

TUESDAY WORK SESSION AGENDA
January 31, 2023
Courthouse Conference Room

THE LOCATION OF THIS MEETING IS ADA ACCESSIBLE. PLEASE ADVISE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS (503-623-8173)
AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE IF YOU NEED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS TO ATTEND OR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
MEETING VIRTUALLY.

**Approximate
Time**

AGENDA

- | | |
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| 9:00 a.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE |
| | 2. COMMENTS (for items not on this agenda) |
| | 3. APPROVE MINUTES OF January 24, 2023 |
| | 4. FAMILY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE – Brent DeMoe |
| | 5. NON-LISTED ITEMS (Pursuant to ORS 192.640) |

Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners are held on Tuesday and Wednesday each week. The meetings are held in the Board of Commissioners' conference room, 850 Main Street, Dallas, Oregon. Each meeting begins at 9:00 a.m., and is conducted according to a prepared agenda that lists the principal subjects anticipated to be considered. Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners may consider and take action on subjects that are not listed on the agenda. The Board also holds a department staff meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Every Monday in the Commissioners Conference Room at 850 main Street, Oregon.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners will be attending the Polk County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council meeting on February 6, 2023 at 12:00 p.m., located at 850 Main St., Dallas, OR 97338.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners will be conducting Public Hearing(s) for consideration of placing on the ballot a Public Safety Levy for May 16, 2023 at both 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. on February 8, 2023 located in the Main Conference Room at 850 Main Street, Dallas, Oregon.

The Compensation Committee will be meeting February 8, 2023 at 10 a.m. located in the Main Conference Room located at 850 Main Street Dallas, Oregon.

APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS

The Board sets aside a time at each regular meeting for comment by the public on subjects not appearing on the Agenda. Individuals may come forward and make any statement they wish, but not to exceed three (3) minutes in length, except as is required to give concise answers to questions from Board members. If the subject will require a lengthier presentation, or merits inclusion as an item on the Agenda of a future meeting, the Board shall schedule it accordingly.

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2023

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Gordon declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session and led the Board and attending audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Pope and Commissioner Mordhorst were present.

2. COMMENTS (for items not on this agenda):

Commissioner Gordon stated that today is the Polk County Community Connect Event where they will be conducting a PIT count among the homeless community.

3. MINUTES: **COMMISSIONER POPE MOVED, COMMISSIONER MORDHORST
SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF January 17, 2023**

MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

4. COMMUNITY SERVICES CONSORTIUM (CSC POLK) UPDATE:

Kelly Cutsforth, Area Coordinator for Community Services Consortium, thanked the Commissioners for their time and introduced Evan Scruton-Lathos, Principle Youth Advisor. Next Mrs. Cutsforth went over a presentation that she put together that showed an overview of the program, a breakdown of enrollment, the current GED rates, their work experience crews, and partnerships. Commissioner Pope asked Mrs. Cutsforth to define WIOA for the record. Mrs. Cutsforth stated Workforce Investment Opportunity Act is a Federal Program for those students who stop going or drop out of school. Commissioner Pope stated he wanted to make sure the public understood what this program is. The Commissioners then asked some follow up questions and Mrs. Cutsforth answered those questions. Commissioner Mordhorst and Commissioner Gordon both thanked Mrs. Cutsforth and her team for their hard work and dedication to the youth.

5. NON-LISTED ITEMS - (Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners considered the below identified non-listed items.)

None.

Commissioner Gordon adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Minutes: Nicole Pineda
Approved: January 31, 2023

Polk County Family & Community Outreach Department Update January 2023

Resource Centers:

The Resource Center team continues to be busier than ever. For the first time since last summer, we have all Resource Connector positions filled, and the team is fully operational out of 2 sites. We are open five days a week in both locations and offer after-hours support from 5 to 6 every Wednesday out of our Monmouth location.

To help with the workload and operation of two sites, we recently promoted Flora Morales-Hernandez to a lead position, where she works with the connector team on day-to-day and case-specific issues. Flora provides training and support to each connector as needed and works to ensure that all tasks falling under the connector umbrella are accounted for daily.

The Resource Center connector team includes six staff and one lead. Each has specialty areas and is cross-trained to support all shared tasks, such as the front desk and phones. We currently have a connector who specializes in all things related to housing and the contracts we have with the West Valley Housing Authority and the Oregon Department of Human Services. Her primary responsibilities include light case management for those who are in the process of securing housing or have barriers to housing. Our average caseload for the ODHS contract is about 15 families at a time. Additionally, Katrina attends the weekly briefing meetings at West Valley Housing Authority. She provides ongoing support as people learn how to use vouchers, search for housing, and navigate applications and deposit assistance. Of the 14 clients who secured a voucher and leased an apartment through West Valley Housing Authority in the last quarter, Katrina assisted 11 of them through the process.

We also have a connector moving into a role where he will work primarily with our Homeless Prevention Community Liaison. His role will be to provide light case management and support to clients currently experiencing homelessness, ensuring they are connected to all the resources and community partners in the area. His role includes supporting the recently formed PATHS group with meeting logistics and minutes.

We also share a Resource Connector with the VSO team. His primary role for the Resource Center portion of his position is to support veteran clients who may need access to resource center services in addition to their claims and other things they may be working on with the VSO team. Andrew also supports Gale's Lodge and ensures that all participants at the lodge have access to all of the resources available through the resource centers.

We are currently accessing funding from more than ten different funding streams. These funding partners include Community Action Agency, The City of Monmouth, The City of Independence, Family Promise, The Salvation Army, The Dallas Community Foundation, The Dallas Ministerial Association, The Marion Polk Early Learning Hub, West Valley Housing Authority, Oregon Department of Human Services, and Service Integration. Each with its own set of requirements and qualifications. The remaining connectors are dedicated to specific resource center sites that process all walk-in client needs and emergency financial assistance screenings. Our staff walks clients through the screening process and advocates for funding based on their specific needs. We then work with the various partners through an invoicing process to access their funds. This allows us to send complete payments to landlords, utility companies, and property managers, making them more willing to work with us when they have residents needing assistance.

