

The Portland Housing Bureau

Draft Strategic Framework

Updated: November 19, 2010

Our Mission

The Mission of the Portland Housing Bureau is to focus community resources on the unmet housing needs of the people of Portland

We accomplish our mission by:

- Stimulating and investing in the development and preservation of affordable housing;
- Supporting programs that help low-income Portlanders access, retain and repair their homes;
- Convening and leading the agencies and partners that comprise the local housing system to develop resources, assess and meet local needs, adopt best practices and increase efficiency and collaboration.

Our Vision

- All Portland residents can find, afford and retain safe homes in active, healthy neighborhoods of their choice.
- All Portland residents have equitable access to housing and to the opportunities that safe, stable housing can deliver, free from discrimination and bias.
- Portland residents and neighborhoods thrive because the local housing sector aligns with other key sectors such as education, transportation, health and business to create a foundation for economic, social and cultural opportunity.

Our Values

- **Equity:** Our work must recognize Oregon's history of housing discrimination and social injustice and address current-day disparities in access to the resources, programs and opportunities our work provides. We value a diverse workforce and a workplace that honors different voices and that celebrates the richness of culture as an essential component to our vision of equity.
- **Stewardship:** We invest, leverage and prioritize resources in projects and initiatives that provide the highest public value and greatest impact on critical community housing needs. We work in full compliance with adopted rules, regulations and policies. Our priorities and allocation of resources will balance the need to adapt to changes in the market with the need to maintain predictability and stability within the housing system.
- **Transparency:** Our success depends upon the integrity of our external and internal relationships. We facilitate broad public engagement to shape our decisions, investments and policies. Our decisions result from processes that are clear, open and without bias.
- **Innovation:** We believe that new thinking, partners and solutions will help us solve long-standing community problems and build a progressive and proactive organization.

Our Goals

Over the next three years, the Portland Housing Bureau will focus its resources, staff, programs and strategies on meeting the following goals:

<p>Goal 1: Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.</p>	<p>Goal 2: Ensure equitable access to housing and to the programs, resources and opportunities that the housing system delivers.</p>	<p>Goal 3: Develop, leverage and allocate housing resources to meet identified needs, sustain existing assets and strengthen the housing delivery system.</p>	<p>Goal 4: Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and the community.</p>
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Sub-goals

<p>1A Produce and preserve housing to meet the needs currently underserved by the market.</p>	<p>2A Remove discriminatory barriers confronting Portlanders trying to access housing.</p>	<p>3A Develop new resources to meet the most critical unmet housing needs.</p>	<p>4A Develop a strong organizational culture that values employees, promotes innovation and respects diversity.</p>
<p>1B Move people quickly and sustainably from homelessness into housing.</p>	<p>2B Achieve equity in the community's use of PHB supported housing and programs.</p>	<p>3B Invest existing resources along the housing continuum to maximize long-term outcomes, increase leverage and promote cost-effectiveness.</p>	<p>4B Establish and meet the highest standards for customer service and regulatory compliance.</p>
<p>1C Increase sustainable homeownership opportunities for low-income households of color to narrow the gap in minority homeownership</p>	<p>2C Increase participation by minority-owned and economically disadvantaged firms in the economic opportunities created by PHB's investments</p>	<p>3C Manage existing housing system assets and partnerships to maintain long-term value for the community.</p>	<p>4C Provide the community with clear, consistent, reliable data on Portland's housing needs and trends and on the performance of PHB's programs and projects.</p>
<p>1D Keep families in their homes by preventing avoidable evictions, foreclosures and involuntary residential displacement.</p>	<p>2D Use PHB's influence, investments and partnerships to create housing opportunities that offer equitable access to quality jobs, schools, transportation, and other elements of sustainable communities.</p>		<p>4D Clearly communicate the public value of the Portland Housing Bureau and its programs and the community needs they address.</p>
<p>1E Maintain the health, safety and sustainability of the existing housing stock.</p>			<p>4E Ensure that a wide range of perspectives inform PHB's agenda, decision-making and policy-setting.</p>

Our Priorities for Investment

Over the next three years, PHB will target its investments according to the following priorities, listed in priority order. PHB will use the annual budget process to increase investments that accomplish the top priorities by shifting funding from lower priority programs and expenditures. When necessary, budget cuts will be absorbed first by programs that fall into the lower priority categories. While these priorities apply specifically to PHB's programmatic investments, PHB will implement them in concert with the Strategic Plan's broader focus on equity, resource development, asset management and organizational development. These priorities reach across current PHB Program Areas. For example, Priority One is inclusive of developing housing units that are affordable and accessible to people transitioning out of homelessness.

