



FINAL REPORT

City of Salem
HOMELESSNESS STUDY

March 8, 2024

Moss Adams LLP
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2800
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 302-6500



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. BACKGROUND, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Homelessness is a persistent social challenge that has widespread impacts on individuals, communities, and governments across the country, including the City of Salem (the City). Despite significant investments by the City and its partners in addressing homelessness, the total population of individuals experiencing homelessness within the City has continued to increase, which is consistent with national trends. This underscores the urgent need for the City and regional partners to expand capacity for successful programs and identify innovative ways to address this important issue. The City remains committed to supporting homelessness prevention and response and is actively exploring new strategies to ensure that everyone in its community has a safe and stable place to live.

The City engaged Moss Adams LLP (Moss Adams) to perform an evaluation of its homelessness response. This study was conducted to respond to a City Council request that Salem review its contracted services to better understand these processes and program impact in the community. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to celebrate successes and identify opportunities for improvement within the City's purview and ability to respond to homelessness-related issues within the Salem community. This work is intended to support future strategic planning that will guide the City's homelessness efforts and includes three primary components:

- **Planning and Strategy**
 - Identify the City's current goals and strategies for homelessness efforts
 - Document gaps or needed clarification in current goals, performance measures, and data tracking
 - Analyze whether the City is meeting current goals to the extent possible
- **Ecosystem and Resource Utilization**
 - Identify all City services related to homelessness response, including service descriptions, delivery method (contracted vs. in-house), successes, and challenges
 - Analyze total expenses and funding sources to support City interventions to homelessness using available data
 - Evaluate the City's participation in regional initiatives to advance homelessness response
- **Contracts**
 - Document current City contracts related to homelessness services
 - Review current contracts and contract management in comparison to best practice to identify opportunities for improvement

The study was conducted between August 2023 and February 2024 and consisted of four major phases: project startup, fact-finding and data collection, analysis, and reporting results. To complete this assessment, Moss Adams conducted 37 interviews with City leaders, staff, service providers, and community groups to gain an up-to-date understanding of the current environment. We also conducted a comprehensive document review, performed research into evidence-based best practices, and evaluated the City's efforts in relation to peer and industry best practices.

B. COMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights gathered throughout our assessment, we noted several areas of strength at the City that can be leveraged to support ongoing efforts related to homelessness prevention and response:

- Housing Status Anti-Discrimination Policy:** The City’s civil rights code (Municipal Code Section 97.0005) specifies its policy intention to eliminate discrimination based on housing status. This supports the idea that people experiencing homelessness have equal access to programs, services, and opportunities within the City.
- Internal Collaboration:** The City’s efforts at collaboration and its relationship-focused approach have begun to establish continuity in an otherwise complex system, particularly the efforts of the Homeless Services Team (HST), Salem Outreach and Livability Services Program (SOS), and the Internal Homelessness Committee (IHC).
- Low-Barrier Shelter Bed Increase:** Due to City investments, there has been a significant increase in low-barrier shelter beds in Salem over the past several years to help increase the number of individuals who are able to shelter indoors throughout the year.
- Developing Regional Continuum of Care:** The developing regional Continuum of Care (CoC) Program presents significant opportunity to enhance homelessness response services throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley.

C. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observation and recommendations are grouped into three sections: 1) City Homelessness Response, 2) Ecosystem and Resource Utilization, and 3) Contracts. Observations and recommendations for each section are summarized below, with greater details and actionable recommendations listed in Section IV of this report.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
City Homelessness Response	
1.	Finding Although the City has defined plans, goals, and strategies related to homelessness in several documents, there is not currently a unified plan that encapsulates the entirety of the City’s response. As a result, the City’s response is often reactive and sometimes disconnected between departments.
	Recommendation A. In the long-term, develop a comprehensive and unified homelessness strategic plan to set clear policy direction, promote alignment across City stakeholders, and promote regional efforts. B. In the short-term, if resources to create a full strategic plan are not available, develop a homelessness operating plan that aligns with the goals in the MWVHA strategic plan and the City’s overarching strategic plan.
2.	Finding Although the City measures performance across its service ecosystem in a variety of ways, it does not have an overarching performance measurement framework to consistently track, compare, and communicate the impact of homelessness response efforts. As a result, the City is not yet able to comparatively assess program effectiveness or concisely convey the outcomes of its efforts to internal and external stakeholders.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation	<p>A. Develop community-level outcome-driven performance measures related to homelessness that support the MWVHA and City strategic plans to keep leadership, staff, and stakeholders informed of progress.</p> <p>B. To better communicate the outcomes of the City's homelessness services, consider developing a dashboard to regularly report community-level performance measures (see External Communication).</p> <p>C. Reevaluate and align performance measures for any service contracts that are engaged in the future (see Service Provider Performance Measures).</p>
3.	Finding	Systems to collect homelessness-related data across City-operated and City-funded programs and services are siloed. This limits the City's ability to accurately assess performance in a timely and meaningful manner.
	Recommendation	Consider different strategies, such as leveraging the City's GIS or gaining access to the HMIS, to develop a unified system-wide approach to data collection, management, and reporting.
4.	Finding	The City communicates its homelessness activities through several mechanisms, including newsletters, neighborhood association meetings, and its website. However, absent an overarching strategy and related performance measures, the community may not be aware of the full scope or impact of services available in the City.
	Recommendation	<p>A. Continue updating the Housing & Shelter webpage to provide a centralized repository for community resources, key reports, and relevant articles.</p> <p>B. Consider breaking out the Addressing Homelessness section of the Housing & Shelter webpage into its own dedicated page that communicates the City's efforts.</p> <p>C. To better communicate the outcomes of the City's homelessness services, consider incorporating community-level performance measures into the Transparent Reporting and Analytics for Residents Portal.</p>
5.	Finding	The City has largely funded its homelessness response efforts through one-time funds, hoping to create appropriate infrastructure for its longer-term homelessness response efforts.
	Recommendation	With the depletion of special one-time funds and the City's approaching revenue shortfalls, City leadership should develop a vision and strategy for the financial role of the City in supporting local homelessness response services.
6.	Finding	The City does not measure or report its total homelessness response spending, including both primary and secondary costs, to articulate overall City resources dedicated to this important community issue.
	Recommendation	The City should establish a process to measure and report its total homelessness response funding commitments Citywide, recognizing the strategic benefits of measuring and communicating this information.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ecosystem and Resource Utilization

7.	Finding	Roles, specialty services, and capacity among community-based service providers are sometimes uncoordinated, which can contribute to confusion around expectations and appropriate service referrals that would facilitate a clear continuum as individuals move from experiencing unsheltered homelessness to becoming stably housed.
	Recommendation	<p>A. In the short-term, the City should explore opportunities to inventory community-based service providers, including core information around service restrictions, criteria, and capacity, to help support a more seamless approach to service referrals and delivery.</p> <p>B. In the long-term, the City should work with the MWVHA to advocate for system improvements including enhancing the Coordinated Entry System, a system-wide HMIS, and opportunities to streamline the continuum of care among service providers.</p>
8.	Finding	While a diverse portfolio of services are available in the City, stakeholders note opportunities to expand services to address capacity constraints and unaddressed populations. Critical gaps and limitations include mental and behavioral health services, low-barrier shelter for vulnerable groups, and transitional housing.
	Recommendation	Continue efforts to evaluate benefits against costs and identify solutions for assessed resource gaps, including investing in infrastructure at the local level, cultivating partnerships with regional service providers, advocating for the ongoing development of the MWVHA, and other opportunities.
9.	Finding	The need for housing in Salem continues to rise, with notable gaps in affordable and permanent supportive housing units.
	Recommendation	Continue to prioritize the development of housing, including permanent supportive housing and affordable housing units, to enable service providers to institute rapid re-housing and provide appropriate supports, thereby increasing the cost-effectiveness of services and the rate at which individuals can exit homelessness.
Contracts		
10.	Finding	The City of Salem's contract management practices include limited coordination between departments, which results in some inconsistencies across departments and across service providers.
	Recommendation	Establish clear policies, procedures, and expectations for contract design and management to support a consistent experience and efficient operations for all City contract managers and service providers.
11.	Finding	Performance measures are a critical component of service contracts, but differences in how they are outlined between departments may lead to inconsistencies in measuring progress and assessing goals for contracted services.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation

- A. Develop a suite of suitable performance measures for service providers to support consistency in ongoing monitoring.
- B. Incorporate the updated performance measures into all service contracts.
- C. Continue to follow a reporting cadence for service providers that incorporates performance measure reporting.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Preventing and responding to homelessness are persistent social challenges that have widespread impacts on individuals, communities, and governments across the country. Within the City of Salem (the City), staff and stakeholders report that challenges related to homelessness in the City appear to be more visible and widespread in recent times. The City and its partners have invested significant resources into addressing homelessness, including the development of affordable housing, low-barrier emergency shelter beds, and increasing access to supportive services. In mid-2023, City Council requested that the City review its contracted services to better understand these processes and program impact in the community.

In addition, the City is facing a \$19 million budget shortfall that significantly limits future funding for services related to homelessness. To address this shortfall, the City proposed a new payroll tax that would have expanded and maintained police and fire department resources, as well as paid for homelessness services. However, voters in Salem overwhelmingly rejected this measure in November 2023, with 82% of the vote against it. This has put many services related to homelessness at risk, highlighting the urgent need for the City and its partners to find new and innovative ways to address this pressing issue. Despite these challenges, the City remains committed to addressing homelessness and is actively exploring new strategies to prevent and respond to homelessness in the community.

B. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to provide observations and actionable recommendations that identify opportunities to optimize the City's homelessness services. The recommendations in this assessment are intentionally developed to fall within the City's influence and ability to prevent and respond to homelessness-related issues in its community. This study focused on three primary areas: the City's planning and strategy environment, the regional and local service ecosystem, and contracts with service providers.

- **Planning and Strategy**
 - Identify the City's current goals and strategies for homelessness efforts
 - Document gaps or needed clarification in current goals, performance measures, and data tracking
 - Analyze whether the City is meeting current goals to the extent possible
- **Ecosystem and Resource Utilization**
 - Identify all City services related to homelessness response, including service descriptions, delivery method (contracted vs. in-house), successes, and challenges
 - Analyze total expenses and funding sources to support City interventions to homelessness using available data
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- **Contracts**
 - Document current City contracts related to homelessness services

- Review current contracts and contract management in comparison to best practice to identify opportunities for improvement

This assessment was conducted between August 2023 and February 2024, and consisted of four major phases:

PROJECT PHASES			
	Phase	Description	Period
1	Start-Up and Management	<p>Project initiation consisted of collaborative project planning with City leadership and project management, including developing our scope of work and final work plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted kickoff meeting to finalize scope of work ● Performed project management and provide status reports 	August 2023
2	Fact-Finding and Data Collection	<p>In the second phase, we conducted our fieldwork, including documentation review, walk-throughs, observations, interviews, and data collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submitted document request and review available data and documents ● Conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, including City leaders, staff, and community service providers <p>Conducted and consolidated research on industry standards and best practices related to homelessness interventions at the regional and municipal level</p>	September 2023
3	Analysis	<p>Based on the information gained during our fieldwork phase, we performed a gap analysis of current conditions and identified opportunities for improvement. Leveraging best practice information and our own experience from working with similar entities, we developed practical recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessed performance from the following perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehensiveness of current plans and goals ○ Achievement and/or progress toward current goals or performance targets ○ Gaps or redundancies in current service offerings and capacity ○ Contract and contract management processes in comparison to best practice ○ Data tracking and management ● Developed inventory of sources and uses of City funds, including in-kind contributions, with uses identified by vendor or City department <p>Evaluated opportunities for improvement relative to best practices to formulate recommendations</p>	October–December 2023
4	Reporting Results	<p>We communicated the results of our analysis with observations and recommendations presented first in a draft report that was</p>	January–February 2024

PROJECT PHASES		
Phase	Description	Period
	<p>reviewed with management to confirm the practicality and relevance of recommendations before finalizing the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared and reviewed a draft report, including an executive summary, observations and recommendations with the City <p>We will deliver a final report and present it to the City management team and City Council.</p>	

