

Meeting Summary
LIFT Policy Subcommittee Meeting
October 14, 2015

Agenda Review

Today's agenda includes a discussion about outreach to rural communities and communities of color, a discussion about need, distribution of resources, and allocation formulas, as well as outcome measures.

Homeownership Discussion

Prior to the meeting, Oregon Opportunity Network provided a [letter](#) to the subcommittee requesting that they give consideration to using part of these LIFT program funds to provide homeownership opportunities for Oregonians with low incomes. Margaret Van Vliet gave the subcommittee some background on the question, in particular the legislative conversation. She indicated that this could potentially be a use of the funds per Legislative Counsel if the Department owned the land. However, in her estimation, given the priorities of the Governor and the challenge ahead of the group to allocate these first funds, she was not inclined to recommend the use of these funds for homeownership.

The group discussed the question. Many members of the subcommittee could see both sides of the question. Some members felt homeownership is a very flexible, small scale, distributed strategy, and that organizations like Habitat for Humanity have served small rural communities well. One member suggested we should not be proscriptive, but instead should set clear goals, target populations, and unit production goals, and allow communities to bring innovative proposals to the table which may or may not include homeownership options. Members of the subcommittee from DHS did note that the median income of Habitat for Humanity homeowners is significantly higher than anyone receiving TANF. The subcommittee agreed to continue the discussion.

Advance question

The committee was asked to respond to the question: *"Given Governor Brown's emphasis on communities of color and rural Oregon, please come prepared to offer advice to OHCS leadership about outreach and engagement. What innovative and creative strategies could we use to bring culturally specific organizations into partnerships with housing developers in new ways? Can we rethink traditional approaches to funding processes that would encourage participation of more culturally specific organizations in partnership with housing developers? How can we incentivize development in small towns? What new kinds of partnerships, innovation, or collaboration would you like to see as a result of LIFT?"*

The subcommittee responded to the question:

- Consider taking advantage of the regional equity councils developed by the OHA Office of Health Equity. They are ready to have this conversation about housing for communities of color;
- The United Way of the Columbia Willamette has a cohort of thirty regional organizations of which half are culturally specific organizations. There may be opportunities to partner more formally with the cohort or with organizations within the cohort to better serve communities of color;
- We need to be very intentional in approaching communities of color and define very specifically what it means to have a partnership with these groups. They have significant expertise and are well known in the communities they serve. Partnering with them is critical, and the agency must be open to changing how things have been done in the past;

- We should consider suggesting that we aren't looking for stand-alone projects by stand-alone organizations but instead are looking for collaboratives, and we should define who we want to participate – maybe a Community Action agency, a Workforce Investment Board, DHS, Education, culturally specific organizations, etc.;
- Some smaller, rural communities have brought together organizations which serve similar clients. That kind of partnership may be easier to accomplish in rural communities because they are accustomed to that kind of partnership. We may be able to reward a culture of collaboration in rural communities and may also be able to use these funds to catalyze partnerships in other places;
- It was noted that we needed to think intentionally about how to elevate communities of color into leadership positions within the collaborations, particularly in more rural communities;
- Community Development Corporations have been invested in local areas and the state and other local funders have invested a lot of resources in building the capacity of community development organizations. Maybe its time to encourage state and local investment in building culturally specific housing organizations;
- Sharing developer fees and organizational ownership interest with culturally specific organizations may be an important thing to consider as projects are funded;
- How do we encourage connections with schools?;
- We may need to provide an incentive to build capacity to do this work in small rural communities. How can we encourage local leadership to take the lead and sustain that capacity over time?; and
- Once communities are identified, is there a way to match up communities that are more ready with those who are still developing partnerships and capacity to help share information, interest in innovation, and infrastructure knowledge?

Measuring need and outcomes

Megan Bolton from Oregon Housing and Community Services presented information on available data and measures of need. The presentation can be found here: <http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/DO/lift/docs/10-14-2015-lift-subcommittee-available-data.pdf/>. The presentation described currently available data from the Census, OHCS, DHS, and the Department of Education. Megan also detailed how the data looks different depending on whether you are measuring the percentage of a county's population who is affected by the measure, or whether you're measuring a county's share of the state's total population affected by the measure.

An additional presentation on the Department of Human Services Self Sufficiency programs is also available: <http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/DO/lift/docs/10-14-2015-draft-ssp-overview-for-lift.pdf>.

There were questions about how housing agencies measure income (area median income) versus how DHS measures income (percentage of the federal poverty level). There was a question about the impact of homelessness on graduation rates for kids in the K-12 school system. There was discussion about measuring disparate outcomes and disproportionality.

Measuring Success Discussion

The group began with a discussion about whether success criteria and data measures should focus on interventions or prevention. The subcommittee discussed other possible suggested measures of success:

- Long Term Family stabilization (reduction of kids in foster care where housing is key-both initial

and reentry)

- Child stability within school (reducing number of school moves, absenteeism, graduation rates, improved percentage of kids ready for kindergarten)
- Production of affordable housing at particular income levels in a timely manner (long term housing stability, cost burden, time in housing, safe and stable versus rent burden)
- Evidence of collaboration
- Increase of affordable and available units in a local geography for extremely low income renters
- Eradicate a problem within a specific geography

Margaret asked the group to think about keeping the measurement of success simple – are there short and long term measures? Would a short term measure be a production target – a number of units at certain income levels, plus some data about who moved in – how many families of color moved in initially? How many families within the DHS system moved in initially? Would a long term measure be measuring housing tenure and next location, as well as income gains?

The group discussed whether longitudinal data might be available in the long term, and whether that would be necessary to really prove success. There was also discussion about how we might use existing data systems to give us the information we needed to do some of this work. The group discussed the need for outcomes to be trackable – how do we capture information on outcomes?

Allocation Formula

The group moved into discussing a possible allocation formula, and how the subcommittee might set priorities and allow communities to respond to those priorities. One suggestion was to use the following factors for an allocation formula:

- Housing scarcity (both rate and number of units);
- Timely production of new units;
- Population of homeless families (suggested edit was to focus on kids under 5);
- Population of communities of color.

There was a suggestion that the formula would be split based on rural and urban geographies, as well as a reminder about the caution from the Financial Structuring Subcommittee about naming specific communities as that can drive up the cost of land, etc. There was discussion and general agreement about listing attributes of communities and ranking priorities of those attributes, without ranking or identifying specific communities for investment.

Next Steps

The subcommittee discussed creating two small workgroups who would meet in the interim to more fully develop proposals around outcomes and allocation, and outreach strategies. For outcome and allocation work, Alejandro Queral, Dan Valliere, Val Valfre, and Joel Madsen will be participating. For outreach strategies, Jacob Fox, Mayra Arreola, and Dani Ledezma.

In December, the subcommittees will meet jointly and will discuss tradeoffs related to production goals, assumptions about the income mix that will drive unit production targets, as well as opportunities to innovate.

Margaret previewed for the group that she wanted to have a discussion about how we might creatively leverage private sector and community resources. The subcommittees will meet jointly on Monday, December 7, 2015.