

**Remote HHS and Public Safety
Meeting Agenda**
February 13, 2024 at 5:30 PM
Remote Meeting



MEMBERS

Councilor April Fournier, At-Large, Chair
Councilor Roberto Rodriguez, At-Large
Councilor Anna Trevorrow, District 1
Councilor Victoria Pelletier, District 2

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email HHSPS@portlandmaine.gov. Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm the day before the Health & Human Services and Public Safety meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the commenter's name and legal address. To help ensure your comment is submitted for the correct item, please include the name of the agenda item (see below).

The Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee will conduct this meeting remotely via Zoom pursuant to the Remote Meeting Policy adopted by the Portland City Council. Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live either in person or via Zoom, a recording will be available in the [Agenda Center](#) following the meeting.

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+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

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International numbers available: <https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/j/kzIANjuou>

1. Announcements
2. Review and Approval of Minutes from January 9, 2024
 - a. Approval of Draft Minutes
3. Dispatch Update
 - a. Locations for New Dispatch Center
 - b. Warming Center Update
4. PD Update
 - a. Overdose Numbers
 - b. Supports & Services
5. 2023 HHS Accomplishments & Presentation
 - a. Supports & Services
6. Work Plan Discussion
 - a. Part II
7. Next Meeting: March 12, 2024



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 5:30pm, Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance: April Fournier, Chair (At-large), Victoria Pelletier (District 2). Anna Trevorrow (District 1) Roberto Rodriguez (At-Large)

Councilors in attendance: Kate Sykes (District 5), Anna Bullett, (District 4)

City Staff:

Adam Harr, Executive Assistant for Social Services; Counsel; Keith Gautreau, Fire Chief; Mark Dubois, Police Chief; Shaza Stephenson, Deputy/Interim Director of HHS; Jessie Lemieux, , Executive Assistant for Fire.

Announcements

- Review and approval of minutes.
 - Councilor Trevorrow moved to approve the minutes and seconded by councilor Pelletier.
 - The minutes were approved unanimously with Councilor Trevorrow absent 4 – 0.

Agreements

- Agreements on how we work together and show up to this space.
- Agree to be present
 - Agree to be present in the moment despite the many responsibilities and notifications we have and receive.
- Taking space and making space.
 - Recognize everyone in the conversation.
- Community Care

- Think about the entire community
- What does it mean to do this work as elected leaders of a full spectrum of people?
- Practice active listening.
 - Not missing what each other is saying while waiting to or thinking of a response.
- Assume good intentions.
 - Permission to speak in first draft.
 - We may need to clarify what we mean as we work out ideas through reciprocal communication.
- No tolerance for hate, discrimination, or prejudice.
- Challenging conventional wisdom
 - Not change for the sake of change, but looking at our processes and look for where we can improve.
- Remember why we stepped into this work.
 - Center the joy and fun of being able to serve our community in this capacity.

Committee questions and discussion.

- Councilor Trevorrow
 - Appreciates this framework.
 - Speaking in first draft acknowledges we are not speaking perfectly but coming from a place of best intentions.
- Councilor Pelletier
 - Appreciates this thoughtful conversation on how we want to show up in spaces like this.
- Councilor Rodriguez agreed with the committee.

Committee 2024 Workplan

- 2023
 - Public Health
 - Chapter 35
 - Abortion
 - Considering Safe Injection Sites
 - Human Services
 - Implementation of HSC
 - Health and efficacy
 - Camping policy
 - Public Safety
 - Dispatch Center

- Staff Priorities taken up by the committee.
- 2024 Committee topics and issue areas we want to center
 - Councilor Pelletier
 - Encampments: supporting unhoused people and the ECRT
 - Center how we are navigating the relationship with our unhoused community members when we have these discussions.
 - Homeless Services Center (HSC)
 - Transportation to shelter
 - Existing barriers to entering the shelter.
 - How to make it so the HSC doesn't feel like a very last resort.
 - Convene the community on a semi regular basis.
 - Balance the needs of all community members, unhoused and housed, with intention.
 - Councilor Trevorrow
 - Reviewing the policies and strategies supporting unhoused people that align with council goals and values.
 - Are there additional models to look at?
 - Informed by all stakeholders and community partners.
 - Feedback from outreach workers serving the unhoused community.
- Councilor Rodriguez
 - Convening stakeholders to dig deeper into ordinances.
 - Including the community.
 - Understanding our data.
 - How the data coming from outreach workers and beds available is used to inform decisions.
 - Make changes with an understanding of our data and input from the community.
- What are next steps to addressing encampments and Homelessness
 - Everyone is doing the best to collaborate but there are disconnects.
 - Who can take different parts of the work to advance it?
 - What can we do in our capacity as a government?
 - Convene stakeholders in a summit.
 - Need to get items on the calendar
 - Meet with Mayor and City Manager to know what we need for:
 - Space/location
 - Is there a cost to the committee?
 - How to reach folks for attendance.

- Date
- Have an outside facilitator
- What is the intended outcome for the convening?
 - To bring in members through out the continuum of care and community stakeholders, in and outside the city, to improve sharing information, and improve processes to quickly connect unhoused people to shelter and other appropriate resources.
 - Examples of stakeholders for attendance:
 - HHS
 - Public Health
 - Public Works
 - Permitting and inspections
 - Public and private shelter, and other human service staff:
 - Domestic violence
 - Substance use
 - Mental Health
 - Veterans
 - Immigrant and asylees
 - Day space
 - Medical
 - Unhoused people with firsthand experience of barriers to entering shelter and housing.
 - Identity areas of policy that address the needs discussed at the summit.
 - The deliverable is leaving the convening with specific goals new collaboration through the connections made at the convening.
 - Gather data to take action in one space with many voices.
 - Multiple sessions with a large in-person meeting then move to smaller actin groups that report back monthly or some other interval.
 - Chief Gautreau doesn't want the committee to lose site of the holistic needs of the city and to focus on high level policy, allowing staff to implement operational minutia.
- Public Health
 - Reviewing Order 68.
- Public Safety
 - Are there things that are priorities in Public Health and Public Safety; does not need to be action and can be updates from staff.