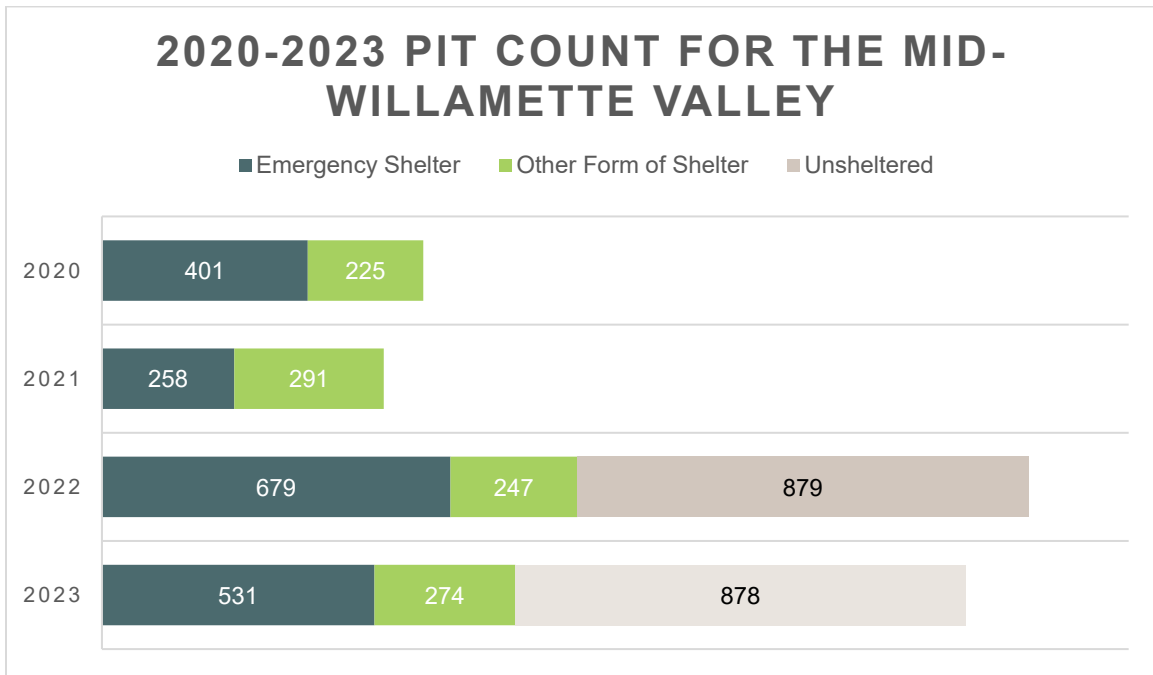
This engagement was performed in accordance with Standards for Consulting Services established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, we provide no opinion, attestation, or other form of assurance with respect to our work or the information upon which our work is based. This report was developed based on information gained from our interviews and analyses of documentation.

III. ENVIRONMENT

A. HOMELESSNESS TRENDS

According to the 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) count¹, the State of Oregon has the third highest rate of homelessness at 48 people per 10,000; only New York and Vermont had higher rates of homelessness. In Oregon, over half (64.6%) of these individuals were reported in unsheltered locations, indicating that they were primarily living outdoors. Notably, Oregon has the highest rate of unsheltered family homelessness, with 58.7% of families with children lacking shelter. Between 2020 and 2022, Oregon had the fourth highest increase in homelessness with 3,304 more individuals experiencing homelessness in 2022 than in 2020, representing a 22.5% increase.

In recent years, both the State of Oregon and the Mid-Willamette region have seen a steady increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness. Although homelessness has been a consistent challenge in Oregon for decades, the crisis has become more visible and widespread in recent years. Communities across the region sit at the crux between a desire to assist people experiencing homelessness and impatience and disappointment with the society’s ability to effectively respond to the crisis. The graph below summarizes homelessness trends in the Salem region, as reported by the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department.² **Unsheltered counts in 2020 and 2021 were unavailable due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

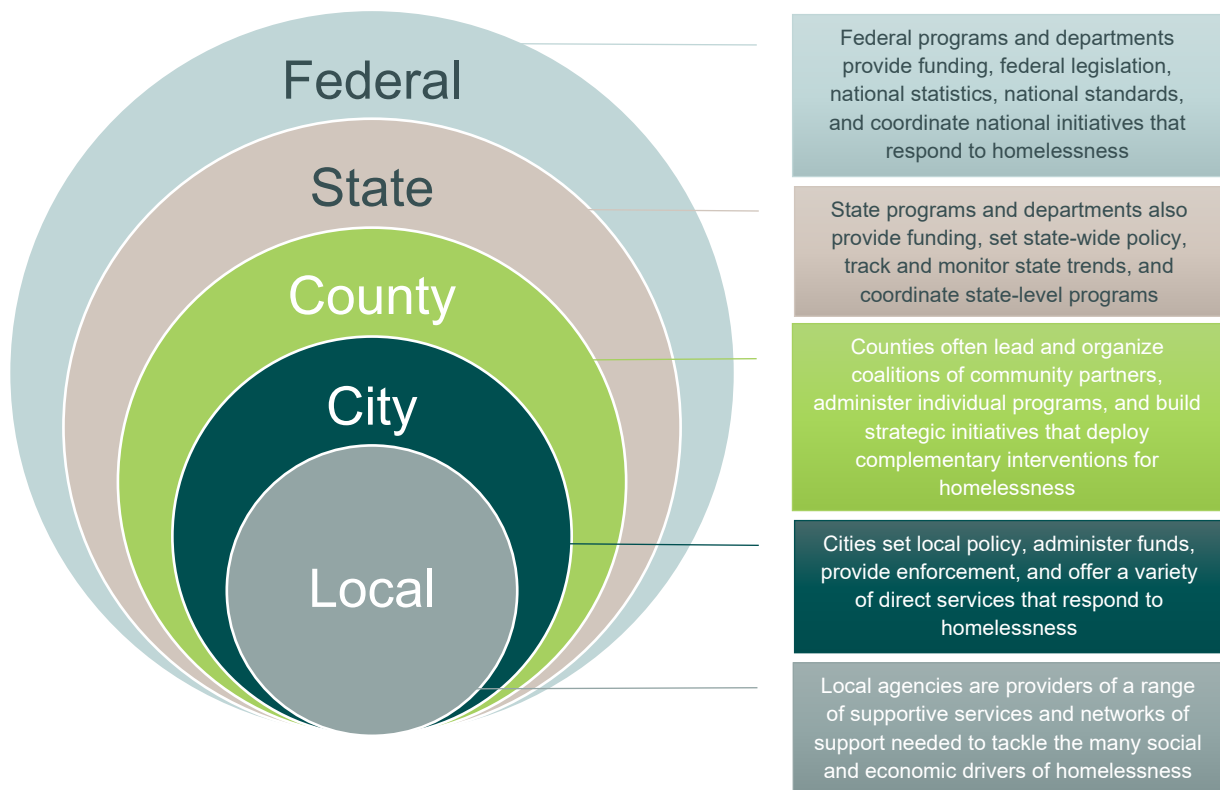


¹ The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

² <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3031/pit-and-hic-data-since-2007/>

B. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AGENCY, AND COMMUNITY ROLES

The complex issue of homelessness has precipitated multi-layered responses at the federal, state, county, and local levels. Jurisdictions across all levels are working to evaluate the issue of homelessness and develop funding, programs, and strategies to prevent and end the experience of homelessness. Interagency collaborations strive to align housing, health, education, and human services, and establish a set of strategies that facilitate partnerships across industries (including the private sector, philanthropy, and state and local governments) to employ cost-effective and comprehensive solutions. The following graphic provides an overview of the roles each agency plays in addressing homelessness.



An assessment of where each level has dedicated its resources to respond to homelessness is detailed in the subsequent section. As the response to homelessness continues to grow, agency, roles, funding, and programs are subject to shift over time.

Federal Support

There are three primary federal agencies that establish policy and regulations, financially support, and coordinate homelessness response efforts.

- **US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH):** The USICH coordinates the Federal response to homelessness by partnering with 19 federal agencies, state and local governments, advocates, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness. USICH drafts and implements the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

- **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS):** The DHHS is the federal government’s principal agency supporting the social and economic well-being of Americans, including those who experience homelessness. DHHS provides funding to state, local, and non-profit entities for health care for people experiencing homelessness, as well as for substance use disorders, mental health, and nutrition.
- **Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** In general, the federal government supports low-income people in affording housing through the HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and provides Homeless Assistance Grants, including grants for the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, and entitlement programs such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Emergency Services Grants, to communities that administer housing and homelessness services. HUD funding is prevalent and is often used as leverage for other regional and local funding, therefore HUD definitions and regulations can often constrain programs, even if they are only partially funded by HUD. Most of the City’s housing vouchers are funded through these federal programs.

State of Oregon Programs

Oregon Revised Statute 458.528³ defines the State of Oregon’s approach to homelessness, which outlines a system that includes:

- The redesign and realignment of response systems to support permanent housing
- The inclusion of community-based treatment, outreach services, early intervention strategies, housing and service management to address compounding needs
- The coordination of multiagency service providers to create integrated and cost-effective programs that deliver housing and other services to people experiencing homelessness in a seamless and timely manner
- Programs of care that have an accompanying set of outcomes to support accountability and the ongoing development of increasingly effective methods to address individual needs
- An individualized approach to homelessness services that includes an assessment of individual needs, identification of appropriate services, coordination, and cost-effective support across agencies

Multiple State-run entities administer homelessness services programs to provide housing, housing-related supports, outreach, and advocacy services. Lead State agencies include:

- Oregon Housing and Community Services
- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Oregon Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

Rather than providing direct services to individuals, these agencies typically provide funding to organizations that offer housing subsidies and other homelessness interventions through grants.

³ https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_458.528

County Programs

Typically, county governments provide the majority of direct services in support of homelessness prevention and response through their human service agencies. Generally, counties coordinate core services such as shelters, warming and cooling programs, food programs, behavioral health services, and substance abuse treatment to prevent and respond to homelessness. This is most often performed through a collaborative effort with municipal governments and local non-profits, with funding distributed by the County.

The City straddles both Marion and Polk counties. Marion County's Housing Authority and Department of Health and Human Services play a key regional role in providing housing, health, and behavioral health services to the community. Additionally, Polk County has a Family and Community Outreach team that provides similar services for those residing within its jurisdiction. Polk County also has the West Valley Housing Authority that functions similarly to the Marion County Housing Authority.

Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (MWWHA)

CoCs are federal designations that receive federal funding (primarily from HUD) for homelessness prevention and response. The CoC program aims to provide community-wide strategies to address homelessness by encouraging coordination among various organizations, including non-profits, local governments, and other social service providers to provide services. CoC services typically include the following:

- **Coordinated Entry System (CES):** A CES is a strategic approach to streamline and centralize the process of assessing and matching individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate services available. The CES establishes a standardized and uniform process to assess individual's needs, vulnerabilities, and preferences to match them with suitable housing and services. The CES assigns priorities based on severity of need, vulnerability, and other factors to ensure that those who are most in need of housing and support receive assistance first. It's designed to promote fair and equitable access to housing and other support services to people experiencing homelessness.
- **Housing assistance:** Housing assistance is designed to meet the different needs and circumstances of people experiencing homelessness. Housing includes emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent, permanent supportive housing, and rapid rehousing.
- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** CoCs establish a consolidated data system to collect information on people experiencing homelessness within the CoC, including tracking services provided and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions. The HMIS is used by providers to triage service delivery and forms the basis for HUD reporting requirements.
- **Supportive services:** CoCs help support the provision of case management, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, employment assistance, and other services to help provide stability to people experiencing homelessness.
- **Prevention programs:** Prevention programs implement strategies to help prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless, such as through eviction prevention.

The MWWHA was recognized by HUD in December 2019 to serve as a regional CoC, with partners including Polk County, Marion County, and the cities of Salem, Keizer, Silverton, and Detroit. The

Alliance’s mission is to develop an evidence-based system of services, including stable housing, designed to meet the unique and complex needs of adults, youth, children, and families in Marion and Polk counties who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness.

In Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), the Alliance was awarded \$1,340,420 in federal dollars⁴ for programs that provide shelter, housing, and services to people experiencing homelessness. As the designated CoC for the region, the MWVHA is responsible for annually compiling a single community application for federal CoC dollars.

City Programs and Services

The following is a list of City departments involved in this work and a summary of the services and programs they lead, as well as estimated expenditures in FY22-23. Expenditures are listed as either primary costs (e.g., cost of providing specific programs directly or through a service agency) or secondary costs (e.g., costs of general City services, such as public safety and infrastructure maintenance, which can be attributed to serving those experiencing homelessness in the City).

