

CHILD WELFARE DIVISION

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

March 2025

(February 2025 data)



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Executive Summary

This report provides data through February 2025.

Some highlights from February include:

Guiding Principle One

- In February, ODHS received a total of 93 inquiries, including 44 inquiries about general foster care, 35 inquiries about certified respite, 4 inquiries about general adoption

Guiding Principle Two

- Caseworker caseload averages continue to meet Oregon's caseload ratio standards for all three categories of caseworkers.
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop a Youth Advisory Council within Child Welfare has been awarded and has been submitted for funding approval.

Guiding Principle Three

- On February 25 and 26, ODHS met with Tribal partners to discuss planning and opportunities available to Tribes through Title IV-E Family First Prevention Services.

Thank you for reading the March Progress Report.

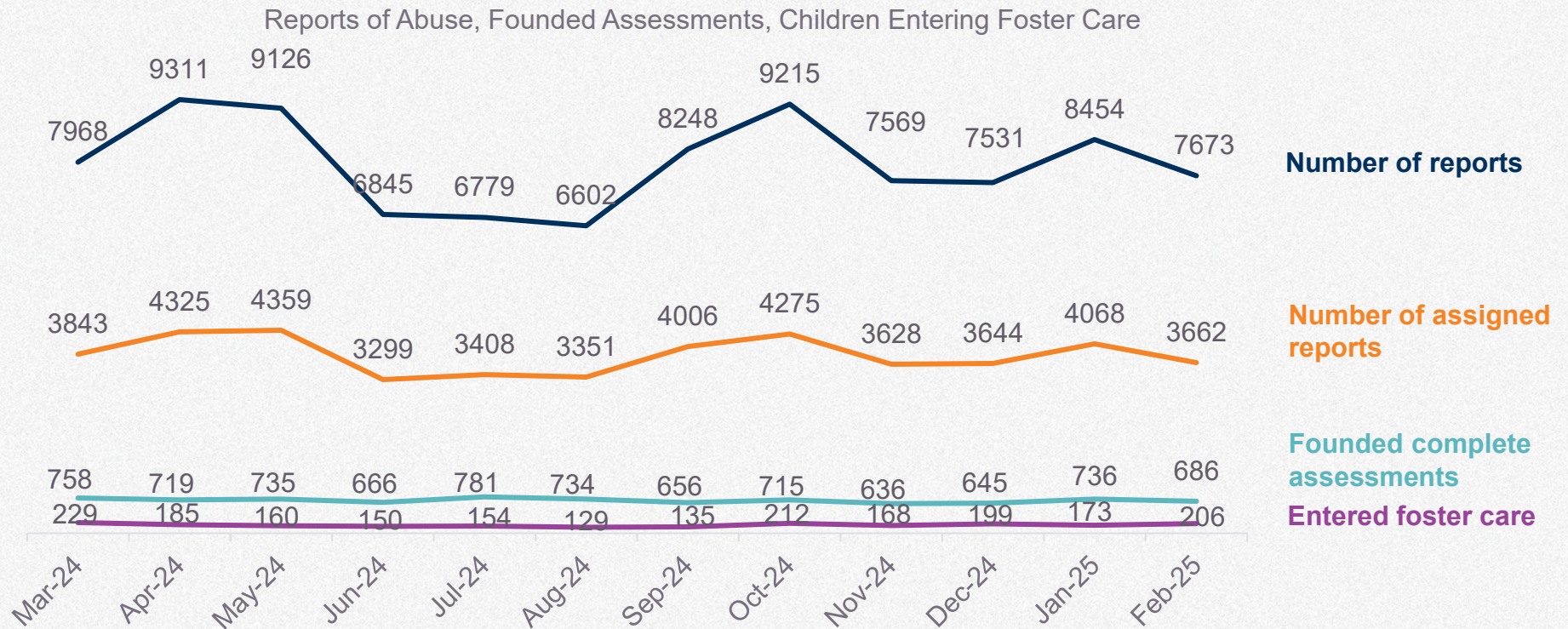
Guiding Principle 1:

Supporting Families and
Promoting Prevention



Continued efforts to ensure that the Child Welfare Division is trauma-responsive, family and community-centered, and focused on safety and prevention

Founded assessments and number of children entering care



What is the measure

While thousands of contacts are received at ORCAH, a smaller “Number of reports” are documented as a report of abuse or a report describing conditions that pose a risk to a child, but do not constitute a report of abuse as defined by rule. The “Number of assigned reports” are reports of abuse assigned for CPS assessment. A small percentage of those assessments result in “Founded complete assessments,” and an even smaller percentage lead to children who “Entered foster care.”