Committee Questions and Discussion

- Councilor Tomorrow

- The dispatch center should remain on the agenda.
 - Reserve space for emergent issue that may come up through out the year.
- Councilor Sykes
 - The extreme shortage of childcare.
 - New money from the state.
 - How to make it easier to raise kids in Portland
 - Hopes the committee will look into and is willing to work on this issue collaborating with the committee.
 - The chair recognized the importance of this issue.
- Councilor Fournier
 - Pedestrian safety.
 - How are we able to address people getting struck by cars as a committee and collaborate with sustainability.
 - Making it safe to walk or bike meets helps meet our sustainability goals.
 - What can we do so we don't see an increase in those fatalities and injuries
- Councilor Rodriguez
 - Accessibility
 - Supporting businesses that make themselves accessible: seating for rest breaks, etc.
 - Address the needs of senior citizens.
- Dispatch Center
 - Close to filling the director position.
 - Staffing is still an issue but moving in the fight direction.
 - Staffing is a greater issue than funding with some working 16 hour days.
 - The dispatch center and police station building is an issue that could be addressed.
 - It has a separate regional budget: Portland South Portland and Cape Elizabeth.
 - Presenting budget on the 18th of January.
- Cooling and Warming Centers.
 - In first or second quarters think about what do cooling centers look like?
- 2024 Working Workplan Summary
 - Convening
 - Order 68 (ordinance around encampments)
 - Dispatch Center
 - Cooling/warming center
 - Childcare
 - Pedestrian Safety
 - Space for emerging issues

Staff Updates

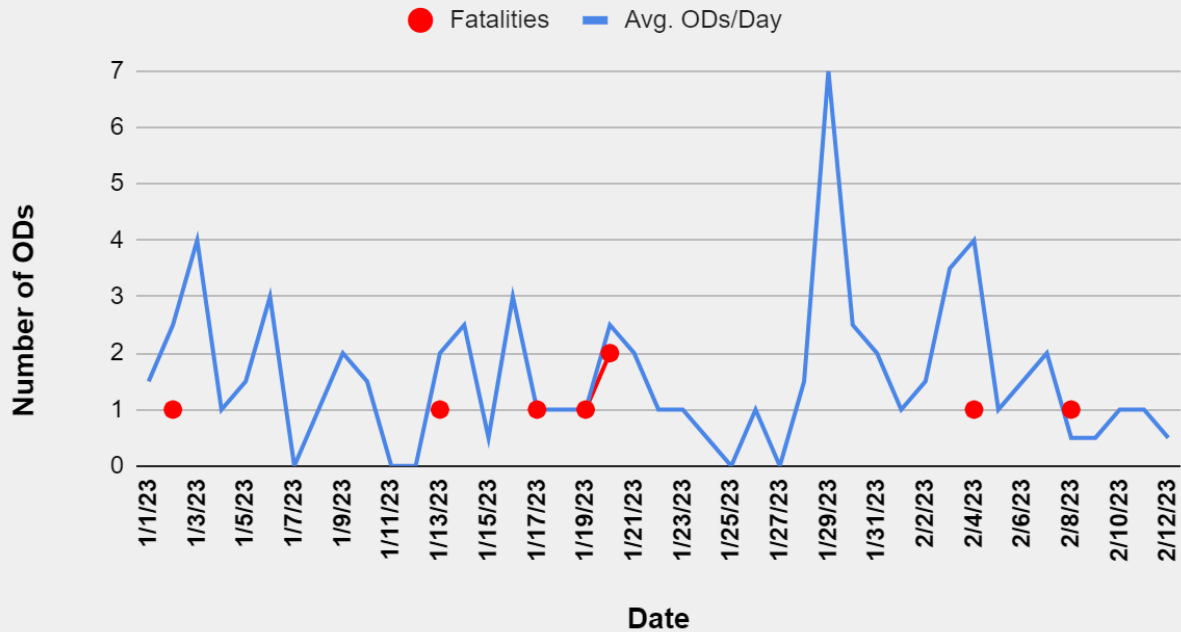
- 2023 HHS Update
 - 427 people have come into the HSC since November,
 - 111 (26%) were from Harbor View
 - HSC Calls for Service have not increased and is about one call per day which is much less than Oxford Street.
 - Mobile Medical Outreach (MMO) had 83 contacts.
 - We are close to full capacity at the HSC.
 - Will do a year end review at the next meeting.
- How are encampments handled now that the policy is being enforced?
 - PD was at an encampment.
 - 8 people went to HSC at night.
 - PD does everything possible to encourage people to go to HSC. People are compliant and there have been no arrests, just some summons issued.
 - Will explain to people they cannot set up tents and people are largely compliant moving along to someone's house or the shelter.
 - There are no identified large encampments.
 - Bayside detail of two officers noon to midnight still exists.
 - Is there any data around why people are not accepting shelter when encountered by PD?
 - Some people are going directly to HSC rather than through P&D.
 - Some people and their intake data slip through the cracks.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:47 PM.