PRIMARY EXPENDITURES, FY22-23			
Department/Division	Service Description	Funding Source(s)	FY22-23 Funding
Non-Departmental	United Way Safe Sleep Expansion	ARPA	\$300,000
Non-Departmental	Center for Hope and Safety Project Turnkey	ARPA	\$230,000
Non-Departmental	C@P Micro Shelter 1: CCS Shelter	ARPA	\$200,600
Non-Departmental	Towing Services - State Sheltering Grant	State Grants	\$200,000
Non-Departmental	C@P Micro Shelter 1: CCS Shelter	ARPA & State Grants	\$2,442,816
Non-Departmental	C@P Micro Shelter 2: Village of Hope	ARPA, State Grants, and \$3k from General Fund	\$2,132,188
Non-Departmental	Navigation Center Operations	State Grants	\$568,929
Non-Departmental	C@P Micro Shelter 3: Turner Road Shelter	State Grants \$6k from General Fund	\$540,887
Non-Departmental	Safe Park - Church At The Park	General Fund	\$235,133

⁴ https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_Dash_CoC_OR-504-2022_OR_2022.pdf

PRIMARY EXPENDITURES, FY22-23			
Non-Departmental	Warming Network - MWVCAA	General Fund	\$148,644
Non-Departmental	Mobile Crisis Response	General Fund	\$80,007
Non-Departmental	C@P: Mobile Laundry Unit	General Fund	\$13,400
Non-Departmental	Homeless Rental Assistance Program	General Fund	\$630,000
City Manager	Homeless and Sheltering Coordination	General Fund	\$183,330
City Manager	SOS Team – Community Services	State Grants	\$130,910
Community Services	SOS Team	State Grants	\$678,920
Community Services	Youth Development	General Fund	\$5,413
Police	SOS Team - Police HST	State Grants	\$288,320
Community Planning and Development	Northwest Human Services Crisis and Information Hotline and Emergency Financial Assistance	General Fund	\$235,000
Community Planning and Development	Marion Polk Food Share Nourishing Salem Residents in Need	General Fund	\$165,000
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development CDBG Programs	Federal HUD Funds	\$1,957,234
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development CDBG Admin	Federal HUD Funds	\$243,363
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development HOME Programs	Federal HUD Funds	\$1,223,876
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development HOME Admin	Federal HUD Funds	\$62,533
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development HOME - ARP Programs	Federal HUD Funds	\$385,250

PRIMARY EXPENDITURES, FY22-23			
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development HOME - ARP Admin	Federal HUD Funds	\$36,743
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development CDBG & HOME Admin Costs Reallocated to General Fund	General Fund	\$77,935
Total Primary Costs			\$13,396,430

SECONDARY EXPENDITURES, FY22-23			
Department/Division	Service Description	Funding Source(s)	FY22-23 Funding
City Manager	CMO Indirect Costs	General Fund	\$24,431
Community Development	Code Enforcement, Homelessness-Related Costs	General Fund	\$396,000
Community Services	Parks Indirect Costs	General Fund	\$221,129
Finance	Contract & Invoice Management	General Fund	\$19,204
Fire	Public Safety - Fire	General Fund	\$7,884,848
Police	Public Safety - Police	General Fund	\$1,660,921
Public Works	Public Works Indirect Costs	Predominantly General Fund \$17,700 in Other Revenues	\$120,000
Community Planning and Development	Community Planning and Development Indirect Costs	General fund and all dollars that fund Community Planning and Development	\$25,197
Total Secondary Costs			\$10,351,730

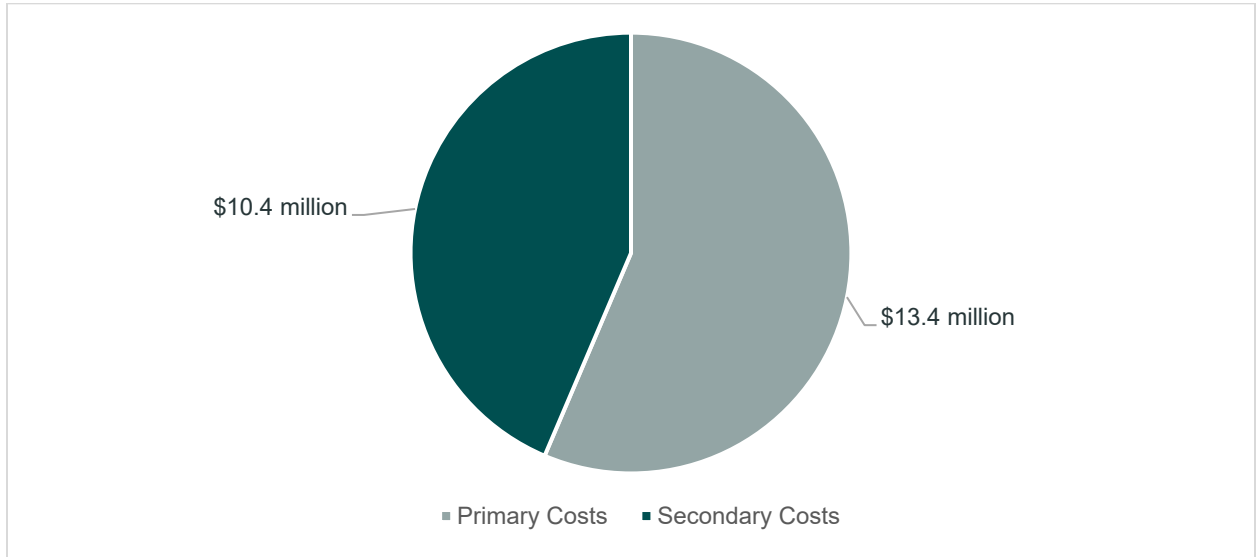
C. CITY EXPENDITURES ON HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

In FY22-23, the City spent over \$23.7 million on homelessness-related services. For this analysis, costs were identified as either primary or secondary costs:

- **Primary costs:** Direct expenditures for homelessness services and programs, including both contracted and City-operated programs

- **Secondary costs:** Estimates of expenditures of general City services (e.g., Police, Fire, Code Enforcement) that can be attributed to homelessness response based on available data and staff expertise

FY22–23 City Homelessness Costs



The City spent \$13.4 million on primary costs (direct homelessness services and programs). The vast majority of these primary costs (\$11.6 million) were funded through the state and federal monies.

CITY OF SALEM HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE PRIMARY COSTS BY SOURCE OF FUNDS	
General Fund	\$1,783,335
State & Federal Special Revenues (Includes CDBG & HOME funds for Community Planning and Development Administration)	\$8,046,735
HUD CDBG & HOME Pass Through Funds	\$3,566,360
Total Primary Costs	\$13,396,430

In addition to these costs which are directly attributable to homelessness-related programs, the City also had secondary costs within nearly all of its operating departments. Secondary costs are expenses that are not *designated* for homelessness but end up being used in the City’s homelessness response efforts. Unlike primary costs that are identified through financial records and contracts, secondary costs are estimated using available data and staff expertise. Because City systems are not set up to track homelessness response costs, estimating secondary costs comes with some uncertainty—true secondary costs could be higher or lower than the estimated in the table below.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE COSTS, FY22-23

Department	General Fund	Other Revenues	Pass Through Funds	Primary Costs Total	Secondary Cost Estimates	All Costs Total
City Manager	\$207,761	\$130,910	\$0	\$314,240	\$24,431	\$338,671
Community Development	\$396,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$396,000	\$396,000
Community Services	\$226,542	\$678,920	\$0	\$684,333	\$221,129	\$905,462
Finance	\$19,204	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,204	\$19,204
Fire	\$7,884,848	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,884,848	\$7,884,848
Police	\$1,660,921	\$288,320	\$0	\$288,320	\$1,660,921	\$1,949,241
Public Works	\$102,300	\$17,700	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	\$120,000
Community Planning and Development	\$503,132	\$342,639	\$3,566,360	\$4,386,934	\$25,197	\$4,412,131
Non-Departmental	\$1,116,657	\$6,605,947	\$0	\$7,722,604	\$0	\$7,722,604
Total	\$12,117,365	\$8,064,435	\$3,566,360	\$13,396,430	\$10,351,730	\$23,748,160

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Contracted Programs and Services

The following is a list of current City contracts related to homelessness services, a summary of the services they provide, and the cost of the contract in FY22-23.

Contractor	Funder	Service Description	Contract Amount in FY22-23
Applegate LLC	HOME	Applegate Terrace Veterans Housing	\$600,000
Center for HOPE and Safety	ARPA	Renovate the Mosaic shelter for women to include 22 kitchenettes (Project Turnkey)	\$230,000
Center for HOPE and Safety	HOME - ARP	Pay for verified eligible costs related to the HOME ARP Assisted units at the site.	\$250,000
Center for HOPE and Safety	HOME - ARP	Provide 24-hour crisis intervention, emergency shelter, and case management for up to 2,200 people	\$100,000
Center for HOPE and Safety	CDBG Non-PS	HOPE Plaza Low-Income Housing Project	\$50,000
Church at the Park	General Fund	Build and operate a micro-shelter village for up to 40 guests	\$429,057
Church at the Park	General Fund	Acquire and operate a laundry trailer	\$13,400
Church at the Park	General Fund	Operate 80 sheltering spaces	\$2,111,880
Church at the Park	General Fund	Operate 132 sheltering spaces for families with children	\$388,120
Church at the Park	General Fund	Provide shelter services to families with children and maintain 132 sheltering spaces	\$2,218,971
Church at the Park	General Fund	Provide safe park services to individuals and families in Salem	\$260,000
Community Development Partners	HOME	Acquire land and construct 184 apartments	\$650,000
Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services	HOME	Acquire property, demolish existing buildings, and construct a 24 single family home subdivision	\$650,000
Family Promise of the Mid-Willamette Valley	General Fund	Provide shelter services to families with children and offer case management support	\$40,000

Contractor	Funder	Service Description	Contract Amount in FY22–23
Integrated Supports for Living	CDBG Non-PS	Rental housing project that will include repairs and improvements to an existing property	\$300,000
Marion Polk Food Share	General Fund	Crisis and Information Hotline Program	\$165,000
Marion Polk Food Share	CDBG PS	Support key staff positions to provide guidance to youth, in order to grow healthy produce that is available to vulnerable seniors	\$15,000
Marion Polk Food Share	CDBG PS	Support key staff positions to the provision of healthy, home delivered meals to vulnerable seniors	\$165,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	Recovery Funds	Acquire 80-room hotel to use as temporary shelter for 1,500 bed-nights on average per month	\$500,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	General Fund	Provide temporary emergency shelter during inclement weather for 300 residents	\$150,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	General Fund	Establish and deliver behavioral health services at the Navigation Center	\$247,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	General Fund	Provide 75 sheltering spaces and help individuals transition to positive destinations	\$1,919,505
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	CDBG Non-PS	Rehabilitation improvements to include code compliance required for childcare and public access to other supportive services	\$705,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency	HOME	Provide monetary assistance (security deposits, rent, and utility assistance) for 16 households	\$300,000
Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance	General Fund	Provide an Affordable Housing Summit, implement Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and assist with Point in Time Counts.	\$150,000
Northwest Human Services	General Fund	Acquire a dedicated vehicle for mobile crisis personnel to assist 1000 people	\$135,000
Northwest Human Services	General Fund	Offer vehicle repairs to unsheltered individuals	\$10,000

Contractor	Funder	Service Description	Contract Amount in FY22–23
Northwest Human Services	General Fund	Crisis and Information Hotline Program	\$135,000
Northwest Human Services	HOME - ARP	Provide emergency shelter and case management support services for up to 15 youth	\$35,965
Salem Housing Authority	HOME - ARP	Sequoia Crossings	\$1,500,000
Seed of Faith Ministries	CDBG Non-PS	Rental housing project that will include repairs and improvements to Premises	\$900,000
St Francis Shelter	HOME - ARP	Provide case management supportive services up to 60 households under the Navigating to Home program.	\$60,000
St Francis Shelter	HOME	Provide security deposit and rental assistance to 14 households	\$140,000
Women at the Well	HOME - ARP	Provide case management and supportive services for up to 20 women	\$47,000

D. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Regulations set by case law and the State of Oregon provide a framework to guide how the City responds to homelessness. The City is obligated to operate within the existing regulatory system and framework, which can impact its ability to respond to homelessness within the community. Key regulations are summarized below:

Measure 110

Measure 110 was a State of Oregon ballot initiative that passed in November 2020 with 58% in favor of the vote. It decriminalized the possession of small amounts of drugs and redirected some of the funds from law enforcement to addiction treatment and harm reduction services.

Prior to Measure 110, police officers and courts would leverage the threat of criminal punishment to encourage individuals using substances to participate in treatment. Since the potential consequence of punishment is no longer applicable to individuals possessing small amounts of drugs, it has been increasingly difficult to get people using substances to pursue treatment, despite the increase in funding.⁵ As a result, 63% of Oregonians support reinstating criminal penalties for drug possession.⁶

⁵ Oregon Public Broadcasting, Measure 110: <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/06/27/oregon-measure-110-drug-addiction-treatment-model-changes-from-jail-time/>

⁶ DHM Research, Measure 110 Oregon Voter Survey: https://www.dhmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DHM-Panel-Oregon_Measure110_May-2023.pdf

Camping on Public Property Ordinance

In March 2020, the City passed a sidewalk conduct ordinance that prohibited sitting or lying on public sidewalks and other spaces during specific hours of the day. The goal of the ordinance was to address safety concerns from residents and maintain access to public spaces. The ordinance was passed with conditions that must be met to enforce it; but, these conditions were never determined and therefore the ordinance was not enforced. However, Oregon lawmakers passed two bills in 2021 (HB 3124 and HB 3115) that restricted how cities and counties can regulate camping on public property. These bills were passed to codify rulings in federal court that cities cannot enforce anti-camping ordinances if they do not have enough shelter beds available.