For the first half of this fiscal year, the resource center has funded 268 cases comprising 232 adults and 205 children, totaling **\$398,907** in direct financial support to residents of Polk County. We have primarily used the funds to support past due rent to avoid eviction, rental deposits, utilities, and needs related to returning to employment. In addition to these funds, the Resource Center team has partnered with Community Action Agency's Energy Services program to help clients who are not currently in shut-off access funds to support their utilities, including electric, gas, other heat, and water needs. From July to November (**EA applications have a six-week processing time), we have assisted 113 households accessing just over **\$105,000**. We anticipate this number will be significantly higher as we are just now into the cold season when most people are accessing these funds. Fewer than 10% of the applications submitted to Energy assistance didn't receive funding. This low percentage is thanks to the connector team ensuring that all applications were complete and that they collected all documents before they sent them to Salem for processing. Nearly 70% of all applications submitted through the Resource Center were for clients who have never accessed the service.

In addition to direct client funding, we currently have 75 clients using the Resource Center as a safe place to receive mail. We also provide food boxes and hygiene supplies to more than 100 households monthly. In addition to our walk-in food

pantry, we were awarded additional funds from Business Oregon to continue providing food delivery services to clients with significant medical or mobility issues and who do not have access to a grocery store or local food bank. We are delivering to 35 families, including 67 adults and 16 children. In addition to supporting deliveries, we use these funds to ensure that the walk-in pantry is stocked with items to make a complete meal and meet the specific needs of those with dietary restrictions. This funding will end in May 2023.

Family Resource Navigators:

We continue to operate our Family Resource Navigator Program, which provides intensive case management to families connected to the ODHS Child Welfare System. These families are referred to us with an open child welfare case and are trying to either have their children returned to their care or avoid removal altogether. This team has a current caseload of about 18 families. While the overall number of cases referred to the program is lower than it has been in the past, the needs of families are significantly greater. In the past, clients would stay open to our services for an average of 3 to 6 months. Now families need support anywhere from 12 to 18 months. The most significant need for participating families is housing and overcoming barriers to secure housing. This can include getting connected to mental health or addiction services, support with social security claims for themselves or their children, overcoming criminal history, and homelessness.

The Navigator team is also working on the Ediger Hall (see info on the last page of this report) project in partnership with Dallas Alliance Church. Our team can provide intensive case management support to one family at a time staying in this transitional housing program. This project includes access to regular support from the Resource Center and addressing barriers that impact their ability to find stable housing.

Holiday Assistance Project 2022:

This year, the Polk County Holiday Assistance Program was coordinated by the Family and Community Outreach Department, in partnership with Dallas Christmas Cheer, Toys for Tots, and the Polk County Fairgrounds. The project raised more than **\$7,000** in cash donations and worked with more than 200 community members, groups, and organizations to match families needing assistance with donors, allowing us to get toys and food for each family. We served more than 1,200 families. Of the 1,200 families, there were 2,100 adults and 3,200 children, making 2022 our greatest holiday assistance effort. During the week-long effort at the fairgrounds, more than 100 volunteers gave their time. The volunteers helped with everything from shopping for children to setting up and tearing down the fairgrounds facility, parking lot duty, calling families, providing delivery services, and supporting the actual distribution event. We have heard much positive feedback from members of the community who were a part of the project about how organized the event was and how the group could work together to figure out the challenge of the ice storm and connect families to needed holiday assistance. We hope to find ways to make the assistance program more streamlined to assist those in need during the holiday season.

Homelessness Prevention Updates

Ediger Hall Project-Brent

The new homeless prevention program is up and running. So far, we are connecting with more folks currently experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. We have a database that includes both literal homeless as well as those that are unstably housed and are currently working with and assisting more the 40 homeless clients. We are in the process of developing referral form to that will allow community partners to directly refer homeless individuals to FCO. February will see the launch a new community partner meeting that will bring together agency staff who provide direct service/resources to at-risk and homeless clients. This new committee will work together each month developing plans of action for shared clients. Our work also includes spending much time establishing and maintaining relationships with community partners, including local landlords.

PATHS Update

The Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions (PATHS) Committee has met 3 times and is currently concentrating efforts on development of a 5 year strategic plan. Marianne Bradshaw has been hired as a consultant to assist with those efforts. Committee members include: Michael Cherry- CTGR, Commissioner Jeremy Gordon-Polk County BOC, Ashley Hamilton- MWVCAA, Sarah Frost-City of Willamina, Kenna West-City of Independence, City Councilor Rebecca Salinas Oliveros-City of Monmouth, Brian Latta- City of Dallas and Council Chairperson Amy Houghtaling from the City of Falls City. Commissioner Gordon and Kenna West are co-chairs of the committee.

Polk County Warming Center (Information provided by Warming Center Coordinator, Matt Smucker)

Here are the warming center figures from November 1, 2022 through January 23, 2023. Depending on the weather, the program will go through March 2023.

- Total nights open all sites (rotating between sites in Monmouth, Independence and Dallas): 58
For 30 of those nights, as second site was also open in Falls City
- # of duplicate visits ("heads in beds"): 489

Distinct/unduplicated individuals served:

- Falls City Only: 47
- Monmouth, Independence and Dallas Sites: 57
- Pets: 14

Note: Many Falls City guests have been coming for showers and food, even if they don't stay overnight.