Priority One: Increase the production and preservation of rental housing, with an emphasis on deeply affordable rental homes for households who face the greatest challenges finding housing in the private market.

- PHB currently estimates an undersupply of over 10,000 units of housing to Portland's poorest households, those with incomes below 30% of Area Median Income. This undersupply is a principal cause of homelessness and family instability as our population struggles to find housing they can afford to call home.
- PHB manages significant resources - such as Tax Increment Financing and federal HOME and CDBG funding – that align most naturally with capital investments in housing production and preservation.
- The production and rehabilitation of housing projects creates badly-needed family-wage construction jobs.
- To implement this priority, PHB will work to align non-capital resources like Section 8, Continuum of Care and homeless service funding to the production of new housing units to support both the financial stability of the housing and the people calling the units home over the long haul.
- While PHB's priority emphasizes the production of deeply affordable units, PHB will establish appropriate production targets for a range of housing affordable and desirable to Portland's diverse population whose housing needs are not met by the private market, including our low-wage workforce.
- PHB will develop geographic priorities for capital investment in housing to promote complementary goals of economic revitalization, prevention of residential displacement and sustainable communities.
- PHB will continue to manage existing housing assets to meet the community's housing needs while conserving public resources.

Priority Two: Invest in programs with a proven ability to transition people quickly and permanently from homelessness to housing and in programs that efficiently and sustainably prevent homelessness:

- The City's investment over the last five years in a range of programs under the 10 year Plan to End Homelessness has yielded a set of highly-effective programs and strategies that end homelessness quickly and permanently.

- While PHB will maintain a basic safety net that includes shelter and services that provide a level of safety off the street (see priority four), we will give a higher priority to investments that truly prevent or end homelessness. Over time, we believe investing in programs under this priority will reduce the need for shelters.
- Preventing homelessness through limited interventions like rent assistance, foreclosure and eviction prevention, and low-cost repairs to that make housing safe and accessible for low-income owners and renters is cost-effective and makes sense.
- PHB will shift resources from less-focused, more costly programs to the strategies with a proven track record for efficiency and success.

Priority Three: Invest in programs and strategies proven to assist low and moderate income families from Portland’s communities of color to sustainably purchase a home or retain a home they already own.

- Homeownership is for many Portland families a path to economic opportunity and family stability. But minority communities in Portland own their homes at much lower rates than the general population as a result of our community’s history, patterns and practices that cannot be explained purely by economic factors.
- PHB will invest in programs that effectively prepare and position low and moderate income families of color to purchase and retain their homes in an effort to overcome historic gaps in homeownership rates while fully complying with the laws and regulations that further fair housing.
- PHB will maximize the impact of its investments in homeownership by focusing on strategies like limited down payment assistance and the community land trust model that fairly balance the level of public investment against the goals of assisting a greater number of households and ensuring that assisted families can sustain their ownership over time.
- PHB will invest in cost-effective programs that help existing low-income homeowners maintain the health and safety of their homes. PHB will focus its investments in this area on programs that effectively serve minority homeowners.

Priority Four: Maintain a community safety net that provides short-term shelter, information and referral services that help low-income Portlanders facing homelessness or housing crisis.

- PHB will continue to support temporary shelter to our most vulnerable residents. PHB work to maximize the availability of shelter to those with the highest levels of vulnerability to the debilitating effects of street homelessness.
- PHB will work to reduce time in shelter beds waiting for housing placement by better aligning programs like rental assistance that help move people into permanent housing.
- PHB will maintain a set of basic community services that provide low-cost, time sensitive information and referral so households facing homelessness, eviction or foreclosure can help themselves or find the help they need in the community.

Our Strategies to achieve the goals

Goal 1: Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.
Sub-goal 1A Produce and preserve housing to meet the needs currently underserved by the market.
1. Increase investment to spur the production of rental housing to meet gaps in the current market, with an emphasis on deeply affordable units with linked rental subsidies and social services.
2. Produce an updated housing market gap analysis to create a comprehensive framework to guide the development of new units by unit type, geography, affordability, and target populations.
3. Prioritize the preservation of publicly-assisted housing where it is financially feasible and less costly than building replacement units.
4. Identify private market units currently serving high-needs populations that are at high-risk for redevelopment. Develop cost-effective strategies to preserve or replace them and to minimize displacement of current residents.
5. Study and implement best-practices to reduce the cost of housing production and to leverage more affordable units from private development, including modular construction, inclusionary zoning, developer incentives, and streamlining funding applications.
6. Explore policies that stimulate production of housing to meet identified needs without direct public investment (e.g. inclusionary zoning)
7. Focus a portion of limited funding for homeownership services on existing renters of subsidized affordable rental housing to leverage double bottom-line success: new homebuyers AND more availability in the affordable housing portfolio.

