



Department of Human Services

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2013-15 Agency Request Budget: Director's Letter

Department of Human Services

Erinn Kelley-Siel, Director

The mission of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve safety, well-being and independence through services that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity. DHS is responsible for the care of some of Oregon's most vulnerable citizens – children, families, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and seniors. DHS is also responsible for serving Oregonians at times when they are most in need – when they have experienced abuse, when they are hungry, when they are homeless.

The Department's ability to achieve its mission and carry out that responsibility has been significantly affected by several biennia of program reductions and the unprecedented increase in demand for services during the economic recession. Even so, agency employees and partners have redoubled their efforts to provide excellent customer service and maximize outcomes with the resources available.

The results of those efforts are evident in the following data:

- A 41percent increase in the number of abused/neglected children who are served safely at home with their parents and avoid the trauma of foster care;
- Nearly 12,000 vulnerable adults (seniors, people with disabilities) protected over the course of one year;
- Wait-time for food stamp benefits going from nine days to same day/next day service for more than 90percent of the nearly 820,000 Oregonians served;
- A total of 1,671 seniors choosing to transition from nursing facility care to in-home and community-based settings;
- 67percent of children and adults with developmental disabilities served in their own homes; and
- 11,064 people with disabilities and low-income parents going to work.

Proud of those accomplishments, but recognizing that the challenges of today demand a transformative, proactive approach to the ongoing and future delivery of human services, the Department is proposing a 2013-15 budget guided by the following principles:

- Focus on the needs of customers and communities, not on individual programs.

“Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe”

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- Invest upfront to prevent the need for crises and higher cost services. Where possible, target investments to supports that will promote independence and avoid, delay or reduce the need for services.
- Transform service delivery models to address current gaps, anticipate future needs and to repurpose the time of people delivering services to allow for more time serving people and less time on paperwork and process.

To that end, in this budget request DHS is presenting requests centered on the following major initiatives:

Long-Term Care 3.0. Oregon's senior population is projected to grow from 502,000 to 950,000 by 2030. While we prepare for this growth, we know what we must do more to prevent entry into publicly-funded long term care, address current system gaps and to ensure the long term financial sustainability of our Medicaid long term care system. We have prepared a strategic budget with accompanying legislative concepts to focus on system evolution that will maximize results and resources for long term care services and ensure joint accountability with Coordinated Care Organizations health outcomes.

Sustainable Programs and Services for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Oregon is one of only three states that have no state or privately operated institutional level services specifically for people with developmental disabilities. To maintain its high levels of customer satisfaction, to further advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in their communities, and to serve the increasing number of people with developmental disabilities requesting services, the system has an urgent need to continue its evolution in a fiscally sustainable manner. To that end, we have prepared a strategic budget designed to further improve the customer experience, advance efficiencies and maximize resources.

Safely and Equitably Reducing Foster Care. The cost of abuse and neglect – to children, to families, and to the state – is significant. The agency's budget targets resources across programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, and transform the State's ability to respond to families in distress and at risk of entering the child welfare system. For vulnerable children and their families, these proposals will also strengthen health and education outcomes as the system innovations depend in part on local communities partnering in new ways with Child Welfare and on locally driven decisions about filling service gaps that are specific to the needs of abused/neglected children and families.

Safety for Vulnerable Adults in Communities and in Licensed Care Settings. Abuse of the elderly and people with physical, mental and developmental disabilities also has significant human and financial consequences. This budget proposes to strengthen the quality of our response to reports of abuse and neglect and to enhance the State's capacity to prevent abuse in the first place. These prevention efforts depend on strong partnerships with consumers, providers, stakeholders and community partners. The Department's proposal will also ensure compliance with state and federal mandates designed to ensure the safety and health of Oregonians in licensed care settings.

Employment and Family Stability. Oregonians access DHS services when they have significant financial needs and can't meet their most basic human needs – food, shelter, and safety for their families – on their own. Given their purpose, it is no surprise that the economic recession triggered a dramatic increase in demand for these services from Oregonians. At the same time, investment in DHS workforce programs was reduced and capacity to address high unemployment levels for people with disabilities has been minimal. Targeting increased employment outcomes across programs within the Department, the agency's proposed budgets focuses on strengthening programs that support job skill development and increase employment outcomes for low-income families and on strategies to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all types. The budget also includes a focus on the “Modernization” of the DHS service delivery model, designed to create capacity for enhanced family and person-centered approaches that will maximize results for all DHS clients.

School Readiness for Young Children and Job Retention for Low-Income Working Families. The Employment Related Day Care program helps very low-income working families from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds arrange and pay for quality child care. Quality child care nurtures a child's learning and development so the child is better prepared to succeed in school. The Department's proposed budget expands opportunities for low-income parents to access child care subsidies and strengthens training for providers in support of positive child development.

Conclusion.

Recognizing that there will be difficult choices to make in the 2013-15 biennium, the Department appreciates this opportunity to propose a budget that seeks to break through traditional barriers and build capacity through outcome-oriented models and person-centered approaches. As discussions continue about what services Oregon can afford in these difficult times, DHS will maintain its commitment to innovation and transparency, prioritizing improvements that will use scarce resources efficiently and effectively. DHS's success in that effort depends upon nearly 7500 employees across the state, as well as upon thousands of community and service delivery partners, all of whom are dedicated to supporting and improving the lives of Oregonians.

Every year, more than one-million people rely on DHS services to meet their most basic needs, to be safe, to live as independently as possible, and to support their efforts to achieve economic independence.

It is on behalf of those Oregonians that I respectfully submit this DHS Budget.



Erinn Kelley-Siel
Director