

# News Release

**Date:** July 15, 2021

**Contact:** Elisa Williams, 503-509-9604, Elisa.A.Williams@dhsosha.state.or.us

## **Public input sought on plan to expand Oregon Project Independence, create Family Caregiver Assistance Program**

---

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is seeking public input by August 15, 2021, on its plan to apply for Medicaid funding to expand Oregon Project Independence and create a Family Caregiver Assistance Program. Both programs serve older adults and people with disabilities.

The [application](#), which is being made through the Oregon Health Authority to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), is a 1115 demonstration waiver. The programs to be expanded are offered by the ODHS Office of Aging and People with Disabilities.

Oregon has a track record of innovating programs to serve older adults and adults with disabilities, but gaps still remain in Oregon's system, especially for individuals with limited income. These Oregonians are at risk of requiring Medicaid when they need long-term care services and supports.

Today, nearly 800,000 Oregonians are age 65 and older. By 2030, this population is projected to increase by 25 percent. For those age 85 and older, and most at risk of needing Medicaid long term services and supports, the population is estimated to increase by 33 percent over the next 10 years, according to Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

The 1115 demonstration waiver would provide the following service expansions with Medicaid funding beginning in July 2022 for a five-year period:

- Oregon Project Independence would expand to serve 4,500 Oregonians, up from about 2,350 currently served. The federal matching funds will also permit local programs to serve younger adults with disabilities, whose participation has been limited to only one third of Oregon counties.

Oregon Project Independence services include case management, in home support and personal care services, adult day services, home delivered meals, assisted transportation, assistive technology, and other supports.

About \$5 million in general funds that have been allocated by the Oregon Legislature for this program would not be matched. This ensures that the ODHS Office of Aging and People with Disabilities can continue to serve Oregonians who

would not be eligible for the Medicaid-funded program introduced with the 1115 demonstration waiver.

- A Family Caregiver Assistance Program would be created to support qualifying Oregonians, whose family members provide them with care in their own homes, through a combination of state and federal funds. Oregonians who receive this family support would be eligible to receive services and supports totaling no more than \$500 per month, with an annual increases for inflation.

Oregonians served by this program would be able to choose from a list of services including caregiver respite, adult day services, transportation, assistive technology, caregiver training and education, and other services that the consumer finds compatible with the caregiving relationship they have with their caregiver.

This program would not replace the Older Americans Act funded Family Caregiver services. Instead, it would build on that program to serve additional individuals.

Oregonians who would like to provide comments on the [application](#) have the following options:

- Send comments, suggestions or questions to Beth Jackson, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Aging and People with Disabilities, 500 Summer St. NE; Salem, OR 97301-1079 or at [Beth.Jackson3@dhs.ohs.state.or.us](mailto:Beth.Jackson3@dhs.ohs.state.or.us)
- Attend hearings held by videoconferencing from 2-3 p.m. on July 22, 2021, and August 5, 2021.

On July 22, 2021, to join the hearing online use:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619189900?pwd=dWhIRE5TcIBJKy8rb3R2YzV5OGcrUT09>; or call in by dialing 1-669-254-5252 with meeting ID, 1619189900#, and passcode, 305260#

On August 5, 2021, to join the hearing online use:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1610197371?pwd=WnRzc0laaEo3dGc3dFJuaWhYTXBQQT09>; or call in by dialing 1-669-254-5252 with meeting ID, 1610197371#, and passcode: 002261#

These sessions will be accessible to people with disabilities. Captioning and American Sign Language interpretation will be provided. For questions about accessibility, or to request an accommodation, contact

[Beth.Jackson3@dhs.ohs.state.or.us](mailto:Beth.Jackson3@dhs.ohs.state.or.us). Requests should be made at least 48 hours in advance of the meetings.