



Briefing for Partners and External Stakeholders

Topic: Governor's Recommended Budget for ODHS for 2021-23 Biennium

December 11, 2020

Liesl Wendt: Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you for taking some time to join us today. My name is Liesl Wendt. I'm the deputy director of the Oregon Department of Human Services. Given our virtual space, I just wanted to note all of our presenters are wearing mask as we adapted to this new environment that we're in.

Our objectives for today include providing updates to all of you regarding an important milestone in the budget development process, a high-level overview of the Governor's Recommended Budget, and all the next steps in the budget and legislative process for 2021.

Before I review the agenda and introduce our director, I wanted to reflect on the value of human services particularly at the close of 2020.

All of you are here today because you probably understand this better than most. Over the last year it's been clear how essential services are to Oregonians. They are an integral public structure and foundational to building community resiliency.

As you hear about the investments in the Governor's Recommended Budget, the pandemic has shown us it takes a community to support the livelihood and safety of Oregonians. This year we learned many new things.

We learned our partnership with other state agencies, our partnerships with all of you, we learn we can adapt, and flex more than we thought we could. We need to make more explicit our racial equity and we learned again we cannot do this work alone.

Today, as we reflect and share information, we're inviting you to do this with us. As we move through this moment of crises, we lift up our shared values and use them as a guide for what comes next. Over the next hour Fariborz will provide an overview of the



Governor's Recommended Budget and I will share the agency's equity investment and introduce Dion Jordan, Office of Equity and Multicultural Services, with some of the proposals in the Governor's Recommended Budget. And we're going to take questions in the middle of our presentations and open it up for a brief question and answer period and then Fariborz will do a deeper dive and we'll end with questions and answers at the end of our time together.

Couple of housekeeping things before I turn it over to Fariborz. You can send questions and if we aren't able to answer your questions during our time together, we will answer them and post the responses next week. And with that, I will turn this over to Fariborz.

Fariborz Pakseresht: Thank you Liesl, and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for being with us. I want to talk a bit about the Governor's Recommended Budget. And you may already know that the way that this budget was constructed, it was partly shaped by our collective experiences in 2020, a year unlike what a majority of us have experienced: Oregonians and our economy, historic wildfire caused damages to property, and Oregonians protest for racial justice. African-American Oregonians, our Tribal population, our Latinx and Pacific Islanders, these populations were exposed to COVID-19 than a higher rate of white Oregonians.

For the 21-23 biennium, the Governor's Recommended Budget proposes significant investments in housing, a safe place to call home, facilities, access to health care, child care, I'm sorry -- facilitates access to health care, child care for working parents K-12 schools, and COVID-19 relief resources, provided equity and education and our environment.

It highlights the need for dismantling the structures of racism in our systems, structures, and programs with the goal of an inclusive state that works for everyone.

It supports businesses and workers. The budget proposes to reform the criminal justice system. I now turn it back to Liesl so she can highlight our equity investments in Oregon Department of Human Services aligned with the equity focus that we all can



see in the Governor's Recommended Budget.

Liesl Wendt: Thanks, Fariborz. As you heard, the Governor's Recommended Budget that we shared with you earlier this year, lays the track for a recovery as well as build well-being from the ground up by prioritizing the foundation role of human services.

So I wanted to highlight a policy on that package to increase our capacity to prioritize equity work, increase capacity to Office of Equity and Multicultural Services. Dion will talk about that and revitalizing our communication to build trust with communities.

As we shared before, we call ourselves the Oregon Department of Human Services and changed our acronym to ODHS to break down barriers for groups that didn't feel welcome with our previous name.

Concurrent with the agency change, we'll rebrand the Oregon Trail Card, the mechanism used for families to access food and cash benefits. The card, in its current form, lacks respect to Tribal nations and their history. We will be convening all of you partners and stakeholders to create equity.

Developmental Disabilities Services had a need to increase language access for the people that they serve. Right now translation supports are tied to very specific services and the program would like to serve all clients in a more culturally responsive fashion.

There are two other equity focused investments outside of package I want to highlight before I turn it over to Dion. The first is a 10 million dollars investment in our Self-Sufficiency Program. The investment prioritizes increases supports and services for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors through Tribes and culturally specific providers and provide investment funds throughout the state.

Finally, the Governor invested two million dollars to make permanent a 2019 investment experience extended case management employment supports and other supports available to refugees and visa holders who have arrived since 2016.



I would like to introduce Dion Jordan with the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services. So with that, Dion, take it away.

Dion Jordan: Thank you. Excited to be here and share a little bit about the opportunities that are now coming up. One of them is we're now able to expand our team and to reach the needs of our agency as well as our community.