Goal 1:

Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.

Sub-goal 1B

Move people quickly and sustainably from homelessness into housing.

1. Evaluate the success and long-term cost-effectiveness of initiatives under the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, including: short-term rental assistance, longer-term rental assistance, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Shift resources from interim interventions like shelters and transitional housing to programs that quickly, effectively and permanently end homelessness.
2. Update the Ten Year Plan to reflect lessons learned and the approach to homelessness in the current economy. Align current programs with income and employment acquisition to support housing retention and self sufficiency.
3. Set clear priorities, goals and objectives for programs such as rental assistance and supportive services which support the transition from homelessness to housing and track long-term effectiveness against established goals
4. Align short-term resources like rental assistance to people with short-term needs for assistance and longer-term resources like case management, long-term rent subsidies and permanent supportive housing to people with longer term needs.
5. Use emerging flexibility of homeless funding under the Hearth Act as a catalyst to realign system resources from short-term solutions like shelters to longer-term solutions like permanent housing placements.
6. Engage owners and operators of private market and publicly-assisted housing to create more housing options for people moving out of homelessness. Expand use of low-cost tools like guarantees and mitigation funding. Develop strategies to address non-economic barriers that make it hard for homeless people to access housing such as poor credit, criminal history and lack of move-in funds.
7. Cross-leverage mainstream systems of care such as County mental health, addiction and corrections services to provide services to support housing retention for people transitioning out of treatment and corrections and to bring housing resources to bear in discharge planning.
8. Work with Multnomah County to evaluate the role of shelters and motel vouchers in meeting interim emergency community needs for the most vulnerable and during severe weather. Propose a strategy that maintains an appropriate safety net while shifting resources to programs that more effectively end homelessness.
9. Identify non-economic barriers to housing confronting low-income residents, including poor credit and rental histories and support proven strategies like tenant education and guarantees that mitigate these barriers

Goal 1:

Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.

Sub-goal 1C

Increase sustainable homeownership opportunities for low-income households of color to narrow the gap in minority homeownership

1. Support programs with proven effectiveness of moving homebuyers of color sustainably into homeownership while balancing subsidy levels against the need to maximize impact.
2. Conduct fair housing audit to determine extent to which bias in local lending environment contributes to the minority homeownership gap.
3. Revisit Operation HOME to extract viable objectives and strategies and update them for current market realities.
4. Use PHB's influence to shift practices in the local lending and real estate system that create barriers to homeownership for financially viable homebuyers of color.

Goal 1:

Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.

Sub-goal 1D

Keep families in their homes by preventing avoidable evictions, foreclosures and involuntary residential displacement.

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the short-term rent assistance system in stabilizing households over the long term. Focus system resources where they are proven effective.
2. Engage with Oregon's Hardest Hit program to maximize impact in preventing foreclosures in Portland.
3. Rebalance homeownership resources between new homebuyers and preventing foreclosure based on current market realities, outcome trends and projections.
4. Utilize culturally appropriate prevention services for foreclosure and eviction prevention to ensure that communities of color have equitable access to services and are not disparately impacted by displacement.
5. Engage in the planning and implementation of neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment with the goal of preventing involuntary residential displacement of low-income people and communities of color.
6. Use education and information-based strategies to increase awareness of programs that can prevent involuntary eviction and foreclosure.

Goal 1:

Meet Portland's need for quality affordable homes for its residents.

Sub-goal 1E

Maintain the health, safety and sustainability of the existing housing stock.

1. Improve partnerships with Multnomah County to streamline and bundle weatherization, home repair and healthy homes programs.
2. Renew and pursue grants that support the healthy homes agenda: Lead Hazard Control, Healthy Homes, Weatherization, etc.
3. Leverage resources such as Clean Energy Works to support the retrofitting of the affordable housing stock to promote energy efficiency and healthy housing.
4. Focus limited resources for healthy housing on outcomes that reduce health disparities for communities of color to support PHB's equity goals.
5. Support modest programs that relocate low-income people from housing that poses an imminent threat to health and safety from fires, disrepair or landlord neglect.
6. Influence and improve enforcement system response to housing occupied by low-income people.

