

Council Business Meeting

December 7, 2021

Agenda Item	Continuum of Care Coordinated Letter of Interest for the League of Oregon Cities Pilot Project Grant	
From	Linda Reid	Housing Program Manager
Contact	reidl@ashland.or.us 541-552-2043	

SUMMARY

Several Council members expressed an interest in the responding to a proposed legislative concept which would provide pilot funding to support city/county coordination on homelessness response. This funding opportunity is being overseen by the Association of Oregon Counties and the League of Oregon Cities (see attached letters). In the upcoming legislative session, there is draft request for a pilot framework in which \$5 million would be awarded to five successful city/county coordinated offices (\$1 million each) for two years. As Jackson County continues to build capacity for housing and services and rebuild from the devastating 2020 wildfires, this intergovernmental appeal may provide much-needed resources for our community to do this work. Additionally, these funds could proffer the resources necessary to encourage regional coordination around issues of homelessness and establish a shared vision for a revised strategic plan. The legislative motivation for offering the grant is to garner increased regional cooperation, specifically across jurisdictional lines. The attached letter of interest is a first step toward consideration for this funding.

City staff approached the Jackson County Continuum of Care Coordinator about whether that entity would be willing to serve as the coordinating entity for such a project should Jackson County be fortunate enough to receive a grant. The Jackson County Continuum of Care is a regional collaboration which works to coordinate resources and planning around issues of homelessness, as well as the overseeing the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care Grant program for Jackson County. As such, City staff felt that the CoC would be the most appropriate convener and implementing body for this particular grant opportunity. The CoC agreed to coordinate the response from the entities within Jackson County that share an interest in moving forward with submitting a formal letter of interest for these grant funds, and in undertaking the strategic planning activities that they would support.

The submission deadline is 5:00 pm on December 10, 2021

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

[2020-2024 Consolidated Plan for Use of CDBG funds](#)

Tier 1: Higher Priority

- Emergency Preparedness
- Address Climate Change

Tier 2: Moderate Priority

- Economic Development
- Housing Needs
- Homeless Services

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In early November the League of Oregon Cities sent out an email to solicit interest in a legislative concept that would provide funding for coordinated city-county homelessness response over two-year period. The funding would be made available to five pilot communities around the state to establish a coordinated office to facilitate cooperation between counties and cities to coordinate state, regional, and local resources to streamline and improve services and the availability of housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

The legislative concept under development would include approximately \$5 million in appropriations to support five counties and partner cities to:

- Develop a 5-year strategic plan to streamline and increase services and resources for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness within the county and partner cities;
- Decrease homelessness in the county and partner cities and eliminate racial disparities within homeless services; and
- Support state, regional, and local partners in planning and developing housing for households at 0-30% AMI.

Each pilot would receive \$1 million in one-time funding for two years to cover:

- Coordinated office director and support staff;
- Stipends for people with current or lived experience of homelessness to support policy; development and community outreach;
- Communications and public engagement; and
- Technical assistance and capacity support.

This concept is still under development and will be informed by the 5 communities selected for inclusion in a bill for the 2022 legislative session.

The Jackson County Continuum of Care (CoC) is a HUD-mandated, community-wide effort to end homelessness through the provision of stable housing for those experiencing homelessness and preventative services to those at risk of becoming homeless. The Jackson County CoC seeks to end homelessness in Jackson County through the collaborative efforts and resources of all sectors of our community. The CoC's work is carried out through a Board which has representation from several sectors of the community, as well as 12 workgroups and a collaboration of 18 non-profit agencies and community partners who utilize a coordinated approach to serving homeless populations throughout the region.

Currently the Jackson County Continuum of Care is overseen by ACCESS, Jackson County's Community Action Agency, and the CoC board has support and representation from several cities and Jackson County as well as representation from affordable housing providers and several agencies that provide services to homeless populations including Jackson County Mental Health and the VA. This body already is coordinating federal, state and local resources and coordinates strategic planning for homeless services throughout the County. This funding would allow the cities, County and service providers located in Jackson County to develop a new strategic plan and strengthen coordination throughout the County.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The grant concept will fund the first two years of the strategic planning period and requires Cities and Counties to commit to funding this effort for the remaining three years of the five-year strategic planning period. The City of Ashland already contributes funding to support the work of the CoC.

STAFF AND COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

I move to approve the City of Ashland as a signatory to the Continuum of Care Coordinated Letter of Interest for the League of Oregon Cities Pilot Project Grant.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

League of Oregon Cities Letter/email dated November 8, 2021

League of Oregon Cities Letter dated November 16, 2021

Continuum of Care Coordinated Letter of Interest



Dear City Leaders:

As the LOC prepares for the upcoming 2022 legislative session, we have been invited to support a legislative concept that would fund coordinated city-county homelessness response over 2 years for 5 pilot communities around the state.

Statewide, strategic and action plans are in development to lay out local vision, goals, strategies, and progress toward preventing and ending homelessness. A coordinated office would allow counties and cities to coordinate state, regional, and local resources to streamline and improve service provision and the availability of housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. Currently, homeless services are provided based on providers' priorities and budgets, rather than based on the needs of people experiencing homelessness in a region.

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- Technical assistance and capacity support.

This concept is still under development and will be informed by the 5 communities selected for inclusion in a bill for the 2022 legislative session.

If your city would like to be considered for the pilot, please contact Ariel Nelson, LOC Lobbyist, as soon as possible at anelson@orcities.org or 541-646-4180.