The bigger ask around equity. One of the things we're able to bring in are service equity managers. Our service equity managers work with our programs and their supports. They're the resources consultants and help them to be able to offer the services that eventually reach that community. And so all of our programs will now have the opportunity to have their own service equity manager.

Also, it allows us to have the opportunity to have somebody full time really look at our REAL-D data. Speaking of REAL-D means race ethnicity and disability. We're not just looking at the numbers but taking under consideration the narratives that go with that.

Something else it allows us to do is partner with your community outreach programs, build the councils and the committees to really do our best to center those voices so we might have the opportunity to hear what the greatest need is. It's been very useful up to this point.

The community helps us in our integration of our ONE system as well as brought up some great new perspectives around language and accessibility. And so we really rely on the community for that and this new POP allows us to have these new opportunities.

I think we open it up for questions if I'm not mistaken.

Liesl Wendt: Great. Thanks, Dion. Christy, any questions so far?



Christy Sinatra: Yes. Does the ODHS equity POP include any enhancements for the deaf and hard of hearing population?

Dion Jordan: Yes. I will just speak. I think with our REAL-D that's going to help that a lot and allow us to see where we missed the mark especially in that area and with our service equity managers it allows us to have the opportunity to not just work inside our program but work within community as well.

Christy Sinatra: One more question. Can you explain the role of the service equity managers within program divisions with some examples and a little detail?

Dion Jordan: Sure. So I will admit it may look different in different programs depending on what the need is. And some of our service equity managers look at policy that's taken place and put an equity lens on some of the policy and practices that are taking place. Also help lead, if not participate, in their equity councils that -- and equity teams within programs. And really be that liaison between our office and the program themselves.

So we tried to make our office a hub of resources so each program will have that connection just so we can make sure we're aligning all of our work is not duplicating work where we don't need to, and lead us closer to our equity north star.

Christy Sinatra: Great. Thank you. Another question: will the equity -- would the equity Policy Option Package bring more language access?

Liesl Wendt: I just want to follow-up on the deaf and hard of hearing request. There was a specific POP that was included in the agency, in the ARB, that was not included in the GRB, so we will be focusing as Dion said. I just wanted to be clear that is not at this time included in the Governor's budget. The POP we were researching before will enhance language access particularly for developmental disabilities but agency wide as Dion indicated.

Christy Sinatra: Next question: does equity within ODHS consider age discrimination?



Dion Jordan: Yeah. Yes. So I think the first answer is the correct answer. Which is yes, we do. I'm trying to think of some specific examples of where that comes up. While I'm thinking, I don't know if program has an example within their program.

Christy Sinatra: I believe the question is related to in our definition of an equitable environment. Does it address age as well as -- Let's move to the next question. Will equity specific funding sources include training opportunities for child caring agencies?

Dion Jordan: Yes. So we are working on our training. Much of our training is internal that we hope will filter out into our community. I believe the programs might do a better job in speaking to how their program might be available, but it's part of our overall initial within our Office of Equity and Multicultural Services.

Christy Sinatra: Thank you, Dion. Next question: how does the REAL-D look for people with disabilities fitting into the equity intersectionality or would that be part of this POP at all? And it might be helpful to have a quick definition what we mean by REAL-D.

Dion Jordan: Sure. So when speaking of REAL-D, we're trying to look at race, we're looking at ethnicity and language, and we're also trying to look at disabilities. And can you repeat the second or the first part?

Christy Sinatra: The second part of the question: how does REAL-D look for people with disabilities in terms of fitting into the equity and intersectionality effort or is that not part of the equity POP for the new biennium?

Dion Jordan: Yeah. If I believe I'm hearing your question correctly, it definitely does play a role in it. I think the example I tried to give earlier is how REAL-D was able to really help us pinpoint what we were falling short around language and disability. I believe one of our recs are in the process now of rewriting policy that clearly stated we missed the mark in that area in the past. And community engagement are the ones who brought it to the rec's attention for us to make those changes.



So definitely on our agenda, but as far as the future piece that you speak of, I'm not quite as enlightened on.

Liesl Wendt: Thank you, Dion. And I think the opportunity by investing on additional staff is to shine a light on what we're doing now, how do we know where those gaps are. So we're very much looking forward to building our muscle in this area and hopeful serving all Oregonians better in ways that best meet their needs in the future.

I think questions, we don't have any more questions. This is a tough environment. If you would like to clarify, please notify Christy. I'm going to turn it back over to Fariborz who is going to do a deeper dive into the Governor's Recommended Budget.

