

## Memo

Date: July 11, 2024  
To: Joint Office Executive Leadership  
From: Multnomah County Supportive Housing Services Advisory Committee  
Subject: System Improvement Recommendations

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### Background

In the December 2023 and January 2024 meetings of the SHS Advisory Committee, members heard a presentation on Multnomah County's Coordinated Access system, ran through a fictional case study to visualize how someone might access housing services in our community, and generated recommendations designed to improve access to services in Multnomah County. These recommendations were approved in the May meeting, and fell into three general categories: shelter and housing, behavioral health, and system coordination.

### Shelter & Housing

- Increase shelter accessibility for people with disabilities by creating accessibility standards for shelter providers.
- Advocate for shelter processes, policies, and structures that support participant choice and autonomy in defining family and that allow families to stay together.
- Provide funding for FTE dedicated to maintaining communication with people who have reached out for services.
- Increase the supply of immediate, safe, private housing and shelter, with a focus on capital investments such as motels or other commercial properties.

### Behavioral Health

The recommendations in this section are rooted in a housing first philosophy—which treats housing as a human right regardless of substance use—and are designed to reduce the housing barriers faced by those at varying stages of use and recovery, as access to stable housing has been shown to reduce substance use.

- Increase the supply of high quality, low-barrier shelter and housing options for people with substance use disorders.
- Invest in additional programs that help drug users get housed.
- Prioritize hiring, engaging, advancing, and adequately compensating peers and people with lived experience of substance use disorders.

### System Coordination

- Prioritize system improvements that decrease wait times for shelter.
- Streamline the process community members use to seek services with a user-friendly online platform that facilitates information sharing among providers.