



SALEM NAVIGATION CENTER: PROVIDING SERVICES, STABILIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

DISCOVER HOW VACANT OFFICE SPACE CAN BE TRANSFORMED
INTO A LOW-BARRIER SHELTER SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

With the assistance of state, county and city funds, the City of Salem was able to convert a vacant office building into Marion County's first low-barrier navigation center to support the region's houseless population. This impactful project uses sustainable design strategies and trauma-informed design to create a model for transitional housing, also called navigation centers. A welcoming and efficient facility was created that's essential for vulnerable populations seeking a different, more effective way to transition from houselessness and start a new chapter in their lives.

Making early, cost-informed decisions with Energy Trust of Oregon

Energy Trust of Oregon worked together with the City of Salem on how their equipment and design choices could suit their budget needs and lower energy bills in the future. "Through those [Energy Trust outreach managers], we were able to get input on the available incentives that helped us inform design decisions

and offset higher upfront costs for appliances and equipment that are more energy efficient and ultimately will be less expensive to operate. So that was key to the success of maximizing the incentives and also offsetting the long-term energy costs and maintaining alignment with the City's sustainability goals."



The City's sustainability goals and occupant comfort were a key consideration in every design decision that we made.

—Luke Gmazel,
senior project manager
for the City of Salem

For a 75-bed facility that operates 24/7 and serves three meals a day, a modern, commercial-grade kitchen with essential appliances like an ice maker, dishwasher and hotbox for proper food storage were all vital to the continued success of the facility.



ENERGY TRUST INCENTIVES, SAVINGS AND SUPPORT

\$4,755

in Energy Trust of Oregon cash incentives

\$1,452

in estimated annual energy cost savings

4,928

annual kWh savings

675

annual Therm savings

+ Early design assistance



But for Gmazel, it's much more than a professional-grade commercial kitchen. "It just gives me an extreme sense of pride to have been a part of this project and to see the impact it's making for unsheltered folks in our community."

Re-envisioning the traditional shelter model

With guidance during the design process from local nonprofit social services provider, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA), the new facility now offers essential services and amenities that represent a dignified, innovative approach to supporting at-risk populations.

Low-barrier shelters are a lifeline for people who, for many reasons, can't gain immediate access to traditional shelters. Here, they are provided a stable bed and a secure place for their pets and possessions.

By using MWVCAA's guidance and trauma-informed design principles, this project incorporated a suite of key features that other communities can replicate, including:

- Access to computers and the internet to work on job searches
- A dog run and dog washing station
- Locked storage for personal items
- Individual and group counseling rooms for both current and past participants
- Intensive case management to connect people to public benefits, health services and a pathway to permanent housing

The positive impact of this facility on the at-risk population extends far beyond equipment and appliances. The cost and energy savings help the City of Salem continue its life-saving work, empowering people to change their lives and escape poverty with dignity and hope.



You really come as you are, and we are going to welcome you in that way, as long as your behavior is appropriate.

You're safe, you're warm, you're fed. You can put your things down, you can breathe, you can go to the doctor for the first time because no one's going to steal your stuff.

—Sara Webb,
program manager
with MWVCAA



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