The City approved a revised ordinance on June 22, 2023 to remove restrictions from the original sit-lie ordinance that did not adhere to the new provisions in State law. This ordinance resulted in camping restrictions in some areas such as parks, near vision clearance areas and building entrances, residential zones, near existing shelters, and areas designated by the City Manager as no camping. The ordinance also includes a requirement that camps maintain a 36-inch pedestrian path on public sidewalks.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CITY HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

Planning and Strategy

1.	Observation	Although the City has defined plans, goals, and strategies related to homelessness in several documents, there is not currently a unified plan that encapsulates the entirety of the City’s response. As a result, the City’s response is often reactive and sometimes disconnected between departments.
	Recommendation	<p>A. In the long-term, develop a comprehensive and unified homelessness strategic plan to set clear policy direction, promote alignment across City stakeholders, and promote regional efforts.</p> <p>B. In the short-term, if resources to create a full strategic plan are not available, develop a homelessness operating plan that aligns with the goals in the MWVHA strategic plan and the City’s overarching strategic plan.</p>

The City has defined plans, goals, and strategies related to homelessness in its City-wide strategic plan, in homelessness-related workgroups, and with regional partners as described below.

City-Wide Strategic Plan: The City lists “Addressing Homelessness” as one of five strategic priority areas in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.⁷ The plan includes the following specific objectives in that priority area:

- **Crisis Response:** Develop a crisis response process and regional network of resources to ensure that all unhoused individuals are safe, respected, and connected with appropriate services.
- **Homelessness Prevention:** Develop a long-term, regional strategy to address upstream factors that increase homelessness with the goal of eliminating homelessness by 2050.
- **Affordable Housing Expansion:** Ensure an adequate supply of housing that is affordable and accessible for current and future generations, with a focus on providing housing options that can reduce the incidence of homelessness.

Homelessness-Related Workgroups: The City has convened the Internal Homelessness Committee (IHC), a workgroup of City staff that facilitates cross-departmental collaboration, information sharing, and proactive planning. Although roles and responsibilities, timelines, and performance measures have not yet been established for the group, IHC’s current workplan sets out the following specific, community-based goals:

- Manage public spaces to be welcoming, livable, and safe for all

⁷ City of Salem, ‘Strategic Plan 2021-2026’.
<https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/5752/637804422145870000>

- Engage private property owners for their spaces to be livable and safe for all
- Inform community members and decision-makers with accurate and respectful communications
- Collaborate efficiently, effectively, and supportively as a multi-departmental and multi-organizational staff team

Regional Partners: The City is an active part of the MWVHA, the relatively new regional CoC for the Marion-Polk region of Oregon. The MWVHA strategic plan was established in July 2021 and includes well-defined strategic goals and activities.⁸ The Alliance has also created a specific plan for serving individuals and families with severe service needs who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness.⁹ The nine goals in the 2021 MWVHA Strategic Plan are:

1. **Homeless Services System:** Develop a robust, responsive, coordinated and client-focused system of services to engage and support individuals and families experiencing homelessness to achieve housing stability.
2. **Affordable Housing:** Increase access and expand affordable housing units to help fill the gap in housing supply across Marion and Polk counties.
3. **Shelters:** Address gaps in shelter beds, including the need for low-barrier shelters.
4. **Transitional Housing:** Address gaps in transitional housing, including capacity for transitional case management.
5. **Permanent Housing:** Utilize the resources of Rapid Re-housing and expand Permanent Supportive Housing to address the needs of the high percentage of chronically homeless individuals concentrated in the Salem/Keizer area.
6. **Health & Safety:** Address physical and mental health and safety issues relating to homelessness.
7. **Prevention Services & Systems Alignment:** Align systems and expand strategies that mitigate risks of becoming homeless or returning to homelessness.
8. **Specific Populations:** Address the unique needs and characteristics of specific populations (chronically homeless, youth, families, seniors, LGBTQ populations, farmworkers, Veterans, survivors of domestic violence, survivors of human trafficking, and persons with disabilities, including those who are medically fragile).
9. **Community Engagement:** Increase leadership, communication, collaboration and community engagement in preventing and reducing homelessness.

Although the City has defined City-wide strategic goals and the IHC and the MWVHA have defined objectives, there are not currently any well-defined, unified goals that capture the entirety of the City's response to homelessness. Overall, the goals that are in place lack enough detail to provide clear direction on priorities, philosophy, and overarching strategy. As a result, the City is often reactive in its service provision, and has historically focused on mitigating the impact of homelessness on the community through activities like encampment clean-ups and monitoring areas throughout the City. In addition, the City's efforts are sometimes disconnected between departments. For example:

⁸ MWVHA, 'Strategic Plan'. <https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/strategic-plan/>

⁹ MWVHA, 'Comprehensive CoC Plan'. <https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Unsheltered-Homelessness-Comprehensive-Plan-REFRAMED-2.3.23.pdf>

- Resources are currently conceptualized and funded separately among some departments, such as Community and Planning Development and Community Services.
- The role of law enforcement has not been defined and contributes to contention within the community. For example, the Police Department is the only group in the ecosystem that has the authority to clear encampments. However, there are community and leadership concerns related to the role of sworn officers in serving as a primary responder to people experiencing homelessness in the community.

Interviewed staff indicated that there is not unanimous agreement among City leadership, including City Council and Department heads, regarding the City's role and philosophy in addressing homelessness, which would be defined in a homelessness strategic plan. There is an opportunity to coordinate strategic planning efforts between the City and the MWVHA to support regional efforts while addressing City-specific needs. The City should develop a comprehensive and unified strategic plan on homelessness to set clear policy direction, promote alignment across City stakeholders, and integrate regional efforts. The strategic plan should focus on the elements of the MWVHA's strategic plan that the City can meaningfully contribute to, such as coordinating and aligning the system of services and mitigation strategies, and should incorporate the goals and activities of all groups across the City, including the IHC.

Developing a cohesive homelessness-specific strategic plan is a common practice for municipalities. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), strategic planning has been shown to result in decreases in homelessness when the plans are well-crafted and implemented.¹⁰ The federal strategic plan from USICH can be used to promote alignment with federal strategies.¹¹ It also provides a useful framework to develop local solutions by centering around three foundations (equity, data and evidence, and collaboration) and three solutions (housing and supports, crisis response, and prevention).

Several other cities in Oregon have established homelessness-related plans. The City of Medford maintains a Homeless System Action Plan that was developed to better understand its role in relation to the newly established Jackson County CoC and create specific goals for the City that could be adopted by the larger region.¹² The plan focuses on the City's ability to promote and provide regional leadership. The City of Portland's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP)¹³ and Oregon City¹⁴ have also both published homelessness-specific strategic plans. Other cities, including the City of Bend¹⁵ and the City of Eugene¹⁶ maintain community-facing

¹⁰ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: Developing and Implementing Strategic Plans to End Homelessness: https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/CommunityStrategicPlanning_February_2011.pdf

¹¹ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: Federal Strategic Plan Overview: <https://www.usich.gov/federal-strategic-plan/overview>

¹² Medford, Oregon: Homeless System Action Plan: https://www.medfordoregon.gov/files/assets/public/v/1/planning/hcd/plans-policies/homeless-system-action-plan_final-rev-june-2020.pdf

¹³ City of Portland: Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program Strategic Plan 2019-2021: <https://www.portland.gov/impactreduction/documents/homelessness-and-urban-camping-impact-reduction-program-strategic-plan/download>

¹⁴ Oregon City: Homelessness Strategy for Oregon City 2022-2026: <https://www.orcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/3325/Homelessness-Strategy-for-Oregon-City-2022-to-2026-PDF>

¹⁵ City of Bend: Supporting Homelessness Solutions: <https://www.bendoregon.gov/city-projects/community-priorities/homelessness#:~:text=The%20City%20is%20working%20with,of%20affordable%20housing%20in%20Bend.>

¹⁶ City of Eugene: What We Are Doing: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/4900/What-We-Are-Doing>

resources that clearly state what the City does and does not do to mitigate homelessness. This can help create clarity on the City's role within a broader societal and regional context.

Developing a strategic plan requires the input from a variety of stakeholders across the City, including department representatives, leadership, community members, and service providers. Highly effective homelessness strategic plans generally include the following elements:

- **Needs Assessment:** Root the plan and associated strategies in the specific needs of the local homelessness population. Utilize an analysis on demographics, causes of homelessness, and service needs to inform interventions and the need for right-sized capacity among existing programs.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster collaboration and partnerships with other regional governmental agencies, non-profits, community groups, and healthcare providers to serve as a network of interconnected resources.
- **Housing:** Integrate the need for affordable housing solutions and other programs to help prevent individuals from becoming unhoused, such as rent subsidies.
- **Services:** Evaluate the scope of available services and shelter options in the community to meet the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness. Consider developing a mechanism to prioritize service offerings to meet core needs.
- **Community Education and Awareness:** Educate the community about the causes and consequences of homelessness to reduce stigma and encourage empathy.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define roles and responsibilities that fall within the City's purview to clarify ways that individuals can or should operate individually or collaboratively. This section can also help define the role of law enforcement and emergency medical services in homelessness prevention and response.
- **Performance Measures:** Based on strategic plan goals, establish meaningful performance measures to evaluate progress toward initiatives and promote continuous improvement.

If resources to create a full strategic plan are not available, the City should consider developing a short-term operating plan that aligns with the goals in the MWVHA strategic plan and the City's overall strategic plan. This will support coordinated regional efforts, clarify the role of the City in addressing homelessness, and define meaningful performance measures. Operating plans differ from strategic plans in that they provide tactical actions and initiatives to pursue strategic goals. A homelessness operating plan would outline key initiatives that the City would undertake to prevent and respond to homelessness, and typically includes associated funding to support these activities.

Performance Measurement

2.	Observation	Although the City measures performance across its service ecosystem in a variety of ways, it does not have an overarching performance measurement framework to consistently track, compare, and communicate the impact of homelessness response efforts. As a result, the City is not yet able to comparatively assess program effectiveness or concisely convey the outcomes of its efforts to internal and external stakeholders.
	Recommendation	<p>A. Develop community-level outcome-driven performance measures related to homelessness that support the MWVHA and City strategic plans to keep leadership, staff, and stakeholders informed of progress.</p> <p>B. To better communicate the outcomes of the City’s homelessness services, consider developing a dashboard to regularly report community-level performance measures (see External Communication).</p> <p>C. Reevaluate and align performance measures for any service contracts that are engaged in the future (see Service Provider Performance Measures).</p>

Across the City’s programs and contracted service providers, many performance measures are tracked related to homelessness services; however, the measures are largely siloed. The table below summarizes the performance measures that are currently tracked across the City’s service ecosystem:

ENTITY	REPORTING VENUE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
Northwest Human Services	Invoice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of people served
Police Department	Internal Homeless Services Team metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of current camps and individual structures ● Number of hours spent at camps or clean-ups ● Number of individuals contacted ● Number of service referrals
Navigation Center (operated by Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency)	Quarterly Report Dashboard (submitted to City Homelessness Liaison)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of available shelter spaces ● Number of unduplicated persons who obtained shelter at the navigation center ● Number served who demonstrated improved physical health and well-being ● Number served with no recidivating event for six months ● Number served who were unemployed and who obtained employment ● Number served who achieved and maintained capacity to meet basic needs for 90 days

ENTITY	REPORTING VENUE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number served who exited to positive destinations and percent compared to total served who exited to positive destinations • Highlights and successes of the program over the reporting period
Church at the Park (Safe Park, Village of Hope, Catholic Community Services site)	Invoices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people served • Number of exits • Number and percent of exits to permanent destinations (HUD) • Total households, adults, and children served (CCS) • Total number and percent of exits to C@P's definition of "positive destinations" (permanent housing, transitional housing, residential projects, emergency shelters, etc.) • Total number of current residents • Percent of exits to positive destinations • Current number of Safe Parkers (Safe Park) • Current number of residents (CCS, VOH)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
MWWHA	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIT Count
	HUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the average and median length of time persons remain homeless • Reduction in the percent of persons who return to homelessness • Reduction in the number of persons who are homeless • Increase in the percent of adults who gain or increase employment or non-employment cash income over time • Reduction in the number of persons who become homeless for the first time • Reduction in the percent of persons defined as homeless who return to homelessness • Increase in the percent of persons who exit to or retain permanent housing • Increase in the percent of persons who exit the streets to an emergency shelter, sheltered housing, transitional housing, or permanent housing destination

There is not currently one place where all these performance measures are consolidated and easily digestible. This is in part because the City has not yet established an overarching performance measurement and reporting framework that supports a clear overall picture of the City's progress and successes. However, this work is currently underway and is reliant, in part, on MWWHA determining what performance measures it will track. The following limitations are contributing to this environment (see [Data Collection and Management](#)):

- Service providers are expected to track and report performance measures in the HMIS, which is overseen and managed by the MWWHA. City staff do not currently have access to the HMIS in

order to create or view reporting. Although service providers report performance measures in their invoices to the City, those metrics are not reported to anyone except the contract administrator.