Veteran Programs Updates

Gale's Lodge

This fiscal year, Gale's Lodge received \$50,000.00 in Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) grant funding through Community Action Agency (CAA). With that funding, we hired a .5 FTE staff member to provide case management for Veterans in the program. Gale's Lodge is currently serving five Veterans (6 is capacity). In July 2022, Gale's Lodge celebrated being open for three years. Since opening, 25 Veterans have participated in the program. The average length of stay is six months. When we look at all the elements it takes to operate Gale's Lodge, the per day per veteran cost averages **\$28.00/day**. We have continued to have positive support from the community and other service providers for Gale's Lodge. Plans are currently taking shape to add a garden in the fenced area.

Success Story: *A Dallas Veteran came into the resource center who recently lost the room he was renting. We enrolled him in Gale's Lodge on Christmas Eve. Andrew and the Veteran identified possible employment opportunities, and the Veteran was offered a job with his former employer in Colorado. With grant funding, we were able to purchase all the necessary gear and equipment for the job. Andrew and the Veteran were able to arrange housing so he would be set to start work immediately upon his return to Colorado. In a span of fewer than three weeks, the veteran went from homeless to gainful employment with stable housing.*

Veteran Service Office

The theme of change continues with the Veterans Administration at the Federal Level. In August 2022, the PACT Act was signed into law. The PACT Act is considered the most significant piece of legislation affecting Veterans passed by congress in decades. The PACT Act expands access to VA healthcare. It establishes presumptive service connection for more than twenty conditions associated with exposure to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic chemicals while on active duty service. Some estimates say this legislation will affect more than three million veterans nationwide. To give perspective to the number of Veterans, the Agent Orange Blue Water Navy Veterans legislation of 2019 affected 50,000-100,000 veterans nationwide. Last week, we began seeing the first VA decisions for PACT Act claims filed through our office. So far, they have been favorable decisions.

Polk County Veterans working with our office have received over **\$750,000** in new monthly and retroactive benefit payments for the first half of the fiscal year.

For the upcoming year, we plan to collaborate with other local Veteran serving organizations to resume the monthly Battle Buddies dinner. This event was a great opportunity for Veterans to connect with other Veterans in the community and share a meal.

Success story: *A Veteran has had a pending appeal since 2016. The VA had erroneously sent another Veteran a letter regarding his request. Subsequently, his appeal was dismissed. Based on a barcode, we successfully argued that the VA had wrongly dismissed his appeal and reinstated the appeal. We were also able to prove further that, due to the error, the Veteran was entitled to submit additional evidence to support their appeal. The Judge agreed and awarded the Veteran over \$150,000 in retroactive benefits and \$4,000 in monthly benefit payments.*

School Based Mental Health

At our Winter All-Staff meeting Brent talked about the idea that “success is the doing”, and I think that’s the best lens to look at the progress and growth that the SBMH team does every day. Here are some stories from our team about how they’ve seen that in action this year:

Last year I met multiple times a week with one Elementary student who was very smart and also struggled with lagging self-control and regulation skills. This year, the student is doing so well he comes by every few weeks and we meet so I can provide support on whatever project he’s working on at the time. These projects range from creating book covers, brainstorming small group activities, to making posters to advertise his school clubs and are mostly focused on just maintaining a supportive relationship with him. Most of the projects don’t see completion, but the process is also important. Seeing him go from a kid literally climbing up the walls and on filing cabinets to a stellar student who handles transitions and academic challenges with ease reminds me that I’m part of a process that really helps students see their true potential.

Another story from a staff member working with teens and young adults:

A particular student was referred for SBMH services back in Fall of 2022 by a staff member who was concerned for the student’s lack of engagement (witnessed by daily head down on desk in class, no connection with other students or staff and zero response when school staff attempted to engage with them). After each meeting with the student I would reflect on their strengths with them in hopes of gaining traction to identify a goal to work on. The student was typically quiet and guarded during sessions, but kept coming back. It wasn’t until January of 2023 when a shift occurred, playing a therapy game similar to Uno, they began sharing more deeply. By the end of the visit their smile transformed their face, an expression I hadn’t seen by them before, and it seemed as if their true self was being expressed rather than years of hardship. Success indeed is the doing.

The SBMH team is continuing to grow and this year added Falls City back to our program area. Staff out there shared “I don’t know how to put it into words, but there is an overall feeling of connection and support that we are feeling out in Falls City now that Alea has joined the team. It’s been such a huge benefit to our students and families, having a closer relationship with some amazing people, resources and programs via the County. We are slowly filling some of the gaps we have been needing in our community and I’m optimistic about the work we are doing.”

We recently entered into a partnership with Kings Valley Charter School to serve their students since over 70% of their population comes from Dallas/Monmouth/Independence areas. Our staff member at that site will begin on Monday February 6th. This feels like a natural addition to our program because many students we are already working with transfer either to or from KVCS.

The staff as a whole are seeing students in both an individual and group capacity, with many of our schools offering evidence based skill building groups or groups focused on grief and loss. Caseloads differ from school to school (ranging from 45-80), but the common thread is that everyone is doing their best to manage the constant referrals they are receiving weekly. We adapted a more short-term goal focused practice this year which has been helpful in serving more students. With each student the SBMH team member is working towards an identified goal for 6-8 weeks, and then (ideally) closing them from their caseload to make space for a new student. So far the feedback from both SBMH and school staff has been positive.

The SBMH staff who are in the Resource Connector focused roles have been making solid connections with families to meet basic needs and increase community resource connection- lots of connecting families with outpatient services. With the SBMH Resource Connector roles in place they’ve been able to support SBMH team members assigned to schools to organize and host family nights at multiple locations. We’re looking forward to piloting a model in both the Central and Dallas districts for the remainder of this year where they are based at 1 or 2 schools and providing support to a specific caseload of students identified by the SBMH Therapist on site.

In the Central School District we started a partnership this fall with the Independence Grocery Outlet to provide Blessings in a Backpack (weekly food bags) to 36 Independence Elementary students, a great start to what will hopefully grow into other Elementary Schools.

