



May 3, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Elizabeth Steiner and Representative Tawna Sanchez
Vice-Chairs Senator Fred Girod, Representative David Gomberg and Representative Greg Smith
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Washington County's Ways and Means Needs

VIA: OLIS

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Washington County is the second most populous county in the state of Oregon, with over 600,000 people residing within the County. Since 1990, the county's population has nearly doubled in size. Over the last decade, our population has grown at a rate equivalent to 19 people moving in every day. As a result, we are the most diverse and one of the most rapidly growing county in the state.

Washington County has sorely needed sustainable funding to serve our vast and diverse communities. We have leveraged every dollar and taken advantage of temporary investments from a variety of revenue sources to cover our ongoing needs and service levels. But, these days Washington County finds itself at a critical crossroads of what to fund and how. Revenue generating tools for counties like Washington County remain limited. The demands for our services do not ebb and flow based on our revenues. Programs like Gain Share have helped us to continue to meet the needs, but the value of the dollar at the county level is just as impacted by inflation as it is at the state level.

We appreciate the partnership that has been developed between our county and the legislature in meeting our constituent's needs. This session we have engaged in a broad advocacy campaign to uplift both the state's needs and our own. And we have remained steadfast in our opposition to new mandates for county capacity that does not come with adequate funding to carry out the task.

As the legislature begins looking at how it prioritizes its resources, the decisions this committee makes will directly impact how best we can serve our constituents and their needs in the years to come.

Board of County Commissioners

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Therefore, we respectfully request your support of the following priorities for the County:

Center for Addiction Triage and Treatment: \$ 8.3 million, Capital Construction

Washington County is in the process of building the Center for Addiction Triage and Treatment (CATT), a comprehensive center offering assessment, sobering, withdrawal support, residential treatment, transition supports, peer mentoring and outpatient services. In addition, we want to provide co-located health services and housing supports so a person with a substance use disorder can get most of their needs met through a single program. With nearly 80,000 sq. ft. of clinical space across two buildings, the center will add 86 treatment beds to our system of care, along with peer mentoring and outpatient care. These dollars would be final construction dollars, supporting the County's commitment of \$51 million from our funds

Courthouse Planning: \$1.25 million, OJD Budget (SB 5512 POP 119)

Planning dollars are a key need for the County to evaluate needs and options to replace the current courthouse which consists of two connected buildings, one of which is nearly a century old. Our current court is clearly outdated due to the rapid growth of the community and age of the facilities. Access to court is fundamental to accessing justice in civil and criminal matters so having a facility that functions to meet all those needs as well as potential for greater partnership with the state will be key to our work. The county will provide the needed equal match for this work.

Workforce and Capacity Building:

Behavioral Health: \$162.9 million for residential facility capacity (HB 2544); \$75 million for recruitment and retention (HB 2651); \$10 million for education opportunities (HB 2977)

Critical to the success of community-based treatment options are training and retaining the workforce. Oregon is facing a shortage of workers and a lack of residential beds needed to meet community need. Therefore, we are deeply supportive of the following bills:

- HB 2544 – Provides \$162.9 million in grants for increasing mental health residential and substance use disorder beds.
- HB 2651 – Behavioral Health Workforce Recruitment and Retention. Provides \$30 million in funding for community mental health programs to recruit and retain workers. \$30 million for the Oregon Health Authority to allocate as necessary to students and

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practitioners. \$14 million for to pay for associate supervision costs, thus boosting take home pay. \$1 million funding for OHA outreach to inform communities about this incentive program.

- HB 2977 – Behavioral Health Workforce Pathways and Development. Provides \$5m for universities and colleges for scholarships and pathway development. \$5m for workforce board career pathway work.

Public Health: \$47 million (HB 2773)

Worker shortages in the Public Health field are contributing to inequitable outcomes for communities across Oregon. HB 2773 provides funding for individuals to be recruited and retained in the public health workforce.

Planning Capacity for Housing: \$51.45 million local government capacity building (HB 3174)

As we work towards the shared goal of developing more housing, Washington County and its local government partners cannot do more or do work faster without an increase in staffing, but local budgets cannot meet the expected demand coming from changes to state laws as well as increased development permitting. State investment in staffing that can work anywhere to address these needs is vital to successfully moving faster.

