OHCS Statewide Housing Plan
Year 2 Quarter 1 Update

EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Equity and Racial Justice Year 2 Strategies
1. Identify an approach to advance equity and racial justice (ERJ) informed by national promising practices and lived experiences of communities of color
2. Create structure that removes barriers in OHCS programs to ensure equitable outcomes
3. Improve OHCS' ability to track, analyze, and measure progress towards equity goals

Status of 5-Year Target: Pending development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System to ensure that our process for developing targets is holistic, includes community voice, and will drive long-term outcomes.

We spent the last several months creating a structure for OHCS' ERJ work. In August, our former **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer, Tricia Tillman**, led the DEI Council in a debrief of the in-depth SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessment of our organization she developed after meeting with about 50 key staff across the agency.

At the same, Tricia worked with the former **DEI Council, the Data Equity Workgroup (DEW), and Team C (staff training)**, to develop a set of charters for the newly formed **Equity Committee** structure. This was a major piece of foundation building, solidifying our agency's direction and approach for our ERJ work. The application process to join the committees opened in August and, by the end of September with an **interim DEI Officer** selected (Chelsea Bunch), staff was placed in ERJ committees. With Chelsea's leadership and the establishment of our new Equity Committee structure, we will continue to center ERJ across the agency, support agency transformation through internal capacity and skill building, and work in right relationship with community.

The **Data Equity Workgroup** (DEW) focused on the development of the **State of Data Equity Report (SODER)** to document and analyze the data collected by OHCS. The Research Team hosted two mapping meetings with staff to identify stakeholders who should be involved with the report and what engagement should look like. The team continues to work with staff to collect and analyze data, document data collection methods, and complete a first draft of the report.
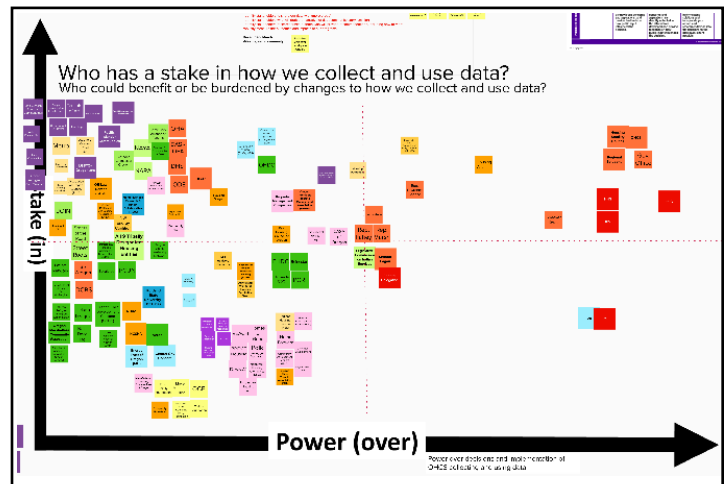
Screenshot from a "stakeholder engagement" planning session for the State of Data Equity Report.

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness Year 2 Strategies
1. Coordinate with partners and providers to build capacity to address homelessness
2. Enhance data and research capability to address homeless needs across Oregon
3. Expand services to support housing retention and homeless risk mitigation

Status of 5-Year Target: Pending modification to better reflect our position and capacity. (Current goals are to ensure that at least 85% of people who receive homeless services stay in permanent housing for six months or more; and to end veteran homelessness and unsheltered homelessness for children.)

Our approach to partnership with organizations that serve Oregonians facing housing instability involves **providing funding and the sharing of best practice** and frameworks for successful outcomes. This has been especially true through the COVID-19 pandemic where best practices are in flux and the models we used to rely on are no longer feasible or adequate for the health and safety of those in need.

In the past few months, our focus has been on supporting those disproportionately impacted by housing instability coupled by the concurrent crises of the pandemic and Oregon wildfires. We have increased collaboration with other government entities to build a **collective and cohesive response to the current crisis**, including: *Best Practices for Winter Shelter During a Pandemic, Shelter Guidance,* and the *Homeless Populations Playbook*. We have also met with 7 out of 8 Continuums of Care to discuss service delivery for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, completed an **Emergency Solutions Grant – COVID (ESG-CV) webinar** with over 100 attendees, and conducted specific outreach to culturally-specific organizations.