There is a lot to look forward to on the team, with plans for future parent nights, new skills groups with students, and fun things this Spring like the creation of a lunch leftover compost bin at Monmouth Elementary School that will then be used as a class project to help grow seedlings in their greenhouse and starting Kindness Clubs in 2 of the Elementary Schools.

Community Education & Training

The prevention team has some exciting updates, and are looking forward to the first quarter of 2023. Here are some important highlights from the last 6 months:

1. Over 500 students have received some type of mental health gatekeeper training. These middle and high school students have learned how to spot warning signs, how to start the conversation, and importantly how to reach out for help for themselves or someone else. Just over 80 adults have been trained in similar content. This important training and education helps adults and students understand the risks associated with substance use.
2. The Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition has a new steering committee. This group of stakeholders will continue to help direct the coalition moving forward. This team is helping support Mental Health awareness month efforts for May of 2023. This team helped complete the messaging and coffee sleeve campaign that reached over 20,000 individuals across Marion and Polk County. This type of guidance and support helps continue the momentum of suicide prevention efforts across the region.
3. A cohort of students completed a new component that was added to the existing Polk County FCO High School Internship Program, called the Job Readiness Program. This program helps students gain soft skills, and hear from a number of industry professionals across the county.
4. In November, nearly 1,000 high school students completed the Youth Interest Survey. This survey provides information surrounding what types of events, activities and programs students are interested in. This survey helps inform our FCO Youth Mini-Grants program as well as all prevention programming in 2023. Thanks to a grant from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community Fund, this year we will have \$40,000 available to support youth programming in Polk County. The mini-grants program application will be released in February 2023.
5. The prevention team provided educational sessions to over 500 students across Polk County on the topic of substance abuse. Nearly 250 adults across the county received training about the dangers of problem gambling.

The team is looking forward to the first annual Polk County Spring Youth Conference coming up in March. Over 600 high school students (juniors) are expected to attend. This conference will give students the opportunity to learn from local industry professionals and get excited about what their future could look like.

The team is excited to continue providing prevention education and messaging to youth and adults across the county. The suicide prevention coalition is planning to coordinate two multi-county messaging campaigns across the region for the months of May and September. These messaging campaigns reach thousands of community members across the county.

Mid-Valley Parenting (MVP)

During the holiday season, Mid-Valley Parenting (MVP) hosted 5 regional Santa Meet and Greet events across Polk County. These events provided an opportunity to connect with parents in the region and offer information about MVP. Parents were able to get a photo with Santa that they were able to access for free by “liking” the MVP Facebook page. This is an easy way to guide traffic to our social media sites where parents can get updates on programming. The team also completed a book club series teaching parents skills on emotional regulation in themselves and as a parent. This important information aligns with the widely used Ruler system that students/families are accustomed to using in our local schools. The team is planning for a group of new programming for the first quarter of 2023 including new parent education series, child abuse prevention programming, and the launch of the Parent Points system in April. Something that we are really looking forward to in the next few months is our annual Bridges to the Future Conference. Each year this conference hosts early childhood and early elementary educators from across the region to come together for 2 days of professional development on site at WOU. This year the focus of the conference is on social emotional learning, behavior support, and mindfulness. We anticipate having around 200 participants.

Service Integration Program

Service Integration (SI) has had a busy year so far! We have had a successful return to in-person meetings, seeing new partners around our physical table at every meeting. In addition to our in-person meetings, we have added a monthly virtual meeting. Service Integration ALL Teams Virtual Recap has allowed us to meet with our SI partners who may not

have the ability to make it to an in-person meeting. We have kept our in-person networking opportunity, Service Integration: Coffee & Connect as a way to casually connect with our SI partners in between our regular monthly meetings. Coffee & Connect is held at a different location each month, either at a Polk County coffee shop or at a SI partner's agency or organization. This allows our partners a chance to see spaces that they refer clients to and may not have otherwise visited.

So far this year we have welcomed 104 new partners, processed around 120 funding requests, served over 5,000 Polk County individuals and leveraged over \$80,200.

PIT Count

This week Amber is focusing on rural Polk County's Point in Time (PIT) Count efforts. We've worked hard to create a survey specific to rural Polk County that allows us to ask questions beyond the HUD survey question of "Where did you sleep on the night of January 23rd?" This has allowed us to collect data relevant to the people we are trying to reach with our homelessness prevention efforts. Including people who are not only literally street homeless, but also people who are doubled up, couch surfing, sleeping in RVs, and people who may be facing eviction.

We kicked off our survey efforts this week with the Polk County Community Connect, surveying everybody who came in the door for this one-stop resource connection event. At the Community Connect, 47 community and agency providers served 294 people with services like Oregon Health Plan application assistance, food, haircuts, dental services, resource connection and more.

In addition to surveying people at the Community Connect, we have spent multiple days conducting street outreach surveys with partners such as: local food banks, school districts, code enforcement, law enforcement, Polk County Health Services, Polk County Corrections, warming shelters, libraries, local businesses, churches, and medical offices. A new strategy we employed this year was to have staff from the list of agencies above complete surveys with individuals that they are already working with and have relationships with.

So far this week, we have completed surveys with over 140 sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals, with about half of those being unsheltered.

Falls City Health Assessment

We just wrapped up the Falls City Health Assessment. In October, we began surveying Falls City area residents (within 4 miles of Falls City) regarding access to healthcare and other services in the Falls City area. We had 240 respondents, representing 224 unique households. We are compiling reports now and are excited to share those with you when they're done.

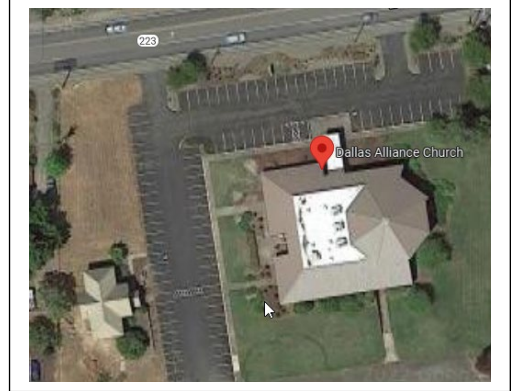
Administrative

Jen has been busy managing the many FCO contracts, tracking contract spending & reimbursements, and providing monthly or quarterly reporting to each funder, depending on each contract's requirements. Currently, the department has over 30 contracts/grants with projected revenue being nearly 3.5 million for the fiscal year.

