

Meeting Notes - May 28, 2015

Mission:	Federal, state, local, and non-governmental leadership working together to improve housing and economic opportunities for the agriculture workforce.
Meeting Location:	Oregon Housing and Community Services 725 Summer St., NE STE. B, Salem, OR 10:00-12:00 PM, Meeting Room 124B PHONE: 1-877-273-4202 / ROOM: #531-141-227
Facilitator:	Theresa Wingard, Policy Analyst, OHCS
Attendees:	Judith Adams/OED, Maria Elena Castro/OHA, Fernando Gutierrez/OED, Don Herman/OHCS, Laurie Hoefer/LSO, Marc Overbeck/OHPR, Shelly Wilkins-Ehenger/MCHA, Kathryn Walker/ODA
Agenda:	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Legislative Update: Alison McIntosh</p> <p>HB2442: Creates overarching governance body. This bill passed both the House and Senate and is waiting on the Governor's desk. The bill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renames the Housing Council, the Housing Stability Council • Adds two members • Adds some areas of responsibilities • Transfers the Oregon Hunger Task Force to DHS, where OHCS is proposing to transfer the food programs. DHS operates the largest food program (food stamps) as well as the WIC program, so this made the most sense. • Sunsets the Advisory Committee on Energy, the Interagency Council on Hunger and homelessness, and the Community Development Incentive Advisory Body. • HB2610: Is a bill that addresses a small technical fix. Agriculture workforce housing is exempt from property taxes at the local level. OR-OSHA is not allowed go on to off-farm properties because they don't govern the relationship between the Landlord and the Tenant, and therefore cannot certify for the tax assessors that the property was exempt from property taxes. The bill makes a technical change to who certifies that the property is owned by a non-profit and who it serves. This bill was signed by Governor in April. <p>HB 2639, relating to Section 8, passed in 2013. It required landlords to treat section 8 voucher holders the same as other applicants and consider their application. The bill also set up a landlord guarantee fund program, and the Housing Choice Advisory Committee. The program has been operated by OHCS since July 1st 2014. The Housing Choice Advisory Committee includes three landlord representatives, three tenant representatives, and three housing authority representatives. The committee drafted a report for the legislature and will be presenting at a hearing on Monday June 1st at 3:00 pm. The report will be available on the legislative website after Monday. The committee's meeting is open to the public, and you may be added to an e-mail list to receive information.</p>

A lot of effort has been made to educate landlords about the program, and it has been successful. However, due to the low vacancy rates, and increasing rents, fewer applicants are able to use the vouchers to get into housing. This is especially true in Central Oregon, Portland, and Medford. Vouchers are being returned to Housing Authorities by tenants at a much higher rate. Housing Choice Voucher tenants have a hard time competing when rent increases rapidly because HUD regulates what they will pay for rent.

Questions:

Q: What happened with the money that BOLI collects from inspections? The original money that was set aside for this group? Some money was used for Bienestar project years ago. Was there money left over, and where did it go?

A: Theresa and Alison will research further to provide definitive information for the team.

Q: What’s happening with the \$100 mil?

A: Former Gov. Kitzhaber put \$100 mil in his budget for affordable housing bond money. 85% general obligation and 15% lottery backed bonds. The money would be required to go toward capital projects (bricks/sticks/mortar). Speaker Kotek and the Governor are very supportive. There have been a few hearings. The Capital Construction Sub-Committee is the decision maker.

OHCS’ HB 2198 puts some side boards on what the program would look like. There are several ways the program could look. This bill is in Ways and Means right now. The Housing Council has named two sub-committees to start once OHCS has a commitment of resources. One committee would deal with the financial structuring of the deals, and the other would address who we are going to serve and how. The bonds won’t be sold until the spring of 2017. Projects need to be named and ready to go by that time.

Q: Could we have a refresher on the Housing Council’s role.

A: HB 2442 will go into effect on January 1, 2016. The current council has seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The members have expertise in housing development, finance, providing services, local government, and community action. There are no predetermined slots for specific roles or expertise. The Governor considers range of expertise and geography. Once HB 2442 becomes law, the membership of the Council will go to nine. The added role for the Council will be to provide over-site, and policy and financial direction to OHCS in addition to approving financing deals, grants, loans, and tax credits.

Q: Is the underserved population represented?

A: Mayra Arreola is the Director of Community Collaborations & Investment at United Way. Prior to that, she was the Latino Program Manager and Diversity & Inclusion Manager at Rural Development Initiatives.

Q: Is there any representative for people with disabilities?

A: Zee Koza is the Executive Director of New Day Enterprises, a community mental health facility for

adults with developmental disabilities in La Grande.

Biographies on the Housing Council members and contact information are on the OHCS website at the following link: <http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/OSHC/Pages/oregon-state-housing-council-members.aspx>

If you are interested in serving on any state policy body you may contact the Governor's office.

Q: How/when will two positions be filled?