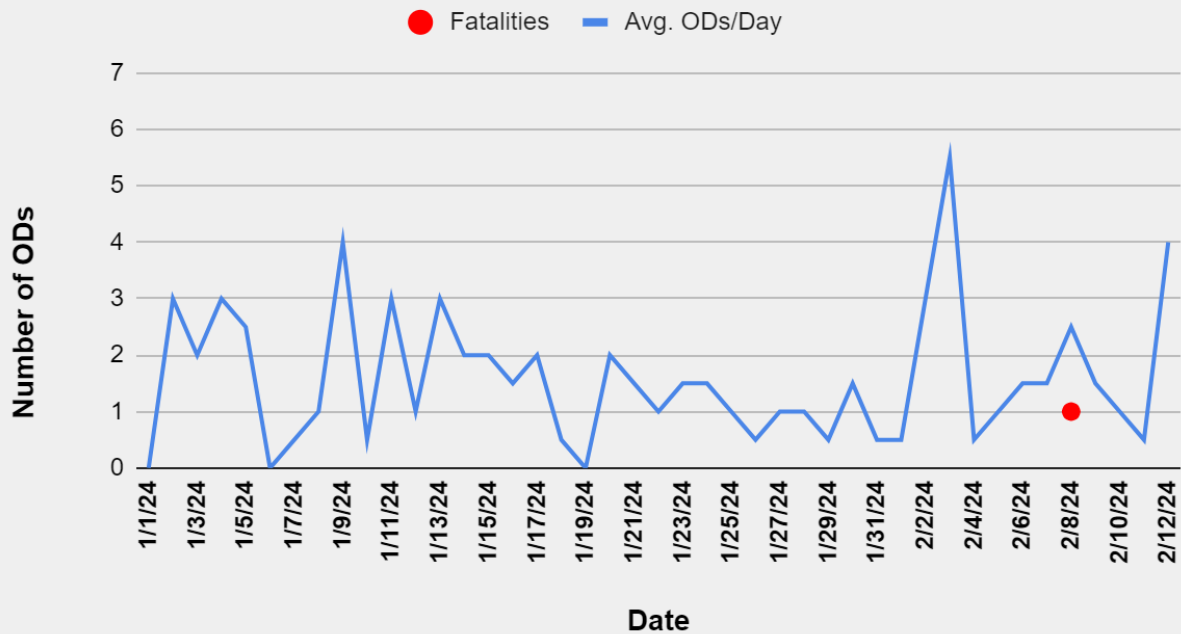
Combined PPD and PFD Overdose Responses 1/1 -2/12 for 2023 and 2024

These overdose values are the combined average daily overdose responses for Portland PD and Portland Fire over the same time period, last year to this year.

Fatalities and Avg. ODs/Day 1/1/23 to 2/12/23



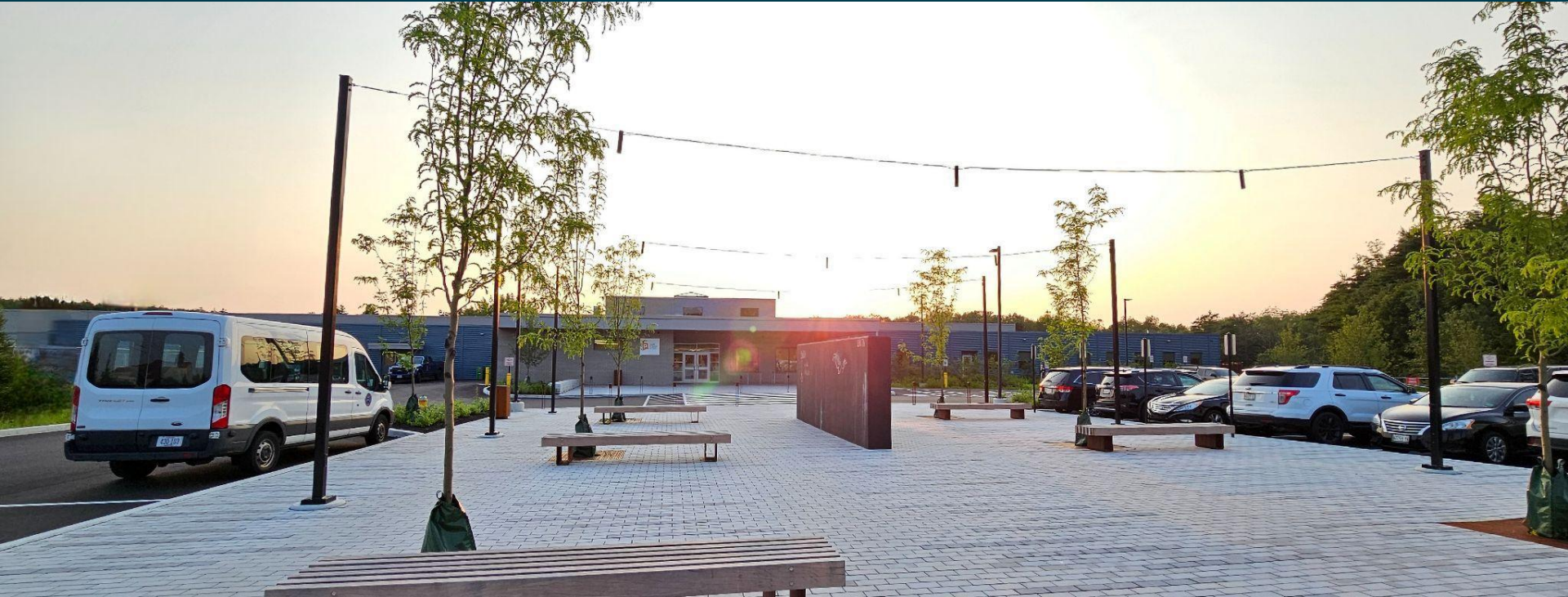
Fatalities and Avg. ODs/Day 1/1/24 to 2/12/24



Combined PPD and PFD Overdose Responses 1/1 -2/12 for 2023 and 2024

The sum of the averages for each of the two years is identical, at 68 ODs/year to date. The significant difference is in the number of fatalities. OD fatalities over the same time period were at a count of 8 in 2023, but only one in 2024. For both years, the average number of ODs per day year to date is 1.58.

