

SUN Service System -- System Delivery Model

Frequently Asked Questions

February 2016

As the number of children and families experiencing poor educational outcomes, poverty and racism has grown in Multnomah County, so, too, has the need to identify and apply strategies that will empower our community and reduce existing obstacles on the path to educational, economic and social success. Multnomah County has adapted the SUN Service System structure and service delivery model to reflect this reality and the county's deepened commitment to equity and improving academic and social outcomes for all children, youth and families in our community.

The modified model recognizes that culture is paramount in learning and places special emphasis on culturally responsive and culturally specific services that help to eliminate structural barriers and lead to better educational and economic outcomes.

Why is the SUN Service System changing?

Modifications to the SUN Service System delivery model reflect both the growing diversity in race and ethnicity in Multnomah County and a shift in where Multnomah County students live. As our community changes, it is important to include students' and families' culture in the services and education they receive. Multnomah County and our SUN partners are addressing these changes in our community by building systems and services that are culturally responsive and increasing funding for culturally specific services.

How is the SUN Service System changing?

Four areas of the System will be significantly changed:

- Regional shift – from 6 to 5 geographic regions
- Reallocation of resources – increase in funding for culturally specific services from 33% of total system resources to 60% of total system resources.
 - Change means about \$3.5 million more for culturally specific services
 - Biggest funding changes are in SUN Community Schools and Multnomah Stability Initiative
- Expectation that all contractors be/become culturally responsive
- Defined culturally specific services and created requirements for organizations who want to deliver culturally specific services

Why are these changes being made through a Multnomah County Request for Proposals?

As the managing partner for the SUN Service System, Multnomah County implements the system, services, and partnerships on behalf of the partner organizations (City of Portland, Portland Children's Levy, School Districts, All Hands Raised, United Way). This includes managing contracts for SUN funding to nonprofit agencies. As a public entity, the County is required to procure (purchase) contracted services through a competitive process on a periodic basis.

Before the 2015-2016 RFP was released, the SUN Service System, along with its partners and stakeholders, conducted an extensive review of the system's programs, approaches and allocation methodologies to identify places where improvements could be made.

What is culturally responsive?

Cultural responsiveness describes the ability to respond to the issues of diverse communities. It requires building knowledge and capacity at systemic, organizational, professional and individual levels. Culturally responsive services are those that are respectful of, and relevant to, the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse populations and communities, whose members identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations because of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, preferred language

or language spoken at home. All services within the SUN Service System are expected to be culturally responsive.

What are culturally specific services?

Culturally specific services are informed by a specific community’s language, cultural constructs, institutions, experiences with racism and intergenerational trauma and social mores to create an environment of belonging and safety, in which individuals can thrive. These services and programs are designed and continually shaped by community input to exist without the barriers present in dominant culture services or organizations. Culturally specific services aim to improve overall community well-being and to address root causes.

Why are the number of geographic regions being reduced?

The regions are changing to reflect population shifts within our County. Poverty and racial and ethnic diversity have changed considerably in recent years. As a result, the existing regions were imbalanced in size and, thus, in funding allocation.

How are the new regions defined?

The five geographic regions are aligned with high school catchment areas, as indicated in the table below.

Region	High School Catchments or School District Boundaries
1	Cleveland, Franklin, Lincoln, Riverdale, Wilson
2	Jefferson, Grant, Madison, Roosevelt
3	David Douglas, Parkrose
4	Reynolds
5	Centennial, Corbett, Gresham Barlow

What percentage of the SUN Service System funding will be dedicated to regional services?

Regional services will account for 40 percent of the overall spending on the SUN Service System.

How much funding will be dedicated to culturally specific services?

Funding for culturally-specific services in the SUN Service System is increasing from 33 percent to 60 percent of the total SUN Service System budget.

Why are culturally specific services receiving more funding?

Providing more resources to these services will improve social and academic outcomes and reduce barriers to success for students in our community, particularly the growing number of students of color.

How did the county make the decision to raise the funding allocation for culturally specific services?

The county received a recommendation from the SUN Culturally Specific Allocation Workgroup, which included representatives from the Office of the Multnomah County Chair, the Department of County Human Services, the Multnomah County Office of Diversity and Equity, Northwest Health Foundation, Centennial School District, HomeFirst Corporation, the Department of Human Services, Latino Health Coalition, APANO, United Way and ECO NW.

The group recommended that the SUN Service System tie allocation decisions for culturally specific services to the percentage of children age 0-6 living in poverty who are from a culturally specific population (community of color, immigrant or refugee), with “living in poverty” defined as having a family income that is less than 185 percent or less of the federal poverty level. That percentage is currently 66%.

What criteria were used to designate a SUN Community School as culturally specific?

A range of factors were considered when designating schools as culturally specific for the purposes of contracting. These included: minimizing changes in current cultural specific designation, maintaining 5-6 sites per region that are designated as regional, the number of non-white students and the number of students from a specific cultural community enrolled in that school.

What expertise will culturally specific organizations bring to SUN Community Schools?

Organizations providing culturally specific services demonstrate intimate knowledge of the lived experience of the community, including but not limited to the impact of structural or individual racism or discrimination on the community; knowledge of specific disparities documented in the community and how those influence the structure of their program or service; the ability to describe the community's cultural practices, health and safety beliefs/practices, positive cultural identity/pride/resilience, immigration dynamics, religious beliefs, etc., and how their services have been adapted to those cultural norms.

Will Culturally Specific SUN Community Schools only serve one cultural group?

No. All SUN Community Schools are required to serve the entire school community and offer targeted services for any and all youth and families who are at risk of educational failure.

Will the agency operating the SUN Community School change at my school?

At the conclusion of a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, it is likely that some existing service providers will not continue on in their current roles. Multnomah County will work to make this transition as seamless as possible.

If there is a change in contractor, will there be a transition period?

We are planning for a three-month transition/overlap period. This will likely be April – June 2016. We hope to have some transition funding so that new contractors can begin to hire staff and learn about delivering services in the SUNSS.

There will be no break in service for individuals and families who are participating in SUN services. Program participants should experience little disruption, even if the particular provider of that service will be changing.

Will the total amount of funding to the SUN Service System change?

No. Total funding for the SUN Service System will not change as a result of modifications to the service delivery model.