



OHCS Statewide Housing Plan Milestone 4 Update July 2020

EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

5-Year Target: Pending target identification

Equity and Racial Justice Year 1 Strategies

1. Identify an approach to advance equity and racial justice (ERJ) for OHCS, our stakeholders, and customers
2. Improve data collection of equity measures
3. Adopt framework for inclusion and equity

Tricia Tillman joined OHCS as a **permanent DEI Manager** and has lead an organizational assessment to support this priority. We have made significant progress in **adopting a structure** focused on identifying and advancing equity and racial justice among staff and in program and policy to better serve all Oregonians. We are working on **updating strategies and metrics** for this priority including, where possible, performance targets.

OHCS leadership made strong internal and external statements in support of **Black Lives Matter** and in opposition to racialized police violence and structural and institutional racism. Our DEI Manager has led multiple sessions providing staff with the opportunity to reflect on this violence and the death of Aumad Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. Additionally, in honor of Fair Housing Month, **89% of staff participated in The Color of Law training** by Teaching Tolerance. Also in this quarter, OHCS piloted a **racial equity toolkit** reviewing three legislative concepts and provided guidance on a funding strategy to support culturally-specific homeownership centers.

Our Data Equity Workgroup (DEW) developed a comprehensive outline for a **“State of Data Equity at OHCS” report** that we plan to focus on over the next year. DEW also developed a table outlining demographic data fields that we collect, gaps in our data, and challenges we might have collecting better data that will be the foundation for the report.

HOMELESSNESS

5-Year Target: Pending baseline & target identification for percentage housed for more than 6 months after receiving services

Homelessness Year 1 Strategies

1. Coordinate with partners and providers, and build capacity to address homelessness
2. Coordinate to end veteran homelessness
3. Integrate asset-building and anti-poverty resources to support housing stabilization
4. Enhance homeless service provider data and research capacity

Our work related to COVID-19 response has **accelerated some of the goals** in this priority. We have improved partnerships with Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and **increased resources and focus on data collection**. HMIS has been instrumental in reporting new **COVID-19 Rent Relief Program (CVRRP) funds** and has allowed OHCS to quickly and effectively allocate over **\$50 million** in CVRRP funds. In an unprecedented move, CAAs had the ability to start entering data related to COVID-19 resources in HMIS before funds were even available.

Agencies are receiving funds to support data entry, more data is used to measure outcomes, and data quality has been incorporated into monitoring plans. OHCS uses this data for forecasting, to get weekly updates, and to address spend-down concerns. Additionally, we are **finalizing data dashboards** showing each CAA's EPIC outcomes and, through the HMIS Budget Note recommendation, we are working to secure a **data warehouse to support statewide data sharing**.

The **OHCS Veteran's team continue to host regular check-in calls** with partners to discuss efforts and resources to address veteran homelessness. Due to the global pandemic, we are planning to host several virtual Veteran-specific convening sessions in the fall to share best practices, resources, and to connect our network of providers to end veteran homelessness.



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

5-Year Target: 405 of 1,000 PSH units built or in the development pipeline

Permanent Supportive Housing Year 1 Strategies

1. Solicit new permanent supportive housing (PSH) funding and align capital for supportive services
2. Explore creation of state-funded tenant and project-based rental assistance program
3. Incorporate incentives for PSH housing development in existing funding sources

The **Oregon PSH Institute** model of bringing people across the state together in a monthly in-person convening, has been upended by COVID. It has taken some time to rework, but we will start soliciting partners in August and plan to host a **virtual PSH Institute** in the fall. Because we have a smaller pot of PSH development resources (\$14 million) than was issued to the first PSH Institute cohort (\$36 Million), we are considering ways to leverage other funding sources to fully subscribe our nearly 300 rent assistance and services funding slots.



AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

5-Year Target: 12,185 of 25,000 units built or in the development pipeline

Affordable Rental Housing Year 1 Strategies

1. Expedite affordable housing delivery with technology, improved processes, and partnerships
2. Provide training and technical assistance on funding sources, application, and compliance to partners and project sponsors
3. Support affordable housing in transit-oriented areas and near affordable transportation

We continue to support housing delivery through the adoption of better processes and technology. Our **new, unified electronic application** was used for four different program offerings and nearly 50 applications. We supported live and prerecorded trainings, as well as extensive FAQ responses. We communicate with partners through the system and we are using it internally for file and application review.