	2023	2024
Total ODs YTD	68	68
Fatalities YTD	8	1
Avg. ODs/Day	1.58	1.58



Homelessness in the US and Maine in 2023

In 2023, the PIT survey found that:

- In the U.S. overall, more than 650,000 people were experiencing homelessness
 - About 20 per 10,000 population, or
 - a 12% increase from 2022
- In the state of Maine, 4,258 were experiencing homelessness
 - **About 30 per 10,000 population**
 - **A 3.5% decrease from 2022**

Despite a small decrease in total number from 2022, homelessness is still an ongoing issue in Maine in 2023.

Point-in-time (PIT) survey results, January 2023

	US	%	ME	%
Total homeless	653,104	100	4,258	100
Of total, those who, are / experience:				
Black or African-American	243,624	37%	2,013	47%
Hispanic / Latino	179,336	27%	219	5%
Female	250,009	38%	2,129	50%
Severely Mentally Ill	137,076	21%	674	16%
Chronic Substance Abuse	108,035	17%	299	7%
Veterans	35,574	5%	123	3%
Victims of Domestic Violence	74,436	11%	245	6%
Unaccompanied Youth	34,703	5%	169	4%
Total Chronically Homeless Persons	154,313	24%	370	9%

These numbers are:

- Skewed by the large proportion of asylum seekers
- significantly underestimated as many interviewees choose not to respond

How is Health and Human Services helping the homeless?

Both HHS' Public Health and Social Services Divisions provide wide-ranging services and programs.

Together, these programs and services:

- Provide low-barrier compassionate care
- Promote and protect individual and community health
- Seek to encourage dignity, self-respect, and self-reliance in the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency

HSC's Low Barrier Services



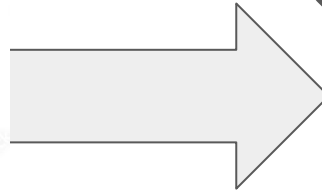
Low barrier homeless shelters offer *immediate refuge and essential services* to people who otherwise might go unsheltered.

Without strict entry conditions, low barrier shelters provide a safe, comfortable environment with access to:

- Warm meals
- Healthcare
- Mental health support
- Housing and other wrap-around services

HSC's Low Barrier Services

As a low barrier shelter, the HSC...



Does not
require
sobriety or
background
checks

Provides
safe
storage for
belongings

Provides
housing-focused
support and
navigation

operates 24/7
to meet basic
needs

Homeless Services Center (HSC)

Guest Amenities

The HSC offers the following guest amenities to **everyone** who comes to the HSC, even if they only stay for one night:

- Convenient check in times, with 11 p.m. curfew
- Guest Wifi
- Phone and computer availability
- Device charging stations
- Dorms and showers open from 11 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.
- Three large congregate areas, available 24 hours a day
- Shuttle services
 - 6 days a week, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
 - Other transportation services available when necessary
- Meals served on site
- Free laundry facilities
 - Shelter provided detergent
- Secure and staff monitored storage, available 24 hours a day
- Library with rotating option of books
- Greater Portland Health (GPH) clinic services
- Narcan availability/overdose prevention safety measures



Homeless Services Center (HSC)

Longer-Term Guest Amenities

The HSC offers additional amenities to people who have longer stays at the HSC. These longer-term amenities include:

- Guaranteed bed availability for consistent guests
- Work bed accommodations available for those who would miss standard check-in times
- Curfew dismissal for employment obligations
- Housing assessments linking guests to housing navigation and case management
- Greater Portland Health Clinic Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings every Monday
- Peer support from Spurwink, with onsite office and full-time staffing
- Harm reduction, needle exchange, and patient navigation
- Pastoral services
- Monthly Homeless Voice for Justice meetings
- Veterans housing services from Preble Street
- Domestic violence services/outreach from Through these Doors
- Maine Department of Health and Human Services conducting eligibility screening for Medicaid, SNAP, etc.



Homeless Services Center

2023 Outcomes

1,252

In 2023, unique guests seen at HSC and Oxford Street Shelter:

- 887 Male, 357 Female, 5 Transgender and 3 Gender Nonconforming guests
- 304 Chronically Homeless
- 30 Veterans

16,135

Shuttle rides provided

3,756

Meals
provided

Homeless Services Center

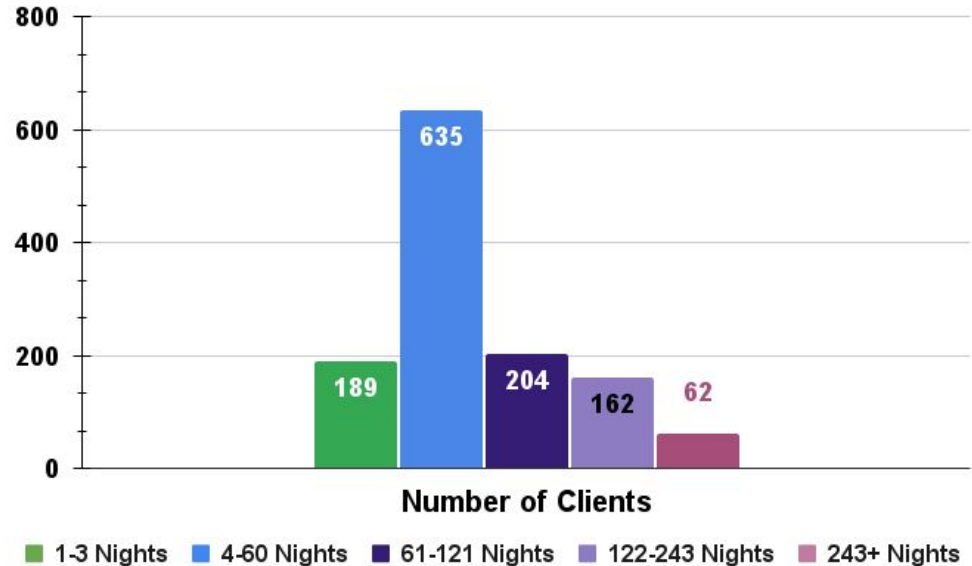
2023 Outcomes

63.3

Average number of nights stayed at the HSC

- 1-3 nights: 189 clients
- **4-60 nights: 635 clients**
- 61-121 nights: 204 clients
- 122-243 nights: 162 clients
- 243+ nights: 62 clients

