

# Council Communication

## November 18, 2014, Business Meeting

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### **Social Service Grant Program Evaluation and Strategic Plan Review**

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**FROM:**

Linda Reid, Housing Program Specialist, reidl@ashland.or.us

**SUMMARY**

At their regular meeting on December 17, 2013, the City Council approved a motion to “request the new Housing and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to conduct an analysis of the current social service grant program, focusing on whether grants are targeted to the right areas and with the appropriate allocations, then have them bring those findings to a discussion with the Budget Committee.”

The Commission discussed the process of addressing the Council’s request at their first meeting held on [January 23, 2014](#). At that meeting the Commission discussed methods for evaluating the program and completing an inventory of available services and service needs to identify gaps. The consensus of the group was that a strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives could provide a framework for targeting awards to community needs and to assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting identified service gaps. The HHSC would like the Council to review the draft document and provide feedback regarding the proposed goals and the document itself to be incorporated into a final draft to be brought back before the council for approval in December.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

To address the Council’s request the HHSC undertook several activities. The Commission researched the origins of the program including its original purpose and goals. The Commission hosted a grantee/stakeholder/community forum to elicit feedback on the current application process, potential improvements, unmet community needs, and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the program in general. The Commission also completed key informant interviews with a cross-section of the Ashland community. The interviews focused on met and unmet community needs to establish priorities for the program. Lastly, the Commission posted a topic on Open City Hall to inform the community about the strategic planning process and to elicit greater community input. Unfortunately the topic received no responses. The feedback garnered from the public forum, and from the key informant interviews, was directly incorporated into the strategic plan’s strategic priorities and implementation strategies.

The Commission also reviewed several data sources to identify community needs. These sources include: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Ashland School District Demographer’s report, Jackson Care Connect 2013 Community Health Assessment, 2012 City of Ashland, National Citizen’s Survey, and the State of Oregon Employment Department. Data from these sources were also used to inform the identified strategic priorities.



The feedback the HHSC received from the community outreach forum regarding the current application and award process was favorable. In general forum attendees were satisfied with the current process, found it to be easy and straightforward, efficient and effective. However, a desire for the City to identify specific funding priorities was stated and for demographic data to be made available to grantees. In general forum attendees did not feel that there should be restrictions on the funding or that smaller grants should not be allowed. Many attendees were in favor of outcome reporting. The results of forum and the key informant interviews are attached along with a list of the individuals interviewed.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

N/A.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:**

The Housing and Human Services Commission is forwarding a recommendation to the Council that the Commission review and make recommendations directly to the council for the award of the Social Services Grant funds, and that the Budget Committee approves the allocation of the Social Services Grant Program. The HHSC would utilize the Strategic Plan to evaluate the applications and make award recommendations. Every four years the Housing and Human Services Commission will update the strategic plan and its goals using community input garnered from outreach efforts which will include at least one community/grantee forum, input from the Council goals, and the most recent demographic data available at that time.

**SUGGESTED MOTION:**

N/A.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Draft Strategic Plan for the Use of Social Service Grant Funds

Appendices to the Draft Strategic Plan:

- Grantee Questionnaire (Appendix A)
- Grantee Questionnaire Results (Appendix B)
- Questionnaire Response Chart (Appendix C)
- Key Informant Interview Results (Appendix D)

HHSC Minutes (linked)

[January 23, 2014](#)

[February 27, 2014](#)

[April 24, 2014](#)

[June 26, 2014](#)

[August 28, 2014](#)

[September 16, 2014](#)



**City of Ashland  
Social Service Grant Program  
Strategic Plan Working Draft  
September 2014**

**Introduction-Purpose of the Plan**

The City of Ashland is committed to supporting the agencies and organizations that work to improve the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.

The Strategic Plan for the use of Social Service Grant funds is intended to provide guidance for applicants and assistance to elected and appointed officials by providing a framework for allocating resources and for tracking progress on identified goals and community priorities.

The Strategic Plan will be updated at four year intervals (every two grant cycles) to be responsive to the changing demographics of the community and to the social and human service needs of the citizenry. The updates may include shifting goals and measurable objectives to more efficiently and effectively address community wide issues.