- Although the Police and Fire Departments interact frequently with people experiencing homelessness, data is limited because there is not a way to identify that a response related to homelessness. This functionality has not been added because the departments are concerned it would introduce bias in their call response. However, the Police Department tracks some data related to the involvement of those experiencing homelessness in violent crimes. The HST in the Police Department track data separately from the Department in the City's Geographic Information System (GIS).
- As mentioned in [Planning and Strategy](#), interviewed City staff reported that there is not currently an overall set of goals related to homelessness, which naturally limits the development of meaningful City-wide performance measures.

In alignment with a comprehensive homelessness strategic plan and relevant regional partner goals, the City should develop a small set of key community-level performance measures (four to six measures) that document top-line homelessness related outcomes. These metrics should be designed to show the impact of the complete service environment within the City, while balancing the potential impact of upstream impacts to service delivery. These top-line indicators represent the information that is most important to community members—who are typically much less focused on the City's specific activities and much more interested in the ultimate impact on homelessness. Commonly reported outcome indicators related to housing and homelessness include:

- Number of people experiencing homelessness (PIT count)
- Number of households entering homelessness
- Number of households exiting homelessness into temporary or permanent housing
- Number of households returning to homelessness
- Housing affordability
- Number of available housing units by type (e.g., affordable housing, permanent supportive housing)
- Number of people prevented from becoming unhoused or number of prevented evictions
- Utilization rates of emergency and transitional housing
- Racial and gender demographics of people experiencing homelessness and/or receiving services

Many of the measures above are already reported to the City by service providers and need only be aggregated and tracked as one community-wide metric. To reduce duplication, consider opportunities to align City-wide measures with HUD's required performance measures, MVWHA's outcome-driven measures, and any other performance measures that are already tracked by service providers. Alongside these measures, the City should ensure that appropriate context is reflected within performance reporting to help community members understand trends. For example, if the PIT count continues to increase, the City should consider how many new households entered homelessness and the availability of affordable housing units. The suite of performance measures should be compiled and presented in a way that shows a complete picture of the holistic environment within the community.

City Councilmembers expressed the desire to receive regular performance briefings on the City’s homelessness response efforts and the status of homelessness in the City. Performance measures that would be helpful to brief leadership on a regular basis include bed counts, usage rates, and measures related to outcomes. In addition, to better communicate the outcomes of the City’s homelessness services, the City should consider developing a dashboard to regularly report community-level performance measures (see [External Communication](#)).

In addition, expectations around performance measurement and monitoring for City-funded programs are currently incorporated into the contracts that are created between the City and the various service providers. After the City develops community-level performance measures, it should reevaluate and align performance measures for any service contracts that are engaged in the future (see [Service Provider Performance Measures](#)).

Data Collection and Management

3.	Observation	Systems to collect homelessness-related data across City-operated and City-funded programs and services are siloed. This limits the City’s ability to accurately assess performance in a timely and meaningful manner.
	Recommendation	Consider different strategies, such as leveraging the City’s GIS or gaining access to the HMIS, to develop a unified system-wide approach to data collection, management, and reporting.

There is not a centralized source of homelessness response data throughout the City, resulting in data siloes and difficulty in evaluating activities Citywide. Data is currently collected and stored in a variety of ways across the homelessness service ecosystem. For example:

- The HST in the Police Department collects data in GIS, which in turn informs a performance dashboard. Parks previously tracked homelessness-related data in the GIS but has discontinued this practice.
- The Salem Housing Authority (SHA) maintains its own data on internal platforms that do not integrate with the City’s data platforms. SHA can also access the HMIS and sometimes inputs information from others across the City to support continuity of services for individuals experiencing homelessness in the community.
- Salem Outreach and Livability Services (SOS) conducts data intake through Public Works Dispatch and community complaints to track the volume of disposed waste.
- The Fire Department does not collect any data related to homelessness calls for service or subsequent actions.

The HMIS for the recently established MWVHA is not yet sufficiently developed to operate as a regional data repository, and service providers reported that they often track data in spreadsheets in addition to the HMIS to ensure data integrity and produce reports required by donors. The City does not have access to the HMIS and therefore cannot pull reports or help to coordinate efforts related to this data if the need arises. This issue was documented in the CoC’s 2022 Gaps Analysis of the Homeless Services Delivery System for the Marion-Polk Region.

The following service providers in the region have access and participate in HMIS data-sharing:¹⁷

- A Ray of Hope Today!
- Church at the Park
- Center for Hope & Safety
- Department of Veteran Affairs HUD/VASH
- Easterseals Oregon
- Family Promise
- Prism Inc. – Shelly’s House
- SABLE House
- Salem Housing Authority
- Shangri-La Corporation
- Sheltering Silverton
- St. Francis Family Housing
- Marion County Housing Authority
- Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance
- Northwest Human Services
- Oregon Housing and Community Services
- Polk County Family & Community Outreach
- Polk County Veteran Services
- The Salvation Army
- Union Gospel Mission – Simonka Place
- United Way – SafeSleep
- WestCare/VetCare
- West Valley Housing Authority
- Women at the Well – Grace House

As noted in [Performance Measurement](#), the siloed data environment contributes to challenges in understanding the community-wide use and impact of the service ecosystem. To help mitigate this, the City should consider different strategies to work with the MWVHA to develop a unified system-wide approach to data communication and management. There are several options that the City could pursue to achieve this; the pros and cons of each are discussed below:

GIS: The City has a mature GIS program with 16 staff. This team is in the beginning stages of developing a Citywide data strategy. Interviewed staff reported the perception that this team is underutilized and may provide a viable mechanism to help support homelessness response strategies. For example, the GIS could be a mechanism to receive community referrals to help support people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the City. The downside of fully relying on GIS is that it is disconnected from service provider data and therefore not comprehensive. In addition, it would require manual updates for performance measures.

HMIS: If the City gained access to the HMIS, it would be able to access the most consolidated data bank available and pull community-wide reports. However, the City does not own or control the data entered into that system and may not be able to isolate the data that pertains only to the City. In addition, it is unlikely that the Police Department would be given access to the HMIS, which would require the HST to partner with a social worker or case worker to access the database.

Peer approaches to the HMIS indicate that there is no standard approach to the role a City plays in the regional HMIS. In Lane County, the County manages the community’s HMIS while the City

¹⁷ MWV Homeless Alliance, ‘Agencies List’. <https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Agencies-list-for-website.pdf>

contributes funding and policy leadership to regional leadership organizations.¹⁸ Conversely, the Portland-area CoC’s HMIS is managed by Northwest Social Connections, an administrative arm of the Portland Housing Bureau.¹⁹

As the City considers which data sharing option best fits its needs, it should also evaluate the following elements for collecting and sharing data in housing collaborations as recommended the Urban Institute:²⁰

- Data security and privacy concerns
- Technical barriers
- Cultural differences among partner organizations

External Communication

4.	Observation	The City communicates its homelessness activities through several mechanisms, including newsletters, neighborhood association meetings, and its website. However, absent an overarching strategy and related performance measures, the community may not be aware of the full scope or impact of services available in the City.
	Recommendation	<p>A. Continue updating the Housing & Shelter webpage to provide a centralized repository for community resources, key reports, and relevant articles.</p> <p>B. Consider breaking out the Addressing Homelessness section of the Housing & Shelter webpage into its own dedicated page that communicates the City’s efforts.</p> <p>C. To better communicate the outcomes of the City’s homelessness services, consider incorporating community-level performance measures into the Transparent Reporting and Analytics for Residents Portal.</p>

Communication around homelessness is an important topic for City staff, leadership, and community members. The City communicates its efforts related to homelessness through several mechanisms, including:

- **Weekly Emails:** The City sends weekly emails to anyone who subscribes. These updates are cross posted in the weekly “Friday Salem Connections” newsletter that is sent to anyone who subscribes to the City’s general updates function, and on the City’s website on the “Learn About City Efforts to Address Homelessness” page.

¹⁸ City of Eugene: Regional Agencies – Partnerships: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/4906/Regional-Agencies---Partnerships>

¹⁹ City of Portland: Homeless Management Information System: <https://www.portland.gov/phb/hmis>

²⁰ The Urban Institute: Making It Real, Keeping It Real: Implementing Housing and Health Collaborations: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/89586/housing_makingitreal_final.pdf

- **Shelter Siting:** While undergoing the process of finding sites to host sheltering services, City staff attend neighborhood association meetings and host Zoom and in-person feedback sessions, among other community outreach activities.
- **Online:** Information about the City's response to homelessness is published on the City's website.²¹
- **Social Media:** The City utilizes social media to communicate generally, with some posts related to homelessness if there is relevant information. The City utilizes a number of different platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Nextdoor.

Given the volume of diverse City, regional, State, and national initiatives that support homelessness prevention and intervention, it can be challenging to fully grasp the extent of services available in the City, as well as their costs and impact, in a complex environment. Interviewed City leaders noted that the community's attitude toward homelessness is difficult for the City to influence, but that homelessness is a very important issue to the public; the 2022 Community Satisfaction Survey found that homelessness was a top concern for 57% of respondents, a substantial increase from 17% in 2016.²² Adding complexity to this is the perception by many community members, reported by staff and stakeholders, that people experiencing homelessness in Salem predominantly originate outside of the City, which contributes to tension around how and to whom the City provides services. It is critical to effectively communicate about this issue with community members to garner support for ongoing resources dedicated to preventing and responding to homelessness.

The City should continue to develop the Housing & Shelter webpage to provide a centralized repository for community resources, key reports, and relevant articles. The City could consider breaking out the Addressing Homelessness section of the webpage into a singular landing page that is dedicated to homelessness. This page would support enhanced understanding and better leverage historical and new reports related to homelessness, and could display or link the following materials:

- Housing resources and options to connect with services
- Community resources, including appropriate phone numbers to call
- Articles on recent events
- Results from the most recent point in time count
- Homelessness strategic plan
- Annual reports on homelessness
- Community-level performance measure dashboard, including total City expenditures on homelessness (see [Financial Monitoring, Reporting, and Communication](#))
- Quarterly program-level key performance indicator report
- Links to historical staff reports
- Links to recent press releases, blog posts, and community newsletter articles
- Links to other relevant webpages, such as MWVHA and community partners

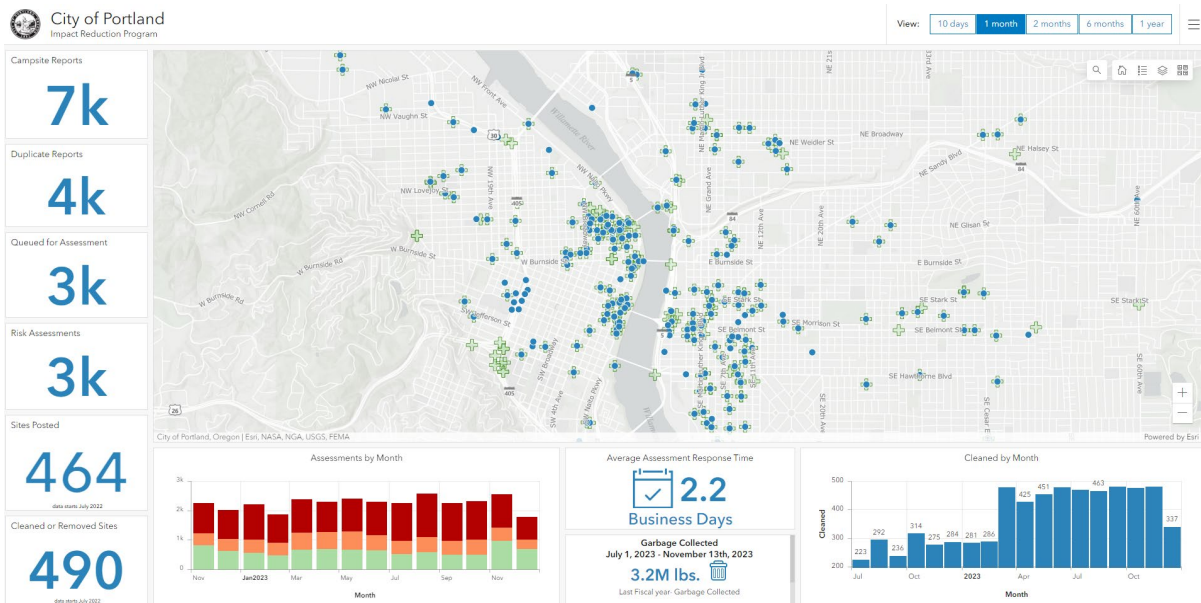
²¹ City of Salem, 'Housing & Shelter'. <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/housing-shelter>

²² City of Salem, 'Community Satisfaction Hybrid Survey'. <https://www.cityofsalem.net/home/showpublisheddocument/17934/638042851019426694>

By continuing to develop a centralized location for all homelessness-related reports and communications, the City can support an improved understanding of its many programs and partnerships in this space.

In addition to centralizing communication resources, the City should consider leveraging a performance measurement dashboard that is updated on a regular basis. Ideally, the dashboard should be able to automatically pull relevant data from a single repository (see [Data Collection and Management](#)) to reduce staff time dedicated to these routine updates. The dashboard could be incorporated into the new Transparent Reporting and Analytics for Residents portal; a link to this reporting tool should be included on the homelessness-related City webpage

In addition to presenting regularly updated performance measures that reflect service utilization and resource capacity, the City can use dashboards to show data trends over time, which is a practice some cities are moving toward. For example, King County in Washington state has developed a homeless response system dashboard²³ that presents a variety of metrics and trends to measure results, monitor performance, increase transparency, and build accountability. If the City decides to pursue the development of a dashboard, this activity should be integrated into the homelessness strategic or operating plan. For example, to support the City of Portland's strategic goal of increasing communication about HUCIRP program processes, their strategic plan states that the program will collaborate with the City's existing data visualization and performance management network to conduct data and operational analyses, improve data visualization, and increase transparency.²⁴ This goal was set in 2019, and the City of Portland's HUCIRP dashboard, included below, is comprehensive and public-facing.²⁵



²³ King County's Homeless Response System dashboard: <https://kcrha.org/regional-homelessness-data/>

²⁴ City of Portland: Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program Strategic Plan 2019-2021: <https://www.portland.gov/impactreduction/documents/homelessness-and-urban-camping-impact-reduction-program-strategic-plan/download>

²⁵ City of Portland: Impact Reduction Program Dashboard: <https://pdx.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/c68d1d2e29e444a7b70f20aaafcbfbeb>

Although clear reporting of performance measures will not directly address homelessness, consistent and transparent data reporting can help inform stakeholders about the efficacy of existing services, identify opportunities to support continuous improvement, and track progress over time.

Financial Role of the City in Homelessness Response

5.	Observation	The City has largely funded its homelessness response efforts through one-time funds, hoping to create appropriate infrastructure for its longer-term homelessness response efforts.
	Recommendation	With the depletion of special one-time funds and the City’s approaching revenue shortfalls, City leadership should develop a vision and strategy for the financial role of the City in supporting local homelessness response services.

Many of the City’s homelessness response services have been funded through one-time special state and federal revenues, along with HUD funds. In addition to the provision of services during the past few years, these funds were used with the intention of developing infrastructure in Salem to better respond to homelessness. Some of this infrastructure is physical, including the capital assets developed through Community Planning and Development’s administration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) federal pass-through dollars, particularly through affordable housing construction. Additionally, some of this infrastructure is organizational and operational, such as through the development and strengthening of local homelessness response service providers.

However, these special revenues are already or almost depleted, and the City faces a pronounced revenue shortfall in the coming years. Although the City will continue to receive and can strategically use CDBG and HOME funds for homelessness response in the coming years, the City will receive far less federal support than the prior three years during which these funds were supplemented with HUD American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

As the City’s financial environment is changing, City councilors and staff leaders should collaborate to conceptualize and articulate a strategic vision for the financial role of the City’s response to homelessness. Most importantly, this strategy must reflect the types and limitations of financial resources that the City has available or can pursue to respond to homelessness. In this process, it is important to consider the City’s role and strategy related to homelessness, capacity of regional partners, and the impact on ongoing operating costs (e.g., secondary costs).

In their efforts to define the optimal financial vision for the City’s homelessness response, Salem’s political and professional leaders can consider one or more of the following strategies:

- Reflecting the lack of general fund resources, the City could act as a pursuer and a conduit of external funds. City staff can apply for federal, state, and philanthropic grants to pass through to local service providers.
- Without directly expending general fund dollars, the City can partner with service providers in name and in-kind donations (e.g., parks, facilities, volunteer resources) to increase their prominence, enhancing their own grant pursuit efforts.

- The City can use the on-the-ground expertise of local service providers to help identify where opportunities exist in the homelessness response ecosystem and local pathways to long-term stable housing. To the extent possible and strategically advantageous, the City can allocate its CDBG and HOME funding to address these opportunities.

Financial Monitoring, Reporting, and Communication

6.	Observation	The City does not measure or report its <i>total</i> homelessness response spending, including both primary and secondary costs, to articulate overall City resources dedicated to this important community issue.
	Recommendation	The City should establish a process to measure and report its total homelessness response funding commitments Citywide, recognizing the strategic benefits of measuring and communicating this information.

Although the City measures, monitors, and has some reporting on each form of its primary spending and pass-through funds dedicated to homelessness response, this financial information is disaggregated. There is no unified figure or source of data demonstrating the resources that the City commits to its response to homelessness. There is no requirement to combine, monitor, and report disparate funding streams and projects into one unified statement of homelessness funding commitments. Doing so, however, would help the City communicate how it supports the community's prioritization of homelessness response, improve public communications, and supplement performance monitoring efforts.

The City should report its total homelessness response funding commitments in its external communications (see [External Communication](#)). Like many government services and functions, homelessness response is a community priority. Residents who are interested in how the City is responding to homelessness should also understand what financial resources are actually available to the City and what it costs to effectively respond to homelessness. Synthesizing, summarizing, and communicating the City's full funding commitments to homelessness response can help improve the public's understanding of Salem's efforts, and would demonstrate that the City is treating homelessness as a priority in alignment with community expectations.

In addition to the above advantages to communications and public relations, combining and monitoring homelessness response funding commitments within a single, easily digestible report could help the City to monitor and understand its broad homelessness response performance (see [Performance Measurement](#)). Although information on the connection between financial commitments and performance is more actionable and more easily understood at the program or department level, measuring and monitoring Citywide spending and performance is still strategically important. High-level, strategic thinking and planning on Citywide homelessness response efforts should be informed by current and historic levels of funding commitments and the historical results of these commitments in addressing homelessness. This is particularly important for informing City councilors who are ultimately responsible for steering the City's homelessness response.

B. ECOSYSTEM AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION

As mentioned in [Planning and Strategy](#), the City participates in the MWVHA, a relatively new CoC that presents many opportunities to enhance and expand services strategically at a regional level. As an active member of the MWVHA, the City can influence how the MWVHA is developed, managed, and integrated to serve the region. Given the regional nature of homelessness services and the City’s revenue shortfall to support service delivery in the community, the relationship with and maturation of the MWVHA is critical to support homelessness response and prevention services in Salem.

Siloed Service Ecosystem

7.	Observation	Roles, specialty services, and capacity among community-based service providers are sometimes uncoordinated, which can contribute to confusion around expectations and appropriate service referrals that would facilitate a clear continuum as individuals move from experiencing unsheltered homelessness to becoming stably housed.
	Recommendation	<p>A. In the short-term, the City should explore opportunities to inventory community-based service providers, including core information around service restrictions, criteria, and capacity, to help support a more seamless approach to service referrals and delivery.</p> <p>B. In the long-term, the City should work with the MWVHA to advocate for system improvements including enhancing the Coordinated Entry System, a system-wide HMIS, and opportunities to streamline the continuum of care among service providers.</p>

Service providers report that roles, specialty areas, and capacity across Salem’s service ecosystem are sometimes unclear, which can lead to confusion around expectations among various governmental entities, agencies, and non-profit service providers. Within the City’s service ecosystem, there is not always a clear continuum of services for a person or family to rely on as they move from experiencing unsheltered homelessness to becoming stably housed within the community. These individuals and families often have unique needs and encounter capacity constraints among service providers, which can create a non-linear path to services and housing. This sometimes results in confusion and unintentional barriers to service, which can impact how individuals are placed for services within the service ecosystem. Examples of siloed service offerings that impact service delivery and coordination are included below.

- **Outreach:** Outreach work is a combination of efforts from multiple sources who do not typically work together, including:
 - The City’s Homeless Services Team (HST), which is staffed by two police officers who liaise with service providers, which may include SHA outreach workers or direct service providers
 - The City’s SOS team, which is staffed by one dedicated coordinator who supports the Police Department and Public Works to share resources, clean up encampments, and help manage refuse, shopping carts, and other material in public spaces
 - SHA, which is staffed by three outreach workers that engage people experiencing homelessness in the community to help them identify and access appropriate services

Through the IHC, HST and SOS coordinate closely with one another, but there are additional opportunities to enhance collaboration and coordination with outreach workers at SHA.

- **Crisis Hotline Administration:** With the City's financial support, Northwest Human Services (NWHS) administers the 988 crisis hotline which is a resource for people who are experiencing, or near to experiencing, homelessness. However, NWHS is not a CES provider, and therefore call center representatives must refer individuals who call the crisis line to another agency (Community Action Agency) to be entered into the CES. Entry into the CES is the best way to identify eligible services and potential openings for shelters and housing based on their vulnerability score. If this resource is not available to call takers, it can inadvertently create barriers to accessing services by introducing a hand-off rather than providing resources at the first request.
- **Navigation Center Client Acceptance:** The Navigation Center does not accept walk-ins from individuals off the street (60 beds are intended to be filled through the CES and 15 beds are reserved for law enforcement referrals) and has certain conditions that must be met to accept an unsheltered individual, with varying vulnerability scores accepted. For example, individuals who stay at the Navigation Center must be able to perform their Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), manage their emotions, and sleep in an open bay without disrupting others, all of which the Community Action Agency screens for at the time of entry. However, requirements have not been well-communicated, resulting in individuals who were referred from other community provider agencies being turned away for services because they do not meet these criteria. This has the potential to re-create trauma for individuals who are unhoused.
- **HST Data Collection:** Although the HST often connects with various social and case workers, officers are not continuously paired with a caseworker or social worker. Case workers and social workers typically have access to enter data into the HMIS, and without this pairing, data collected by the HST is not consistently entered into the HMIS, which would ideally be used to triage and identify eligible services.

Service providers also reported that there can be confusion around which partner is best positioned to help a person experiencing homelessness based on their unique needs. Compounding the above concerns, service providers are not always aware of the services and capacity available from other partners in the community. Therefore, there is a need for one dedicated function or role that triages the correct place for clients to go based on factors such as vulnerability scores, partner status, and health status. An interactive, real-time map of available services within the City, along with their capacity and requirements for participants, would help support continuity of care.

Typically, this resource is provided through a CoC; therefore, the City should help support the MWVHA in developing a robust system that can help provide this information in real-time. This work will likely take additional time to develop given the regional nature of services. Therefore, in the short-term, the City should explore opportunities to help stakeholders across the local service ecosystem better understand roles, responsibilities, specialty areas, and short- and long-term capacity to assist individuals and families. The City could develop and host a central resource that would act as a guide to define what services each local community partner offers, and any specialty areas to serve individuals with unique needs. For example, someone using the resource could easily find the available services and correct contact if they are experiencing homelessness and have a medical condition.

The City's Housing and Shelter webpage currently publishes several resources including 2-1-1, the NWHS Crisis and Information Hotline, and information about Safe Vehicle Parking and shelters, but

there is an opportunity to expand this information so it is more actionable to fill this identified need.²⁶ For example, though the shelter page publishes the addresses and phone numbers of all shelters, it may be helpful if information about who the shelter serves, any shelter restrictions, and current bed capacity is easily accessible. SHA also provides a community resources page that the City could seek to integrate with its own.²⁷

To improve system integration in the long-term, the City should work with the Alliance to prioritize system improvements noted in other sections of this report, including a robust CES that allows appropriate service providers to perform assessments, prioritizes the most vulnerable, and enables a system-wide approach to data management and reporting through the HMIS. Over time, the MWVHA should develop a system that provides comprehensive access to available services and a standard prioritization process.

Ecosystem Gaps and Barriers

8.	Observation	While a diverse portfolio of services are available in the City, stakeholders note opportunities to expand services to address capacity constraints and unaddressed populations. Critical gaps and limitations include mental and behavioral health services, low-barrier shelter for vulnerable groups, and transitional housing.
	Recommendation	Continue efforts to evaluate benefits against costs and identify solutions for assessed resource gaps, including investing in infrastructure at the local level, cultivating partnerships with regional service providers, advocating for the ongoing development of the MWVHA, and other opportunities.

Although there is excellent work happening throughout the City—including a high-quality drug treatment program and a significant increase in low-barrier shelters within City limits over the past several years—gaps and barriers in the service ecosystem remain. City leadership reports that these gaps are anticipated to widen with the upcoming budget shortfall, specifically for the following areas that currently rely on City funds to operate²⁸:

- **Micro-Shelter Villages:** The City will no longer be able to provide funding to support three micro-shelter sites that provide temporary shelter for 232 people. Unless C@P is able to secure additional funding, these shelters may close on July 1, 2024. Each adult and family micro-shelter community costs about \$2.4 million each year to operate, while the newly opened youth micro-shelter costs approximately \$1.8 million per year.
- **Navigation Center:** The City will no longer be able to provide funding to support ongoing operations at the Navigation Center that provides 75 beds with intensive case management. Current funding will expire on July 1, 2025. The Navigation Center costs about \$2.1 million each year to operate.