Goal 2:

Ensure equitable access to housing and to the programs, resources and opportunities that the housing system delivers.

Sub-goal 2A

Remove discriminatory barriers confronting Portlanders trying to access housing.

1. Continue funding programs that further fair housing and assist Portlanders with enforcing fair housing laws.
2. Complete HUD's required Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing to assess where PHB should be investing its time and resources to create promote fair and equitable access to housing. Coordinate with regional partners where practical.
3. Fund new programs to effectively respond to findings in the Analysis of Impediments.

Goal 2: Ensure equitable access to housing and to the programs, resources and opportunities that the housing system delivers.
Sub-goal 2B Achieve equity in the community’s use of PHB supported housing and programs.
1. Use established data sources like the Coalition of Communities of Color Report and the State of Black Oregon to set clear, measurable targets for utilization of PHB supported programs.
2. Incorporate PHB equity targets into all funding solicitations and contracts.
3. Measure, monitor and report on utilization against established equity targets.
4. Consider well-established strategies to increase utilization of PHB-supported services by underrepresented populations such as culturally appropriate marketing and outreach and funding set-asides for culturally specific services.
5. Select providers based on criteria that consider actual performance in serving underserved communities.

Goal 2: Ensure equitable access to housing and to the programs, resources and opportunities that the housing system delivers.
Sub-goal 2C Increase participation by minority-owned and economically disadvantaged firms in the economic opportunities created by PHB’s investments
1. Establish and meet clear targets for participation in construction and professional service contracting and report results annually.
2. Convene working group to examine and improve elements of bid process that work to the disadvantage of otherwise-competitive minority-owned and economically disadvantaged firms.
3. Align with and support existing efforts to provide technical assistance to and build capacity of the sector of construction industry targeted for increased participation.
4. Designate “equity in contracting” lead at PHB to ensure that RFP’s NOFA’s contracts and loan documents are structured to target and incent meeting participation goals.
5. Consult with the industry about key utilization issues, including: cost barriers to state certification, diversity of workforce composition, change order management and effective strategies to improve participation by minority-owned firms. Look beyond state-certification to better assess actual participation by minority-owned firms.

Goal 2: Ensure equitable access to housing and to the programs, resources and opportunities that the housing system delivers.
Sub-goal 2D Use PHB's influence, investments and partnerships to create housing opportunities that offer equitable access to quality jobs, schools, transportation, and other elements of sustainable communities.
1. Strengthen PHB's connections to education, economic development, transportation, health, recreation, business and other sectors to align resources, strategies and outcomes toward common vision of sustainable and equitable communities.
2. Explore feasibility of a joint RFP or NOFA with other public sectors as a place-based demonstration project mirroring federal sustainable communities and choice neighborhoods grant.
3. Continue to participate in the Regional Indicators Project, Portland Plan, East Portland Action Plan and sustainable communities planning work to promote equity as a regional objective.

Goal 3: Develop, leverage and allocate housing resources to meet identified needs, sustain existing assets and strengthen the housing delivery system.
Sub-goal 3A Develop new resources to meet the most critical unmet housing needs.
1. Develop and leverage relationships with key local and regional investors, foundations, coalitions, financial institutions and potential partners in a campaign to develop new resources for housing.
2. Adopt a long-range resource development plan that examines the feasibility of a range of revenue options at work in other cities to create a sustainable stream of revenue to meet local housing needs.
3. Staff the resource development plan with sufficient leadership and communication expertise and capacity to raise public understanding of the need for and potential impact of new revenue to meet critical housing needs.
4. Develop the role at PHB of grant writer/manager to track and pursue grant opportunities that would advance PHB mission and goals.
5. Consider a fee structure for PHB services that could feasibly generate program income to support ongoing activities without adversely impacting program participants.

<p>Goal 3: Develop, leverage and allocate housing resources to meet identified needs, sustain existing assets and strengthen the housing delivery system.</p>
<p>Sub-goal 3B Invest existing resources along the housing continuum to maximize long-term outcomes, increase leverage and promote cost-effectiveness.</p>
<p>1. Use longitudinal data to determine which current strategies and programs provide long-term cost-effectiveness by promoting the highest levels of housing stability for the lowest cost while ensuring equitable access to services.</p>
<p>2. Prioritize funding for programs that have the greatest long-term impact on the community's most-critical housing needs.</p>
<p>3. Prioritize and fund proven "win-win" strategies that move participants along the housing continuum (e.g. services that move current renters of affordable housing units into homeownership, thereby creating a new homeowner AND an available unit of affordable rental housing).</p>
<p>4. Expand relationship with the Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon Housing and Community Services Department, Multnomah County and other funders to increase leverage of public funds toward common outcomes and to reduce duplication of effort.</p>