Why it is important

Many times, concerns can be managed with resources and support provided by family, community and ODHS to allow children to remain in their homes and avoid removal.

25 percent of ORCAH contacts result in CPS assignment

What is the measure

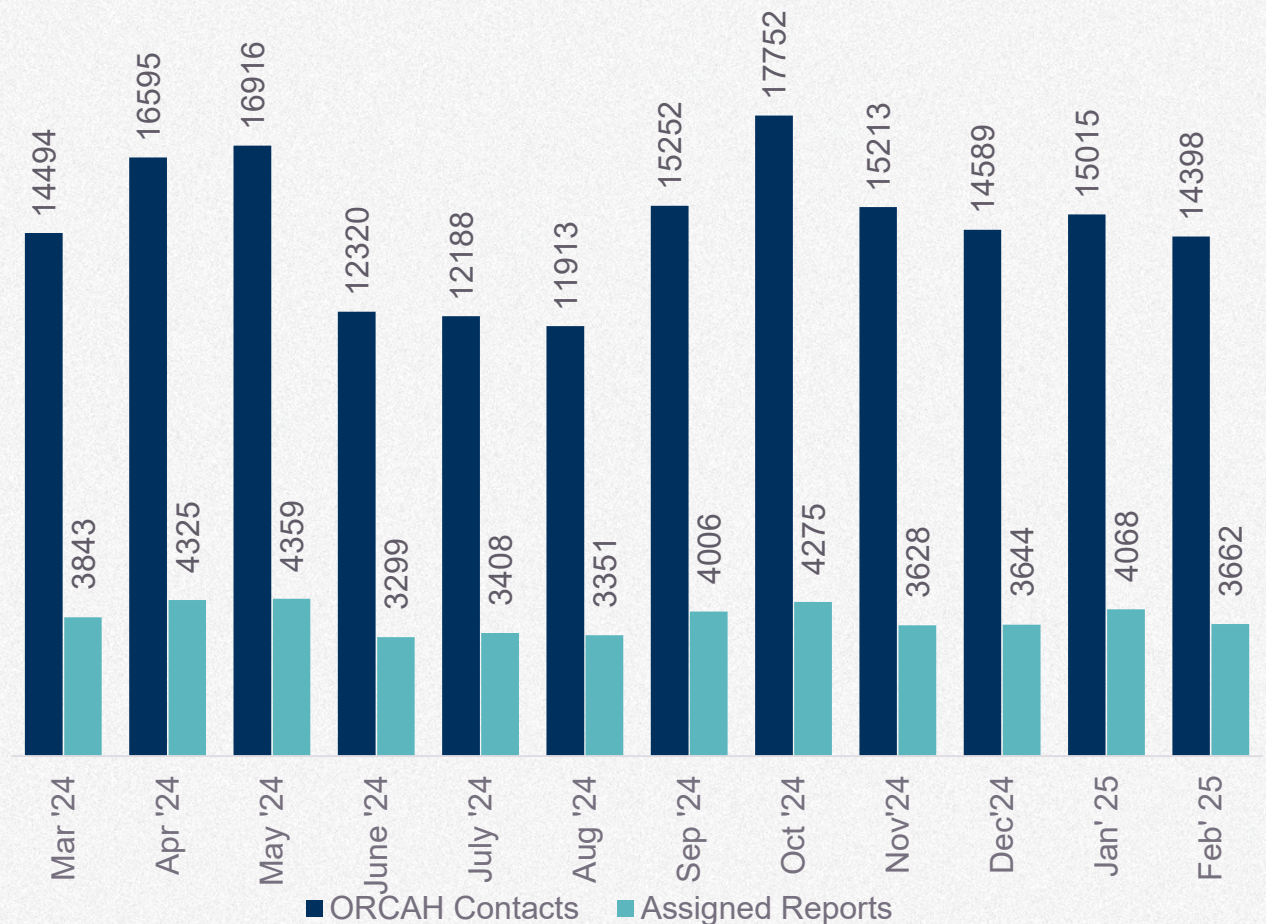
Total contacts received at ORCAH and the number of those contacts that are assigned for Child Protective Services (CPS) assessment.

“Contacts” are all calls and law enforcement cross-reports received, including those that do not constitute a report of abuse.

Why it is important

ORCAH receives a high number of contacts that are neither reports of child abuse nor require Child Welfare intervention. In February, 25 percent of contacts resulted in CPS assignment.