Dallas Alliance Church & Polk County Transitional Housing Project Concept



Project Description



Dallas Alliance Church (DAC) and Polk County’s Family & Community Outreach Department (FCO) are proposing the creation of a transitional housing program that will serve Polk County families on the campus of DAC. DAC has been a reliable and responsive community partner, serving as a host for warming and cooling centers, community meals and gatherings, and several other community projects and initiatives. Church leadership has recently expressed an interest in doing more to serve the community. The campus has a historic house on site that will serve as the host site once renovated to be up to city code. The program will help one family at a time by providing a safe place to live, rent-free, while FCO and other community partners offer a myriad of resources and wrap-around services. Depending on the family’s unique factors, we anticipate assisting between four and eight families per year.

Need

There are currently no transitional housing programs in rural Polk County which are specifically geared for families. In the last year, the Family Resource Navigator program (just one of several client- based programs in FCO) worked with 26 different Polk County families that would have benefitted greatly from a transitional housing program. This type of support can fill the gap between homelessness and complete self-sufficiency.

Family & Community Outreach Department’s Contribution	Dallas Alliance Church will provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing trauma informed case management • Access and connection to Resource Center services • Housing navigation • Assistance with enrollment in programs to promote self-sufficiency and goal achievement • Referrals to additional community resources to strengthen family’s continued security • Support in navigating complex government programs • Knowledge on how to overcome the barriers that families face while trying to regain independence • Empower family’s ongoing success through creating a network of support and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Ediger Hall (the physical location to be retrofitted to accommodate housing needs for a family.) • A welcoming and supportive community • Utilities and lawn maintenance • Assistance with furnishing Ediger Hall

Repairs/Construction Costs (Most Labor will be Donated)	Other	Ongoing Annual Costs
H-VAC - \$8,400	Window treatments/linens- \$1,000	Insurance - \$2,500
Electrical - \$6,630	Furniture for all rooms - \$15,500	Utilities - \$3,000
Framing, finishing and doorway- \$7,550	Oven/Stove downdraft - \$3,500	Cleaning supplies, maintenance costs - \$2,500
Total: \$22,580	Total: \$20,000	Total: \$8,000 Total Project \$50,580

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For the first half of this fiscal year, the resource center has funded 268 cases comprising 232 adults and 205 children, totaling **\$398,907** in direct financial support to residents of Polk County. We have primarily used the funds to support past due rent to avoid eviction, rental deposits, utilities, and needs related to returning to employment. In addition to these funds, the Resource Center team has partnered with Community Action Agency's Energy Services program to help clients who are not currently in shut-off access funds to support their utilities, including electric, gas, other heat, and water needs. From July to November (**EA applications have a six-week processing time), we have assisted 113 households accessing just over **\$105,000**. We anticipate this number will be significantly higher as we are just now into the cold season when most people are accessing these funds. Fewer than 10% of the applications submitted to Energy assistance didn't receive funding. This low percentage is thanks to the connector team ensuring that all applications were complete and that they collected all documents before they sent them to Salem for processing. Nearly 70% of all applications submitted through the Resource Center were for clients who have never accessed the service.

In addition to direct client funding, we currently have 75 clients using the Resource Center as a safe place to receive mail. We also provide food boxes and hygiene supplies to more than 100 households monthly. In addition to our walk-in food

pantry, we were awarded additional funds from Business Oregon to continue providing food delivery services to clients with significant medical or mobility issues and who do not have access to a grocery store or local food bank. We are delivering to 35 families, including 67 adults and 16 children. In addition to supporting deliveries, we use these funds to ensure that the walk-in pantry is stocked with items to make a complete meal and meet the specific needs of those with dietary restrictions. This funding will end in May 2023.

Family Resource Navigators:

We continue to operate our Family Resource Navigator Program, which provides intensive case management to families connected to the ODHS Child Welfare System. These families are referred to us with an open child welfare case and are trying to either have their children returned to their care or avoid removal altogether. This team has a current caseload of about 18 families. While the overall number of cases referred to the program is lower than it has been in the past, the needs of families are significantly greater. In the past, clients would stay open to our services for an average of 3 to 6 months. Now families need support anywhere from 12 to 18 months. The most significant need for participating families is housing and overcoming barriers to secure housing. This can include getting connected to mental health or addiction services, support with social security claims for themselves or their children, overcoming criminal history, and homelessness.

The Navigator team is also working on the Ediger Hall (see info on the last page of this report) project in partnership with Dallas Alliance Church. Our team can provide intensive case management support to one family at a time staying in this transitional housing program. This project includes access to regular support from the Resource Center and addressing barriers that impact their ability to find stable housing.

Holiday Assistance Project 2022:

This year, the Polk County Holiday Assistance Program was coordinated by the Family and Community Outreach Department, in partnership with Dallas Christmas Cheer, Toys for Tots, and the Polk County Fairgrounds. The project raised more than **\$7,000** in cash donations and worked with more than 200 community members, groups, and organizations to match families needing assistance with donors, allowing us to get toys and food for each family. We served more than 1,200 families. Of the 1,200 families, there were 2,100 adults and 3,200 children, making 2022 our greatest holiday assistance effort. During the week-long effort at the fairgrounds, more than 100 volunteers gave their time. The volunteers helped with everything from shopping for children to setting up and tearing down the fairgrounds facility, parking lot duty, calling families, providing delivery services, and supporting the actual distribution event. We have heard much positive feedback from members of the community who were a part of the project about how organized the event was and how the group could work together to figure out the challenge of the ice storm and connect families to needed holiday assistance. We hope to find ways to make the assistance program more streamlined to assist those in need during the holiday season.