Lengths of Stay for Individuals Sheltered in 2023



*These 2023 numbers include nights in shelters, so are inflated

Homeless Services Center

2023 Outcomes - Greater Portland Health (GPH)

1,830

Clinic visits by HSC guests to onsite GPH

Clinic providers:

- 845 visits to medical providers
- 355 visits to nursing staff (RN's)
- 211 visits to dental
- 142 visits to dental hygiene
- 102 visits to social work
- 100 visits to community health workers
- 11 visits to psych nursing staff

64

HSC guests provided financial assistance from GPH.





Public Health Division's Clinical Services

Health and Human Services offers several clinical services programs focused on meeting the healthcare needs of low income and uninsured residents in Portland. These programs include:

- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Clinic
- Mobile Medical Outreach
- Immunization Program
- Portland Community Free Clinic (PCFC)
- Screening, Prioritization and Urgent Referral (SPUR) Program, new in 2023
- Maternal Child Health (MCH) Program

Mobile Medical Outreach (MMO)

MMO is made up of 20 non-uniformed City staff who collaborate with the Portland Fire Department to reduce both non-fatal and fatal overdoses by implementing community based medical care to those with substance use disorder.

2023 Outcomes

765

Encounters

663

Referrals provided to community-based providers for support with physical and behavioral health, basic needs, and recovery

Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH)

MCH is a nursing team providing no cost, in-home wellness visits to Portland residents who are pregnant, recently delivered, have a newborn (0-1 years old) and/or have children under age 5 with a unique non-acute health need.

2023 Outcomes

1,513

Home visits made by the Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH)

691 visits were to people experiencing homelessness (sheltered and unsheltered)

Screening, Prioritization and Urgent Referral (SPUR) Program

SPUR provides health screenings for New Mainers, along with referrals to Greater Portland Health.

2023 Outcomes

768

People provided clinical services through SPUR

346 of these people (113 families) were provided services while being housed at the Expo



Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Services

Harm Reduction's main purpose is to **help people reduce the harms associated with drug use**. These harms include the risk of HIV, hepatitis C, other infections, overdose, and death.

Harm Reduction also works to educate the community to reduce stigma associated with drug use disorders, and to promote pathways to additional prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.

Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Services

According to the National Safety Council, **in the U.S., people are more likely to die of overdoses than from car accidents.**

HHS services include:

- Syringe Service Program
- Naloxone distribution
- HIV/HCV Testing
- Treatment and other service referrals
- Basic needs, hygiene supplies
- Overdose prevention, recognition, and response trainings
- Sharps disposal
- Wound Care

Syringe Services Program (The Exchange)

2023 Outcomes

806,000

Sterile syringes distributed in 6,178
total exchanges

537,000

Used syringes collected

2,789

Referrals provided
to community-based
orgs for support with
physical and
behavioral health,
basic needs and
recovery



Naloxone Distribution Program

2023 Outcomes

5,067

Naloxone kits (over 10,000 doses) distributed through the Exchange

15,276

Naloxone kits (over 30,500 doses) distributed to partner naloxone distributors throughout Cumberland and York Counties





Prevention and Diversion (P&D)

The Prevention and Diversion (P&D) team is intended to be a first point of contact for someone who is at risk of becoming homeless or who is currently homeless. The P&D team can assist someone by:

- Working with the individual to find solutions to their housing problems, and/or
- Assisting their access to the Homeless Services Center or other shelter.