Fariborz Pakseresht: Thank you, Liesl. When we look at the budget it really is a very positive budget for Oregon Department of Human Services considering a few months ago. As we were engaged in the process of working on our next biennium budget, we were actively involved in a three to five percent reduction on the budget at the time.

And I think we had a couple of really positive revenue forecasts, and the future seems to be looking better; although, there are some risks that I will get to in just a few moments.

When you compare the Governor's Recommended Budget, it is several million dollars under that budget, which is phenomenal. It maintains the benefit standards for safety net programs. For example, for the SNAP program, which is a Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as food stamps.

The budget, as I said, does make some assumptions and I will talk about those briefly in just a few moments.

The new investments that has been proposed in this, in Oregon Department of Human Services, I want to highlight the main investments. These are not the entire list of investments, but I will go program by program and let you know what you can expect in



these programs.

With Aging and People with Disabilities, the Governor's budget makes significant investments to protect Oregonians living in long-term care facilities from COVID-19 and that includes funding six new positions to focus on infectious control and prevention to the tune of about 1.2 million dollars.

Training and apprenticeship programs for Certified Nursing Assistants, virtual businesses and technological support for in-home consumers, and with consumers in facilities and those investments are one half million dollars and one million dollars respectively. The budget preserves eligibility in all of the APD programs.

And last but not least, expanded Oregon Project Independence due to the expansion of the 1115 waiver. It is important to know that this came about as a result of the conversation that we had during our presentation at the last legislative session and interest by some of the legislators who approached the federal government to see if they would provide federal funding, which currently Oregon Project Independence is all General Fund.

Perhaps we have a long path on that, but it is a very successful program, it is a unique program, and we're hopeful. So we will go down that path and see what happens.

Child Welfare received some of the most significant investments in the Governor's Recommended Budget. Workforce development and increased retention and recruit of the staff which historically has been an issue in Child Welfare. That investment is nearly a million dollars. It funds the family preservation services for families that are at high risk and services can connect the community to programs at the community level and community based resources that can support these families so that they would not need a higher level of child welfare intervention. That investment is about 4.6 million dollars.

The GRB also funds respite care for foster or resource families and adds respite resources behavioral residential services programs to two different funding models. It



could be through the Child Welfare program or funded through the Community Care Organizations and has an investment that is almost 19 and a half million dollars.

The budget also funds some non-budget positions that are critical for Child Welfare operations and services. That investment is nearly 11 million dollars. It is important to note that these investments in the Governor's Recommended Budget all of these are in accordance with the organization the Governor brought in to help Child Welfare improve, executive order 19-03. So they followed those recommendations what Oregon needs to do to achieve better outcomes.

In Developmental Disabilities Services the Governor's Recommended Budget protects current eligibility and services for individuals in need of intellectual and developmental disabilities services. It includes funding to provide greater language access for ODDS services. That's actually a Policy Option Package and it invest just over 34 million dollars to transition from the old structure to the new service groups based on Oregon Needs Assessment.

And the model plan is also a Policy Option Package and it basically brings up the average hourly wages to \$14.24 an hour. Again, that's a fairly low wage for really it is the type of work these staff put their heart a soul into.

These are different jobs and this is a necessary pop option package to keep this population at least just barely above the minimum wage and hopefully there will be future investments in that as well as more resources become available.

Self-Sufficiency Programs for (domestic violence) survivors. That's a 10 million dollars investment and refugee and employment services for this population. That actually would be a contract and it is a two million dollars investment.

In Vocational Rehabilitation it is maintaining the service levels. In the central office of VR (invests in) service equities and inclusion to take care of those issues within the agency and in connection with our communities of color across Oregon.



We did have some reductions in August you may remember during the rebalance. Some of those reductions were not restored in the 22-23 budget.

So there are, as I said, some risks in the budget. There are some assumptions I think we need to be aware of. There is an assumption that the F-map increase federal and Medicaid percentage that had been granted to Oregon and all the other states as a result of this pandemic will continue through the third quarter of 2021. That is an assumption. We keep our fingers crossed that will happen. If it does not, it will take 50 million dollars out of this budget.

When we look at the back-breaking costs of the Oregon wildfire and continued expenses related to COVID-19, we don't know where the money at this point is coming from to pay for those things. And if we are not getting another package from the federal government that will cover some of these costs, all of those additional costs will have to come from the budget.

We also don't know; although, there is great hope on the horizon with the COVID-19 vaccines, we don't know what the end of this pandemic will be. There is some speculation that perhaps by June or July we will have every Oregonian who would like and prefers to get the vaccine can get it. But again there is an uncertain future ahead, and we still have six and a half months to get to that time frame.

