

## Questions and Answers from the May 1, 2020 Stakeholders Meeting

*Please note: The questions and answers in this document relate to DHS programs and activities. For health-related information, visit the Oregon Health Authority website: <https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>. For information from the Governor, visit: <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-covid-19>.*

### Aging and People with Disabilities (APD)

**Why didn't the Adult Care Homes get recognized by the Executive Branch and the Legislature for an increase of 10% temporary rate increase like the rest of the long-term care? The State of Washington got temporary increase emergency rate on their Medicaid residents for corona virus. In the state of Oregon Adult Care Homes did not get anything. Why is that?**

COVID-19 has impacted larger congregate care settings differently and, as a result, the demands on larger facilities to meet state requirements during the pandemic have been more complex to maintain over time as they have more staff and more residents. We understand that the pandemic has been challenging for all care providers and we are continually exploring ways to ensure providers are supported at this time.

**Are there guidelines being discussed to help provide in home services for elders not able to attend their usual programs such as Adult Day Programs?**

We do not have guidelines addressing this specific need in development at this time. APD has recommended that case managers work with consumers to identify unmet needs and adjust service plans as needed. Additionally, ADS continue to provide some services to consumers based on their ability and consumer's needs. The Oregon Home Care Commission, <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/seniors-disabilities/hcc/pages/index.aspx>, is a tremendous resource for information about best practices for in-home care. In addition, Oregon Care partners, <https://oregoncarepartners.com/>, provides free training resources for those providing care at home.

**Do you see a slow roll out of being able to open Day Centers with limited numbers?**

Decisions about re-opening congregate care services such as Adult Day Centers will be part of the coordinated state effort to re-open Oregon. No specific timeframes have been set at this time.

### Child Welfare

**Is there any news about Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families (SPRF) Program funding?**

We expect to have updated information by the end of May regarding SPRF.

**What are we doing for drug testing (UA's & breathalyzers) for families required by Child Protective Services to take drug tests?**

All UA's have been suspended at this time. We are continuing to assess and evaluate the circumstances in Oregon but for now, they continue to be suspended.

**In the event of a home visit being needed prior to reunification, are those home visits occurring? Can that be done virtually?**

Yes, reunifications are still happening. The following is guidance given to the field in April regarding face to face contact prior to and after a reunification:

- If possible, monthly in-person face to face contact should still occur for children and parents prior to and following a return home.
- Before making in-person contact, please confirm with the parent/caregiver that no one in the home is confirmed to be sick or displaying symptoms of COVID19. If this is the case, please follow the precautionary guidelines on the staff intranet.
- Contact must be documented in OR-Kids. If the contact was virtual it will temporarily be considered face to face contact and should be documented as such. Please indicate there was a virtual visit due to COVID-19. Documentation must include information regarding confirming safe environments, confirmation of the in-home safety plan, child well-being needs, and parent needs. Please refer to the Face to Face Guide in the appendix of the procedure manual Chapter 4 for guidance on information to be documented.

**If a foster parent uses the Alternative Funding Support During State Emergency does the individual(s) they use meet the same requirements as a respite provider, such as criminal history check, age, etc.) or could they use the reasonable and prudent parent standard?**

There are no background check requirements associated with this Alternative Caregiver rule (much like for a babysitter). Families, using good judgement and Prudent Parenting decide who can provide care for the children in their home. And as normal, foster families should be in touch with their certifiers/caseworkers about their alternative caregiving plans.

**Communication to people with disabilities; multi-language communication**

**How is DHS getting information to the elderly, to those with disabilities and non-English speaking people at this time? How can DHS support or partner with community-based organizations in doing this work?**

DHS programs have a multitude of ways each communicates needed information to their clients as well as partners. Some of these communications are regular stakeholder and partner calls; informative videos, social media posts; getting material translated; website updates; emails, through case managers meeting with clients; and through partnering with many community organizations.