Prevention & Diversion

2023 Outcomes

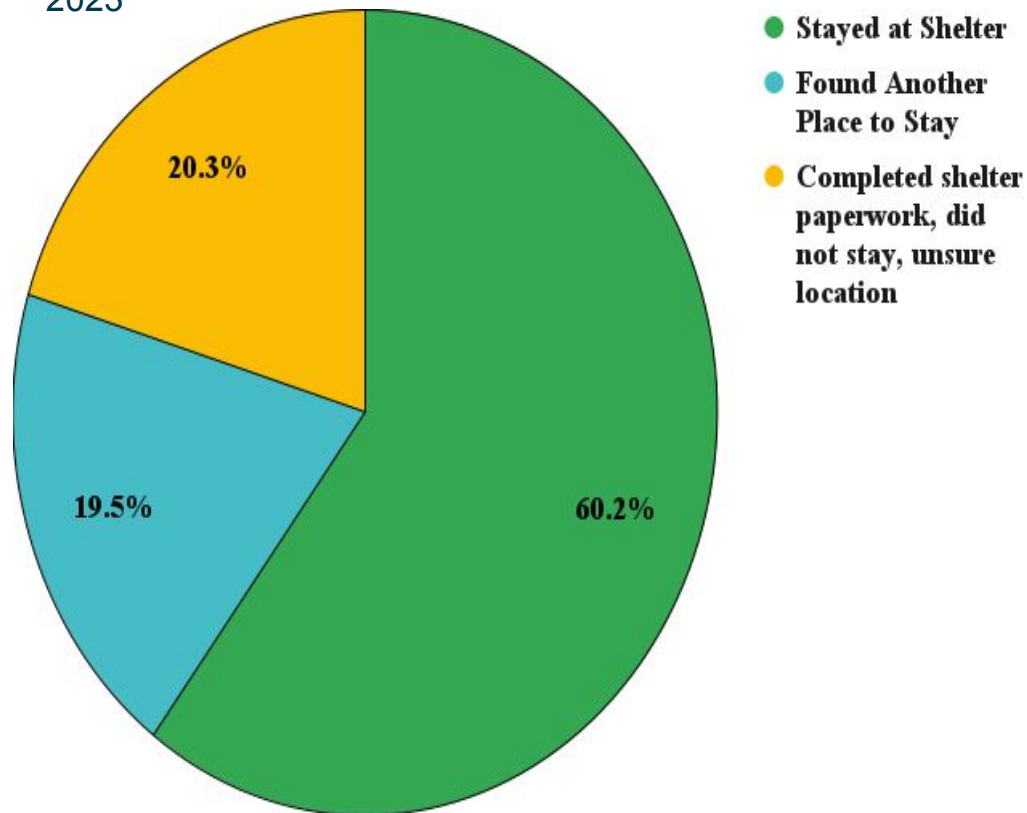
913

People seen, including those presenting for shelter assistance and Homeless Prevention assistance

\$63,399.33

Provided in financial assistance to residents with the Housing Problem Solving Funds

Outcomes for Individuals Seen by P&D in 2023





Housing Services

HSC's Housing Services provide individualized housing plans based on the unique needs of guests. Housing Services also include:

- Ongoing follow-up/retention services.
- Bus ticket program available for those who have a confirmed/safe housing option elsewhere.
- Homeless Prevention/Rapid ReHousing services.
- Collaboration with outside service providers to maintain continuation of care.

Homeless Services Center

2023 Outcomes - Housing Services

159

Guests placed into housing

Together, prior to being placed into housing, *these 159 guests collectively experienced 33,173 nights of homelessness* (equating to 90.9 years of homelessness)

- 27 placements for guests who were chronically homeless
- 75 placements for guests who were first-time Homeless
- 3 placements for guests who were Veterans
- 19 RRH/Prevention Placements
- Other misc. various placements





Mobile Housing Fairs

In 2023, Mobile Housing Fairs took place at encampments located at Fore River and Marginal Way in Portland.

The purpose of these fairs is to meet people where they are at, and help them access shelter directly from the encampments.

Mobile Housing Fairs

2023 Outcomes

152

Housing applications completed

- 9 Coordinated Entry applications
- 9 Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) voucher applications
- 12 project based voucher applications through Portland Housing
- 18 public housing applications through Portland Housing
- 31 Centralized Housing Choice voucher application new/reinstated)
- 31 other applications (individual housing applications, etc)
- 41 Releases of Information

What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

24.3%

HSC guests who were chronically homeless

Total number of months on the streets, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven in the past three years

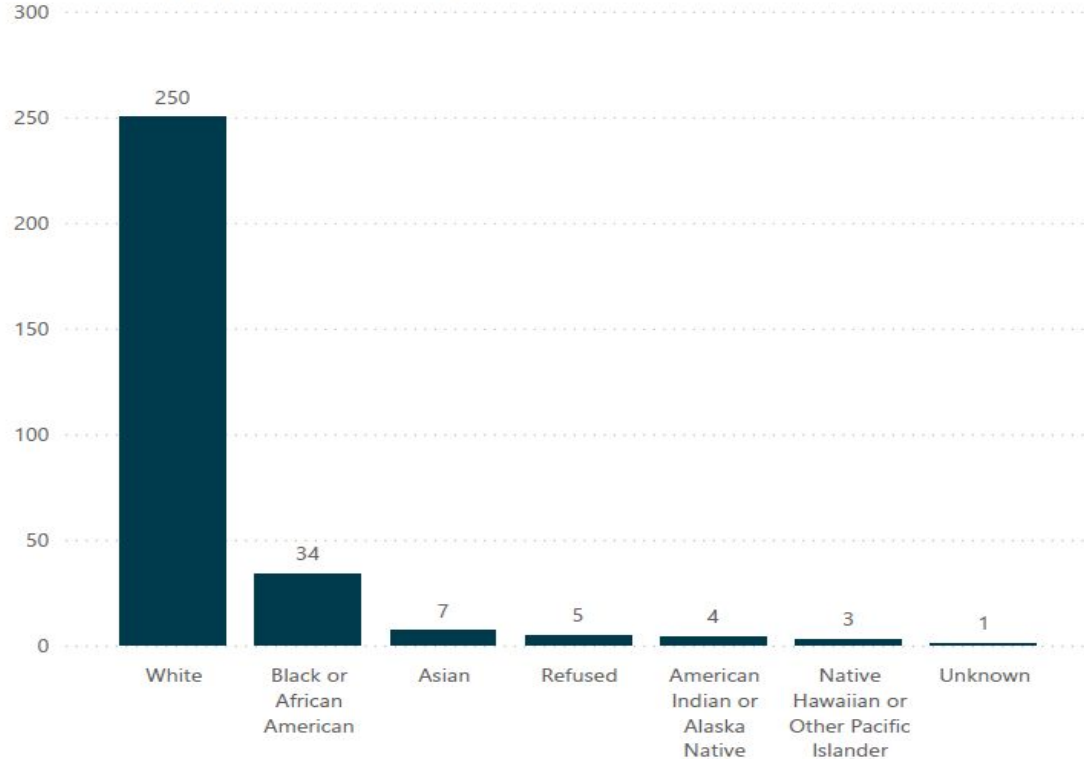
N=202. 1 response missing. Only includes chronically homeless guests who went through P&D intake (203/304, or 67% of the chronically homeless HSC guest population in 2023.)