What will happen to the economy, seeing a rise of COVID in the past few weeks, numbers we have not seen before both in cases and fatalities and in the economy and perhaps another future reduction. All of those things are variables that we are not necessarily clear about as to what impact that would be.

The other thing to keep in mind is that the Governor's Recommended Budget is part of the budget building process. It is a long process, and we are just about midway through the process. You may remember that we started with the Agency Request Budget. It went then to the department of administrative services. The analyst there looked at the budget. We had to engage in a ten percent mandatory reduction



exercise.

Great news. We did not - at least in the Governor's Recommended Budget, the reduction to ODHS programs are under one percent. We have all of the hearings. The stakeholders will have a change to speak with the legislators. The lobbyist will do their work and they will have their eyes on the future revenue forecast.

All of those things will ultimately inform the decision of the legislature to come up with a Legislative Approved Budget that, if the Governor signs that budget, it becomes our future budget for 2021-23. So that's basically what's in front of us.

I think, in light of everything that has happened, we are grateful that the Governor's Recommended Budget has made the investments it has made in Oregon Department of Human Services.

There was a question earlier about the deaf and hard of hearing investment not included in the POP. I just want to put it on the record even though it is not included in that POP we are committed to making that investment happen. The Governor's supportive of that. It will either be managed through the legislative session or it will be managed within the Department of Human Services. We have announced that and it will happen. I just want to put that on the record.

When we talk about racial equity, and Dion is very intentional about that, he always expresses that this is basically leading with race meaning race is not only element of our equity, particularly our people with disabilities.

And when talk about equity, and you know my hope is that at some point in the future Dion can talk about our Equity North Star when at the end of that road is everyone regardless of our differences will be getting equal opportunities to participate and to experience well-being. That's our intent in this organization whenever we talk about equity. We talk about that with the future version of unity. Equity is intended to bring us together, not to separate us.



So with that, i will turn it over back to Liesl to see if there are any questions and we will be glad to answer your questions. I believe that also Eric Moore, our chief financial officer, is also with us and if we get deep within the budget he can chime in and answer your questions.

Again thank you so much. We're ready to answer any questions you might have. Christy or Liesl?

Christy Sinatra: Thanks, Fariborz. I think we have a question or two. Eric, this may be a question for you. If F-Map is not extended, will it be a 15 million or 50-million-dollar potential shortfall?

Eric Moore: Fifty, 50 million dollars.

Christy Sinatra: And Eric, just for our stakeholder audience, F-MAP?

Eric Moore: Federal Medicaid. It is the match rate we get for Medicaid services. I always forget the acronym. For every dollar that's spent the feds put in 62 percent and the state 32 percent of the dollar, under normal circumstances. Through, the pandemic we gotten 6.2 percent of F-Map which has led to the savings that was removed from the budget at the last session.

Christy Sinatra: Great. Thank you. We have another one. The Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program. The question is around P-EBT benefits for people with school age children. Do we know if there will be another round of the P-EBT benefits coming yet?

Liesl Wendt: Eric or Fariborz?

Fariborz Pakseresht: I'm not aware any additional P-EBT has been approved but, Eric, you can add to that answer.

Eric Moore: my understanding it has been approved through December and we have



not gotten word about January as of yet.

Christy Sinatra: We have one more question. This question is related to Personal Support Workers. Many Personal Support Workers are becoming overwhelmed without support to care for their children. Is DHS considering allowing parents to qualify as PSWs for their own children?

Liesl Wendt: Fariborz, I'm going to kick that to you.

Fariborz Pakseresht: I'm not aware that is under consideration right now. But clearly, we will take a note of that and look into that and we can provide an update at the next stakeholder's meeting or if the questioner would like to contact us directly, we will be glad to answer that question. Right now I'm not aware of consideration around that.

Liesl Wendt: Some of our programs are holding their own stakeholder meetings so Aging and People with Disabilities, their stakeholder meeting is Wednesday, December 16th, 10 to 11: 30. And Christy, can put that information in the chat. Our Self-Sufficiency Program has a conference call January of 2021.

And I think Eric you need to mute. I think Eric is multitasking and listening. The life of a CFO at the Oregon Department of Human Services. Thank you. And a couple of other dates I just want to flag. We hold another briefing January 13th. Again 2021. 9 to 10 a.m. This will be an opportunity for us to preview some of our framework for the next session. So please join us then.

On the slide deck that you have a list of some resources that are available on our website. Communications has done a great job keeping our COVID-19 resources up to date. So you can see those there in addition to other community-based resources.

Another resource we shared before and I invite you to share it is a "need food" website where we tried to compile food related resources available both in response to COVID-19, the economic crisis, and some of the fire related response information. So please check out those resources and share liberally with your networks.



