



# Building Well-being Together Initiative

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Year in Review

July 5, 2022



“Do the best you can until you know better.  
Then when you know better, do better.”

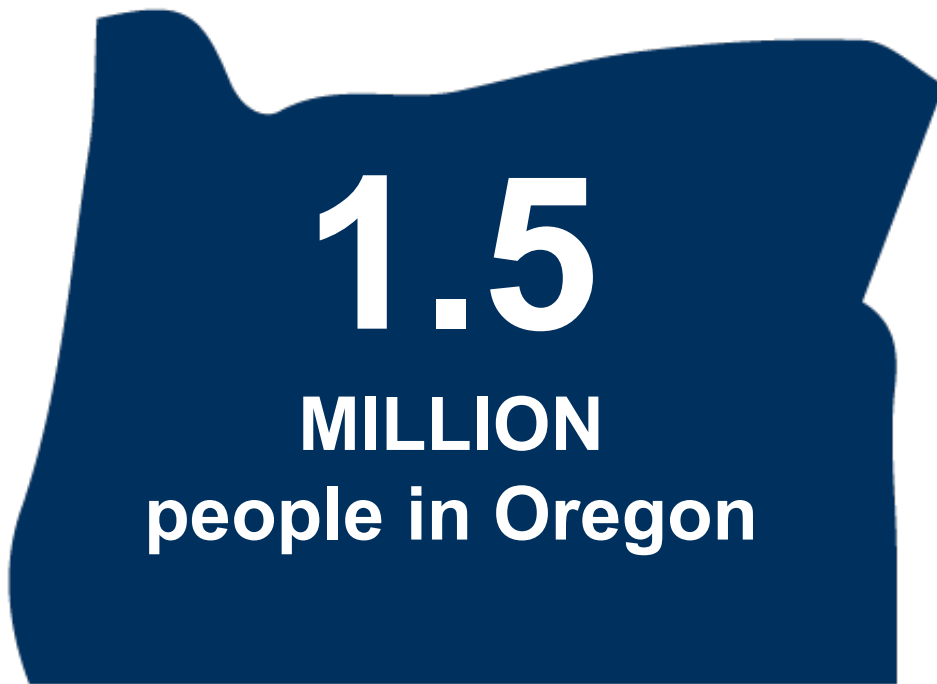
- Maya Angelou

# Building Well-being Initiative Overview

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The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) administers programs that...

Provide social services for more than



The agency includes

- APD** [Aging and People with Disabilities Program,](#)
- CW** [Child Welfare Program,](#)
- ODDS** [Office of Developmental Disabilities Services,](#)
- SSP** [Self-Sufficiency Programs](#) and,
- VR** [Vocational Rehabilitation Program.](#)

# Building Well-being Initiative Overview - Continued

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ODHS programs can help with some basic needs, but not everyone has equitable access to those services and supports. People slip through the gaps, and sometimes the services don't really meet or address people's needs.



ODHS wants to better support people, to help them truly improve their lives and their long-term outcomes, beyond just meeting the needs of today.

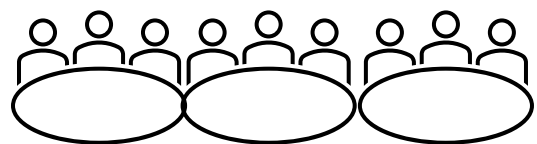


**The Building Well-being Initiative seeks to rally ODHS, its programs, partners, Tribes, and community to work together to identify and close the gaps between services and supports and invest in community and upstream solutions, so that all who live in Oregon, regardless of race, identity, age, disability, or place, have the needed supports to achieve whole well-being for ourselves, our families, and our communities.**

# Our Approach

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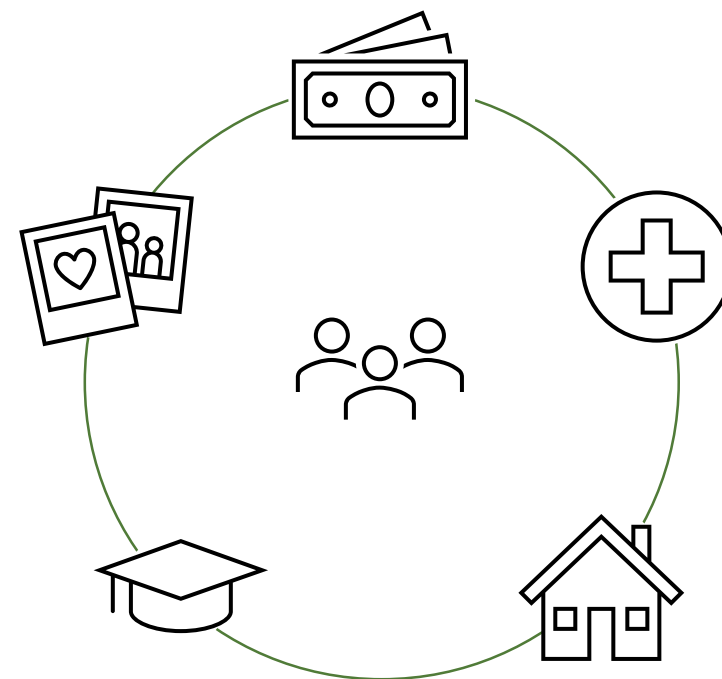
Community, government, businesses, and people with lived experience **partner at all levels**



To identify and **close the gaps** between services and invest in **community-led** and **upstream solutions**



That better support **the whole well-being** of all people, families, and communities.



# Background

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- In May 2021, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) developed a report, which identified many areas for potential improvements for ODHS, but the agency did not have an overarching **vision for the future of human services in Oregon** to help prioritize which efforts would best support its long-term goals.
- ODHS started the Building Well-being Together Initiative to help develop that basic vision for the future and prioritize and resource innovative, transformative efforts that would **advance the agency toward the ODHS Equity North Star and the goal of supporting the whole well-being of people, families, and communities.**



- ODHS inclusively leads with race and intersectionality in order to address the roots of systemic oppression that impact all protected classes.
- We are dedicated to making services, supports and well-being accessible to all.
- We are committed to partnering with communities to develop and deliver policies and programs that are equitable and improve community conditions.
- Staff and communities will know services and supports are working when all who live in Oregon, regardless of identity or place can achieve well-being.

# Background - Continued

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The **strategy** for the Building Well-being has been to approach this work in two simultaneous ways:



## **Focus on the Future**

Create space/resources for advancing the future state, both through short-term efforts that are ready for change now and through long-term strategic planning and transformative projects.



## **Support Core Responsibilities**

Provide resources to help with core agency responsibilities, both for operational and emergent issues, so that the agency has better capacity to be proactive rather than mostly reactive.



# Background - Continued

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The initiative is now one year old and has resulted in various accomplishments and lessons learned. It continues to **identify gaps in social services**, and it is **laying the foundation for agency-wide, equity-based strategic planning with community** to transform human services and address those needs long-term.



This report provides an **update on progress to date and outlines the next steps** for the initiative through the end of 2022.



# Phases of Growth

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- Listen to community, Tribes, staff, and partners to learn about needs, gaps and innovative solutions
- Strengthen relationships with community and Tribes
- Begin to co-create an ODHS strategic plan with community and Tribes
- Complete the strategic plan and implement in stages
- Invest in equity and community and Tribal solutions
- Make changes to people, budget, culture, and organizational structure
- Work with community, Tribes, and partners to fill gaps and create a full continuum of care and support
- Embed culture of inclusion and empowerment across ODHS





# Goal for 2022

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**This year the main goal has been to get people to start thinking, talking, and working together toward the future of human services.**

# 2022 Activities

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## Key activities to support this year's goal:



**Preparing for ODHS strategic planning** through outreach to staff, partners, people with lived experience, Tribes, and community to strengthen relationships and learn about barriers, gaps, and innovative solutions.



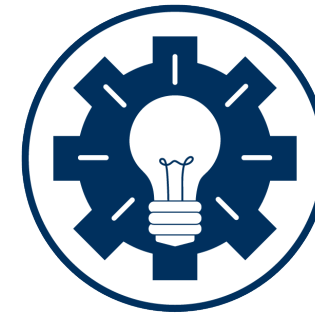
**Developing agency-level infrastructure to support the future state**, like an agency-wide policy planning process, a proactive legislative package development process, and cross-agency data sharing agreements.



**Advancing systems improvements at the program level**, like development of the Oregon Eligibility Partnership (OEP) to oversee cross-program eligibility functions, looking at a unified approach to supporting children and families across programs, and starting up regional demonstration projects for cross-program collaboration at the local level.

# 2022 Activities - Continued

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- **Supporting community-initiated, innovative ideas and efforts that show the future in action:**
  - [Oregon LGBTQ+ Older Adult survey](#)
  - [Rogue Way Home Collaborative](#)
- **Helping with operational and emergent issues to protect the agency's ability to remain proactive,** like efforts to address eligibility backlogs and the end of the public health emergency.



# Accomplishments

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# Highlighted Accomplishments



## Supporting Community:

- Supported the relationship of ODHS with Native American communities in the Gorge
- Helped stand up the initial phase of the Oregon Eligibility Program (OEP) and teed up expanded ONE access with community partners.
- Identified and started to organize a key demonstration project in Jackson County.
- Assisted ODHS Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) with emphasizing the importance of community engagement, helping prepare the agency for the Community Engagement Framework OEMS has developed.



## Advancing Toward the Future State:

- Communicated the future vision to hundreds of people from various external and internal audiences.
- Started rebuilding relationships with other agencies, partners, community members, and staff at all levels.
- Agency strategic planning preparation, completing a request for proposal and developing rotation positions.
- Started work on cross-agency data sharing agreements with a social determinants of health lens.



## Better Support Core Responsibilities:

- Developed service level agreements for central services.
- Shepherded the initial transition of Employment-Related Day Care program to the new Department of Early Learning and Care.
- Helped facilitate the move of Employee Development / Training to HR and start up revamp efforts.
- Helped resurrect the employee engagement survey.
- Mapped the agency hiring processes and helped address position management issues for SSP.





# The Gaps & Barriers

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# Meet Roberta

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Roberta is the mother of a 13-year-old boy. He's a person of color. He's adopted and has multiple diagnoses and developmental disorders. He receives services from the Developmental Disabilities program, mental health, and from a large team of specialists.

When he was young, Child Welfare didn't take complaints of abuse seriously because of his inability to communicate. In school, he was abused because of his conditions. In frustration, he has turned to violence as a way to communicate.

Roberta has had to learn the system. She sits on an advisory council, works with family groups, and has led a support group for adopting parents. But even knowing the systems doesn't help. It's still confusing for her. It's still full of gaps. Sometimes the funding runs out. Even if there is funding, there are no workers to hire. She hears the same thing from other parents.

People like her son are treated based on the source of the condition, rather than their whole needs. Programs are siloed by their funding source. It creates inequitable outcomes, especially for children of color. There is no hand off. There is no system. And figuring it out becomes the person in needs problem.

That's a problem for all of us. Roberta was told by her son's mental health provider that, "as a black youth with behavior problems, he could end up being shot by the police." A retired police officer told her that if she, "couldn't manage his behaviors, he would end up in jail."

Roberta is trying everything. So are many other families. They shouldn't have to navigate this alone. She is very clear. The state and its partners can do something about it. We can work together to connect the dots and create equitable outcomes for all.