A: OHCS will work with Governor's office to get those filled. This will like occur in September or February when the Senate is in session to approve the appointments

Q: If there was a map of OHCS, where would this task force fall in relation to the Housing Stability Council?

A: The goal was to make the Housing Council an overarching advisory policy body to oversee the agency. It would be nice to have this group make recommendations to the Housing Council which would provide them an opportunity to learn more of what you do and the important work that go on at this table.

Q: How many task forces are there, other than this one?

A: There is the Housing Stability Council, Community Action Partnership of Oregon, this group, the Housing Choice Advisory Committee, and the Oregon Commission on Voluntary Action and Service. There used to be 11 statutorily named advisory bodies. The bill and the OHCS budget show the different groups. Alison will provide the list to Theresa to disseminate.

Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program: Don Herman

Five applications were received this year, including one labor camp, and one off-site dual residence potential. One project has been completed for an on-farm manufactured home. The total available tax credits were \$2,960,880. There is one pending application for one off-farm 42 unit multifamily, which includes 20 two bedroom, and 22 three bedroom units. This unit would be farmworker housing located in Salem. There is \$460,880 in potential tax credits that remain. Don will research questions around reserves and report back to the group.

Handout: 2015 Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program summary

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA): Theresa Wingard

The 2015 Multifamily NOFA application recommendations will go to the housing council in July. Two new NOFA advisors came out in March and May. You may review all OHCS technical advisories at this link: <http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/Pages/multifamily-housing-announcements.aspx>

Handouts: Technical Advisory 2015 Multifamily NOFA Updates and Future Offerings, and NOFA, Veterans Multifamily Affordable Housing-Release.

OHCS Integrators (formerly the RADs): Theresa Wingard

OHCS has two positions that are known as Integrators. They were formerly known as RADs, and focused their work on Regional Solutions-based work, capacity building, and technical assistance around affordable housing development. The Integrator positions now aid in the integration and alignment of affordable housing and housing stabilization tools and resources with family stabilization and self-sufficiency efforts of Oregon’s Department of Human Services, as well as other community-based efforts within key State policy areas, including Coordinated Care Organizations, Early Learning Hubs, Regional Achievement Compacts, Workforce Investment Boards and Regional Solutions.

You may read additional details about the work done by the Integrators by accessing the following link:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/DO/messages/2014/12-19-14-Integrator-Position-Announcement.pdf>

Oregon’s Consolidated Plan & State Plan: Theresa Wingard

The Federal Planning unit and the Integrators partnered together to engage the community in the planning efforts of the agency. The goal was to learn more about local priorities and services in the communities we serve.

We tried to select a cross section of the state. Some cities rose to the top of the list because of their struggles with low vacancy rates and skyrocketing housing costs or because they are actively seeking to develop shelters or other resources for their communities.

We visited the following cities in April, and the beginning of May: Ontario, Medford, Coos Bay/North Bend, Tillamook, McMinnville, The Dalles/Hood River, Klamath Falls, Pendleton, and Redmond.

In some communities the documentary, American Winter, was shown, in others we help round table discussions with partners, and in others, a panel of experts in housing and services presented in a community forum discussion.

We talked to over 250 people across Oregon through the outreach forums.

As of this date, we’ve had 114 responses to the provider survey, and 270 responses to the community survey. The surveys close on May 30th. A survey for the Spanish speaking community, is currently open.

We learned that low vacancy rates are a problem everywhere – there are not enough units available to serve the low and extremely low income people that need housing stabilization and assistance.

- Central Oregon has a 1.5% vacancy rate,
- Medford has a 1.8% vacancy rate,
- Hood River the vacancy rate is below 2%
- There are not enough housing units to meet the needs of people with barriers such as - people with disabilities, seniors, people reentering community after incarceration, or people with addictions, and undocumented workers

- There are not enough units available for people with any mark on their rental, credit or criminal background.
- Many communities have housing vouchers and funds to spend that go unused because there are no affordable units available for the people that need them. Voucher success rates have rapidly declined over the last year due to low vacancy rates, rising rents often exceeding HUD Fair Market Rents (FMR's) and more stringent landlord screening criteria.
- Children are suffering because of the instability of their lives and there is simply not enough food, time, money to meet their basic needs. Housing insecurity disrupts their education, impacts their chances for opportunity.
- There are not enough living wage full time jobs available to help stabilize people and help them improve their financial condition.
- Many rural communities lack reliable affordable transportation, which impacts employment opportunities and housing choice.
- Many programs, operated by our partners, do not provide adequate administrative dollars to effectively run the program. Some communities have chosen not to pursue these grants because they cannot afford to administer them.

Communities across the state are creating opportunities and collaborating with their partners. For example:

- CARE in Tillamook sponsored a day long conversation about housing needs, and in May, Pendleton is hosted a homeless summit.
- Medford received a \$6 million grant to support and stabilize Veterans.
- The Columbia Gorge, Klamath Falls, and Medford are organizing around the connection between health and housing. Recognizing that housing is a key determinant for health outcomes, communities are seeking to positively improve community health through cross sector collaboration and investment.
- Communities are seeking opportunities to be innovative. They are preparing to be ready when funding becomes available to try new approaches to our persistent housing problems.

