



**OREGON HOUSING and
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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RE: Additional Information on the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the House Committee on Housing:

The Task Force on Racial Disparities in Homelessness concluded their initial work in January producing a [Legislative Report on Finding and Recommendations](#) on January 14th, as required by [House Bill 2100 \(2021\)](#), with recommendations for modernizing and improving Oregon's homeless services funding and delivery structures. The only recommendation from the legislative report related to the work of the task force under consideration in the -3 amendment is the extension of the task force sunset.

Extension of the HB 2100 Task Force to 2025

HB 2100 outlined an ambitious set of duties for the task force to consider in a short time frame. OHCS prepared and initiated a Request for Information (RFI) to select a suitable third-party facilitator, consistent with the law's requirements. We received no responses when it was posted in mid-July and feedback from potential contractors indicated that the work was important but that the timeline for completion made the task resource intensive and challenging to deliver on. OHCS eventually worked with two separate firms to come to the final make-up of the facilitation team to ensure adequate staffing, experience and aligned approaches. Final appointments for the task force were not made until late November, making it difficult to compress the already intense workload into just a handful of months. While the report was in-depth and reflective of the task force discussions, there was broad consensus among task force members that the truncated timeline severely limited the ability to adequately address key issues related to final recommendations. The HB 2100 Task Force recommendation to extend to the sunset to 2025 can be found on page 4 of the legislative report.

HB 2100 Task Force Process Moving Forward

While the truncated timeframe on a complex issue such as homelessness manifested as a barrier, we observed the task force to be effective in affirming that this process of systemic improvement continues to be a worthwhile effort. The time commitment for improving a complex system requires an inclusive representation and a lot of dialogue, which came through in the composition of the taskforce. OHCS has heard process concerns expressed by some members of the task force, and we immediately elevated them to the third-party facilitator charged with leading the process for the task force. We are continuing our conversations with task force members to improve the overall process, and with the additional time granted by the -3, we are confident that the feedback we've received will accomplish that.

The use of the platform Slack met several needs. Due to the constrained timeline to produce the initial legislative report, Slack gave members of the task an opportunity to engage more deeply on key discussion areas and helped members with lived experience participate. Some members who recently



expressed concern about the use of Slack were most active within the channels. Because the task force will have more space and time to do their work, separate communication platforms will no longer be needed, and Slack will no longer be used.

The facilitator's utilization of separate breakout rooms via Zoom for smaller group discussion was seen as a successful piece of the task force by most members. It is the interpretation of OHCS that breakout rooms do not constitute a violation of public meeting law, because they do not constitute a quorum and votes did not occur within the breakout rooms. The breakout rooms were also tasked with taking notes on their discussions to ensure shared accountability on the discussions and transparency. The task force had a discussion about the breakout rooms, and they ultimately remained.

The timeline constraints also made regular meeting attendance challenging for many task force members. The third-party facilitator reports that there were only 14 members present for voting on final recommendations at the 1/10 and 1/12 meeting dates. They also report that at no time did any of the 6 meetings have the full 19-member body at any of the task force meetings. Despite repeated outreach attempts by the facilitator, some members had work conflicts, or were nonresponsive, and one member left the organization with which he was affiliated. It is worth elevating that many of the task force members are also leading community organizations that are on the frontline delivering services during a pandemic, and during extreme winter weather. If the taskforce is given an extension, we believe one of our priorities is to have the facilitator proactively engage with taskforce members to offer concrete solutions that would improving meeting cadence and participation. OHCS believes that the work of improving our homeless services system to eliminate persistent racial disparities and re-imagine a system that works for all Oregonians will take time, resources, and many voices around the shared table to arrive at final, actionable solutions. We are hopeful that a longer timeline will give task force members and the facilitator what they need to ensure that the voting process and results are representative of a majority, if not consensus, on recommendations for legislative action.

All materials including meeting recordings, summaries, presentation materials, and final legislative report are posted on the HB 2100 Task Force [website](#). This website was continually updated during the Task Force meetings to ensure public access and transparency was available throughout the process.

Data Collected by ICF and Utilized by HB 2100 Task Force

The ICF Discovery Team collected and analyzed data on the demographics of people experiencing homelessness across the state to set the table for the work ahead. This team was composed of nationally renowned experts in homelessness, data systems and racial equity analysis. This data included system performance metrics across Continua of Care (CoCs), research on the disparate harm of other public systems on communities of color, and current and historic funding for homeless services.

Pages 9-10 of the [Report on Findings and Recommendations](#) detail the analyses presented in the report which include:

- *Quantitative Data:* 2020 Point-in-Time Count, Stella P data in HDX 2.0 from all 8 CoCs that cover the state of Oregon, Oregon-specific publicly available data, and estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey
- *Policy Analysis:* document review of strategic plans, budgets, annual reports, master grant agreement templates, program compliance forms, implementation reports, funding formulas, budget notes, and federal guidance



- *Qualitative Data:* 11 one-on-one interviews of Task Force members to 1) understand how they perceived the state's approach to funding homeless and housing instability-related services, 2) perspectives on making changes to the state's funding structure, eligibility, and contracting processes to advance racial equity, and 3) solicit their perspectives on which changes would yield the largest positive impact on advancing racial equity in the state. Additionally, a broad stakeholder survey was disseminated to more than 300 providers and advocates working to address homelessness and housing insecurity across the state yielding 172 individual responses with a thematic analysis to identify common themes and unique perspectives.

Additional detail and the data analysis from the HB 2100 legislative report beginning on page 15:

Homeless population and subpopulation data comes from the 2020 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data reported in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S. Congress. PIT Counts serve as an unduplicated, one-night estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, typically conducted annually at the end of January. Although PIT Count methodologies are widely seen as an undercount of those experiencing homelessness, the use of the methodology across communities provides one statewide metric of homelessness. Because communities' ability to conduct PIT counts in 2021 were impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent of the pandemic's impact on homelessness in the state is still emerging. Data on the total population and population under 100% of the poverty line come from the American Community Survey (ACS) most recent 5-year data.

The Discovery Team was able to obtain Stella P data from each of the 8 Continuums of Care (CoC) within Oregon. The Stella P system or Stella Performance Module uses data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to illustrate how households move through the homeless system and enables analysts to highlight disparities in outcomes.

The Discovery Team analysis of Stella P data concluded the following:

- Across all eight CoCs, there is a higher proportion of white, non-Hispanic head of households and adults accessing permanent supportive housing than those who access emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing.
- Each CoC has its own unique disparities that do not mirror characteristics of other CoCs across Oregon.
- Further interrogation of quantitative data coupled with qualitative data and the insights of people with lived experience of homelessness will help each CoC more accurately understand the human experience of individuals and families accessing their systems and create effective strategies to address disparities.

While OHCS does not have a formal position on HB 4051, we are happy to answer any process questions the committee may have.

