

Department of County Human Services
Citizen Budget Advisory Committee



Members: Beth Crane, Committee Chair, Bill Barnes, Committee Vice Chair, Mark Lewinsohn, Tamara Maher, Keith Vann, and Stephen Arnold

May 26, 2015

Dear Multnomah County Board of Commissioners,

This letter serves as written testimony in support of the recommendations of the Department of County Human Services Citizen Budget Advisory Committee. This testimony is a supplement to the March 16 letter you received from our Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) containing our recommendations for the pending FY2015-2016 budget.

On behalf of the County Human Services CBAC, I want to thank Chair Kafoury for the generous financial support the Chair's budget proposes for the Department. We are so fortunate as a community to see an improved economic environment and the concordant ability to provide increased resources to protect and support our most vulnerable community members served by this Department. In particular, we appreciate the Chair's commitment to affordable housing and ending homelessness thru the significant funding commitment to A Home for Everyone.

We are most excited by the Chair's support for several programs that were high priorities for our CBAC, including:

- 25136B Homeless Youth Services Mental Health and Addictions Engagement
- 25155B Sexual Minority Youth Program Expansion
- 25159B School Attendance Supports Expansion
- 25152B Early Kindergarten Transition Expansion
- 25145B, 25145C, 25145 D SUN Community School Expansion to outer east county.

We feel these investments in children, students and young adults are the "upstream solutions" that will provide the greatest positive social impact and return on public investment going forward.

We are pleased to see our recommendation for the 25139D Racial Justice Initiative be funded at our recommended level. We look forward to seeing the positive, measurable impact the investment from the previous budget combined with the current proposal will make to reducing social disparities and making Multnomah County a more fair and just place for all the people who live here, particularly those who have historically been underserved. Additionally, we were happy to see the 25139E Economic Opportunity offer which shows a commitment to reducing poverty and assisting low income individuals and families to move towards economic independence.

Similarly, we believe that support for seniors and people with disabilities and veterans demonstrate our community values and responsibilities to protect and shelter our most vulnerable family members, veterans and neighbors. We were delighted to see funding for:

- 25147B Senior Hunger Initiative, proposed by the Chair
- 25025B ADVSK Veteran's Services Expansion

Our CBAC was concerned to see that offer 25026B, ADVSD Public Guardian for \$96K was not funded in this version of the budget. We heard from the program manager that the public guardian program is chronically at maximum capacity and not able to accept new enrollees. Once the need for a public guardian is identified, the County is legally responsible to provide that support service. However, we are not tracking the actual gap in need to services available. We urge the Board to reconsider and provide the \$96K necessary to increase our capacity to serve these most vulnerable people in our community. In the future, we hope to see program data collected and analyzed that will show the community need and the service capacity available.

Additionally, in this improved economic environment when it is hoped that all boats will rise together, offer 25014D, DD Abuse Investigation Clinical Services Specialist was not funded. Currently, it appears the state is unlikely to provide this resource. A CBAC member reminded us that people with developmental disabilities lack strong advocacy representation to ensure they also receive the benefit of the improved economy and opportunity to thrive in our community. We recommend the Board reconsider and provide the \$93K to fund this program offer.

We were pleased to see the Chair supported the 25000B Directors Office, Strategic Data and Outcome Team program offer to improve the Departments capacity to collect and analyze data to inform strategic decision making. We look forward to using this increased capacity when we reconvene for the next budget development process.

Thank you for your consideration and action on our recommendations. We appreciate the opportunity to advise you and value the opportunity to serve our community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Crane, EMPA
Chair
Department County Human Resources Citizen Budget Advisory Committee