**History/Background**

The City of Ashland established the Social Service Grant Program in 1986 due to a reduction in Federal Revenue Sharing funds which had, in prior years, provided funding to the City to support the activities of non-profit and social service agencies that provided services to vulnerable Ashland Citizens. Resolution 86-35 was adopted in recognition that: *“the funding of health care and social service needs is an important City function which contributes to the health and well-being of the citizens of Ashland.”* The Council at that time opted to maintain funding for social services with an emphasis on health care in recognition of the City’s tourism based service sector economy, and felt that it was *“appropriate for the City to address the problems created by this type of economy”*<sup>1</sup>. Since that time the City of Ashland has committed a portion of the general fund in support of activities that address the health and social service needs of the Ashland community.

**Today’s Community Snapshot**

The ability of working class individuals and families to afford housing and secure employment that offers compensation that is commensurate with the local cost of living, has far reaching impacts on the community. Reduced discretionary spending negatively impacts the local economy, the physical and mental wellbeing of families, and inhibits access to good nutrition and basic health care. Community diversity, vibrancy, and resilience are all impacted by an individual’s or families’ ability to work and reside in their community. This has been and continues to be a challenge for the Ashland community.

- **Population:** The City of Ashland has a population of just over 20,295 people.<sup>2</sup>
- **Age:** The population of Ashland has seen an increase in older individuals and a decrease in younger families with children. These findings are evident in the most recent census data; which shows that approximately 83% of the population is 18 years old or older.<sup>3</sup> The largest age group is 45-54 year olds at 13.9%<sup>4</sup>, and is echoed in the findings of various demographic reports and community assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Arnold, Former City Councilor.

<sup>2</sup> 2013 PSU Population Research Center estimate certified estimate.

<sup>3</sup> 2008-2012 ACS 5 year estimates.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- **Income and Poverty:** The median income for a household in the city was \$43,305, and the median income for a family was \$58,616. About 18% of the population and 11.4% of families had incomes below the poverty level, with female headed households with children under 18 and those households with children under 5 experiencing the highest rates of poverty, at 42.2% and 43.4% respectively. 4.7% of individuals 65 years old and older are below the poverty level.<sup>5</sup>
- **Housing:** The City of Ashland has over 10,000 housing units. 53% of occupied housing units are owner occupied, and 46.1% are renter occupied<sup>6</sup>. In the 2012 National Citizen’s Survey completed for the City of Ashland, the City met or exceeded most national benchmarks for citizen satisfaction for all but two categories; availability of affordable quality housing and employment opportunities. Availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options are comparatively lower than both national benchmarks and to other University communities with populations from 10,000 to 40,000 comparisons.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Census data shows that 43% of homeowners with a mortgage and 54.5% of renters pay more than 35.0% of their income toward housing cost.<sup>8</sup>
- **Employment:** 2013 Ashland annual average unemployment rate was 6.7%.<sup>9</sup> Ashland School District reports that over half of the employees within Ashland live outside of the district and commute to work.<sup>10</sup>
- **Transportation:** When workers must live elsewhere and commute into or out of the community, this has a significant impact on other aspects of the community. Community diversity, vibrancy, and resilience are all impacted by an individual’s or family’s ability to work and reside in their community. Similarly, household transportation costs increase and traffic and air quality are impacted. This has been and continues to be a challenge for the Ashland community.
- **Health:** The social service grant program was originally established in part to address access to affordable health care, and while access to affordable health care continues to be a priority especially as the population ages, community feedback and demographic data has identified more pressing healthcare service needs. *The 2013 Community Health Assessment identified oral/dental health and mental health, especially as it relates to depression and suicide as the most urgent unmet health care needs within the community.* Further, community feedback identifies mental health disorders with co-occurring drug/alcohol addiction to be a need that is currently not adequately addressed in the Ashland community.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> 2008-2012 ACS 5 year estimates

<sup>7</sup> 2012 National Citizen’s Survey. <https://ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=15166>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Guy Tauer, Regional Economist, State of Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>10</sup> ASD 2012 Demographer’s report. <http://www.ashland.k12.or.us/Files/ASD%20Demographer%27s%20Report%202012.pdf>

## Community Strengths and Challenges

### *Community Strengths*

Ashland residents are civic minded, and work together to solve community issues through a strong commitment to community service.

While access to affordable health care continues to be an issue for many in the community, since the inception of the Social Service Grant Program many resources to address these concerns have been implemented.