Examples include:

The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) updates its COVID website daily and sends out regular email digests to stakeholders. In addition, ODDS holds weekly calls with case management entities, and monthly calls with providers and stakeholders. ODDS has also created a number of public resources, including videos and fact sheets, that have been shared statewide. ODDS partners with community organizations including the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition, FACT Oregon and Disability Rights Oregon, to help share this information and resources. ODDS is also regularly sharing all this information and resources on our social media channels.

The Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) has been working to make sure that when federal guidance comes out the information gets translated in the languages of greatest use in our community then they are communicated out to our community partners and programs.

We have also established the Protecting Immigrant Families Fund to get \$500,000 out to community-based organizations to enable them to do this outreach work in their local communities, recognizing that they are better suited to conduct that outreach in their community. IRCO is one of the recipients.

We are working to develop and share more messages specifically related to stimulus checks for English Language Learners in Oregon.

DHS also works with a contact from the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities as a community partner to share information to people accessing developmental disability services. We are working with Spanish Speaking advocates to talk about what information is needed for Latinx communities related to COVID-19 and changes to Developmental Disability services in response to the ever-evolving world we live in.

The Aging and People with Disabilities program communicates directly with the people it serves in the following ways:

- Through case managers who interact directly with consumers
- Through licensing staff and provider alerts – this is how we reach long-term care facilities
- Through our local offices and through our community partners, including via our AAAs
- Through adult protective services
- Through the ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Connection)

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors provide information directly to the individuals they serve and to community-based organizations they partner with locally. As a program, VR sends information out through emails to its stakeholders list regarding the change to virtual appointments and the beginning of virtual intakes. Currently there are more than 1,100 subscribers to that list. VR published a COVID-19 web page with topical information relevant to VR clients and programs at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/EMPLOYMENT/VR/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>.

VR administration is also working with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), which represents interests of people with disabilities, advocates, business and the community. VR also shared information during the SRC's quarterly meeting.

We invite anyone who wants to stay informed to sign up for the stakeholder email at [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=ORDHS\\_614](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/subscriber/new?topic_id=ORDHS_614).

## **COVID-19 Budget Impacts**

**The state budgeted prudently over the past 10 years, turning down many human services requests because "Oregon has to put away money for a rainy day." It is raining right now for many Oregonians who we serve. Can DHS advocate to the Governor's office to actually spend some of these reserves to preserve the system of care, which is at risk of collapse without some support?**

Oregon Reserve funds and rainy day funds will be part of the overall discussion. It really depends on the severity of the forecast. More importantly, this may not be the last down forecast so there is some risk in spending rainy day funds too early.

**Are there going to be any layoffs with these budget cuts?**

It is uncertain at this time and frankly will depend on the forecast. DHS considers layoffs a last resort option. It is also important to note that the current process is an exercise and not the reductions that would be needed to balance the state budget. The Governor and the legislature will consider all options, after the May forecast is released and will determine next steps.

**Will existing DHS service contracts be impacted by the 8.5% budget cuts or will this only impact future contracting?**

This ultimately will be determined by the severity of the revenue forecast. DHS strives to honor current contracts unless budget circumstances absolutely dictate otherwise. Some areas have decisions to make on year two contracts but until the forecast comes out these contracts are in question.

**Can you clarify, is the 8.5% reduction general fund, thus presumably deeper Total Fund reduction?**

Yes, in general, for each personal service General Fund dollar we also lose Federal Funds. In program Federal Funds will be lost at the matching rate for the program.

**The budget decrease of 8.5% in each state agency which is most likely double. What percent will it have to get to for us to be concerned about furloughs?**

It is difficult to assign a percentage that would trigger furloughs or layoffs since across the board reductions yields a different result than an enterprise-based approach that takes into consideration the enterprise needs and priorities. Furloughs, if any, will be discussed at the statewide level and requires negotiations with the unions. The forecast will ultimately drive budget decisions for the remainder of the biennium.

## **Office of Developmental Disabilities Services**

**Does the Federal FMAP Medicaid match increase of 6.2% that was part of the CARES Act apply to the 1915k waiver and disability services?**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) initially said services provided under the Community First Choice Act (k plan) would not be eligible to receive the additional 6.2% match. After several weeks, they reversed that decision. Oregon's I/DD services are bringing in the additional match.