We have responded with flexibility and speed to support the vast needs of Oregonians who are unstably housed and experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. We have deployed millions of dollars to communities through **CARES Act funding and State Emergency response programs**, aggressively monitored spending rates, supported efficient program implementation, encouraged strategies for marketing to the most impacted communities. In addition, to respond to rapid emergency needs, our **energy programs** began utilizing streamlined eligibility standards to enable rapid processing of applications.

In addition to the above achievements, we have made tremendous progress on enhancing data and research capability to understand and address housing instability and homelessness needs. We completed our Budget Note stakeholder engagement with the final report sent to legislature in September. As a result of the **Budget Note report**, we will be moving forward with implementing the **HMIS Multi-Continuum of Care** and the **HMIS data repository** that will support data sharing across the state. We are excited to report that as of the end of the quarter, we have started reporting out demographic information disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other key characteristics, and examining how we can align our data with other service providers' data.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing Year 2 Strategies
1. Coordinate with local governments and continuums of care to make it easier to create permanent supportive housing (PSH) units
2. Identify barriers to PSH and provide education and technical assistance to support PSH unit development and operation
3. Explore creation of state-funded tenant and project-based rental assistance program

Status of 5-Year Target: 563 units out of 1,000 units

We have had positive conversations with partners about creating more **PSH units** and we are working with partners to support these efforts. We will be obtaining tenant lease-up data for collaboratively funded PSH units through

METRO. We will also host two groups from the METRO region in our second PSH Institute.

We have had to revise our in-person **PSH Institute** model for a virtual platform to accommodate restrictions stemming from the pandemic. With help from our contractor, we are able to host our second PSH Institute cohort online for our teams.

Additionally, we continue to work towards aligning resources for PSH. We have included these needs in OHCS' budget request and hope to utilize **HTF funds** to further our PSH priority. We are also working on developing a framework for our **PSH Project Based Rent Assistance**. We obtained feedback from the Housing Stability Council (HSC) and our partners, and plan to finalize the policy in the next couple of months. Given the supportive political environment for PSH, despite the economic downturn and budget constraints, we believe we can secure additional resources for this priority.

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

Affordable Rental Housing Year 2 Strategies
1. Make housing development resources available in a consistent, predictable format to help build a pipeline of housing supply aligned with local funders
2. Align funding priorities for subpopulations and income or rent levels or other factors to address Statewide Housing Plan priorities; respond to areas of greatest need and take advantage of opportunities for greater reach and leverage
3. Implement innovations in financing for the acquisition of land and preservation of affordable and low-cost, market-rate rental housing to provide a greater range of tools for affordable housing

Status of 5-Year Target: 13,706 units out of 25,000 units

A core strategy of our Affordable Rental Housing (ARH) priority is to streamline processes, programs, and tools. Our new **State Program Manager**, Amy Cole, has helped us lead this work. In quarter one, we have been able to debrief our 2020 NOFAs with all program leads, introduce a **template NOFA** to refine processes, and initiate conversations on our **2021 NOFA goals and priorities**.

One of the goals for this quarter was to improve our ability to track and report on our data to better align funding priorities with our agency goals. We achieved this through continued **implementation of ProLink** for application review and data entry, as well as piloting **MWESB data collection** into the 2020 Vets-GHAP NOFA.
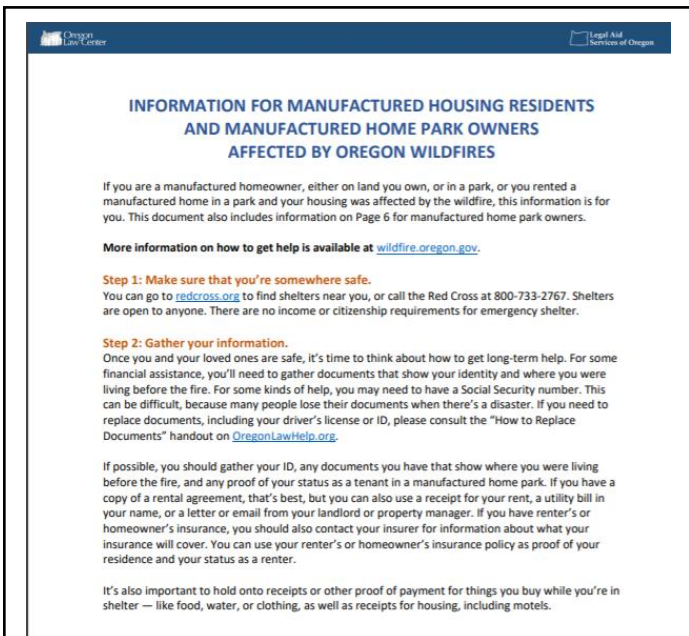
HOMEOWNERSHIP

Homeownership Year 2 Strategies
1. Explore new programs that address an unmet need for low- and moderate-income potential homebuyers
2. Engage with organizations that can connect communities of color to OHCS homeownership

programs and ensure program parameters are aligned with the needs of communities of color

3. Expand and better coordinate programs that support homeowners to stay in their homes and keep their homes safe, energy efficient, and healthy
4. Support low-cost homeownership opportunities through preservation and improvement of manufactured housing

Status of 5-Year Target: 767 out of 6,500 home loans

One of our goals to support homeownership is to **modernize OHCS lending**. We are evolving in this role by serving as a convenor, guiding and assisting relationships to provide a continuum of services as seamless as possible to assist Oregonians in achieving homeownership. We are developing our **Flex Lending program** to complement the Whole Loan Residential Bond Program and create other opportunities for MBS Bond products, and other enhancements in the future. In the first quarter, we have engaged a hedge provider for this work. We hope to onboard a master servicer in the first part of 2021 and anticipate offering the program in the second quarter.

In October, we contributed to a Frequently Asked Questions document for Manufactured Housing residents and park owners.

We are continuing to support homeownership for communities of color through outreach to culturally specific and culturally responsive organizations. We shared Flex Lending draft program design with 17 organizations to obtain feedback. With the launch of **OHSI's COVID-19 mortgage assistance program**, we performed outreach to organizations that were not currently established OHCS partners and invested in media outreach utilizing our established culturally specific organizations. Additionally, our **Homeownership Center RFA** is the first RFA to establish performance based contracting measures and the first to have established ERJ goals and expectations.

We support low-cost homeownership through preservation and improvement of manufactured housing (MH). This past quarter, we completed rulemaking,

program design, and stakeholder engagement for the **MH Decommissioning and Replacement Program**. While not part of the original scope, in response to the wildfires which have had a significant impact on manufactured housing parks in the state, we have pivoted quickly to participate in various task forces focused on response and recovery, while evaluating ways to leverage our existing resources to assist with the response. We also worked with partners to develop an informational sheet and **FAQs specific to manufactured housing**.

We are looking for creative ways to work with FEMA and other federal and state agencies to leverage resources for long-term manufactured housing recovery to replace some of the units lost in wildfires.

🏠 RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural Communities Year 2 Strategies
1. Support collaboration among existing and potential partners in small towns and rural communities to enhance capacity to advance projects and efforts that meet local housing and service needs
2. Remove systemic barriers to accessing OHCS resources by tailoring programs intended for small towns and rural communities to the needs and context of those areas
3. Engage the agricultural community to understand the housing and service needs of farmworkers and develop strategies to meet these needs

Status of 5-Year Target: 910 units out of 2,543 units

To support our rural outreach plan and marketing needs, we **evaluated our 2020 NOFAs** on their success in reaching rural areas and rural projects. **LIFT** was particularly successful, with more applications from rural than urban areas for the first time in its short history. Conversations with rural partners identified **potential areas for growth** among applicants and **potential barriers** to development that OHCS can help address.

Like in other priorities and for other organizations, the ways we connect and the strategies we developed to reach our objectives has changed due to the pandemic. Due to the loss of **Lottery Backed Bond** resources we have to update our **HOME program** more dramatically than we initially envisioned. In regard to **LIFT**, more resources were added to support projects in the 2020 LIFT NOFA round. We have shifted our request from LIFT funds to more general **XI-Q bond resources** that can be used for a number of rural-focused programs that can be leveraged most effectively by our partners.

In the first quarter, the legislative concept for the **Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit (AWHTC)** was presented to the **Agricultural Workforce Housing Facilitation Team** and approved. The AWHTC is an important investment for the state, especially given the disparate impact of the pandemic and the wildfires on the agricultural worker population. The update to the tax credit policy will help increase resources for rural communities and support more **efficient distribution of funds** to small, rural farmers.