Homelessness Prevention Updates

Ediger Hall Project-Brent

The new homeless prevention program is up and running. So far, we are connecting with more folks currently experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. We have a database that includes both literal homeless as well as those that are unstably housed and are currently working with and assisting more the 40 homeless clients. We are in the process of developing referral form to that will allow community partners to directly refer homeless individuals to FCO. February will see the launch a new community partner meeting that will bring together agency staff who provide direct service/resources to at-risk and homeless clients. This new committee will work together each month developing plans of action for shared clients. Our work also includes spending much time establishing and maintaining relationships with community partners, including local landlords.

PATHS Update

The Partners Aligned Toward Housing Solutions (PATHS) Committee has met 3 times and is currently concentrating efforts on development of a 5 year strategic plan. Marianne Bradshaw has been hired as a consultant to assist with those efforts. Committee members include: Michael Cherry- CTGR, Commissioner Jeremy Gordon-Polk County BOC, Ashley Hamilton- MWVCAA, Sarah Frost-City of Willamina, Kenna West-City of Independence, City Councilor Rebecca Salinas Oliveros-City of Monmouth, Brian Latta- City of Dallas and Council Chairperson Amy Houghtaling from the City of Falls City. Commissioner Gordon and Kenna West are co-chairs of the committee.

Polk County Warming Center (Information provided by Warming Center Coordinator, Matt Smucker)

Here are the warming center figures from November 1, 2022 through January 23, 2023. Depending on the weather, the program will go through March 2023.

- Total nights open all sites (rotating between sites in Monmouth, Independence and Dallas): 58
For 30 of those nights, as second site was also open in Falls City
- # of duplicate visits ("heads in beds"): 489

Distinct/unduplicated individuals served:

- Falls City Only: 47
- Monmouth, Independence and Dallas Sites: 57
- Pets: 14

Note: Many Falls City guests have been coming for showers and food, even if they don't stay overnight.

Veteran Programs Updates

Gale's Lodge

This fiscal year, Gale's Lodge received \$50,000.00 in Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) grant funding through Community Action Agency (CAA). With that funding, we hired a .5 FTE staff member to provide case management for Veterans in the program. Gale's Lodge is currently serving five Veterans (6 is capacity). In July 2022, Gale's Lodge celebrated being open for three years. Since opening, 25 Veterans have participated in the program. The average length of stay is six months. When we look at all the elements it takes to operate Gale's Lodge, the per day per veteran cost averages **\$28.00/day**. We have continued to have positive support from the community and other service providers for Gale's Lodge. Plans are currently taking shape to add a garden in the fenced area.

Success Story: *A Dallas Veteran came into the resource center who recently lost the room he was renting. We enrolled him in Gale's Lodge on Christmas Eve. Andrew and the Veteran identified possible employment opportunities, and the Veteran was offered a job with his former employer in Colorado. With grant funding, we were able to purchase all the necessary gear and equipment for the job. Andrew and the Veteran were able to arrange housing so he would be set to start work immediately upon his return to Colorado. In a span of fewer than three weeks, the veteran went from homeless to gainful employment with stable housing.*

Veteran Service Office

The theme of change continues with the Veterans Administration at the Federal Level. In August 2022, the PACT Act was signed into law. The PACT Act is considered the most significant piece of legislation affecting Veterans passed by congress in decades. The PACT Act expands access to VA healthcare. It establishes presumptive service connection for more than twenty conditions associated with exposure to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic chemicals while on active duty service. Some estimates say this legislation will affect more than three million veterans nationwide. To give perspective to the number of Veterans, the Agent Orange Blue Water Navy Veterans legislation of 2019 affected 50,000-100,000 veterans nationwide. Last week, we began seeing the first VA decisions for PACT Act claims filed through our office. So far, they have been favorable decisions.

Polk County Veterans working with our office have received over **\$750,000** in new monthly and retroactive benefit payments for the first half of the fiscal year.

For the upcoming year, we plan to collaborate with other local Veteran serving organizations to resume the monthly Battle Buddies dinner. This event was a great opportunity for Veterans to connect with other Veterans in the community and share a meal.

Success story: *A Veteran has had a pending appeal since 2016. The VA had erroneously sent another Veteran a letter regarding his request. Subsequently, his appeal was dismissed. Based on a barcode, we successfully argued that the VA had wrongly dismissed his appeal and reinstated the appeal. We were also able to prove further that, due to the error, the Veteran was entitled to submit additional evidence to support their appeal. The Judge agreed and awarded the Veteran over \$150,000 in retroactive benefits and \$4,000 in monthly benefit payments.*

School Based Mental Health

At our Winter All-Staff meeting Brent talked about the idea that “success is the doing”, and I think that’s the best lens to look at the progress and growth that the SBMH team does every day. Here are some stories from our team about how they’ve seen that in action this year:

Last year I met multiple times a week with one Elementary student who was very smart and also struggled with lagging self-control and regulation skills. This year, the student is doing so well he comes by every few weeks and we meet so I can provide support on whatever project he’s working on at the time. These projects range from creating book covers, brainstorming small group activities, to making posters to advertise his school clubs and are mostly focused on just maintaining a supportive relationship with him. Most of the projects don’t see completion, but the process is also important. Seeing him go from a kid literally climbing up the walls and on filing cabinets to a stellar student who handles transitions and academic challenges with ease reminds me that I’m part of a process that really helps students see their true potential.

