



Office of Community Involvement



Department of County Human Services CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega-Pederson and Board of County Commissioners 3 pages

FROM: Department of County Human Services Community Budget Advisory Committee

DATE: April 27, 2023

SUBJECT: DCHS Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This letter represents the Department of County Human Services Community Budget Advisory Committee's (CBAC) recommendations regarding the FY 2023-2024 budget. Our recommendations for the Chair's executive budget focus on communities who have the least access to resources and that are at higher risk of adverse health and economic impacts, especially those who face disproportionate challenges.

Our CBAC consists of members who take civic participation and equity work very seriously, which is why we strove to make recommendations to maximize benefit to community members of the County -particularly its most vulnerable residents, while considering local budget realities and global health and economic uncertainties. We made sure to adhere to the following guiding principles while making our recommendations:

DCHS CBAC Guiding Principles:

- Inclusively and intentionally leading with race through the application of the equity and empowerment lens
- Prioritize stable housing
- Consider impact to vulnerable populations
- Protect state and federal match funding by leveraging county dollars
- Protect programs and/or services not provided in another venue/mission
- Consider outcome or success of program in decision making

PROCESS

The DCHS CBAC met monthly throughout the year during this budget cycle to hear from County staff and discuss budget priorities. Due to the transitioning out of veteran members and new members joining the committee, we began the process by reviewing the Multnomah County Budget Process; the FY24 financial and 5-year General Fund forecasts, and the roles CBACs play in the County budget process. All meetings were attended by DCHS Director Mohammad Bader and/or DCHS Deputy Director Rachel Pearl, and Finance Manager Senior Robert Stoll, who

Department of County Human Services CBAC

provided overviews, context, and support. Also included were Equity and Inclusion Manager, Dr. Carlos Richard to join our meetings on a regular basis to enhance our equity discussions as a group.

To inform our budget recommendations, the DCHS CBAC heard presentations from each division in the Department as well as from County Economist Jeff Renfro, and a presentation on Unconditional Cash Transfer & Basic Income.

DCHS Division Directors attended meetings and presented overviews of their divisions, the services they provide and how their programs are funded in regards to CGF and other funds. Each Division spent considerable time outlining the services provided with County funding, including changes to operating models and need in the community as a result of COVID-19 and beyond. We continue to be impressed with the level of scrutiny and review that program offers went through to prioritize equity and empowerment in the decision-making process. Much like last year, the DCHS CBAC was intentional in allowing committee members more time to consider and debate budget recommendations than in previous years; this included gathering supporting information earlier and scheduling consecutive meetings during the decision making process.

The DCHS CBAC believes that DCHS is doing an admirable job of prioritizing add requests to the Chair that are critical human service programs. Department staff provided thorough program details and were very responsive to requests for further information, and clear rationale was given for all proposed budget changes. Further, the CBAC members are continuously examining how to be more efficient with the information we receive and request from DCHS, including how we digest this information and strengthening the link between the presentations we've received throughout the year and our ultimate budget recommendations.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES

The committee formed its recommendations as COVID-19 relief funding was ending and examined its effects on County citizens and programs needed to aid those disproportionately affected were heavy factors in our decision making. Our primary focus is on supporting programs which provide aid to preventing evictions and increasing housing stability, immigrants and refugees, those affected by domestic violence, and building economic security for communities of color.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

The CBAC believes that DCHS provides a critical safety net through the provision of essential services in our community. We believe that a strengthened social safety net is the foundation of recovery for the populations that DCHS serves, particularly given the pre-existing vulnerabilities of these populations. We continue to support a system-wide collaboration using a racial justice

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Department of County Human Services CBAC

lens, developing new relationships with other stakeholders not at the table, and improved planning in responding to extreme weather events.

Our recommendations for DCHS and the County's budget overall is to focus on observation of process, opinions and ideas facing the community. One aspect to carry over from last year is to consider other ways that budget feedback can be gathered, particularly from the people who are targeted by Multnomah County's services in a more inclusive way than the current CBAC structure. Ideally, the County could also solicit feedback from community members who don't participate in the County's programs, to understand barriers to access and awareness of the County's services.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated previously, the DCHS CBAC recognizes the essential services that the County provides as a social safety net for the County's vulnerable residents, particularly in light of the aftermath impact of COVID-19 and the inequalities resulting from oppressive systems, both historic and contemporary. Our committee feels the obligation to highlight the need for **ALL** DCHS services to continue support and services via the additions requests put forth as well as the importance of vital services the department renders to the community.

Accordingly, our specific recommendations are as follows, in priority order:

1. 25118B - Expand Staff Capacity - YFS Infrastructure - \$574,489 (Ongoing)
2. 25133B - Housing Stability Team Eviction Prevention Specialist - \$151,437; 1.0 FTE (Ongoing)
3. 25490B - Emergency Rent Assistance - \$13,078,059 (ARP)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee would like to give special thanks to the DCHS staff who provided their time and information to us to better understand the programs to the committee as well as the committee members who served either their 3rd or 6th year that were transitioning out this fiscal year - Kali Glenn-Haley, Nyla Moore, Ashley Hess, and Jeff Scroggin.

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