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November 16, 2021

Dear City and County Leaders,

Thanks to those of you who have expressed interest in participating in a legislative concept to pilot city/county homelessness response coordination. Unsurprisingly, there is strong local need for and interest in this concept. LOC and AOC have received more initial responses than there are pilots or funding planned in the bill. We are following up today with additional details and a draft bill framework to give communities a better understanding of the intent for the pilot and expectations for jurisdictions that wish to be considered for participation.

The draft pilot framework would fund 5 pilot city/county coordinated offices with \$1 million for 2 years. Each pilot would be expected to meet a basic framework, including requirements to enter into an intergovernmental agreement or MOU to ensure mutual responsibility for the success of the office, create a governance structure/advisory board with a minimum representation from each city/counties' governing bodies, and develop a 5-year strategic plan with specific program deliverables. **Importantly, pilots would receive 2 years of one-time state funding, after which time local jurisdictions would need to identify a long-term funding plan to sustain their coordinated office.**

In order to narrow down those local jurisdictions that are ready and able to fully commit to the draft pilot concept, interested communities are asked to submit a formal letter of interest from the regional jurisdictions (a city, or cities, and a county) you would like to include in your pilot. Your letter should include the following:

- Confirmation that your elected bodies have indicated majority interest in this pilot concept and understand the details of the short and long-term commitment. Include all City/County partners that will be included, and the status of the agreement to move forward.
- Confirmation that there is mutual agreement among the partners to seek out or provide funding after the first two years of state funding.
- Confirmation you have reviewed the draft framework of the bill as proposed, and that there is general agreement to abide by the policy as it is laid out (suggestions are welcome to inform the final bill draft).
- A description of any recent or current local coordination on homelessness response in or among your jurisdictions and local provider partners and how a coordinated office would align with or strengthen current efforts.

Priority will be given to jurisdictions who can successfully meet all framework requirements. While all pilot proposals from a county and city will be considered, preference will be given to pilot proposals that include a county and multiple cities, as the concept is intended as a regional approach.

Please email your letter by no later than December 10, 2021 at 5pm to anelson@orcities.org and latwoodwills@oregoncounties.org.

Thank you again for your interest and your leadership. Please feel free to reach out with additional questions.

Sincerely,

Ariel Nelson, League of Oregon Cities (LOC)
anelson@orcities.org

Lizzy Atwood-Wills, Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)
latwoodwills@oregoncounties.org



November 23, 2021

Ariel Nelson, League of Oregon Cities
Lizzy Atwood-Wills, Association of Oregon Counties

Dear Ms. Nelson and Ms. Atwood-Wills,

We, the undersigned, represent agencies engaged in ending homelessness in Jackson County, Oregon. As mandated by HUD, a Continuum of Care has been established that works with community partners to capture accurate data and develop strategies to address the housing challenges facing our region. While local leaders have wrestled with the competing problems of extremely low housing inventory and homelessness for several years, the Almeda and South Obenchain wildfires of September 2020 have exacerbated the situation. We respectfully request your consideration of this letter of interest for participation in Oregon's Pilot City/County Coordinated Response.

We recognize several key components that are needed for our community to recover, rebuild, and thrive. These include political will, manifest through a shared vision and unified leadership, system access that addresses both emergency response and effective prevention strategies, accessible exit opportunities through the Housing First model and a universal coordinated entry system, and infrastructure improvements including training and capacity building. This successful implementation will be possible through reimagining the structure of our Continuum of Care as the repository for the ecosystem that comprises the vast array of services provided in our community. Inclusion in this pilot program would proffer the necessary up-front funding to establish, implement, and build this new, enhanced capacity through evidence-based best practices.

Understanding that housing development is a years-long process, and that safe, temporary housing is urgently needed, we resolve to evaluate alternative strategies and establish a continuum of supportive housing options. Through collaboration with community partners, these programs will provide individualized case management including housing navigation, counseling, accessing public benefits, enhancing life skills, employment assistance, mental and physical healthcare, and other supports as identified.

Jackson County and the incorporated cities within agree to form a governance structure that includes representation from all participants to create and oversee a five-year strategic plan. We will leverage the existing Continuum of Care as a starting point and resource for development of new guidelines and policies for addressing the needs of individuals experiencing houselessness. As a subrecipient of ACCESS, the Jackson County Community Action Agency, the CoC is positioned to be the umbrella under which federal, state, and local resources will be streamlined and increased through community-wide collaboration and shared vision.

This capacity building opportunity will increase our ability to reach marginalized communities and invite their participation while decreasing racial disparities within homeless services. Jackson County is fortunate to have agencies committed to social justice advocacy that serve higher risk populations including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In addition, non-governmental and faith-based organizations are working closely with state social service agencies to support at-risk youth and those individuals aging out of foster care. Our vision to increase the collaboration and integration of agencies will ensure a holistic, authentic, successful continuum of care.

The two-year pilot program will provide the necessary resources to implement a new structure wherein the Continuum of Care is the regional resource hub, unified data repository, and cooperative platform for the integration of political will, housing development, and supportive services for Jackson County. This model will be agile – responsive to the dynamics of rapid change – and proactively engaged with local, regional, and state programs. The cooperation of our political leaders and community partners through a shared vision and unified approach will, over time, result in a safe, housed, stable community.

As signatories, we acknowledge our shared interest in participating in this pilot program and understand the details of the short- and long-term commitment this participation entails. Furthermore, we agree to fulfill those commitments should our community receive funding. There is mutual agreement among the signatories that should this pilot be funded, we will, in partnership seek out and/or provide funding support to continue this work beyond the two years that comprises the pilot program period. The signatories confirm that we have fully reviewed the draft framework of the bill as proposed and there is agreement among the entities to abide by the terms of the draft policy as it is currently presented.

In Support of our Community,

City of Ashland

City of Medford

Jackson County

Jackson County Continuum of Care Board