The ability to communicate with partners and transmit important documents via a secure interface turned out to be a very timely upgrade to our capabilities. The **new systems have already helped us** in our response to the changing nature of how we do work during the pandemic.



HOMEOWNERSHIP

5-Year Target: 610 of 6,500 mortgage-lending products in calendar year 2019; and 371 Oregon Bond Residential Loans in the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2020.

Homeownership Year 1 Strategies

1. 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
2. Support programs that address unmet need of low- and moderate-income potential homebuyers
3. Support low-cost homeownership opportunities through manufactured housing

Our homeownership center (HOC) partners have experienced increased calls for **assistance related to forbearance and client services**. We utilized \$500,000 in Homeownership Assistance Program (HOAP) funds to support the 15 HOCs assisting homeowners affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19. We continue to host **monthly HOC partner calls** to ensure we understand our partner needs.

We are working on completing the programmatic framework for our **new TBA lending program** and reaching out to stakeholders for feedback on our draft program design. Unfortunately, with the volatility of the mortgage market, we have seen a decrease in the use of the Oregon Bond Residential Loan program. In regard to the **Oregon Homeownership Stabilization Initiative** (OHSI), we implemented wind-down plans but received approval from the U.S. Treasury to continue OHSI with recycled funds to assist homeownership impacted by the economic downturn.

The **Manufactured Housing Advisory Committee** (MHAC) has been working on issues related to the Umatilla flood and developing the **manufactured dwelling replacement program**. The program will provide a forgivable loan product to qualified homeowners who wish to replace their substandard and unsafe homes. Funds are expected to be leveraged with other resources to enable borrowers to affordably replace their homes.



RURAL COMMUNITIES

5-Year Target: 532 of 2,543 units built or in the development pipeline

Rural Communities Year 1 Strategies

1. Build relationships with providers, development partners, local government, and tribal

communities to facilitate access to OHCS program resources

2. Tailor programs for small towns/rural communities to the needs and context of those areas
3. Develop strategies to meet farmworker needs and engage the agricultural community to understand their needs

The **Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator (GOHA)** program was part of the package of potential budget cuts sent to the Governor for consideration. Work has been paused on this until we receive information about its status. In the meantime, we are working on soliciting a training and **technical assistance provider for our rural trainings**. We are also working on a COVID-related capacity offering (to be published in an RFP in the summer) that can support rural partners who have had to invest in technology and other means in response to COVID.

Our efforts to apply a rural lens to our offerings has paid off. For the first time in the program's history, **more applications were received for LIFT non-urban projects** than LIFT urban projects. This is a great indicator that when resources are available, partners will work to build the capacity to respond. **Gap resources** will become even more important to make projects work if tax credit pricing declines or investors are more hesitant to back rural projects.

There has been extensive outreach to understand how COVID-19 is impacting our agricultural workers, including a plan to collaborate with other state agencies to provide emergency support to these communities. Because of the pandemic, our research contractor is actively working on new ways to collect the data they need for the **agricultural workforce housing study**. However, there is still a great amount of uncertainty around timeline and approach.

Challenges

Staffing Needs

- Resources were quickly focused on crisis response and management with the onset of COVID-19. Some work has been delayed due to this shift because of the lack of available staff resources to address multiple competing priorities.
- Continued outreach and maintaining relationships take time and is a key component of our success in meeting the needs of Oregonians. And given that we are still in the process of hiring staff from the 2019 legislative session, we are not operating at full capacity.

Collaboration and Coordination

- With social-distancing measures, we have had to cancel our Veterans Convening and other in-person stakeholder meetings. Internally, in-person trainings and conferences have been canceled

and we are working to provide online resources and training to fill the gap. Additionally, staff are working through the challenges of working from home – systems access, child care issues, adjusting to new ways of collaborating and meeting, etc.

- We are working to envision and plan for what the future environment might bring us. We have met with a number of our stakeholders to try to delineate the impacts that COVID-19 has and will have on Oregonians.

Areas for HSC Support

Supporting Change Efforts with our Partners

Leveraging HSC connections to encourage adoption of and gather constructive feedback on OHCS efforts.

Advocacy We would like HSC to continue to share our work and progress on the Statewide Housing Plan.

Flexibility As we work through the changes brought on by this pandemic, we ask for your support, understanding, and insights as we try to figure out how our SWHP goals and objectives might change to best support Oregonians.