Ashland's community groups, faith-based groups, civic groups, non-profit organizations, social service agencies, governmental agencies, and business groups have a history of successful collaboration.

Ashland's faith-based communities communicate and collaborate to problem solve and implement strategies to address community concerns.



### *Community Challenges*

High need individuals and those with challenging behaviors, such as those with dual diagnosis, (mental health and/or alcohol/drug addiction), physical, mental, or developmental disabilities, need more effective service options than the community currently provides.

There is a deficit of supportive services for vulnerable populations such as; peoples with developmental disabilities, people with mental health issues/frail/elderly populations, veterans, at-risk youth and homeless populations.

Working families and citizens earning below the median income for the Medford/Ashland area have a difficult time finding rental or ownership housing options in Ashland which are commensurate with their incomes.

There is a lack of transitional housing options for families and individuals who are working toward self-sufficiency.

## Social Services Grant Program Mission Statement

To fund support services that improve the lives of Ashland residents, assist individuals and families in the community and promote personal and community safety, health, and wellbeing.<sup>11</sup>

**Strategic Priorities:** *(These strategic priorities were identified through a process which included community outreach, grantee/stakeholder feedback, and key informant interviews. These priorities are not in any priority order.)*

- Subsidies for housing<sup>12</sup>
- Increased transportation services<sup>13</sup>
- Services for people with mental health issues<sup>14</sup>
- Services for people with drug and alcohol addiction
- Services for at-risk youth

**Implementation Strategies** *(which may include, but is not limited to the following)*

- Allocate resources to activities which address an identified strategic priority
- Support innovative proposals
- Support proposals that leverage community collaborations or enhance community partnerships<sup>15</sup>
- Support proposals which have a proven capacity to carry out their stated goals/meet proposed numerical outcomes
- Support proposals which are ready to precede

## Outcome Measurement

- Request the grant recipients to list their anticipated measurable activity/program outcomes
- Review and compare applicants' identified anticipated outcomes at the completion of the grant year using a standardized evaluation matrix. *(Example: Number of Ashland Residents who; received housing support, participated in life skill training, received job search assistance, etc.)*
- The Commission will host stakeholder/applicant/community forum every four years to elicit feedback on grant making process and reporting requirements

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<sup>11</sup> Consistent with Council priority strategic plan goal 5: "Seek opportunities to enable all citizens to meet basic needs."

<sup>12</sup> Consistent with Council priority strategic plan goal 5.2: Support and promote, through policy, programs that make the City affordable to live in.

<sup>13</sup> Consistent with Council priority strategic plan goal 3.4: Support RVTD in fulfilling and expanding its mission.

<sup>14</sup> Consistent with Council priority strategic plan goal 5.1: Examine means and methods by which to improve access to mental health services in Ashland for Ashland citizens who need them.

<sup>15</sup> Consistent with Council priority strategic plan goal 5.3: Leverage partnerships with non-profit and private entities to build social equity programming.

# CITY OF ASHLAND



The City of Ashland’s Housing and Human Services Commission has been asked to undertake an evaluation of the City’s Social Service Grant Program and would like your input! The Commission would like to gain feedback on the award process and solicit suggestions regarding potential changes, improvements, and goals for the program.

*Your time and input is greatly appreciated!*

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## **A. Respondent Information**

I represent:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An Interested Citizen (skip to section C.) | <input type="checkbox"/> A Non-Profit Service Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An Advocacy Group                          | <input type="checkbox"/> A Social Service Provider     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Current Grantee (skip section C)         | <input type="checkbox"/> An Elected/Appointed Official |

## **B. Application Process/Presentation**

1.) How would you rate the these items on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= easy and 5 = difficult)

The application process	1	2	3	4	5
The Presentation Process	1	2	3	4	5
Grant reporting	1	2	3	4	5

2.) What is the application process like for you? What do you like/dislike about it?

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3.) Do you find the current grant application process efficient and effective for your organization?

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4.) What is the presentation process like for you? What do you like/dislike about it?

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5.) Is the process of awarding grants efficient and effective for your organization?

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6.) Does the award process seem fair to you?

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7.) Do you have any suggestions about how to improve the application and award process?

