

Oregon Department of Human Services
 Child Welfare Programs

Overview

We provide prevention, protection and regulatory programs for Oregon’s most vulnerable citizens – children and adults – keeping them safe and improving their quality of life. Prolonged economic stress is increasingly putting Oregon children, seniors and adults with disabilities in situations that are unsafe. These issues are disproportionately affecting communities of color contributing to their over-representation in both the child welfare and corrections systems. We know that the demand for state-funded services in the future is directly related to our ability to prevent and mitigate these traumas today.

Engaging Families

Our strategies depend on creating an environment that is safe for citizens who are most vulnerable based on family, social and economic issues. We focused our initiatives toward minimizing risk by transforming our interventions to better meet the challenges families are facing. This will enhance our ability to engage individuals who are less able to care for themselves, their families and communities. This creates a stronger continuum of efforts to prevent abuse and neglect, and efforts to hold perpetrators of that abuse and neglect accountable.

Our budget proposal seeks to ensure that Oregonians are safer in the future than they are today by focusing on strategies that have proven to result in the greatest reduction in overall risk. We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- A better array of interventions with community-based supports for families before, during and after involvement with the Child Welfare system, including strategies to safely and equitably reduce the number of children who experience foster care. This includes available services and supports so children are not at risk for re-entry into foster care and families can be stabilized.
- Improved services for children and families of color, targeting strategies to address issues such as overrepresentation in foster care, underrepresentation in family support and family preservation services, and potential disparities in decision-making.
- A clear focus on protective strategies for the most vulnerable citizens in care in Oregon, including children, the elderly and those with physical and developmental disabilities to keep them safe and healthy.

Funding Request – Strategic Initiatives

The Agency Request Budget in the Safety arena is projected to be \$478M general funds for the 13-15 biennium.

| DHS Safety PFT Total | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|----------|
| | GF | OF | FF | TF | Pos | FTE |
| LAB | 400,289,519 | 20,495,069 | 398,383,495 | 819,168,083 | 2,361 | 2,312.92 |
| ARB | 478,317,652 | 22,871,237 | 441,851,902 | 943,040,791 | 2,682 | 2,553.01 |
| Difference | 78,028,133 | 2,376,168 | 43,468,407 | 123,872,708 | 321 | 240.09 |
| Percent Change | 19.5% | 11.6% | 10.9% | 15.1% | 13.6% | 0.10 |

Oregon Department of Human Services
 Child Welfare Programs

Children and Families: Child Welfare services represent a continuum of supports with the ultimate goal of keeping children safe. Historically in Oregon that has equated with removal and placement into foster care. Based on research and feedback from children, youth and families who experience our system, our strategic efforts are refocusing the service continuum to ensure safety while also focusing on child well-being, family stability and, when possible, avoid removal and placement in foster care by supporting families safely parenting their children at home. Post adoption and guardianship support helps families bridge those difficult times as children move through childhood, again preventing them from returning to foster care.

These strategies include:

- 1 Differential Response - Changing our upfront intervention to more fully engage families building on their strengths and engage them in outcomes that remediate the issues that are challenging the family;
- 2 Programs that are designed to strengthen, preserve and reunify families involved in the child welfare system;
- 3 Focusing on addressing the disproportionality of children of color; and
- 4 Assisting more families in extreme poverty at risk of involvement with Child Welfare.

Program funding requests are intertwined in the Child Safety, Child Welfare Design and Delivery, Permanency Planning and Post-Adoption/Guardianship and Family Support and Connections Programs

| Child Welfare Investments/Reductions | Child Welfare - Safety Total | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------|
| | GF | OF | FF | TF | Pos | FTE |
| Fund 5% shift differential for additional Indian Child Welfare Act staff duties | 0.08 | 0.00 | 0.08 | 0.17 | | |
| Achieve better outcomes for native Americans by adding 25 dedicated staff | 2.25 | 0.00 | 1.31 | 3.56 | 25 | 18.75 |
| Staff CW at 80% workload to implement Diff Resp and OR Safety Model | 23.64 | 2.65 | 13.90 | 40.19 | 281 | 205.69 |
| Restore Post Adoption Program to 11-13 levels - replace one time funds | 0.11 | 0.00 | 0.33 | 0.43 | | |

| Self Sufficiency Investments/Reductions | Family Support and Connections | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | GF | OF | FF | TF |
| Add Family Support and Connections services to 4,400 more families | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 |

Differential Response Traditional child welfare services assume a single approach to protecting a child through investigations: an allegation occurs, and we investigate and decide if maltreatment occurred. This approach is very effective with some families. However, for families that are experiencing neglect, the children enter care at a higher rate than other forms of abuse and stay longer, suggesting the need for a different approach with these families. Based on our data showing nearly 60 percent of children are involved with child welfare as a result of neglect (as opposed to physical and sexual abuse) our budget proposes adding an alternative approach to child protection, known as “Differential Response.” This approach would allow state workers to conduct a family assessment, gauge the needs and strengths of the family and engage them and community partners in outcomes that keep the family together, benefitting the family as a whole. This alternative approach would not replace investigations or assistance when there is imminent danger or

Oregon Department of Human Services Child Welfare Programs

significant safety risk. However, in other states this approach has safely reduced costly foster placements and the associated trauma on the child and families. To succeed and minimize risk of harm to children already identified as having experienced abuse/neglect, this service delivery innovation depends both on investment in culturally specific community-based services, as well as investment in adequate child welfare staffing focused on serving more children safely in their own homes.

