



Only Strong Communities Can Combat COVID-19: Communities Unite to Demand a Bold Vision for a Strong and Healthy Portland

Summary Statement:

We are a group of community organizations in Portland, and these are our demands for the City during the COVID-19 outbreak. The City of Portland and Multnomah County need to protect the most vulnerable people in our community right now. This protection needs to meet the needs of communities across Portland without threat of being jailed, fined or criminalized in any other way.

There are people in immigrant detention centers, jails, and prisons; houseless people; workers who can't afford to not work; poor people; young people whose schools have closed; disabled people; people without health care; and people seeking medical care that could result in deportation or police involvement. Police already target these people, but with COVID-19, they are even more vulnerable to police violence and contracting the disease from police. People are having to make difficult choices for their own safety, as well as the safety of others as this virus spreads.

We demand the City provide real safety and care for everyone, without further risk of harm by the state. Other cities and counties have taken steps to protect their communities, like giving out emergency funding, freezing rent, and releasing people from prisons. For example, California is

moving towards housing people in hotels and motels. And, Washington County released 121 people from jail. Multnomah County should take these steps, too.

In crises, leaders are more likely to use police, surveillance, and prisons. The demands we list in the full statement (in the “Demands” section) will cost money, but they will protect us from worse crises. When all people’s basic needs (like housing, food, and community) are met, cities are safer and healthier for everyone.

We know public funding is available in the police and jail budgets, and we want our leaders to use this money to protect our community in the life-affirming ways we have listed in our demands. We know this crisis is preventable if the City of Portland and Multnomah County acts now.

Signed,

Care Not Cops
Critical Resistance Portland
Asians for Black Lives, Portland Chapter
Brown Girl Rise
Carceral Tech Resistance Network
CAREpdx
Cascade Abortion Support Collective
Community Alliance of Tenants
Democratic Socialists of America, Portland, OR Chapter
Decrim Oregon
Don’t Shoot PDX
Free Lunch Collective PDX
Glitter Squadron
National Lawyers Guild, Lewis & Clark Law School Chapter
Oregon DA for the People
Organizing Committee of the Growing Seeds Workers Union
PDX Childcare Collective
PDX Disability Justice Collective
Stop the Sweeps PDX
STROLL PDX
SURJ PDX Black Lives Matter Action Group