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**C. Potential Grantee Questions**

1.) Have you/your organization ever applied for a Social Service Grant from the City of Ashland?  
 Yes     No

2.) If you have not applied for a Social Service Grant, why not?

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**D. Community Needs -Please rank the following needs in your community.**

1=Very Low Need, 2= Low Need, 3=Moderate Need, 4=High Need, 5=Critical Need

Low-Cost/affordable Housing in general	1	2	3	4	5
Services for Homeless populations	1	2	3	4	5
Services for Persons with Alcohol/drug addiction	1	2	3	4	5
Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
Services for Persons with Mental Illness	1	2	3	4	5
Services for seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Services for youth	1	2	3	4	5
Access to affordable health care	1	2	3	4	5
Legal assistance/advocacy	1	2	3	4	5
Life Skills Training	1	2	3	4	5
Other:_____	1	2	3	4	5

**E. Unmet Needs**



Please provide us with a list of your opinions on unmet service needs or gaps in your community.

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**F. Additional Comments, Concerns or Suggestions**

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**G. Organization/Agency Contact Information (Optional)**

Name of Organization/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Forum Evaluation (Optional)**

*Your feedback will assist the Ashland Planning Department improve the quality and relevance of future public involvement efforts*

Please check the box for your response to each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
The forum covered what I expected it to cover						
The forum's objective were clearly stated						
The forum's discussion questions were interesting						
The level of interactivity was appropriate for this topic						
The forum's format allowed for participant input						
The duration of the forum was right for me						
The pace of the form was right for me						

## SS Grant Forum Questionnaire Responses

### A. Respondent Information

Interested Citizen	1
Advocacy Group	1
Current Grantee	1
Non-Profit Service Provider	8
Social Service Provider	1
Elected/Appointed Official	

### B. Application Process/Presentation

1.) How would you rate the these items on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= easy and 5 = difficult)	1	2	3	4	5
The application process	1	2	2	2	
The Presentation Process	1	2	1	3	
Grant reporting	2	1	3	1	

#### 2.) What is the application process like for you? What do you like/dislike about it?

I heard that the process was easier due to the same form as United Way

It is clear straightforward & effective process. I've written many federal, state, foundation etc. grants & I greatly appreciate your process.\*

Application process employs "standardize" format collaborating with other funders. The two year process is very helpful in planning.

Opportunity to add to specific Ashland grant would be very helpful

Be able to ask questions regarding opportunities that could be added during the time period of the grant

General application okay, Dislike program/logic model

N/A for food & friends with the City of Ashland, H&H services grant although we have been through the process with ?? & City of Medford

#### 3.) Do you find the current grant application process efficient and effective for your organization?

Yes

\*Yes, Please see comments in #2

Yes, I find the current grant application straightforward in soliciting information for decision makers.

Trying to obtain information fits with our current data structure

Fine

#### 4.) What is the presentation process like for you? What do you like/dislike about it?

We did not receive notification of the presentation date. We were not the only ones who were not notified

Positive & I felt, as an agency, valued, & a partner in Ashland

Appreciate having the opportunity to do this presentation

The presentation is timed but questions are helpful in clarifying issues or questions.

Open discussion with non-profits leading to collaboration

Open discussions are very important

Fine

#### 5.) Is the process of awarding grants efficient and effective for your organization?

yes

Absolutely

yes

yes, it is open to applicants to hear rational for decisions.

yes

yes

Fine

#### 6.) Does the award process seem fair to you?

yes

yes

yes

yes

yes

yes

**7.) Do you have any suggestions about how to improve the application and award process?**

Not at this time  
 Not at this time  
 data  
 Publish clear objectives

**C. Potential Grantee Questions**

**1.) Have you/your organization ever applied for a Social Service Grant from the City of Ashland?**

Yes	6
No	2

**2.) If you have not applied for a social service grant why not?**

We need to do so to provide better integration  
 The stipulation that the applicant organization be a non-profit. Food & friends is tax exempt under RVCOG

**D. Community Needs -Please rank the following needs in your community.**

*1=Very Low Need, 2= Low Need, 3=Moderate Need, 4=High Need, 5=Critical Need*

	1	2	3	4	5
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Low-Cost/affordable Housing in general			1	3	5
Services for Homeless populations			2	4	3
Services for Persons with Alcohol/drug addiction			2	7	
Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities		2	2	5	
Services for Persons with Mental Illness		1	1	4	3
Services for seniors			5	4	
Services for youth			2	6	
Access to affordable health care		3	2	2	2
Legal assistance/advocacy		5	4	1	
Life Skills Training			4	5	1

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1- Transport  
 Assistance for needy people facing an economic crisis-rent, utilities, Rx, etc.