What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

Race

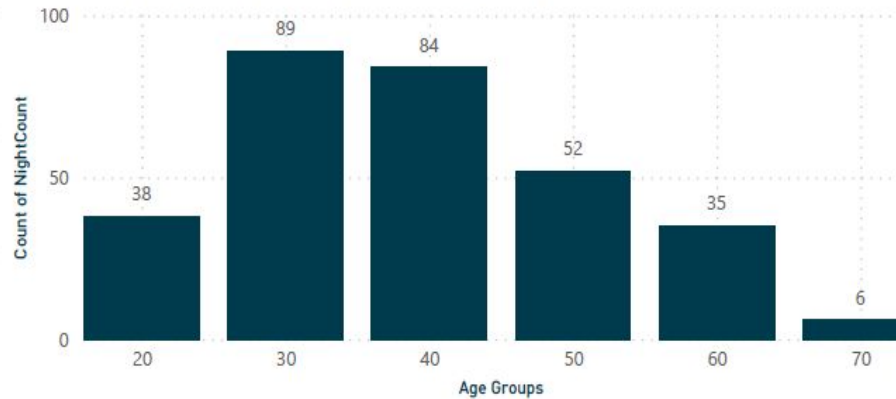
N= 304 (100% of all chronically homeless HSC guests.)



What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

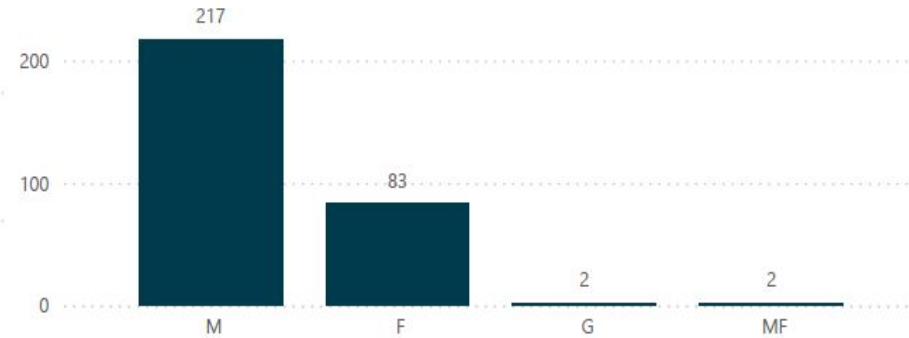
Age Groups

N=304 (100% of all chronically homeless HSC guests.)



Gender

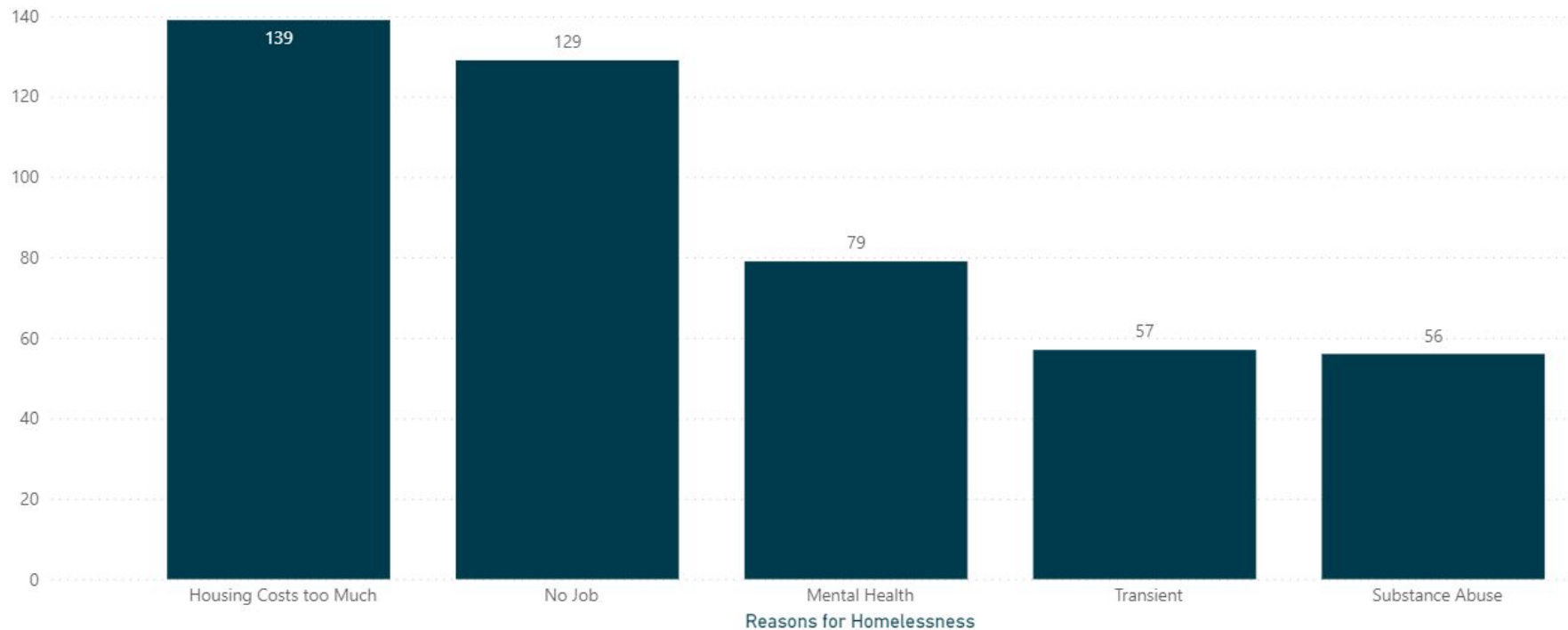
N = 304 (100% of all chronically homeless HSC guests.) M = Male, F = Female, G = Gender Non-Conforming, MF = Male to Female Transgender



What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

What are your reasons for homelessness? - Top 5 most reported reasons

N= 759 total responses from 196 chronically homeless guests who went through P&D intake (97%). Responses for 7 individuals missing.