ORCAH Contacts vs Assigned Reports



Safety assessment trends



What is the measure

In many cases after initial screening, Child Protective Services (CPS) determines that a formal child safety assessment is necessary. The graphic above shows the number of assessments open less than 60 days (teal) and the number of assessments open greater than 60 days (dark blue).

Why it is important

Timely assessments are critical in ensuring children's safety, minimizing stress on families, and making the best use of Child Welfare workers' time.

What we are doing

Monthly trainings are being provided by Evident Change to safety consultants (in addition to consultants in other programs) to integrate enhanced child and family engagement and decision support tools into the coaching and consultation framework. The development of good working relationships with families is critical to completing timely and accurate safety assessments.

In February, 73 percent of children/young adults were diverted from temporary lodging

What is the measure

The graphic displays the number of individual children and young adults who spent at least one night in Temporary Lodging (TL) last month. TL becomes necessary when an appropriate placement cannot be found. It typically refers to a child or young adult's overnight stay in a hotel with Child Welfare workers, while the team works to develop a solution for the placement need.

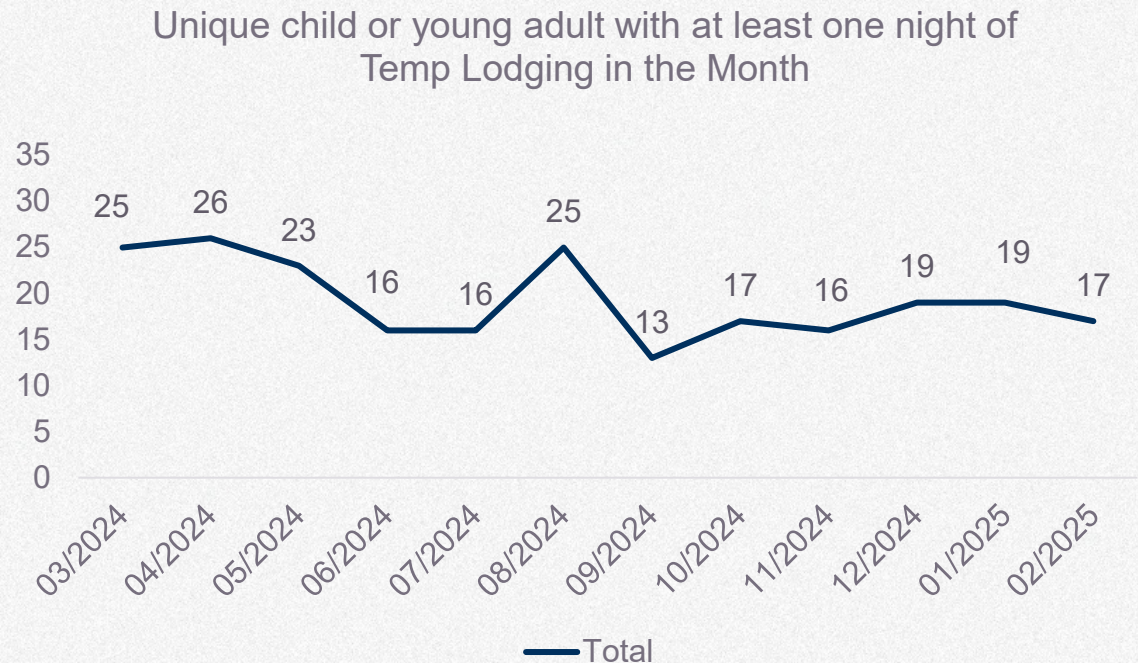
Why it is important

Child Welfare tracks the number of children in TL to track ongoing efforts to ensure it is only used as a last resort, as we are identifying appropriate placement options and supports.

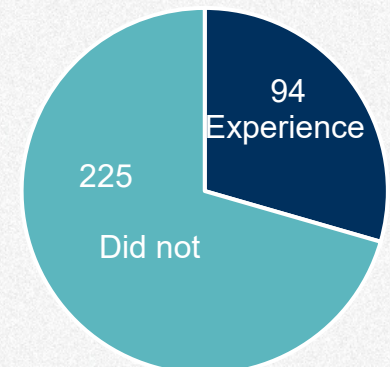
What we are doing

All children and young adults identified as being at risk of TL are staffed by a team of design and delivery staff who work to develop child-specific plans to prevent TL.

During February 2025, 73 percent of the 62 children and young adults who were at risk of TL did not experience an episode of TL. This is part of a longer-term trend over the last 12 months where 71 percent of children and young adults staffed did not experience TL.