Another story from a staff member working with teens and young adults:

A particular student was referred for SBMH services back in Fall of 2022 by a staff member who was concerned for the student’s lack of engagement (witnessed by daily head down on desk in class, no connection with other students or staff and zero response when school staff attempted to engage with them). After each meeting with the student I would reflect on their strengths with them in hopes of gaining traction to identify a goal to work on. The student was typically quiet and guarded during sessions, but kept coming back. It wasn’t until January of 2023 when a shift occurred, playing a therapy game similar to Uno, they began sharing more deeply. By the end of the visit their smile transformed their face, an expression I hadn’t seen by them before, and it seemed as if their true self was being expressed rather than years of hardship. Success indeed is the doing.

The SBMH team is continuing to grow and this year added Falls City back to our program area. Staff out there shared “I don’t know how to put it into words, but there is an overall feeling of connection and support that we are feeling out in Falls City now that Alea has joined the team. It’s been such a huge benefit to our students and families, having a closer relationship with some amazing people, resources and programs via the County. We are slowly filling some of the gaps we have been needing in our community and I’m optimistic about the work we are doing.”

We recently entered into a partnership with Kings Valley Charter School to serve their students since over 70% of their population comes from Dallas/Monmouth/Independence areas. Our staff member at that site will begin on Monday February 6th. This feels like a natural addition to our program because many students we are already working with transfer either to or from KVCS.

The staff as a whole are seeing students in both an individual and group capacity, with many of our schools offering evidence based skill building groups or groups focused on grief and loss. Caseloads differ from school to school (ranging from 45-80), but the common thread is that everyone is doing their best to manage the constant referrals they are receiving weekly. We adapted a more short-term goal focused practice this year which has been helpful in serving more students. With each student the SBMH team member is working towards an identified goal for 6-8 weeks, and then (ideally) closing them from their caseload to make space for a new student. So far the feedback from both SBMH and school staff has been positive.

The SBMH staff who are in the Resource Connector focused roles have been making solid connections with families to meet basic needs and increase community resource connection- lots of connecting families with outpatient services. With the SBMH Resource Connector roles in place they’ve been able to support SBMH team members assigned to schools to organize and host family nights at multiple locations. We’re looking forward to piloting a model in both the Central and Dallas districts for the remainder of this year where they are based at 1 or 2 schools and providing support to a specific caseload of students identified by the SBMH Therapist on site.

In the Central School District we started a partnership this fall with the Independence Grocery Outlet to provide Blessings in a Backpack (weekly food bags) to 36 Independence Elementary students, a great start to what will hopefully grow into other Elementary Schools.

There is a lot to look forward to on the team, with plans for future parent nights, new skills groups with students, and fun things this Spring like the creation of a lunch leftover compost bin at Monmouth Elementary School that will then be used as a class project to help grow seedlings in their greenhouse and starting Kindness Clubs in 2 of the Elementary Schools.

Community Education & Training

The prevention team has some exciting updates, and are looking forward to the first quarter of 2023. Here are some important highlights from the last 6 months:

1. Over 500 students have received some type of mental health gatekeeper training. These middle and high school students have learned how to spot warning signs, how to start the conversation, and importantly how to reach out for help for themselves or someone else. Just over 80 adults have been trained in similar content. This important training and education helps adults and students understand the risks associated with substance use.
2. The Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition has a new steering committee. This group of stakeholders will continue to help direct the coalition moving forward. This team is helping support Mental Health awareness month efforts for May of 2023. This team helped complete the messaging and coffee sleeve campaign that reached over 20,000 individuals across Marion and Polk County. This type of guidance and support helps continue the momentum of suicide prevention efforts across the region.
3. A cohort of students completed a new component that was added to the existing Polk County FCO High School Internship Program, called the Job Readiness Program. This program helps students gain soft skills, and hear from a number of industry professionals across the county.
4. In November, nearly 1,000 high school students completed the Youth Interest Survey. This survey provides information surrounding what types of events, activities and programs students are interested in. This survey helps inform our FCO Youth Mini-Grants program as well as all prevention programming in 2023. Thanks to a grant from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community Fund, this year we will have \$40,000 available to support youth programming in Polk County. The mini-grants program application will be released in February 2023.
5. The prevention team provided educational sessions to over 500 students across Polk County on the topic of substance abuse. Nearly 250 adults across the county received training about the dangers of problem gambling.

The team is looking forward to the first annual Polk County Spring Youth Conference coming up in March. Over 600 high school students (juniors) are expected to attend. This conference will give students the opportunity to learn from local industry professionals and get excited about what their future could look like.

The team is excited to continue providing prevention education and messaging to youth and adults across the county. The suicide prevention coalition is planning to coordinate two multi-county messaging campaigns across the region for the months of May and September. These messaging campaigns reach thousands of community members across the county.

Mid-Valley Parenting (MVP)

During the holiday season, Mid-Valley Parenting (MVP) hosted 5 regional Santa Meet and Greet events across Polk County. These events provided an opportunity to connect with parents in the region and offer information about MVP. Parents were able to get a photo with Santa that they were able to access for free by “liking” the MVP Facebook page. This is an easy way to guide traffic to our social media sites where parents can get updates on programming. The team also completed a book club series teaching parents skills on emotional regulation in themselves and as a parent. This important information aligns with the widely used Ruler system that students/families are accustomed to using in our local schools. The team is planning for a group of new programming for the first quarter of 2023 including new parent education series, child abuse prevention programming, and the launch of the Parent Points system in April. Something that we are really looking forward to in the next few months is our annual Bridges to the Future Conference. Each year this conference hosts early childhood and early elementary educators from across the region to come together for 2 days of professional development on site at WOU. This year the focus of the conference is on social emotional learning, behavior support, and mindfulness. We anticipate having around 200 participants.

Service Integration Program

Service Integration (SI) has had a busy year so far! We have had a successful return to in-person meetings, seeing new partners around our physical table at every meeting. In addition to our in-person meetings, we have added a monthly virtual meeting. Service Integration ALL Teams Virtual Recap has allowed us to meet with our SI partners who may not

have the ability to make it to an in-person meeting. We have kept our in-person networking opportunity, Service Integration: Coffee & Connect as a way to casually connect with our SI partners in between our regular monthly meetings. Coffee & Connect is held at a different location each month, either at a Polk County coffee shop or at a SI partner's agency or organization. This allows our partners a chance to see spaces that they refer clients to and may not have otherwise visited.