**E. Unmet Needs**

**Please provide us with a list of your opinions on unmet service needs or gaps in your community.**

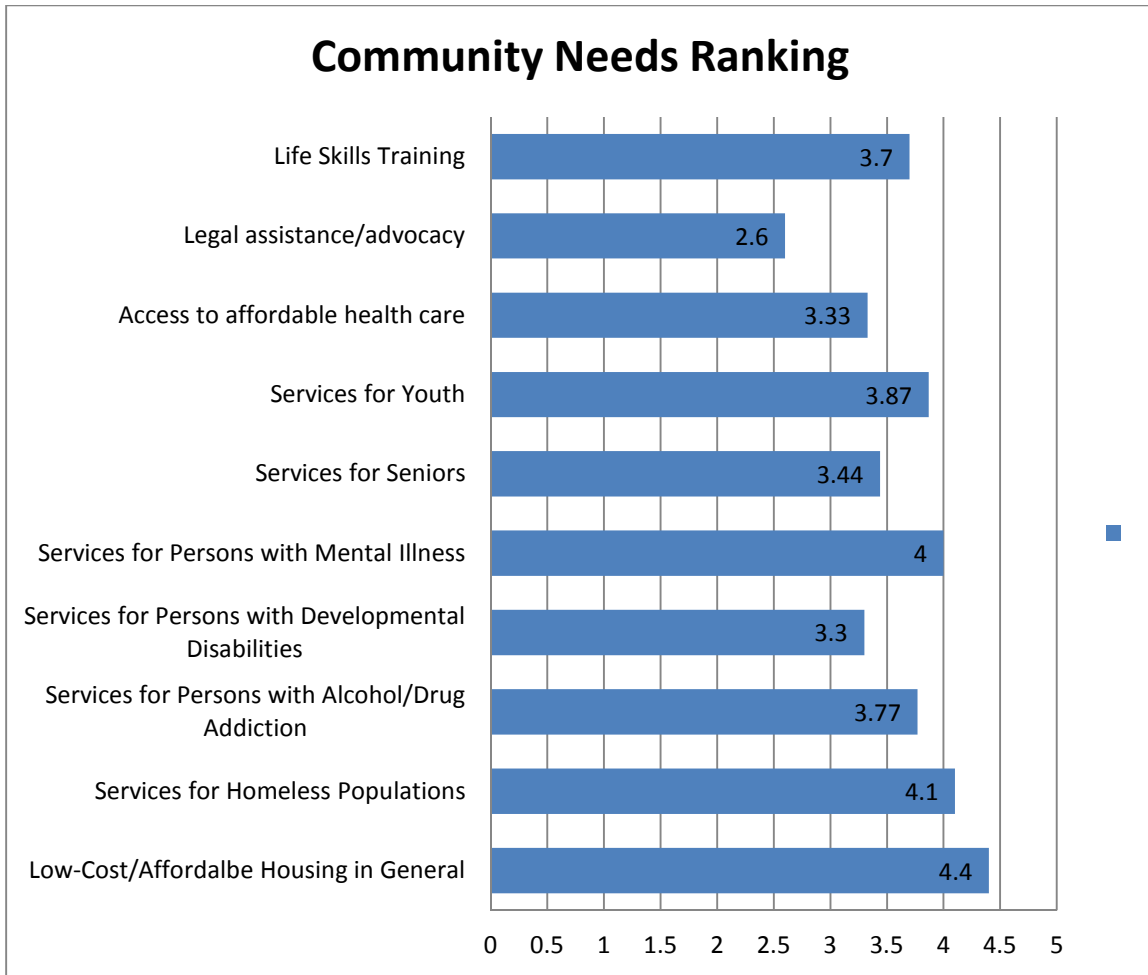
I think we have a population of people with autism and other disabilities that is growing  
 Transportation-low-income housing  
 The low income people who qualify for assistance is large. Could more financial assistance be given here.  
 Mental Health and transportation  
 Mental Health and insurance help  
 Mental Health Services  
 Providing meals and a safety net service to homebound seniors who are at risk due to isolation