Stabilized and Sustainable Funding for Shared Services:

As a partner in serving the community, we are also focused on how to best spend resources to meet the variety of community needs. Housing, infrastructure, public safety, accessible justice systems, and emergency management are all vital areas where the state and counties share responsibilities. State investments in these programs is the only means by which we can partner to meet expectations to build safe, accessible and resilient communities for everyone in Oregon. To facilitate that partnership, investments in the following shared services are key to the County's continuing success in providing services.

Community Corrections:

- \$284 million in grant-in-aid to meet current service levels for correct services by counties across the state (SB 5504)

Law Library & Conciliation Services:

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- \$16.4 million increased funding to maintain service levels for law libraries and conciliation services for parents negotiating custody (SB 5512)

Public Health Modernization:

- \$150 million continued investment in public health modernization (SB 5525 POP 406)

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Affordable Housing:

- \$118 million in bonding and general fund for housing preservation (SB 5511 POP 107)
- \$875 million in bonding for affordable housing construction (SB 5511 POP 104 and POP 105)
- \$73 million rental assistance, eviction prevention, and homelessness response (SB 511 POP 90)

Access to Justice:

- \$6.6 million general fund includes 2 additional Judges for county (SB 5512 POP 108)
- Sufficient funding for public defense services to meet the increased caseloads with effective counsel (SB 5532)

County Fairgrounds:

- Remove dollar cap on lottery dollars transferred to the Fair account (SB 541; HB 2510)
- \$20 million to provide grants for fairgrounds used as emergency evacuation sites (HB 2948)
- \$10 million in assistance for COVID impacts to fairgrounds (HB 2911)

Human Services:

- HB 5026 – Fully Fund Intellectual and developmental disabilities case management budget.

Economic Development:

- \$75 million lottery funds SPWF recapitalization (SB 5524 POP 102)
- \$3.8 million other and federal funds for Broadband Office Staffing (SB 5524 POP 82)
- \$2 million other and general funds COBID programs enhancement (SB 5524 POPS 101 and 110)
- \$110 million lottery funds Childcare Business assistance (SB 5524 POP 91)

Emergency Management:



- Creates the Disaster Assistance Matching Fund (HB 3059)
- Increase funding and positions for county emergency managers (SB 962)
- Establishes Oregon Public Assistance Grant Account to be used for needs during emergencies. (HB 2854)
- Funding for the development of resiliency hubs within local communities for use during disasters (HB 2990)
- \$10 million for State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment (SPIRE) for use in an emergency (HB 2873)

Partnership with Local Economic Development

Extension of Gain Share for 10 years and modernizing the cap

While there is not a direct expenditure in the Ways and Means process, how we allocate funding for program that impact revenues is part of the budget conversation. The County's work in economic development has had profound impacts on the state's budget and available revenues. Ensuring that the gain share program continues to repay a portion of the revenues gained by the state, the impacts of inflation have heightened the impact of the current cap of \$16 million dollars to the county and the other local governments that invest in job growth using strategic investment program agreements. The county requests that the budget continues to reflect the intention of the state to make gain share payments to all counties using this program and increases the cap established in 2015 and indexes it to inflation so that we can continue to partner in creating family wage jobs across the state.

Regionally Significant Industrial Site readiness funding

The opportunities that the legislature has looked for this session to help bring significant federal investment through the CHIPS Act requires local governments to have industrial sites with the infrastructure and size that meets a company's need. Local governments cannot do that on our own, and investment in the Regionally Significant Industrial Site program in Business Oregon will help make more sites shovel ready and will have a return on investment when jobs are created at those sites. Therefore, we support the extension of the RSIS program (HB 2258) and capitalization of the fund (SB 5524 POP 121).

Conclusion



Parallel to these specific asks, it is also incumbent on the state to find the funding needed to pay for any increased workload or new programs that counties will have to take on based on legislative work. Like you, we have to work with balanced budgets, and, with limited revenue enhancements at our disposal, we cannot do more with what we have. Community members count on the county to provide so many services, and when the state adds to the expectations it must come with the funding to meet the expectation. Without funding for new mandates, we have to cut services in other places to stay in compliance with state laws.

As fellow elected officials, we know that it is a challenge to find sufficient funding for the programs that our shared constituents need to thrive. However, as partners to the state in providing services to our communities, we need the state to fully invest in the programs and projects above that will lift our efforts in better outcomes across all communities in Washington County.

We appreciate your consideration of all of our asks and are happy to discuss our needs with you as you continue to work on the state's budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Harrington'.

Kathryn Harrington, Chair,
On behalf of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners