



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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2021-23 Agency Request Budget

Director Fariborz Pakseresht, Department of Human Services

Our vision of safety, health and well-being for all Oregonians is what drives our work at the Oregon Department of Human Services. Our services touch one in four Oregonians. With our support, we make sure that everyone can reach their potential and fully contribute to our communities.

Our role as a human services agency has become increasingly important in the current environment, as we plan for the 2021-23 biennium. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sharp economic downturn that will be felt for many years, and it has exacerbated historic inequities among communities of color. The pandemic has illustrated what we have known for some time – that an individual’s ability to experience health, safety and economic stability (our Department’s core values) is significantly influenced by the neighborhood they grew up in, their family’s socioeconomic status, the color of their skin, and other elements of systemic bias and inequity.

The need for our Department’s services grows significantly during economic downturns, when state resources are tight. To be the best stewards of scarce resources, we have focused our 2021-23 Agency Request Budget on the following areas:

- **Equity and inclusion.** Disparities shown in our data reflect systemic racism, historic injustice, and inequitable distribution of power and resources in Oregon communities. Many investments proposed for the 2021-23 budget focus on improving access to programs and services for historically underserved populations who have been most significantly impacted by the pandemic, including communities of color and tribes, and Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Safety and prevention.** While safety will always be a priority for the Department, providing upstream services for Oregonians, particularly children and families, can help reduce the need for intervention and provide stability.
- **Empowerment, enforcement and accountability.** We will continue to support our providers and empower them to provide the highest quality of *“Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe”*

services to our children, families, consumers and service recipients. At the same time, we will make enhancements to the Department's licensing and enforcement units to help us better protect the most vulnerable Oregonians, such as children, older adults, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- **Efficiencies and alignment.** We will continue implementing the Oregon DHS Management System focusing on outcomes and results. We will continue to refine our focus on research, data and analytics to inform decisions. Investments in technology and efforts to align standards and services make our Department more efficient and easier to access for Oregonians.

While we are supporting Oregonians through the current crisis, we continue working toward a delivery system that provides services in a seamless and integrated manner across the entire continuum of life, and in strong partnership with other public, private and community organizations. This framework – called the Human Services Value Curve – is used by many human services organizations and recognizes that:

- People and programs are interconnected.
- Service continuums must be designed with individual and community outcomes in mind. It is important to pay as much attention to the environment as we do to the individual.
- Each individual and family's health, well-being and needs must be approached holistically, addressing each factor that determines their survival and security, always with service equity at the center.
- A multi-generational approach is necessary to help families move beyond the daily struggle to survive and achieve lasting economic stability, keeping in mind historical realities, trauma and epigenetics.

Our success in the current crisis and into the future will depend on how well we work with other system partners and our communities to create a continuum of care and services that provide Oregonians with best opportunities to succeed and thrive. The Department is undergoing an assessment to chart a path that will lead to forward movement on the Human Services Value Curve. This is the first assessment of the entire department since the separation of the Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority in 2011. The findings will also inform the optimal organizational structure for Oregon DHS to best serve Oregonians.

The more than 9,000 Department employees working across Oregon meet the needs of Oregonians with the help of many public, private and community organizations. We value their partnership, dedication and commitment to continuous improvement. It is on behalf of our employees, our partners and the more than 1 million Oregonians we serve that I respectfully submit our Agency Budget Request.

Sincerely,



Fariborz Pakseresht
Director, Oregon Department of Human Services