Mar. 2024 – Feb. 2025



Respite care services

What is the measure

This chart shows the total number of *respite services paid by month* across all respite service types (informal, foster care, in-home). The number of new fully certified respite care providers indicates providers who are certified within each month specifically to provide respite care services. In 2024, the program expanded to support parents/caregivers during reunification, and the monthly number of those served with this new service continues to show a steady increase (demonstrated below with the blue "Certified In-Home" bars).

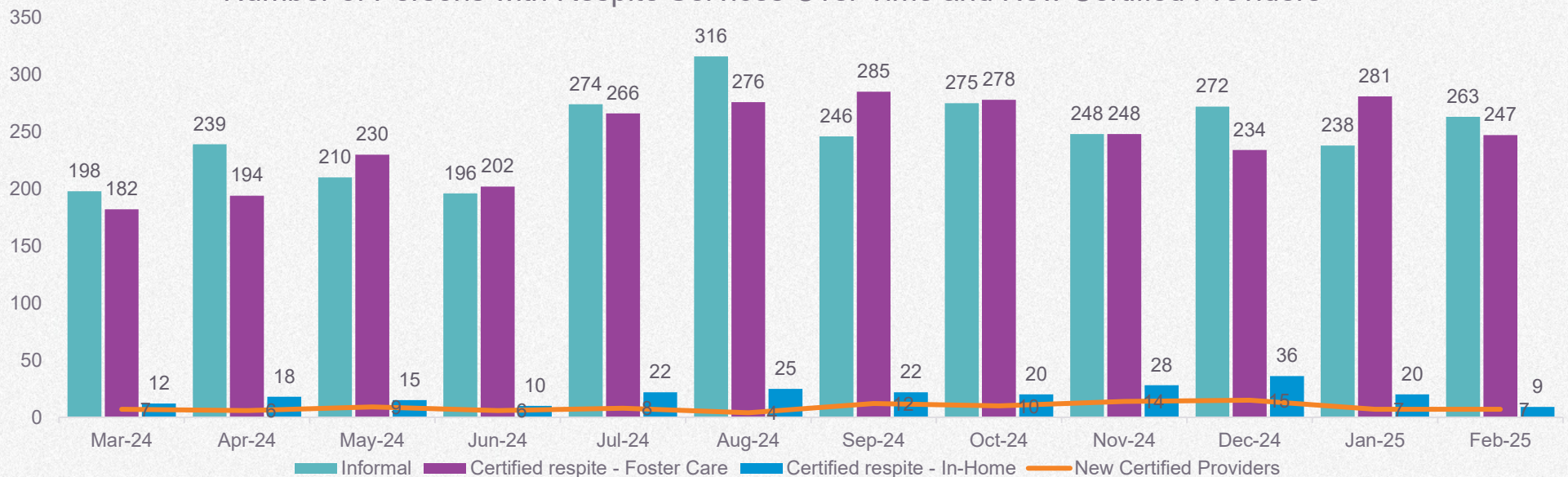
Why it is important

Respite care is the temporary relief of a primary caregiver's responsibilities by another adult. It can be a planned or crisis-support arrangement, providing caregivers and parents with opportunities to take breaks, rest and renew, and avoid becoming overwhelmed by their many responsibilities.

What we are doing

Individuals interested in becoming a certified respite care provider can call ODHS's recruitment partner, Every Child, at 1-800-331-0503. Information can also be found at Foster.Oregon.gov. To get started an individual applies and completes the Certified Respite Provider Training and knowledge check. The next steps to becoming fully certified include background checks, an interview and home visit, and an environment safety check.