So far this year we have welcomed 104 new partners, processed around 120 funding requests, served over 5,000 Polk County individuals and leveraged over \$80,200.

PIT Count

This week Amber is focusing on rural Polk County's Point in Time (PIT) Count efforts. We've worked hard to create a survey specific to rural Polk County that allows us to ask questions beyond the HUD survey question of "Where did you sleep on the night of January 23rd?" This has allowed us to collect data relevant to the people we are trying to reach with our homelessness prevention efforts. Including people who are not only literally street homeless, but also people who are doubled up, couch surfing, sleeping in RVs, and people who may be facing eviction.

We kicked off our survey efforts this week with the Polk County Community Connect, surveying everybody who came in the door for this one-stop resource connection event. At the Community Connect, 47 community and agency providers served 294 people with services like Oregon Health Plan application assistance, food, haircuts, dental services, resource connection and more.

In addition to surveying people at the Community Connect, we have spent multiple days conducting street outreach surveys with partners such as: local food banks, school districts, code enforcement, law enforcement, Polk County Health Services, Polk County Corrections, warming shelters, libraries, local businesses, churches, and medical offices. A new strategy we employed this year was to have staff from the list of agencies above complete surveys with individuals that they are already working with and have relationships with.

So far this week, we have completed surveys with over 140 sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals, with about half of those being unsheltered.

Falls City Health Assessment

We just wrapped up the Falls City Health Assessment. In October, we began surveying Falls City area residents (within 4 miles of Falls City) regarding access to healthcare and other services in the Falls City area. We had 240 respondents, representing 224 unique households. We are compiling reports now and are excited to share those with you when they're done.

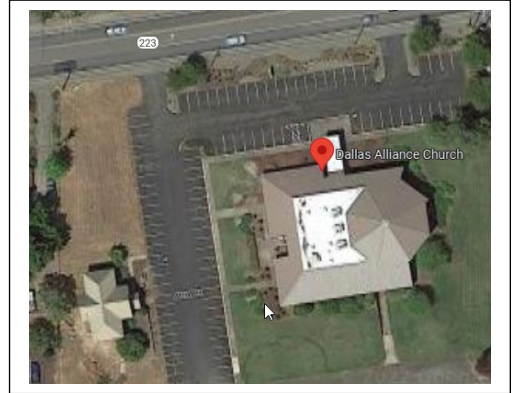
Administrative

Jen has been busy managing the many FCO contracts, tracking contract spending & reimbursements, and providing monthly or quarterly reporting to each funder, depending on each contract's requirements. Currently, the department has over 30 contracts/grants with projected revenue being nearly 3.5 million for the fiscal year.

Dallas Alliance Church & Polk County Transitional Housing Project Concept



Project Description



Dallas Alliance Church (DAC) and Polk County’s Family & Community Outreach Department (FCO) are proposing the creation of a transitional housing program that will serve Polk County families on the campus of DAC. DAC has been a reliable and responsive community partner, serving as a host for warming and cooling centers, community meals and gatherings, and several other community projects and initiatives. Church leadership has recently expressed an interest in doing more to serve the community. The campus has a historic house on site that will serve as the host site once renovated to be up to city code. The program will help one family at a time by providing a safe place to live, rent-free, while FCO and other community partners offer a myriad of resources and wrap-around services. Depending on the family’s unique factors, we anticipate assisting between four and eight families per year.

Need

There are currently no transitional housing programs in rural Polk County which are specifically geared for families. In the last year, the Family Resource Navigator program (just one of several client- based programs in FCO) worked with 26 different Polk County families that would have benefitted greatly from a transitional housing program. This type of support can fill the gap between homelessness and complete self-sufficiency.

Family & Community Outreach Department’s Contribution	Dallas Alliance Church will provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing trauma informed case management • Access and connection to Resource Center services • Housing navigation • Assistance with enrollment in programs to promote self-sufficiency and goal achievement • Referrals to additional community resources to strengthen family’s continued security • Support in navigating complex government programs • Knowledge on how to overcome the barriers that families face while trying to regain independence • Empower family’s ongoing success through creating a network of support and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Ediger Hall (the physical location to be retrofitted to accommodate housing needs for a family.) • A welcoming and supportive community • Utilities and lawn maintenance • Assistance with furnishing Ediger Hall

Repairs/Construction Costs (Most Labor will be Donated)	Other	Ongoing Annual Costs
H-VAC - \$8,400	Window treatments/linens- \$1,000	Insurance - \$2,500
Electrical - \$6,630	Furniture for all rooms - \$15,500	Utilities - \$3,000
Framing, finishing and doorway- \$7,550	Oven/Stove downdraft - \$3,500	Cleaning supplies, maintenance costs - \$2,500
Total: \$22,580	Total: \$20,000	Total: \$8,000 Total Project \$50,580

	Total Surveys	Unsheltered Homeless	Sheltered Homeless	At Risk of Being Homeless or in Jail	Other (Safely housed)	Ties to the Community % (Excluding other)	Number of Chronically UNSHELTERED Homeless (More than 1 time or longer than 1 year)	Number of Youth Surveys Completed (Under 24)	Number of Youth Surveys Completed (Under 18)
Independence	39	17	1	15	6	81%	14	13	4
Monmouth	15	4	0	5	6	88%	3	4	3
Dallas	62	30	7	19	6	80%	27	10	5
Grand Ronde	9	7	0	2	0	100%	6	1	
Willamina	3	2	0	1	0	67%	2	0	
Falls City	26	24	0	2	0	81%	21	0	
POLK TOTALS:	154	84	8	44	18		73	28	12