# Roberta's Story: Helping Shine a Light on the Gaps

We have shared Roberta's story with many people to illustrate the gaps/barriers and talk about their impact on people. Roberta continues to work with us and the Oregon Health Authority to dive deeper to help identify the systemic barriers and gaps. Gaps include but are not limited to:



- Lack of wraparound supports at the point of adoption
- Missed opportunities to identify and respond to sexual and physical abuse among children with developmental disabilities in school settings
- Inexperienced/unskilled workforce working with children with developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs
- Providers denying the family's private insurance mixed with Oregon Health Plan Open Card
- Lack of available day treatment that meets developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs
- Inability to access short term stabilization resources due to lack of staffing
- Racial discrimination in special education setting
- Lack of helpful response from law enforcement during multiple events where youth became violent at home

**With Roberta's help, we are exploring ways to bridge these gaps across our systems to prevent harm and support children to heal and thrive.**

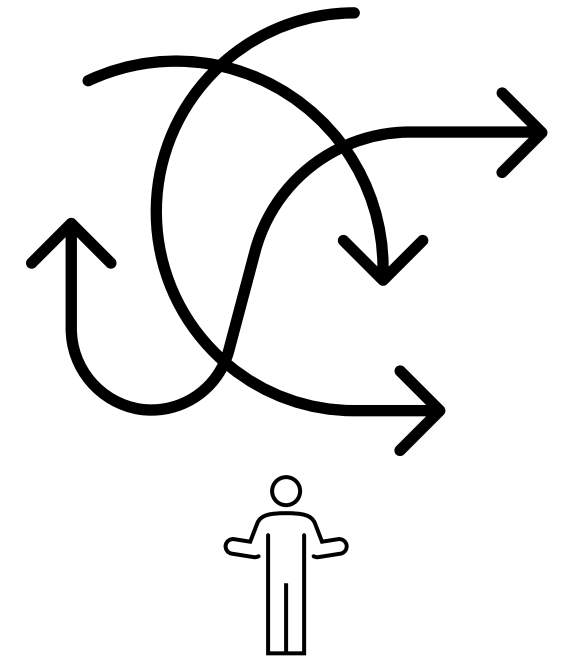
# The Barriers and Gaps

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During our outreach for the Building Well-being Initiative, staff, partners, Tribal members, communities, and people with lived experience have shared many of the barriers and gaps they have witnessed or struggled to address. We are developing a repository for this information, looking for ways to collect additional information going forward, and analyzing it for insights, trends, and actionable opportunities.

## Common barriers to whole well-being for people receiving ODHS services:

- No help **navigating** a confusing and inaccessible system
- **Bureaucratic hoops** at all levels
- **Siloed programs** with gaps in between and no hand-off
- Rising **cost of living**, and benefit levels that don't match costs
- **Benefits cliff** making it hard to improve life or just achieve balance
- Limited **behavioral health** resources
- Lack of available, affordable, and accessible **housing**
- Low-paying **jobs** without adequate benefits
- Lack of reliable and accessible **transportation**
- Post-secondary **education** derailed by lack of support for basic needs
- Limited **childcare** options prohibiting participation in work or school
- **Burned out, inconsistent workforce** due to ODHS and provider staffing and retention challenges



# The Barriers and Gaps – Initial Analysis

**88%** of people with lived experience who we interviewed said they had received **inadequate or no help navigating the system**.

Types of navigation support needed include:

- Plain-language communication in preferred languages
- Culturally-specific navigators
- Accessible technology for people with disabilities
- Kindness and empathy from ODHS staff
- Community partners to connect them with ODHS services

In outreach conversations with ODHS staff and partners, we heard that most gaps and barriers involve a **siloed system** determined by funding source, **bureaucratic hoops** preventing staff from meeting the needs of those we serve, and a **burned-out workforce** with too much on their plates.

*“There are such high call volumes you can only spend so much time helping someone. Sometimes our help has nothing to do with our actual job. We can transfer the client to someone who can maybe help, or they end up getting lost.”* –District 15 SSP leader

Barrier or gap	Total mentions	Percentage of conversations
Navigation and accessibility	47	76%
Siloed system	36	58%
Bureaucratic hoops	31	50%
ODHS/provider staffing	27	44%
Behavioral health	22	35%
Housing	20	32%
Employment/job benefits	15	24%
Childcare	13	21%
Transportation	12	19%
Cost of living	11	18%
Benefits cliff	10	16%
Education	6	10%

*“If I need services or I’m a contractor billing the state, I shouldn’t have to keep track of who has money to do what, or who should be billed...The only way to get to equity is to fund what individuals actually need, not to funnel people to what legislators or program managers think they need.”* –Oregon Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Advisory Council member



# Next Steps

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# End of Year Deliverables in Progress

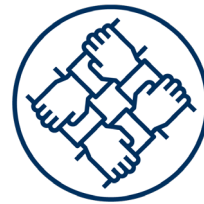
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**Report  
on gaps**



**Start to  
share data  
between  
agencies**



**Pilot a community  
engagement  
process**



**Identify the  
lessons learned**



**Begin  
Strategic  
Planning**



**Develop a  
cross-program  
policy table**



**Begin  
implementation  
of pilot projects**



**Learn from other  
jurisdictions**



# Rogue Way Home: a Community Collaboration

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In 2020, wildfires ravaged communities in Southern Oregon. In response, Rogue Community Health and ODHS came together to provide housing and other wrap-around social services to wildfire survivors.

As a part of this collaboration, caseworkers work directly with impacted individuals and families, getting to know their stories and unique needs. These close relationships allow caseworkers to help the individuals and families navigate the complex systems and ensure access to the services they need to support their whole well-being.

Rogue Community Health and ODHS are now looking to expand this innovative service delivery model to support more families beyond wildfire survivors. This includes bringing other partners to the table, including from the housing, health, and workforce development systems.

This wrap-around model could serve as a prototype for a new way of providing human services across Oregon, one better suited to people's needs and that meets where they're at.



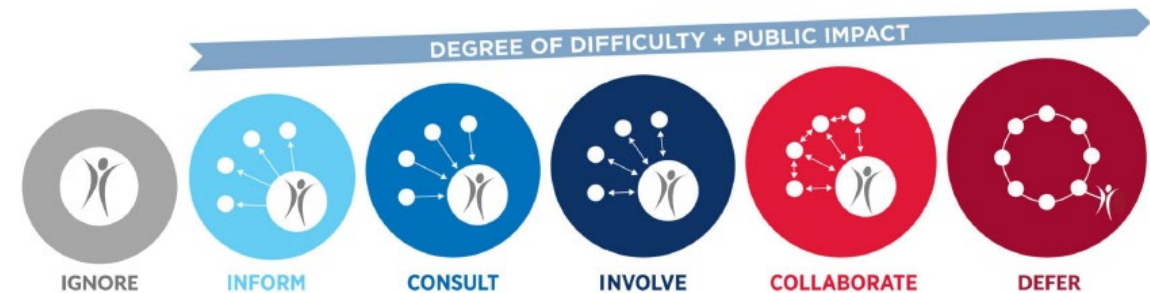
# Engaging with Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations (CBOs), like non-profits, churches, and civic groups, often play an integral role in supporting communities. These organizations work directly with individuals and families, building relationships and helping them with their needs and overall well-being.

ODHS has a long history of working collaboratively with CBOs to support the needs of people in Oregon, but engagement efforts by the agency have been inconsistent over time. ODHS would like to build upon its relationships with CBOs and engage in greater depth with these organizations, so that the agency has greater insight into the challenges and needs of communities and more opportunity to partner with collaborators like CBOs to find ways to meet those needs in the community in culturally appropriate ways.

The Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) within ODHS has begun to develop a Community Engagement Framework to help the agency better engage with community, people with lived experience, and CBOs. This framework includes shared definitions and tools for engagement and builds upon the community engagement guidelines developed by the state's [Racial Justice Council](#).

ODHS is now beginning to pilot this new framework and engagement tools as it engages with CBOs as it looks ahead to strategic planning later this year.



# Questions or feedback?

Contact us at  
[building.wellbeing@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:building.wellbeing@dhsosha.state.or.us)



The Seal of the State of Oregon is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features an eagle at the top, a ship on the left, a plow and a cow in the center, and a banner at the bottom that reads "THE UNION". The words "STATE OF OREGON" are written around the top half of the circle, and "1859" is at the bottom. A thin horizontal line crosses the seal.

# Thank you