²⁶ City of Salem: Housing & Shelter: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/housing-shelter>

²⁷ Salem Housing Authority: Resources: <https://www.salemhousingor.com/community-resources>

²⁸ At the time of this report's finalization, C@P leadership reported that the MWVHA will provide funding for micro-shelter shelter villages.

As the City undergoes a process to address its revenue shortfall, leaders should continue efforts to evaluate benefits against costs and identify solutions for assessed resource gaps, including investing in infrastructure at the local level, cultivating partnerships with regional service providers, forging public-private partnerships, and other opportunities.

The following tables provide a snapshot of the current gaps and barriers in service delivery facing the City.

Gaps

SERVICE GAP	DESCRIPTION
Shelter Bed Capacity	
Emergency and Transitional Beds	<p>Based on the January 2023 MWVHA point-in-time (PIT) count, the demand for temporary housing exceeds the current capacity of emergency and transitional beds in the region. The PIT count observed 1,683 people experiencing homelessness, of which 531 were in emergency shelter, 259 were in transitional shelter, 15 were in Safe Haven, and 878 were unsheltered (including 432 people characterized as chronically homeless).²⁹ Although utilization of available beds the night of the PIT count was 90%, there are 1,524 total beds available in the region—a shortage of 159 beds – and the majority of locations had a utilization rate of 100%.³⁰</p> <p>Interviewed service providers reported that there is a need for transitional housing that supports people who need to learn how to live inside again after long periods of being unhoused. The lack of availability of this type of transitional housing has resulted in some individuals losing their affordable housing option because housing units became damaged or unsafe to occupy.</p>
Low Barrier Shelter Beds	<p>While the City has invested heavily in increasing the number of low-barrier shelter beds in the community over the past several years, there is still a shortage of options. Barriers to accepting shelter include partners, pets, people who are not capable of living inside, and the inability of some individuals to perform ADLs.</p>
Shelter for Vulnerable Individuals	<p>There is extremely limited emergency or long-term shelter available for people who are unable to perform ADLs for any reason, including disability or other medical condition(s). These individuals are highly vulnerable and unable to access shelter within Salem due to this gap in the service ecosystem. There is also currently no dedicated shelter for the elderly, though as of February 2024 C@P is proposing a public/private collaborative project to provide 50 supportive shelter spaces for people over the age of 55.</p>
Shelter for Youth	<p>There are currently only 10 shelter beds available for youth under 18 in the City. In addition, the Church at the Park recently stood up a micro-village with 38 beds for youth aged 18–24. There are also transitional living beds at HOST for youth aged 18–24. Additional beds for youth, particularly those under the age of 18, are needed within the community.</p>

²⁹ MWVHA, '2023 Public Summary'. <https://mwwhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-Public-Summary.pdf>

³⁰ MWVHA, 'Housing Inventory Count – January 2023'. <https://mwwhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-HIC-Summary.pdf>

SERVICE GAP	DESCRIPTION
Services	
Mental and Behavioral Health Services	Although there are robust substance abuse programs operated by Ideal Option, Tribal programs, Bridgeway, NWHS, and outpatient medical assisted treatment, there are not sufficient mental or behavioral health services available. Additionally, it is reportedly very difficult to access these types of services, which are typically provided by a county. Marion County is currently suing the State of Oregon over the availability of mental health beds at the State hospital.
Case Management	Although the HMIS is intended to serve as a case management system that can track a person's information between service providers as they progress through the CoC, this system has not yet been used for this purpose. The MWVHA is concerned about data reliability and has therefore limited data entry and usage to preserve the integrity of data. However, this presents challenges in providing long-term case management across providers.
Discharge Planning	Related to case management, there are insufficient facilities (e.g., temporary or affordable housing) to support those who are exiting the State hospital or a nearby State prison. The lack of discharge facilities is also a concern when teenagers are exiting the foster care system, which is exacerbated by the limited shelter beds for youth.

Barriers

SERVICE BARRIER	DESCRIPTION
Coordinated Entry System	<p>Ideally, a Coordinated Entry System (CES) serves as a mechanism by which people who are currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system quickly and connect with appropriate resources that fit their needs. As noted in <u>Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (MWVHA)</u>, CES is a CoC-established system that uses standardized assessment tools and practices to identify the best options to address the individual or family's unique needs. However, the current CES is largely still in development to support the regional population of people experiencing homelessness within and in areas surrounding the City.</p> <p>Because the CES at MWVHA is still largely under development, there are limitations as to how the prioritization framework influences the decision of who is given access to the limited resources and services that are available. Some interviewed service providers reported the perception that, as a result, some service providers help candidates that they think are more likely to have successful outcomes or prioritize finding services for certain individuals. Best practices suggest that service providers should prioritize the most vulnerable to help reduce overall costs.³¹</p> <p>The intent of a CES is to transform a CoC into a fully integrated crisis response system by leveraging data that can be used for system and project planning as well as resource allocation. This system is a critically important data gathering and information tool that local service providers should leverage in order to coordinate services for each individual. Though the CES is the purview of the MWVHA, the City can advocate for the further development of a robust CES and encourage prioritization of the effort, including the recommendations from the 2021 CES</p>

³¹ Oregon Housing and Community Services, "How to Fight Homelessness with Data" https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3585797/File/Government/County%20Departments/Health%20and%20Human%20Services/Human%20Services/HMIS%20ServicePoint/Fight%20Homeless%20wth%20Data%20Presentation.pdf

SERVICE BARRIER	DESCRIPTION
	Evaluation contained in the CoC's 2022 Gaps Analysis of the Homeless Services Delivery System for the Marion-Polk Region. ³²
Housing Assessments	Completing a housing assessment is the first step in the CES for rapid re-housing services, but this is reportedly a hurdle for many people who are experiencing homelessness in the City. The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency is the primary organization that conducts housing assessments, and the line to receive a housing assessment often begins outside their site office at 7:00 am. As a result, teams in the field are not able to initiate next steps when a person agrees to accept services. As of December 2023, the Alliance agreed to grant SHA outreach workers access to complete housing assessment in the field which would alleviate some of this backlog (at the time of this report's finalization, SHA outreach workers had not yet been granted access). In addition, interviewed staff reported that the assessments include questions that some people experiencing homelessness may prefer not to answer, and that can present its own barriers to service.
Safe Parking	People experiencing homelessness may use Safe Parking to park their vehicles while they are living in them, but accessing Safe Park is difficult for many as it requires participants to have up-to-date vehicle insurance and registration.
Service Resistance	Numerous interviewed City staff noted that service refusal presents a barrier to their work, with some staff estimating that up to 80% of contacted people do not wish to accept services. There are a number of potential reasons that a person experiencing homelessness may appear to resist services, with each individual's situation being unique. Commonly cited reasons include a history of trauma and subsequent reluctance to trust service providers, mental health challenges, lack of tailored services that address their unique needs, a desire to preserve autonomy and independence, or substance use disorders.

Housing

9.	Observation	The need for housing in Salem continues to rise, with notable gaps in affordable and permanent supportive housing units.
	Recommendation	Continue to prioritize the development of housing, including permanent supportive housing and affordable housing units, to enable service providers to institute rapid re-housing and provide appropriate supports, thereby increasing the cost-effectiveness of services and the rate at which individuals can exit homelessness.

The 2022 Salem Area Comprehensive Plan, "Our Salem," included housing as part of a list of guiding principles that were informed by community engagement. Specifically, the goals and policies in Our Salem were informed by the City's intention to "provide a variety of housing types throughout Salem to accommodate the needs, abilities, and preferences of all residents, including ensuring an adequate supply of housing that is affordable and accessible for current and future generations."

³² MWVHA, 'Gaps Analysis'. <https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-FINAL-Gaps-Analysis-8.22.22-race-data-added.pdf>

Beyond the need for additional housing to keep Salem accessible for future generations, City leaders are keenly aware that housing is a critical component of responding to homelessness. The City has prioritized the development of affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), including the following recent developments:

- Construction is underway on the Center for Hope and Safety’s HOPE Plaza, an affordable housing complex in downtown Salem with 20 units for domestic violence survivors. Construction is set to finish in June 2024.³³
- In December 2023, the City Council approved a purchase to facilitate the development of 120 affordable housing apartment units at the former Salem General Hospital.³⁴
- The SHA opened Yaquina Hall, a building with 51 affordable apartments at the Oregon State Hospital North Campus, in May 2023.³⁵ SHA also plans to open Sequoia Crossings, a building with 60 new units for chronically homeless people, in early 2024.³⁶
- The City opened the Salem Navigation Center in April 2023, a 24/7 75-bed shelter facility that is the first of its kind in Marion County.³⁷
- The City finalized a partnership with a real estate investment company in July 2023 to preserve and restore Northeast Salem’s Orchard Park Apartments, a 224-unit building that is Oregon’s largest affordable housing complex outside the greater Portland area.³⁸

However, a shortage of affordable and permanent supportive housing persists in the City. SHA staff report that their waiting lists at any given time are closed due to the amount of people already on the list. The following sections describe the current housing shortfalls and the importance of continuing to invest in affordable and permanent supportive housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing

PSH is a key component to both homelessness prevention and response. PSH is a form of affordable housing in which housing assistance (e.g., rental assistance) and supportive services are provided to help households achieve housing stability. PSH units are designed to serve individuals who experience chronic homelessness or community members with complex medical or behavioral health needs. PSH offers safe and stable housing environments with voluntary and flexible supports and services to help people manage serious, chronic issues, such as mental health or substance use disorders. Research indicates that developing PSH is highly effective in reducing homelessness, and results in cost savings between an estimated \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year.³⁹ However, PSH is

³³ The Statesman: What’s that under construction on Church Street in downtown Salem? <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/local/2023/12/20/whats-that-under-construction-on-church-street-in-downtown-salem/71910469007/>

³⁴ Salem Reporter: UPDATE: City to support affordable housing development at former Salem General Hospital: <https://www.salemreporter.com/2023/12/05/your-government-plans-for-revenue-task-force-to-take-shape/>

³⁵ Salem Housing Authority: Yaquina Hall: <https://www.salemhousingor.com/yaquina-hall>

³⁶ City of Salem: Responding to Sheltering in Public Spaces: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/housing-shelter/learn-about-city-efforts-to-address-homelessness/responding-to-sheltering-in-public-spaces>

³⁷ OPB: Salem launches ‘low barrier’ navigation center, supportive housing units to combat homelessness: <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/04/03/salem-homelessness-oregon-homeless-shelters/>

³⁸ The Statesman: City partnership to save largest affordable housing complex in Salem: <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/local/2023/07/24/city-partnership-to-save-largest-affordable-housing-complex-in-salem/70445338007/>

³⁹ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness – Ending Chronic Homelessness in 2017: https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Ending_Chronic_Homelessness_in_2017.pdf

expensive upfront; for example, Multnomah County reportedly spent approximately \$14.8 million to place 934 people into PSH between August 2022 and August 2023.⁴⁰

Although many groups across the ecosystem are focusing on increasing the availability of PSH, City staff and service providers noted that there is still a gap in availability. The 2023 Annual Gaps Analysis by the MWVHA found that 42% of households experiencing homelessness required PSH. An estimated 1,393 new units with accompanying supportive services are needed to fill this gap in the Salem-Keizer area.⁴¹

The shortage of PSH creates barriers in exiting people from homelessness and hinders the effectiveness of the homelessness response system in multiple ways. First, it creates the perception that there are insufficient emergency and transitional beds by restricting the ability for individuals to successfully exit chronic homelessness, creating longer stays in temporary housing and a backlog at the front end of services. Second, it creates a potentially competitive environment among people experiencing homelessness for limited units among a population that may already be facing significant trauma and barriers to service access. Third, being denied housing due to a shortage can perpetuate the distress experienced by people experiencing homelessness, which can result in relapses of mental health or substance use disorders over time.

The current shortage of PSH also presents barriers to effectively understanding the success of homelessness interventions. If someone is unable to readily transition into permanent housing after completing a program, securing financial assistance or employment, and/or benefitting from other medical services, staff and stakeholders report that they are more likely to return to unsheltered living. Often, these outcomes reflect poorly on the program that served the individual rather than showing the insufficient capacity of permanent housing to help the individual regain independence.

