

# Recommendation Status Evaluation #2

County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic —  
County implemented most recommendations

February 2022



Multnomah County Auditor's Office

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## Table of Contents

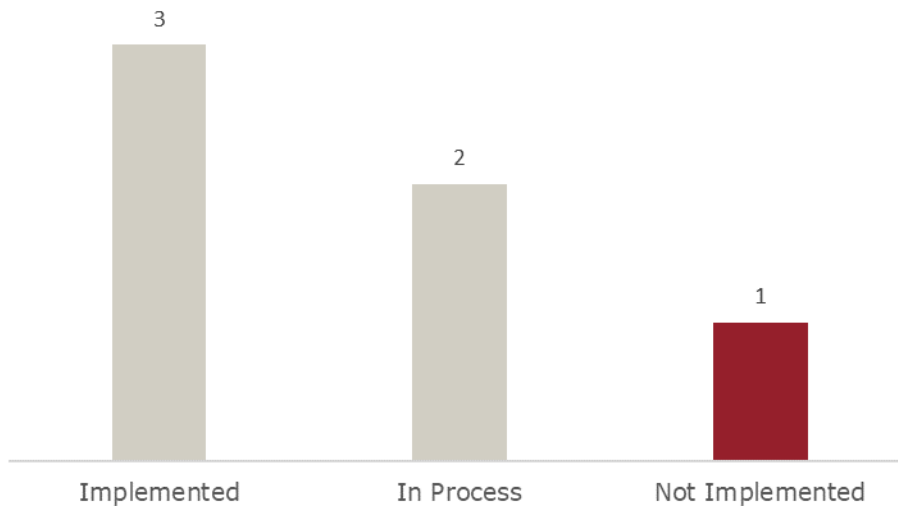
Report Highlights.....	1
What We Found .....	1
What the Statuses Mean.....	1
Why We Did This Evaluation.....	1
Status of Recommendations .....	2
Implemented.....	2
In Process.....	3
Not Implemented.....	3
Objectives, Scope, & Methodology .....	5
Updating the Status of a Recommendation.....	5
Staff .....	6

## Report Highlights

### What We Found

The county implemented most of the Auditor's recommendations that we evaluated. This was the second assessment of recommendations from our February 2021 audit report on the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Central Human Resources did not implement our recommendation to ensure the maintenance of telework information electronically, specifically as it relates to monitoring teleworking performance and whether approvals to work remotely are equitable.



Source: Auditor's Office

### What the Statuses Mean

- Implemented – Auditee has fully implemented, or auditee has resolved the issue to meet the recommendation's intent.
- In Process – Auditee has started implementation.
- Not Implemented – Auditee has not implemented, or does not intend to implement.

### Why We Did This Evaluation

The Auditor's Office follows up on audit recommendations to support county government's accountability. This evaluation focused on recommendations with the following deadlines:

- Ongoing –this refers to a recommendation where we continued to monitor periodic actions over time, in an ongoing situation
- By February 2022

## Status of Recommendations

### Implemented

**Recommendation 10:** Based on responses to our office's employee survey, it appears that applying policies is an ongoing challenge. Upon issuance of the report and periodically thereafter, the Chair or her designee should reiterate to managers and employees her expectations that safety policies and recommendations are followed, including the requirement that employees telework as much as possible. (The deadline for this recommendation began when the report was issued on February 9, 2021, and was considered ongoing after that.)

**Auditor's note:** Starting in June 2021, the county began allowing non-essential employees to work in person voluntarily. In September 2021, the county shifted to increase onsite services and directed staff and managers to formalize teleworking assignments. Leading up to the transition, county leadership communicated about masks and vaccine requirements. County leadership also directed employees to an internal county site with safety information. As county policy has shifted since the audit report was first written, and leadership communicated about changes and ongoing safety expectations, we consider this recommendation resolved.

**Recommendation 15a:** By February 2022, Central Human Resources should ensure the maintenance of telework information, including approved or denied telework agreements, electronically, preferably in Workday, to allow:

- a. Accessibility to approved or denied telework agreements at the employee, supervisory, departmental and central levels.

**Auditor's note:** In August 2021, the county started rolling out information on a new process for determining appropriate ongoing telework arrangements including new telework suitability assessments and telework agreement templates. Currently, telework information, including approved or denied telework agreements, is maintained electronically in Workday. These documents are accessible at the employee, supervisory, departmental, and central levels.

**Recommendation 15b:** By February 2022, Central Human Resources should ensure the maintenance of telework information, including approved or denied telework agreements, electronically, preferably in Workday, to allow:

- b. Electronic approvals and updating for better efficiency.

**Auditor's note:** Telework related information is maintained electronically in Workday. Telework information and resources are available to employees on the Multnomah County intranet's Future of Work site.

## In Process

**Recommendation 15d:** By February 2022, Central Human Resources should ensure the maintenance of telework information, including approved or denied telework agreements, electronically, preferably in Workday, to allow:

Documentation of specific details, such as computer ID numbers, of all county equipment used to telework.

**Auditor's note:** Information Technology (IT) tracks the laptops and desktop computers it issues in DAX, the IT system of record for IT assets. Risk Management tracks ergonomically customized chairs and desk purchases for specific individuals. Central Finance asked department directors to inventory and track the county-owned technology and office equipment employees have at their telework locations. Tracking information will be reviewed by Central Finance.

**Recommendation 16:** To help ensure fairness among employees, by February 2022, Central Human Resources should indicate potential telework eligibility in county job descriptions.

**Auditor's note:** Telework eligibility is determined by position classification or job profile and the specific position description, often referred to as job description, within the position classification. Telework eligibility for each position description is tracked in Workday and tracking is ongoing.

Position classifications are general while position descriptions are specific to the job. Some examples of the most frequent position classifications include Elections Worker, Corrections Deputy, Office Assistant, Case Manager 2, Library Access Services Assistant, Community Health Nurse, Program Supervisor, and Mental Health Consultant. Within the position classification there are specific position descriptions which contain information about the work expected of the employee holding the position.

## Not Implemented

**Recommendation 15c:** By February 2022, Central Human Resources should ensure the maintenance of telework information, including approved or denied telework agreements, electronically, preferably in Workday, to allow:

Monitoring of teleworking performance and equity.

**Auditor's note:** The portion of the recommendation related to equity was specifically related to monitoring to help ensure that supervisors approved employees for telework equitably, and that supervisors did not approve White employees for telework more often than they approved

their Black, Indigenous, or People of Color counterparts.

Central Human Resources staff have plans to monitor teleworking performance and equity. Monitoring implementation has been delayed due to the continued demand on personnel resources required for the ongoing pandemic response. Management reported that once the telework pilot period is complete and more personnel resources are available, they have plans to do analysis related to equity. The pilot period is expected to end by the end of June 2022.

## Objectives, Scope, & Methodology

The objectives of this evaluation were to determine the status of recommendations from the first audit report on the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic that had the following due dates:

- Ongoing
- By February 2022

Auditors evaluated the status of recommendations based on interviews, documentation, and other available evidence.

## Updating the Status of a Recommendation

During each audit our office conducts, we develop recommendations intended to improve government operations, particularly with regard to effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and equity. Our goal for evaluating the status of recommendations is to help ensure management implements these recommendations for improvement.

We recognize that after we publish an evaluation on the status of recommendations, management may fully implement a recommendation that we reported was in process or not implemented. Management can then provide evidence to the Auditor demonstrating why the recommendation's status should be changed in the Auditor's future reporting. The final decision on whether to change any recommendation's status rests with the Auditor.

## Staff

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