The proposed staffing investment will bring the Child Welfare program to nearly 80 percent of the workload model by the end of the 2013-15 biennium, assuming all positions are filled. These staff are critical to the integrity of the Oregon Safety model; our intervention model for safety assessments and safety management. This staffing investment is necessary even without a differential response model so that we can most adequately handle the caseloads. However, if we are provided the combination of staffing, in-home and Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Family Program funding, and implement a differential response model, we will be able to make significant progress in preventing and/or delaying children from entering care, reducing the length of stay for those in and providing culturally appropriate, family based services in community settings.

Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families Programs In 2011, the Oregon Legislature recognized and codified this performance-based approach developing a community-based, programs and services for children and families involved in the child welfare system. This effort compliments the work of the Coordinated Care Organizations and the future work of the Early Learning Council hubs, targeting children and families involved in the child welfare system. Local collaborations of interested stakeholders determine community strengths and service gaps and request funding targeted to specific outcomes focusing on keeping children safe and families together. These programs are an essential compliment to the implementation of Differential Response and supporting children being safely parented at homes. Implementation of this approach and investment in a more comprehensive service continuum has begun in seven counties. This budget would allow us to work with communities and other local agencies to establish these programs statewide.

Indian Child Welfare Act Native American children are currently over-represented in Oregon's child welfare system. Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act is a federal mandate. However, the Act is complex and requires a higher level of expertise and effort than cases involving non-Tribal children. This proposal, a five-percent pay differential for our Tribal Liaisons, would enhance Oregon's relationships with Tribal governments and ability to work with Tribal children and families to reduce disparities and improve compliance with the Act. Because of the increased efforts the Act requires, we also propose adding staff across the state and in targeted areas to manage caseloads.

The Family Support and Connections Program (Note: this program is in the Self Sufficiency Budget) More than 35 percent of children in foster care were receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) supports within two months of coming into care. This budget proposes an investment in this program to enhance family stability and child well-being for families in extreme poverty receiving funds through TANF, thereby reducing the likelihood that those children are abused or neglected and come into foster care. We served 7,336 families during the 2009-2011

Oregon Department of Human Services
 Child Welfare Programs

biennium – half the estimated need in this program area. Enhancing program resources would allow us to help serve an additional 4,408 families with risk factors shown to lead to child abuse and neglect further reducing the reliance on state funded programs.

Safety for Vulnerable Adults and Children Across Service Settings: We provide an additional layer of safety through our Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations for non-criminal incidents of abuse, but those that threaten the health, safety and welfare of Oregonians in care and, in the case of vulnerable adults, in communities.

| OAAPI Investments/Reductions | Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations | | | | | |
|--|---|------|------|------|-----|------|
| | GF | OF | FF | TF | Pos | FTE |
| Add Adult Protective Service staff to be more responsive to reports of abuse | 0.55 | 0.09 | 0.63 | 1.26 | 7 | 6.16 |

This budget proposes to strengthen the quality of our response to reports of abuse and neglect and enhance capacity to prevent abuse through additional staff capacity. Our proposal targets efforts that ultimately will reduce both the human and financial cost of abuse against vulnerable adults and children served in residential settings, allowing for reinvestment in proactive, proven strategies of abuse prevention. These prevention efforts depend on strong partnerships with consumers, providers, stakeholders and community partners.

Licensed care facilities: The most vulnerable citizens in care in Oregon, including children, the elderly and those with physical and developmental disabilities comprise the 50,000 people who reside in 5000 licensed care facilities in Oregon. Through our regulatory activities, we provide an environment of safety for residents through initial licensure, regularly scheduled state and federally mandated surveys/site reviews, and through corrective action processes.

| OLRO Investments/Reductions | Office of Licensing and Regulatory Oversight | | | | | |
|---|--|------|------|------|-----|------|
| | GF | OF | FF | TF | Pos | FTE |
| Add DHS licensing staff to adjust to increasing workloads | 0.62 | 0.00 | 0.62 | 1.23 | 7 | 6.16 |

Currently, Oregon is not meeting our performance targets in this area. This budget proposes to increase staff capacity allowing the Department to meet requirements set by federal regulation and state law. This investment is critical to Oregon’s ability to avoid negative financial consequences in other state and federally funded services, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Conclusion

We want to break the cycle that causes harm to individuals and drives Oregonians into expensive state-sponsored programs. Our strategies focus on helping ensure that Oregonians are safer in the future than they are today by increasing resources proven to result in the greatest reduction in overall risk. Though those strategies require some upfront, taxpayer investment, we are committed to being accountable for needed service delivery innovations and performance metrics focused on improvements in the lives of those we serve and long-term reductions in the demand for state services. We know that abuse and neglect will never totally be eliminated, but we believe that Oregon should be a place where our children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are safe, and we believe our budget proposal will improve the state’s ability to work with individuals and communities to achieve that goal, while reducing the demand for costly state services in the future.