And I think we have another question.

Christy Sinatra: Yes. This comment is regarding the investment in wages for direct support professionals supporting the I/DD population. Will there be a continued effort to raise that wage?

Liesl Wendt: I will let Fariborz.

Fariborz Pakseresht: Sure. We are always looking to keep - whether it is our own employees or employees that are working perhaps not officially as state employees but still connected to us, they are serving our population, Home Care Workers, and Personal Support Workers. We're continually looking at their wages and we'll do everything that we can to keep those wages at least above the minimum wage.

You know, as I said earlier the Personal Support Workers, the Home Care Workers, do very difficult jobs. They provide valuable services. They put their heart and soul into these jobs and the realities of the budget is basically based on what is available.

So you know, I'm still holding hope we're going to see a package specifically focused on state and federal government because that will allow us to have a bit more flexibility whenever there are opportunities to provide 14 dollars and you know, 40 or 50 cents an hour or not, wages that, you know, are not going to make anybody financially independent. It takes much more than that.

And we -- the Governor's interested in that. We're interested in that, but the budget reality drives some of the decisions that are being made. Short answer, yes there is always attention on what we can do to improve well-being of all of our Personal Support Workers and, you know, we'll keep that focus as we move through this budget building process.

Liesl Wendt: Great. Thank you. Couple other dates I just want to flag while we give you a last-minute chance to type in additional questions.



The Senate held legislative days earlier this week. You can watch December 8th Human Services. There was children programs and vaccines and Child Welfare updates. So Christy will share that if you would like to watch that.

Next week the House is holding legislative days 15th through the 18th. You can tune in on the 18th. We'll have a number of presentations there as well. Rebecca Jones Gaston will present. And we'll be talking about how the agency responded to current economic challenges.

We'll do a joint presentation with our partners on our wildfire response and share the impact of COVID-19 on foster parents and the 21 Legislative concepts we hit on lightly today, so join then if you are available.

And to flag, the first day of the session is January 19th just to mark that date on your calendars. And, Christy, any more questions? Okay. Fariborz, if you would like to do a closing?

Fariborz Pakseresht: Thank you, Liesl. And thank you everybody for joining us. We have been through quite a year in 2020. As Liesl mentioned in her opening comments, one of the things we noticed along the path of 2020, whether it was COVID or the wildfire, was the generosity of people. How many people stood up to help others walk through this.

We hope that 2021 will bring a better future for all of us. We will put that learning into how we can better serve the over a million Oregonians that we serve in conjunction with our partner agency, Oregon Health Authority.

In this process we also figured out how many points of connection exist. It is not that we didn't know this, but this has really highlighted that between Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Human Services. We serve some of the very same population.



And as we all know, public health factors in a major way in well-being of children and families in fact if you look in the Governor's Recommended Budget you see investments in systems of care in some of the early intervention programs and all of those factors to successful trajectory for children and families.

At the next stakeholder meeting or the following one we'll share our priorities and what we accomplished during this 2020 even with everything that we have been through.

Also, we'll share with you the work that we are doing with our partners from American Public Human Services Association who are helping us better align ourselves so we can serve our communities.

Again, as Liesl and Dion mentioned, we are intentional about connection with our communities, communities of color, and those are happening on a regular basis. And we will report on those as well.

All in all I think, despite everything that happened in 2020, we have a lot to be grateful for. And last but not least, we are grateful for all of you, all of you stakeholder partners, supporters, providers who are with us every step the way. We cannot do this work by ourselves. It takes a community and you are our community. Thank you. Have a great holidays and we'll talk with you again next year.

Liesl Wendt: Thank you, Fariborz. You said that really well. With American Public Human Services Association, we spent Friday with some of our colleagues across the country and the themes where we cannot do this alone. All of us as state agencies have done this work with community partners who showed up in ways we didn't recognize before and certainly have been putting in the work in your local community. And we know you are tired, and our commitment is to be in partnership with you and make sure we're hearing what your needs are. We wanted to appreciate the work you do and the effort and toll it has taken over the last year.

We want to thank you for participating. We were just talking before we started today that it would be great to see you in person someday soon. We cannot tell you when,



but we do miss your faces. This format is not ideal to doing that. You are welcome to reach out to us and participate in our stakeholder meetings.

Just a couple housekeeping pieces. A recording will be posted on our website next week. You will be notified about our newsletter, and this is a plug to sign up for our newsletter and follow us on social media. Save the date. January 13th we'll be in front of you again and really look forward to starting a new fresh year.

So finally, just be safe be well and thank you for partnering with us and we'll see you in 2021.