<p>Goal 3: Develop, leverage and allocate housing resources to meet identified needs, sustain existing assets and strengthen the housing delivery system.</p>
<p>Sub-goal 3C Manage existing housing system assets and partnerships to maintain long-term value for the community.</p>
<p>1. Develop a long-range asset management plan in collaboration with the housing industry and based upon emerging data from the portfolio review.</p>
<p>2. Invest to sustain economically viable projects over the long term; Provide for staged phasing out of underperforming assets that lack long-term economic viability.</p>
<p>3. Utilize a feedback loop from asset management to housing development/finance to improve long-range performance of front-end investments.</p>

Goal 4:

Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and to the community.

Sub-goal 4A

Develop a strong organizational culture that values employees, promotes innovation and respects diversity.

1. Recognize staff contributions and professional accomplishments to encourage a culture of competency, continuous learning and innovation.
2. Adopt hiring, training and promotion practices that build a diverse staff at all levels of the organization.
3. Increase opportunities for team and morale building and cross-team collaboration at PHB.
4. Continue monthly staff cultural events to celebrate and learn about diverse cultures represented on PHB staff.
5. Adopt an internal communication strategy to ensure that clear, consistent information is shared across all of PHB.
6. Consider tools such a “virtual suggestion box” and regular staff surveys to solicit ongoing input and feedback from PHB staff.

Goal 4:

Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and to the community.

Sub-goal 4B

Establish and meet the highest standards for customer service and regulatory compliance.

1. Develop and maintain strong, integrated business and data systems that streamline processes and that provide consistent, timely information on budget, accounting, contracting and performance.
2. Publish clear program guidelines for all programs to meet goals of transparency, clarity of desired outcomes and mission alignment.
3. Set and meet business system response and turn-around times for all major business functions.
4. Evaluate customer service performance and responsiveness annually through surveys and other performance management tools.
5. Develop a cross-functional team to review and improve all core business systems on a regular basis.
6. Use compliance reviews, audit findings and survey results to continuously improve customer service.

Goal 4: Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and to the community.
Sub-goal 4C Provide the community with clear, consistent, reliable data on Portland’s housing needs and trends and data on the performance of PHB’s programs and projects.
1. Develop a PHB Dashboard that publishes and tracks key housing needs indicators and PHB-supported program outcomes over time.
2. Audit data integrity and improve reporting from PHB systems like HMIS and IDIS.
3. Standardize measures of community need and outcome reporting such as homeless counts, foreclosure rates and trends, and housing production data so community and policy-makers have clear baselines from which to evaluate need and outcome data over time.
4. Align data used in annual reports like CAPER, SEA, TIF Set-Aside Report and SEA.
5. Centralize data in PHB to promote accessibility and accuracy.

Goal 4: Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and to the community.
Sub-goal 4D Clearly communicate the public value of the Portland Housing Bureau and its programs and partners and the community needs they address.
1. Where appropriate, clearly identify successes in the community with PHB investments so the people of Portland see the value in their investments.
2. Implement an outreach, communication and earned media strategy to highlight Portland’s housing needs and best practice programs and projects to align with a resource development strategy.
3. Promote structured internal communication and cross-team training so that all PHB staff can serve as ambassadors of PHB at public meetings and events.
4. Use the web, social media and other forms of cost-effective communication to showcase key issues and successful work and projects.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach and communication strategies with annual surveys.

Goal 4:

Build a strong, sustainable Portland Housing Bureau that provides the highest level of leadership and service to its customers, stakeholders, employees and to the community.

Sub-goal 4E

Ensure that a wide range of perspectives inform PHB's agenda, decision-making and policy-setting.

1. Develop a structured process for public engagement that includes a diverse, high level advisory committee that advises the bureau on policy and budget direction. This committee will perform functions currently performed by HCDC, Budget Advisory Committee and URACs.
2. Adopt broader public engagement strategies designed to regularly solicit input from non-geographic communities, communities of color, low-income Portlanders and other traditionally underrepresented voices on their housing needs and issues.
3. Include diverse community members and stakeholders in selection committees for RFP's, NOFAs and key PHB staff hires.
4. Solicit input from other sectors such as health, business, transportation, education, economic develop, sustainability/green, higher education, etc. when developing needs assessments, policy statements and priorities for housing.