We talked to committed and determined partners and service providers throughout the state. Here's what they told us would help them help the people they serve.

- More flexible tools to serve the people in need- constraints imposed by the color of the money make it difficult to serve people best.
- The passage of a bill currently being considered by the Legislature that would make substantial changes to the TANF program, and allow for a longer period of stabilization after people find work before removing benefits.
- The state being less silo-ed in infrastructure investments, and thinking more comprehensively when investing in housing.
- A more accurate and up to date calculation in the Fair Market Rents and recognition that many area median income calculations are not an accurate representation of the areas actual

	<p>wages.</p> <p>Our Next Steps are to compile the information that we've gathered from the engagement effort.</p> <p>We are currently working to complete the Needs Assessment and Market Analysis that will inform what strategies we should employ to support efforts to provide stable housing opportunities throughout the state.</p> <p>The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is being completed now and is due to be delivered to the state in June. This analysis will also determine the strategies Oregon develops for the Consolidated Plan.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Q: How were the cities chosen? A: For the ConPlan, the state is required to do outreach to the non-entitlement areas. We chose cities based on what was happening in the communities; many because of hot topics around homeless and housing. We tried to select cities in the state's non-entitlement areas, and those that allowed us to reach out to the largest percent of the population. We worked with our partners to coordinate the events and invite attendees.</p> <p>Q: Were there any forums for Spanish speaking individuals? A: We are contracting to have forums for the Spanish speaking communities. An update will be provided as soon as there is information available.</p> <p>Q: Is there a timeline for the Spanish language surveys, and do you know the number of surveys completed? A: The Spanish language survey is currently open. There is no closing date at this time.</p> <p>Q: Will there be an opportunity to comment on the draft. A: HUD requires Oregon to have a public comment period for all plans. The ConPlan submission date is November 15th. We will send a notice to all partners for the public comment period. It will also be posted on the OHCS website. Shoshanah Oppenheim, Manager for Federal Planning, did reach out to several team members, including Fernando, and Claudia. Shoshanah and Fernando met. Claudia will contact Shoshanah as a follow up. **Note: Shoshanah Oppenheim attended this group's meeting in November 2014, and provided a short overview of the outreach being done for the ConPlan.</p> <p>Q: The outreach was performed in cities that are high agricultural areas, but there is nothing specific in the feedback for farmworkers. The Farmworker set-aside would not appear to be important, and this is concerning. A: We do have the survey open for Spanish speaking communities, and we will have forums/focus groups for this population.</p> <p>Q: Will the strategic plan come out with populations to be targeted?</p>
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	<p>A: The plan will identify Oregon’s priority needs and describe the strategies that we will undertake to serve the priority needs. If the data shows a particular population is a priority need, they would be called out in the plan.</p> <p>Information Sharing: Shelly Wilkins-Ehenger/Marion County Housing Authority: She appreciates all of the information from today, noting it’s comforting to hear, as she goes from meeting to meeting, people saying the same thing. She’s not getting mixed information from the public housing side, or the farm labor side or others. Marion County Housing Authority will be issuing a project based voucher notice for Marion county outside Salem, Keizer, and the urban growth area if you know of any developers who would be interested. This will be for new as well as existing. This is one of their strategies to make affordable housing more permanent because the project based contract will be for up to 10 years. That notice is going out June 15th and will be open for one month. Up to 20% of their available tenant based vouchers are being held for this purpose.</p> <p>Laurie Hoefer: They are starting to do camp outreach. They now have a 2015 calendar in Spanish and in English about farmworkers rights, mainly work place. Let her know if you would like some to distribute, and she will send them to you. Laurie will send information to Theresa to disseminate. Laurie may be reached at laurie.hoefer@lasoregon.org.</p> <p>Claudia Cantu: Claudia needs to do farmworker surveys in the Marion County area over the next few weeks. If you have an event where she can hand out surveys, please contact her at ccantu@casaoforegon.org or 503-537-0319 x303</p> <p>Labor Camp Tour: Claudia Cantu 18 people signed up to take the tour. The tour includes three labor camps, and will begin at 1:00. The camps are 4B Farms, Inc., Ivan Barkoff’s camp, and Stan Dansky’s camp. Theresa will send a last minute invite to some OHCS internal staff prior to 1:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Action Items</p>	<p>Alison will provide a slide showing advisory groups Laurie will provide information for ordering calendars Theresa will invite guest speaker Shoshanah Oppenheim Theresa and Alison will research the BOLI dollars collected from inspections</p>
<p>Next Meeting:</p>	<p>Thursday, July 23, 2015 Oregon Housing and Community Services 10:00a-12:00p, Room 124B</p>
<p>Contact:</p>	<p>Theresa Wingard, Policy Analyst, OHCS (503) 986-0999 theresa.wingard@oregon.gov</p>