**F. Additional Comments, Concerns or Suggestions**

It's been great to network with other agencies  
 Please consider including eligibility for tax exempt human services organizations

**G. Organization/Agency Contact Information (Optional)**

St. Vincent de paul-I am just a plain vanilla volunteer. Not involved in the application process, but use ASSG funds to help mainly rent and utilities for home visit clients.  
 Community Works-Barbara Johnson-Director of victim services  
 St. Vincent de paul-Charlotte Dorsey Volunteer  
 Center for non-profit legal services-Debra Lee-ED  
 On-Track-Robin Stroh- Ashland DHS office  
 Community Health Center-William North-CEO  
 St. Vincent De Paul-Rich Hansen  
 Food & Friends Senior meals & meals on wheels/RVCOG-Evelyn Kinsella-Program manager



## 2014 HHSC-Key Informant Interview Results

### List of Key Informants

Vickie Aldous, (as a private citizen)

Sandra Slatterly

Linda Chase, Outreach Worker @ Easter Seals

Patty Michels, Principal @ Walker Elementary

Christine McCollom, Principal @ Belview Elementary

Samuel Bogdanove, Director of Student Services @ Ashland School District.

Deneice Zeve, Ashland School Board Member/ Attorney

Kylan M de Vries, Faculty @ SOU

James Westrick, Ashland School Board member

Jeanne Stallman, Executive Director, Outreach & Engagement @ SOU

Alma Rose Alvarez, Social Justice House Adviser & Professor of English & Philosophy @ SOU

Linda Wilcox Young, Professor of Economics @ SOU:

Jim Shames, Medical Director of Jackson Co. Public Health

Unknown x 2

### What do you see as the greatest community need?

Need	Times Selected
Low-Cost/affordable Housing in general	8
Services for Persons with Mental Illness	5
Services for youth	3
Transportation	3
Services for Persons with Alcohol/drug addiction	3
Services for Seniors	2
Life Skills Training	2
Services for Homeless populations	1
Legal assistance/advocacy	1
Food	1
Access to affordable health care	0
Services for Persons with Develop Disabilities	0

**Other needs mentioned:**

Workforce housing for low and middle income families

Pet-Friendly affordable rental housing

Community activities for teens

**Greatest Needs and Unmet Services:**

- Integrated mental health and addiction treatment services.
- Transitional housing for homeless people using the *Housing First* Model \*
- Family advocates helping families navigate assistance programs, mental health, medical and addiction treatment programs.
- More local pediatric medical practitioners for children with high/ specialized needs.
- To get drug dealers off the plaza and out of Lithia Park
- Adolescents (age 14-19) need day treatment
- Post-high school services for teens/families to connect with higher education or employment
- Parent to parent support groups for students with disabilities/mental illness
- Life/Legal guidance for AHS students
- Transportation for seniors to health care, activities ect.
- Support seniors to stay in their own homes.
- Help support the caretakers of the mentally ill.
- Need more construction of low-income housing located in mixed income neighborhoods.
- Increased public transportation, especially in light of the lack of affordable housing, causing people, SOU student particularly, to have to commute.
- Public Health Extension in Ashland for Alcohol & Drug, Mental Health services, WIC, Immunizations, etc.
- Pick up the cigarette butts

**Comments/Thoughts paraphrased**

- There is a lack of regional and state services for mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction.
- Housing should be encouraged by supporting a healthy economy with well paying jobs to provide a higher standard of living.
- Recent changes at the VA will only be a band-aid (14,000 out patients at White City)
- Students 1-9<sup>th</sup> grade need a place to “hang” so they are not at parks unsupervised.
- The community has a large number of seniors who want activities to stay involved and active.

- The Maslow project is a great support for homeless children and families!
- Concern about the affect of Ashland's declining school enrollment and the need for affordable housing for families to stabilize the situation.
- People, particularly diverse populations, are priced out of Ashland.
- Suggest a free RVTD system would increase ridership to improve transportation situation.
- Use railroad tracks for a commuter line.
- Pick up the cigarette butts
- The people on the street should not be allowed to hang at the chamber courtyard and the visitor areas. Perhaps they could clean up the debris for a meal.