

ODHS Budget Requests | 2022 Legislative Session

Agency Priorities

Human services provide key supports for people at every stage of life. From child safety to cash assistance for young families to homes and meals for older adults, these supports are the brick and mortar in the work of building communities' well-being. As with any building effort, the journey from brick and mortar to solid structure requires a team of capable craftspeople and the right set of tools.

During the 2022 legislative session, Oregon Department of Human Services is requesting the staffing and operational support necessary to strengthen our foundations, respond to emergencies, and build the future of human services in Oregon.

Strengthening our Foundations

- **Building Local Equity Infrastructure | \$24 million** – This investment will bring equity coordinators to ODHS districts and regions around the state, where they will help the agency's thousands of field employees gain the skills necessary to provide culturally responsive services to their communities. Encompassing needs assessment, employee training, communications, data collection, and reporting, the new positions will allow ODHS to tailor its equity work to each local context, improving service delivery to and increasing access by members of Oregon's Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, LGBTQIA2S+, disability, and rural communities.
- **Community Engagement | \$14.7 million** – Covering all five ODHS program areas, this investment will support the staffing and operational resources needed to launch a statewide community engagement strategy that's co-created with the communities we serve and ensures the alignment of our services to community goals. The effort will support greater participation in decision making by community-based leaders; provide grants to organizations addressing racial, gender, disability, and other disparities in the delivery of human services; and expand the ODHS Tribal Affairs program to support the engagement of the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribes across the agency's programs.

- **Eligibility Staffing | \$26.9 million** – Nine months ago, ODHS and Oregon Health Authority launched the ONE Eligibility system, an effort to increase equitable access to medical, cash, food, and childcare benefits. The streamlined system has allowed us to serve more people than ever before and has been a crucial element of the state’s pandemic response. Now, we must invest in the staffing necessary to handle the state’s growing eligibility needs and ensure that Oregonians continue to get the help they need.
- **Child Welfare Staffing | \$15.9 million** – In the Child Welfare field, growth in caseloads triggers proportional increases in staffing thanks to a workload model. However, no such model exists for Child Welfare central operations, leaving gaps in the central coaching, consultation, and guidance capacity needed to support field operations. In 2021, Senate Bill 5529 established a \$15.9 million special purpose appropriation (SPA) to assist Child Welfare in remedying ongoing staffing shortages and resolving double-filled positions. Since that time, Child Welfare has significantly reduced position vacancies and non-budgeted positions. Now, the program requests the release of the SPA funds and the position authority needed to continue this progress.
- **Supporting Service Providers | \$6.8 million** – ODHS is working closely with the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) to strengthen systems of care that support Oregon children and families, including the state’s Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) program. Made up of contractors and providers around the state, the BRS program provides a range of evidence-based supports to clients who are experiencing debilitating psychosocial, emotional, and behavioral disorders. During the 2022 legislative session and as part of an \$11.9 million joint request with OYA, ODHS is requesting permission from the legislature to self-fund three initiatives, namely supplemental funding for BRS providers navigating COVID-19 outbreaks and quarantines, rate increases for providers to support capacity during and immediately after emergencies, and provider rate differentials that are on par with those that ODHS Office of Developmental Disabilities Services offers to its BRS providers.

Responding to Emergencies

- **Mass Care and Disaster Food, Water, and Shelter | \$38.2 million** – ODHS is requesting funding for the staff positions and equipment necessary to

coordinate emergency management responsibilities as required by statute. This investment will fund Oregon's mass care, disaster food and water, and disaster social services, allowing ODHS to effectively coordinate feeding, shelter, first aid, and other emergency assistance in partnership with local and Tribal governments and community-based organizations.

Building the Future

- **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) | \$27.6 million** – ODHS is requesting a combination of General Fund support and TANF Federal Funds limitation to improve existing supports for TANF-eligible families. The funding will activate solutions that are proven to create better outcomes for people, including increased cash supports, culturally responsive services, and an end to TANF disqualifications that revoke cash assistance from entire families.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation | \$3.6 million** – ODHS is requesting permission to use existing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program resources to increase rates for VR-contracted vendors, which would bring the program's rates into parity with those offered by ODHS's Office of Developmental Disabilities Services. VR is also requesting position authority for four new regional workforce and business coordinators who will strengthen partnerships with local businesses, increase access to services by members of rural communities, and support workforce and business recovery by connecting Oregonians with disabilities to businesses that are hiring.
- **Strengthening home- and community-based services | \$435.6 million** – ODHS Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) and Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) are jointly requesting position authority and increased federal funds limitation to continue their efforts to enhance Medicaid home- and community-based services as required by the American Rescue Plan Act.

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