

How is Unity Shelter funded?

Unity Shelter has grown significantly since it was formed in January 2020, and along with that growth has come significant changes to how we are funded.

While a majority of our budget came from City and County general and social service funds pre-pandemic, post-pandemic we receive less than 4% of our total funding from local social service funds.

In the 2024 fiscal year, 72% of the committed funding we've received is coming directly from Oregon Housing and Community Services, as the State continues to address the housing emergency declared by the Governor a year ago. Another 7% of funding comes through grants by local foundations and charitable organizations.

The balance of our funding comes from donors like you. While donations have typically been about 10% of our funding, donations in 2023 were up 29% over 2022, accounting for 17% of total revenue and carrying us through challenging times.

Thank you for your support!

Meet our Traditional Health Workers



Ryan McConnell

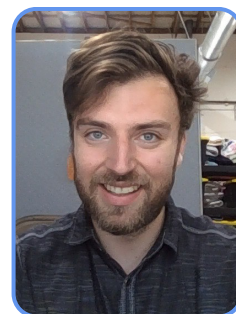
Community Health Worker

I am from southern California but have lived in Oregon for 4 years while continuing school at Oregon State. I came to work at Unity as I saw the need for a bridge to resources, and to reduce the gaps of care affecting the community. I am excited about this job because I am passionate about helping others and want to connect individuals to resources so that they can better themselves on all levels.

Jacob Burwell

Community Health Worker

Hello! My name is Jacob Burwell. After coming to Oregon from Arizona, I experienced the social determinants associated with living without a fixed address. Consequentially, I am completing my BS in Public Health at OSU in hope of one day contributing to reducing the health-related disparities of our most vulnerable populations.



Dawn Lyman

Peer Wellness Specialist

My name is Dawn Lyman, and have been employed with Unity Shelter since May 2023. I am a recovering addict, and have experienced domestic violence, homelessness, and incarceration. After being released from prison, I decided that I wanted to do something different with my life. I have been clean for two years, and have been able to rebuild my life. I was drawn to a career as I am 2 years own a brand new car, have my license and a house. I have a deep desire to make a tangible impact on people's lives. I am especially passionate about working with individuals who may not have easy access to quality healthcare.

Warm up with US 2023

In December, we held our second annual Warm Up With US event, this time with a focus on our microshelter program, SafePlace. We hosted tours of SafeCamp, a raffle, and a panel discussion about the realities of houselessness.

Thank you to everyone who attended, our panel speakers, donors, and First Congregational United Church of Christ for hosting!



A memorial banner was hung to name and acknowledge the community members we lost this year.



Rev. Jen Butler took people on a tour of SafeCamp, and tells the history of the program.



Our panel speakers had an insightful conversation on houselessness and the work we're doing to make resources accessible to those who need them most.

Traditional Health Workers - who they are, what they do, and their impact on the unhoused population

What is a Traditional Health Worker (THW)?

According to the Oregon Health Authority, Traditional Health Workers (THWs) are trusted individuals from their local communities who may also share socioeconomic ties and lived life experiences with health plan members. THWs have historically provided person- and community-centered care by bridging communities and the health systems that serve them, increasing the appropriate use of care by connecting people with health systems, advocating for patients, supporting adherence to care and treatment, and empowering individuals to be agents in improving their own health. THW's can take on a variety of roles such as Community Health Worker, Peer Support Specialist, Peer Wellness Specialist, Personal Health Navigators, and Doulas.

Financially, what does it do for the for the healthcare system, specifically the Emergency Department?

Part of the THW's jobs is to work with people to establish relationships with their primary care provider. Going to a primary care provider is often a cheaper, faster, and more trauma-informed experience. The emergency department (ED) is designed to move people through quickly and provide some stabilization, however it's a very expensive way to get some basic healthcare needs met. Many of our unhoused clients see the ED as their main source of health care. Often an ED visit is an attempt to address a chronic health issue that needs ongoing treatment. The ED simply does not have the capacity to provide treatment that is productive in alleviating long-term symptoms of their condition. When we can connect people to primary care, we're able to not only lower costs of healthcare on a larger scale, but we are also able to improve the quality of care delivered.

What Jacob has to say...

What is your role as a Traditional Health Worker (THW)?

I'm specifically a Community Health Worker, which is kind of a specified category of Traditional Health Worker. I work with the Men's Shelter and Room at the Inn clients, and I function as a bridge to help them access health care, and other resources. I don't look at health as just the absence of illness, but the overall ability to thrive.

I also help provide peer support. I am a shoulder to lean on and listen to their struggles on a daily basis and help them navigate it. I will help some clients go to appointments, and work as an escort because many of them are afraid of the medical system. And lastly, because with how our current medical system functions, how fractured it is, and how being unhoused is so misunderstood, I help care providers understand our client's needs and address treatment options to meet them where they're at.

"I don't look at health as just the absence of illness, but the overall ability to thrive."

What is the most rewarding part of your role within the system for you personally?

Honestly, it's the smile on the faces of the people that I helped when I'm able to get them access to a service that they didn't know they could access. It's me escorting them to a doctor's appointment, and helping them feel heard and cared about by their doctors and building confidence within themselves. I've seen many people cry in tears when I just felt like it was a very simple thing to get them but it means a lot to me.



The Longest Night

On December 21st, members of the Corvallis community gathered in front of City Hall to remember those who died without a home. We came together to bear witness to the realities of houselessness as the names of 22 individuals who passed away in 2023 were read aloud and honored.

Want to donate?
Scan the QR code below!



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www.unityshelter.com/donate