicators, these reports reveal that there are large areas of the city where Communities of Color cannot afford to rent anything larger than a studio apartment. This is also true for low-income families and immigrants. Furthermore, of the more than 4,000 people in our community who are homeless on any given night, more than 40 percent are persons of color, and the poverty rate for nearly all Communities of Color is more than double the poverty rate for whites.

The challenges of finding affordable options in our tight housing market are further compounded due to factors which many of Portland's underrepresented communities experience, including having limited English proficiency, larger family sizes, and systemic trauma from housing discrimination.

PHB's Racial Equity Plan calls for the bureau to actively develop and maintain long-term and genuine relationships with organizations serving culturally specific communities. This commitment has been echoed by community members through the engagement process that occurred during the development of the Policy Framework. PHB is therefore committed to an open and transparent engagement process to inform the public throughout the life of Portland's Housing Bond, with a particular focus on conducting effective outreach to underrepresented communities and the priority populations identified in the Framework.

Goals

The goals of this Community Engagement Plan are:

1. Inform the public of our progress toward the goals of Portland's Housing Bond¹;
2. Share the availability of housing opportunities as they arise, with a particular focus on reaching underrepresented communities; and
3. Build, sustain and institutionalize relationships with community members and organizations serving underrepresented communities as prioritized in the Policy Framework.

Our outreach activities will be focused in sharing general progress updates with the broader community and conduct targeted marketing activities to reach the priority populations as housing opportunities become available. Stakeholder engagement will be a chief strategy in accomplishing our goals, including outreach to community-based organizations, neighborhood coalition districts, non-profit housing providers, and low-income renters.

Points of Notification

The feedback gathered from hundreds of community members and community organizations during the development of the Policy Framework indicate that respondents voiced the importance of keeping them and the communities they serve informed throughout the implementation of the bond, particularly at points when which they have opportunities to provide feedback. Most important, organizations serving members from priority communities *want to be informed before vacancies occur, and when waitlists open - before they are advertised widely.*

The customers served by community partners may require additional time to respond to housing opportunities and are often overlooked and unreached through traditional general marketing plans.

PHB proposes the following notifications and contacts at these points:

	Neighborhood Coalitions (NAs) Office of Neighborhood Involvement	Non-Profit Housing Providers	Culturally Specific Organizations	Homeless and Housing Service Providers	Prosper Portland NPI's	Faith Communities
Method of Contact	In person, via phone, and email	In person, via phone, and email	In person, via phone, and email	In person, via phone, and email	Email	Email
Responsible Parties	Community Liaisons	Community Liaisons	Community Liaisons	Community Liaisons	Community Liaisons	Community Liaisons
Land/Building Acquisition	√	√	√	√	√	√
Population is determined	√	√	√	√		√
Waiting lists open		√	√	√		
Lease up		√	√	√		

¹ The bond will produce a minimum of 1,300 new housing units affordable for households with incomes at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Of these: 600 will be affordable for households at 0-30% AMI, including a target of 300 units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and other supportive housing, provided services funding is secured; and •650 will be larger size (2 or more bedrooms) for families.

Methods of Outreach and Engagement

The bulk of the community engagement activities are the responsibility of PHB's Community Liaisons team, whose work is executed within districts, and the PHB Public Information Officer who oversees communications and publications for the bureau. They will communicate directly with stakeholders including the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Coalition district offices, community-based organizations, and immigrant and refugee communities within their districts. We will leverage and grow the relationships we have in these communities.

To be most effective, Community Liaisons will attend district coalition and community based organization meetings to share updates as needed. As a team, we will take advantage of opportunities to collaborate on meetings and events occurring through our community based partners. The Coalition offices will help disseminate information related to the Bond provided by the Housing Bureau by sharing with their networks, including renters via their formal networks and channels.

We will inform the general public of updates via:

- **Portland's Housing Bond website:** The website, www.portlandhousingbond.com features news and updates, general information, project fact sheets, a schedule of public meetings, and a link to sign up to receive updates. To collect feedback, there is a dedicated Portland Housing Bond email address monitored by staff for anyone wishing to provide feedback. Staff will gather any comments received to share with Community Liaisons, and concerns will be elevated to PHB management.
- **Newsletter:** A quarterly newsletter will be published and distributed to interested parties including the partners we contracted with to conduct community outreach activities, organizations serving communities of color, and those who have signed up through the website. The newsletter will be available in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese for Limited English proficiency (LEP) community members, and shared through our networks. We will work with the Office of Neighborhood Involvement Neighborhood Coalition Offices to publish a link to our newsletter in their communications to all area residents including renters.
- **Quarterly Bond Oversight Committee meetings:** All meetings of the committee are public meetings and will provide updates regarding process on Portland's Housing Bond. All meetings will have allotted time for testimony from community members. The Bond Oversight Committee is committed to hosting at least one meeting per year outside of downtown in a community location during evening hours. These meetings will be co-hosted with a community-based partner and childcare and interpretation services will be available.

For vacancies and waitlist openings, we will be intentional about engaging with community-based and culturally-specific organizations and service providers² to target outreach when vacancies occur and when waiting lists open. The service providers we contact will depend on the population(s) intended to be served at a particular housing community once that is known.

² Including, but not limited to: Black Parent Initiative, Catholic Charities, El Progamma Hispano Catolico, Hacienda CDC, IRCO Africa House, IRCO Asian Family Center, JOIN, Latino Network, Lutheran Service NW, Native American Rehabilitation Association, Native American Youth and Family Center, PCRI, REACH CDC, Rose CDC, Self Enhancement, Inc., Urban League of Portland.

Language Policy

To engage communities who have limited English proficiency, PHB's policy is to translate outreach materials and the quarterly newsletter into Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Lao, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Swahili and French. Furthermore, interpretation services will be available by prior arrangement at all public meetings, including quarterly Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) meetings.

Community Engagement Evaluation

PHB will conduct review and evaluation of our outreach and engagement efforts. This evaluation provides the opportunity to reflect, improve upon and share insights about the challenges and opportunities, and provide a blueprint for improvement.

PHB will analyze the effectiveness of the engagement process from both stakeholder and organizational points of view, and will provide a brief summary statement. The summary statement will indicate how the process advances policy goals and adheres to the Bureau Equity Plan. The summary will assist PHB Management and staff in evaluating and informing ongoing and future community engagement processes.

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