Finally, PSH has generally been shown to increase the success rate of people exiting homelessness and reducing taxpayer costs associated with homelessness services. One meta-analysis, which assessed 72 studies of PSH, concluded that this service was effective in reducing homelessness and achieving housing stability while also resulting in cost offsets.⁴²

Affordable Housing

Although this study focuses on the City's response to homelessness, it is important to note that one of the primary ways to prevent homelessness is through the production of affordable housing—and the availability of affordable housing is a key strategy for reducing cyclical homelessness. Affordable housing is defined by HUD as housing in which the occupant pays no more than 30% of their gross income for housing costs, including utilities.⁴³ The link between housing affordability, renters, and homelessness is well-documented. In 2020, the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimated that

⁴⁰ OPB: Here are some solutions to homelessness in Oregon: <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/10/10/oregon-homelessness-solutions-supportive-housing-villages/>

⁴¹ Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance – Regional Needs Assessment: <https://mwvhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/10.2023-Gaps-Analysis-v.3.2-FINAL-1.pdf>

⁴² Effectiveness of Permanent Supporting Housing and Income Assistance Interventions for Homeless Individuals in High-Income Countries: A Systemic Review (The Lancet, 2020): <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2468-2667%2820%2930055-4>

⁴³ US Department of Housing and Urban Development – Glossary of Terms to Affordable Housing: <https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm>

for every \$100 increase in median rent, there is an associated 9% increase in the estimated homelessness rate.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, similar to PSH, the gap in affordable housing is difficult to precisely quantify. However, available data indicates that there is a significant gap. For example:

- The City performed a Housing Needs Analysis in 2015 to project housing needs for Salem from 2015 to 2035. The analysis found that 52% of Salem’s rented households were cost-burdened, and projected: a) A surplus of single-family detached housing (projected surplus of 1,975 acres/9,131 units), and b) A deficit of multifamily housing (projected deficit of 207 acres/2,897 units).
- The organization Imagine Salem reports 10.5% of the City’s housing is considered affordable (2,032 units), with 10% of those units at risk of expiring by 2030.⁴⁵ MWVHA’s 2022 Gaps Analysis reported that although Salem was in the top third of affordable housing markets in the country 10 years ago, the City now ranks 213th of 238 housing markets nationwide when accounting for average home sale prices and average incomes.⁴⁶

To support cost-effective programs, enable accurate performance monitoring, and best support people experiencing homelessness in the community, the City should continue to prioritize the scouting for and development of permanent housing units (affordable housing and PSH).

C. CONTRACTS

Contract Design and Management

10.	Observation	The City of Salem's contract management practices include limited coordination between departments, which results in some inconsistencies across departments and across service providers.
	Recommendation	Establish clear policies, procedures, and expectations for contract design and management to support a consistent experience and efficient operations for all City contract managers and service providers.

Contract management is a critical component of any organization's operations, and the City is no exception. Effective contract management ensures that the City can efficiently and effectively provide services to people experiencing homelessness. The Harvard Kennedy School’s Government

⁴⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office – Better HUD Oversight of Data Collection Could Improve Estimates of Homeless Population: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-433.pdf>

⁴⁵ Department of Planning and Community Development, Imagine Salem – Housing in Salem FAQs and Common Concerns: <https://imaginesalem.org/faqs-and-common-concerns>

⁴⁶ Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance – The Homeless Services Delivery System for the Marion-Polk Region GAPS ANALYSIS: <https://mwwhomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-FINAL-Gaps-Analysis-8.22.22-race-data-added.pdf>

Performance Lab has worked with government agencies regarding contract management and found that most contract management practices fall short in three ways:⁴⁷

- Lack of purposeful attempts by government agencies to improve outcomes of contracted services
- Failure to collect and use meaningful data to improve service delivery
- Lack of productive collaboration with service providers

The evaluation of the City's contract management practices revealed that there are opportunities for improvement. Currently, the City manages contracts related to homelessness services in a decentralized manner split between two primary departments, Community Services and Community Planning and Development. However, there appears to be limited coordination between the two departments as it relates to managing grants and contracts, which creates the possibility of inconsistencies in processes, expectations, and relationship management with service providers. The City uses resources from the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) to guide their practices associated with contract management. While this is a strong starting point to ensure contracts are being managed appropriately, there are no City-specific documented policies and procedures on contract management which creates the risk that departments are applying these practices inconsistently.

Contract Design

Policies and procedures related to contract design are crucial for ensuring that grant awards are distributed fairly and consistently. Without clear guidelines in place, inconsistencies can arise between contracts, leading to confusion and undocumented expectations. The City currently lacks policies and procedures related to contract design for grant awards. As a result, inconsistencies have been observed between contracts, highlighting the need for the development of clear and comprehensive guidelines for contract design in the context of grant awards.

More specifically, contracts had inconsistencies in the following areas:

- **Indemnification:** Contracts usually include a clause on indemnification to reduce liability if there is ever a lawsuit, claim, or action made against the City. However, there are a few contracts where this clause is not included, potentially exposing the City to unnecessary risk.
- **Withholding of Funds:** Most language in the contracts regarding noncompliance is about terminating the agreement as a result. While termination is an option, contracts should also include clauses about withholding funds, so that the City has more options instead of abandoning the agreement if something goes wrong.
- **Structure:** Contracts managed by the Community Services are mostly structured as grant agreements, while contracts managed by Community Planning and Development (CPD) are mostly structured as deferred forgivable loans. This difference is partly due to restrictions associated with federal funds managed by CPD.

⁴⁷ Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab - Active Contract Management: How Governments Can Collaborate More Effectively with Social Service Providers to Achieve Better Results: https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/govlabs/files/active_contract_management_brief.pdf?m=1538680014

- **Compliance with Law:** It is critical that contracts aim to reduce the liability of the City. Many contracts include sections that the recipient/developer/grantee shall comply with all relevant laws and regulations. However, this section is missing for some of the contracts managed by CS.

To document the process of contract design related to homelessness services, The City should create a set of policies and procedures that outline the steps involved in the contract design process. This can include creating templates for different service providers based on their organizational type, function, or more. These templates can be customized to meet the specific needs of each service provider, while also ensuring that all contracts meet the minimum standards set forth by the City. Additionally, it is important to establish clear guidelines for the evaluation and selection of service providers, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of their performance. This can include regular reporting requirements, site visits, and other measures to ensure that service providers are meeting their contractual obligations and providing high-quality services to those experiencing homelessness in the City.

Contract Management

Several current grant agreements managed by CS were not competitively bid, which has led to questions regarding the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of services. To initiate needed programs and services, the City originally conducted a capacity needs assessment to survey community partners on their capabilities, capacity, and financial needs to provide homelessness response services. This analysis formed the basis for existing grants out of CS. It is important to note that these agreements were initially an emergency response to the pandemic to provide sheltering services, meaning that future costs were not accounted for.

Relatedly, the majority of grants are funded on a reimbursement basis, which can make it difficult to determine and forecast the actual cost of services. This approach relies on contractors submitting the correct documentation in a timely manner, which can be challenging if service providers submit invoices inconsistently. Establishing clear guidelines for service providers on how to submit invoices and documentation for reimbursement, including requirements for timely submission and specific formats for documentation, can help ensure that the reimbursement process is efficient and accurate.

According to interviewees, there are perceptions that service providers do not always select clients from the CES. To address any perception of inconsistent advocacy towards certain individuals seeking assistance, the City should incorporate the requirement to use CES to determine eligibility and prioritization for assistance. By doing so, City contract managers and service providers will have clear expectations, which ensures that vulnerable populations receive the services they need.

To ensure that all grant awards are fair, transparent, and cost-effective, it is important for the City to establish clear policies and procedures related to contract bidding and requirements. Having these processes documented promotes consistency from the applicant's perspective and eases concerns around the cost-effectiveness of service providers that are provided funding. This would ensure that all applicants have an equal opportunity to secure City funding and promotes the delivery of cost-effective services. The City should conduct regular evaluations of grant agreements to ensure that services are being provided in alignment with contract terms, including use of resources, performance outcomes, and compliance with key provisions, such as using CES for service placement.

Additionally, the City should establish clear policies, procedures, and expectations related to ongoing contract management practices. This documentation should address, at a minimum:

- How the City approaches contract management as a strategic and purposeful function
- Best practices for managing contracts, collaboration, reporting, and documentation
- Establish guidelines for:
 - Equal treatment towards those seeking assistance
 - Service providers on submitting documentation for reimbursement
 - Competitive bidding on grant awards
 - Conduct regular evaluations of grant agreements
 - Communication standards for service providers

Documenting these processes is critical to ensure that all contracts are managed in a transparent and efficient manner, reducing the risk of errors and misunderstandings. This could be achieved by developing a comprehensive contract management manual that outlines the steps for managing contracts from start to finish. This manual could include information on how to draft contracts, how to monitor and evaluate performance, and how to handle disputes or issues that may arise. Additionally, it could include guidelines for collaboration between contract managers and service providers, as well as expectations for reporting and documentation.

To support the success of all stakeholders, including service providers, the City, and residents, it is imperative that everyone engaged in this transition is familiar with these concepts and that a consistent approach to service providers is applied by City contract managers.

Service Provider Performance Measures

11.	Observation	Performance measures are a critical component of service contracts, but differences in how they are outlined between departments may lead to inconsistencies in measuring progress and assessing goals for contracted services.
	Recommendation	<p>A. Develop a suite of suitable performance measures for service providers to support consistency in ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>B. Incorporate the updated performance measures into all service contracts.</p> <p>C. Continue to follow a reporting cadence for service providers that incorporates performance measure reporting.</p>

Performance measures provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of contracted services and are an essential aspect of service contracts. In the context of homelessness, performance measures are even more critical due to the significant impact that homelessness has on individuals and communities. The importance of addressing homelessness underscores the need for clear and consistent performance measures to ensure that contracted services are meeting the needs of the community and making a meaningful impact on reducing homelessness.

As detailed in [Contracted Programs and Services](#), the City has many contracts that include relevant performance measures. However, because contracts are managed by different departments,

performance measurement is not uniformly approached. Ultimately, this division has resulted in a wide array of performance measures across the City. For example, the Church at the Park CSS Site Sheltering Services contract has a specific measurable output of maintaining an average of 132 sheltering spaces by the end of the agreement. However, there are also contracts that either do not have specific performance measures or the performance measures are unclear. In the NWHS Vehicle Assists Program contract, performance measures are not specifically defined and include general ideas aimed at helping individuals secure sustained employment and housing. While this is certainly beneficial, specific measurements are necessary to align expectations. Unclear performance measures can lead to confusion and disputes between parties involved in the contract. Additionally, without clear performance measures, it can be challenging to determine whether the contract has been fulfilled satisfactorily, which can lead to dissatisfaction and a breakdown in the relationship.

- As described in Contract Management (see [Contract Management](#)), contract management in the City is split between two departments: the Community Services (CS) and CPD.
- **Community Services:** Most of the contracts managed by CS contain an Exhibit A attached to the document titled “Grant Specifications.” This section outlines the actions of the service provider and the measurable outputs that will result, referencing both specific and quantifiable goals. The contracts also note that substandard performance will constitute noncompliance with the agreement.
- **Community Planning and Development:** Performance measures in contracts managed by CPD are less clearly laid out. Like the CS contracts, there is language that outlines how substandard performance will constitute noncompliance. This language also references that there is an Exhibit C that describes the program, similar to the Exhibit A for the CS contracts, but it is not attached to the contract. Instead, it notes that exhibits can be found using a link to the City website. This can make it more difficult to find specific performance measures for each project.

To address any inconsistent performance measures across the City’s contracts, a comprehensive approach is needed. Based on the homelessness strategic or operating plan (see [Planning and Strategy](#)), the City should develop a suite of performance measures that could be used in service provider contracts to ensure that all contracts have clear and consistent performance measures that align with the City’s goals. Federal requirements for CDBG and HOME programs will also still apply. This will provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of contracted services and ensure that service providers are uniformly held accountable for meeting the established benchmarks.

Additionally, the City should incorporate the updated performance measures into all service contracts to ensure that all contracted services meet the needs of the community and demonstrate impact on homelessness in the community. By doing so, the City can track progress towards its goals and make data-driven decisions to better serve those experiencing homelessness within the City. Finally, the City should continue to follow a reporting cadence for service providers that incorporates performance measure reporting. This will allow the City to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to contracted services. By taking these solutions and actions, the City can improve the effectiveness of its contracted services and make a meaningful impact on reducing homelessness in the community.

APPENDIX – ACRONYM GLOSSARY

Acronym	Definition
ADLs	Activities of Daily Living
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
C@P	Church at the Park
CCS	Catholic Community Services
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants
CES	Coordinated Entry System
CS	Community Services
CoC	Continuum of Care
CSS	Community Supported Shelters
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
GIS	Geographic Information System
HB	House Bill
HCV	Housing Chouse Voucher
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HOME	HOME Investment Partnerships Program
HOST	Health Outreach Shelter Transitions
HST	Homeless Services Team
HUCIRP	Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IHC	Internal Homelessness Committee
MWVCAA	Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency
MWVHA	Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance
NIGP	National Institute of Governmental Purchasing
NWHS	Northwest Human Services
PIT	Point-in-Time

Acronym	Definition
PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing
SHA	Salem Housing Authority
SOS	Salem Outreach and Livability Services Program
CPD	Community and Planning Development
USICH	United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
VOH	Village of Hope



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