## DHS staff teleworking

### **How long do you anticipate employees working from home?**

While not all workers will continue to work from home, we have seen some areas of increased productivity. In addition, widespread working from home is becoming, for certain areas of the business, the new normal. DHS will be reviewing space needs and other employee related expenditures that may be reduced due to more working from home. DHS does not see going back to a staff fully working in offices and rarely working from home. There will be a new “normal” but when and how will be in part dictated by the reopening of the state in stages.

### **I need clarification on the working from home vs being in office. Are we continuing telecommuting or are we expected to go back into the branch offices? I heard both, just want clarification.**

There are no immediate changes planned to our telework approach. Working from home is being encouraged if the position is eligible to telecommute, has work they can do from home and have the equipment to adequately do so. Again, DHS does not believe it will go completely back to past practice of mostly in office work. Where appropriate working from home will likely continue to be an option based on needs, customer service and performance.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

### **Will staff be able to visit people in home utilizing PPE and protective measures?**

Yes, but face-to-face meetings are limited at this time to prevent spread of disease. Please see APD’s updated policies on face-to-face visits which can be found through links on these pages: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/COVID-19/COVID-19%20Index.htm> and <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/transmit.htm>

### **Will all CBC and nursing communities receive PPE from surveyors?**

Oregon’s National Guard has coordinated the distribution of PPE to Oregon’s licensed long-term care providers. Deliveries of PPE were made in April. Surveyors are not currently involved in distributing PPE. Facilities should continue to utilize their existing supply networks to obtain PPE. If a facility is in an emergent situation where a supplier cannot provide requested supplies, you may file an emergency request with your local public health authority.

### **Will DHS employees that are having direct contact with families (child protective services workers) be considered first responders to have PPE administered?**

DHS employees are not considered first responders. Many DHS employees who work with clients are considered health care workers in the State PPE allocation plan. Employees that are engaged with clients that are known to have COVID-19 or be identified as presumptive positive need to work with their manager and the Occupational Health, Safety and Emergency Management Program to develop a safety plan and ensure that they have the appropriate PPE. When working with other non-COVID-19 clients should use face coverings when appropriate and meet social distancing requirements.

**Some social service providers are unable or having difficulty getting a hold of PPE and are still being held to OSHA standards. What is Oregon doing to ensure PPE is available and that OSHA knows there's a shortage?**

DHS continues to work with the State Emergency Coordination Center to acquire an adequate supply of PPE. A PPE ordering and distribution program is being established to estimate long term usage rates so that DHS can acquire and maintain an adequate supply over the next year.

**Will DHS contractors be provided PPEs or will they need to be procuring them themselves?**

Contractors are required to obtain their own PPE unless specified as a DHS responsibility through a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation**

**What is VR's plan related to providing Pre-Employment Transition Services while schools are closed?**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to support pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), doing so in innovative ways during the governor's Stay Safe, Save Lives executive order.

VR, along with our statewide transition teams, is meeting with students virtually, and via phone. We are teaching pre-employment transition skills, such as resume development, mock interviews, studying for the driving test, advocacy, how to complete college financial aid forms and college readiness skills. We are conducting online assessments and discussing results. At the end of the program, we conduct exit interviews virtually. This is an important way to discuss what the student still needs related to their career goals and how those needs have changed since the coronavirus began.

Virtual job tours and job shadows are being delivered to students via Zoom or other platforms. Examples include viewing recorded informational interviews with an employer to learn about specific jobs and watching videos of a person performing a task to learn about the many steps involved.

The Youth Transition Program management team is hosting weekly virtual meetings with YTP teams to discuss how to provide services virtually, how to use Google Classroom, what applications to use to protect phone number privacy, resources for mental health, etc.

A Pre-ETS newsletter is being developed for teachers and school districts. It will promote activities and lessons for each Pre-ETS. A website is also being developed by transition network facilitators to strengthen communication and resources for students across the state in the new virtual reality.