Encampment Outreach Surveys

In November – December 2023, HHS piloted an outreach survey at Harbor View Encampment. Through conversations with encampment residents, the survey sought to collect information into the reasons why encampment residents decline to go to, or stay at, the HSC.

What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

Harbor View Encampment Surveys

Most of the HV occupants (90%) had never been to the HSC and reported their top three barriers to be:

1. loss of autonomy
2. transportation
3. belongings and storage

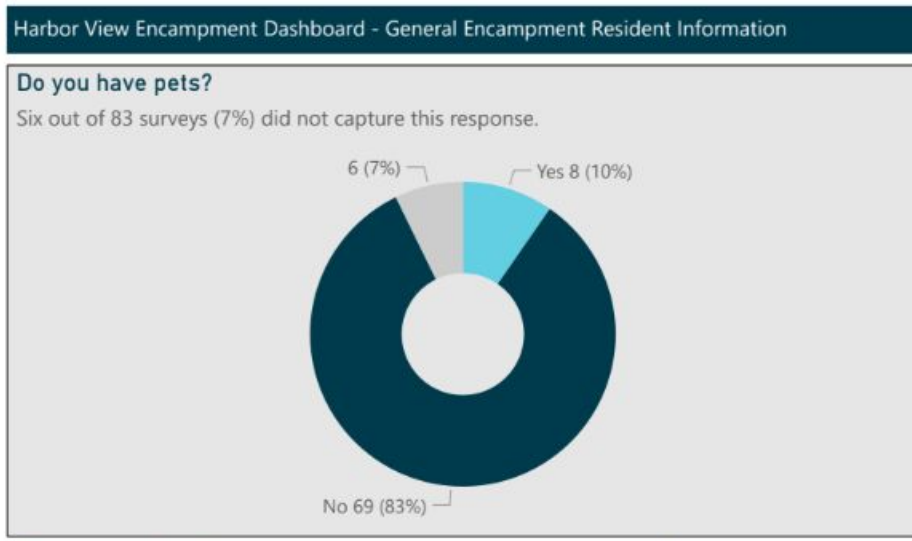


Pivots made by HSC in response to these outreach results:

- Extended curfew to 11:00 PM.
- Secured vans and established regular pick-up times to help individuals relocate to the HSC.
- Improved storage resources and capacity.

What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

Loss of autonomy is by far the biggest reported barrier



What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

External factors influence shelter bed intakes

Harbor View occupants probably needed external factors to push them to get shelter. Such things as:

- Increasing cold and inclement weather events
- Dispelling perceived barriers and adjusting where possible
- Coordinating City staff outreach and transportation
- Enforcing City ordinances

What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

Homeless guests tend to stay a while at the HSC

Since additional beds were added, 645 unique individuals have received a total of 18,877 bed nights, which equates to around **29.2 bed nights as an average length of stay** thus far.

What Did We Learn about Portland's Homeless Population in 2023?

Getting people to shelter may save their lives

While overdose deaths saw a significant drop in January, Narcan administrations at the HSC experienced a significant spike, with 38 Narcan doses.

What Will HHS Do in 2024?

In 2024, HHS is looking to expand services, collect more data, and increase collaboration by:

- Solidifying and expanding our outreach structure through the new Homeless Outreach Engagement Program
- Implementing the HOPE pilot project
- Building on the ECRT framework



HOPE Project

A one-year pilot program, serving 90 households through housing navigation assistance delivered at encampments. **The goal is to stably house a minimum of 45 of those households over the course of 2024.**

The HOPE project will employ three housing navigators by sub-contracted MaineHousing Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) partners, as well as a City of Portland program coordinator/landlord liaison. Funding would also cover client costs specific to the housing search, move-in process, and landlord incentives.



Outreach and Engagement Program

With the recent addition of two homeless outreach and engagement workers as well as staffing up the new Overdose to Action program, **HHS is establishing an homeless outreach program that will work in tandem with other City agencies to track, get to know, and understand Portland's unsheltered population.**

These staff will provide a foundation for increased citywide case management, provide referrals to the housing navigation team, as well as establish tracking mechanisms for individuals referred to housing, treatment, and their outcomes.

The Encampment Crisis Response Team (ECRT) is shifting toward a longer-term systemic response

With the availability of shelter beds, the ECRT focus has been shifting away from crisis response toward the next phase of homeless response needs, such as:

- Emphasizing housing and case management
- Compiling and analyzing available data
- Increasing collaboration and coordination



Team work makes the dream work

The work HHS does is made possible through collaborations with our City and external partner providers.

- Anthem
- Greater Portland Health
 - Onsite clinic
 - General Health, Dental, Psychiatric
- Preble Street
 - Provides and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner
 - Veteran Housing Services
- Spurwink Peer Support
- Greater Portland Peer Services
 - Weekly Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)/ Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Support Groups
- Through These Doors
- The Opportunity Alliance
 - Bi-Weekly Mobile Crisis Services
- Portland Trails
 - Guided trail tours and volunteer opportunities
- Portland Fire Department, Mobile Medical Outreach
- Maine Department of Health and Human Services
 - Bi Weekly benefit application assistance
- Spiritual Care Services of Maine
 - Weekly non denominational faith / spiritual work
- Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)
 - Upcoming outreach and educations
- Portland Public Library
 - Supplies guest library
- Milestone – Home Team
- University of Southern Maine
 - Master Gardener Program

City of
portland



Health and Human Services

Portland, ME

Thank you!