Number of Persons with Respite Services Over Time and New Certified Providers



The total number of children in foster care remains low

What is the measure

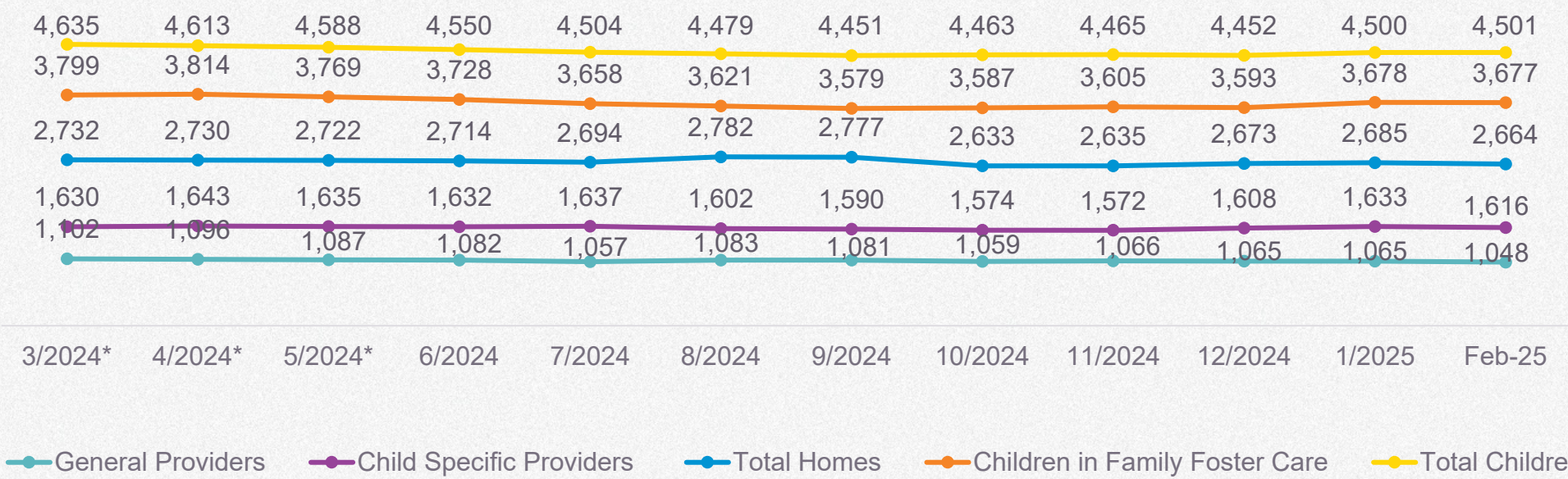
This graph shows the number and type of resource families in relation to the number of children in care.

The Total Children (yellow line) count does not match the Children in Family Foster Care (orange line) because some children are placed in other settings, such as those supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and those providing higher levels of care.

Total Homes (blue line) = Child Specific Providers (purple line) + General Providers (teal line)

Why it is important

These numbers help inform efforts to increase recruitment and retention of available resource families. The next section of this report describes the consistent, local and statewide, recruitment and retention efforts. These efforts strive to develop a qualified pool of resource families who reflect and affirm the diversity of children and young adults in foster care.



Child Welfare Data Book, 2018-2022. ROM.CM01 Foster Care Counts, 1/2023-5/2023. Child Welfare Retention and Recruitment Dashboard, 6/2023 – current.
*“Total Homes” data reported for March 2024-May 2024 has been updated due to a data reporting change.

Efforts to recruit and retain resource (foster) families

What we are doing

In 2025, districts are focusing on one to two key retention and recruitment goals. This approach improves focus at the district level and more in-depth project management by Champions. This table shares examples of *retention* goals for each district. See the [February 2025 Progress Report](#) for *recruitment* goals.

In February, ODHS received a total of **93 inquiries**, including:

- 44 inquiries about general foster care
- 35 inquiries about certified respite
- 4 inquiries about general adoption

2025 District Retention Goals	
Standard use of Ice Breakers where it is considered safe and appropriate.	District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook)
Further expand and strengthen resource parent support networks	District 2 (Multnomah)
Enhance tangible resources and utilization of certified respite care.	District 3 (Marion, Polk, Yamhill)
Develop a resource guide of local and statewide supports for resource parents.	District 4 (Linn, Benton, Lincoln)
New support networks for resource parents.	District 5 (Lane)
Create a standardized district transition plan for reunification and placement changes.	District 6 (Douglas)
Partnerships to recruit new certified respite care.	District 7 (Coos, Curry)
New support networks for resource parents.	District 8 (Jackson, Josephine)
Develop and offer quarterly resource family engagement training to all district staff by December 2025.	District 9 (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler)
Develop standardized communication plan between workers and resource parents.	District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson)
Develop tangible resources and supports for resource families.	District 11 (Klamath/Lake)
Develop and offer a resource family engagement training to all staff quarterly by December 2025.	District 12 (Morrow, Umatilla)
All district staff will complete Customer Service Training within 6 months of the training being available.	District 13 (Wallowa, Baker, Union)
Supervisors will discuss resource family communication with caseworkers during their 90-day staffing.	District 14 (Malheur, Harney, Grant)
Goal of 75% of staff taking Customer Service Training within 60 days of it being available.	District 15 (Clackamas)
Strengthen the collaboration and communication between resource parents and ODHS staff.	District 16 (Washington)

Timeliness to initial case plans percentage completed increase

What is the measure

The percentage of total case plans completed within the federally required timeframe.

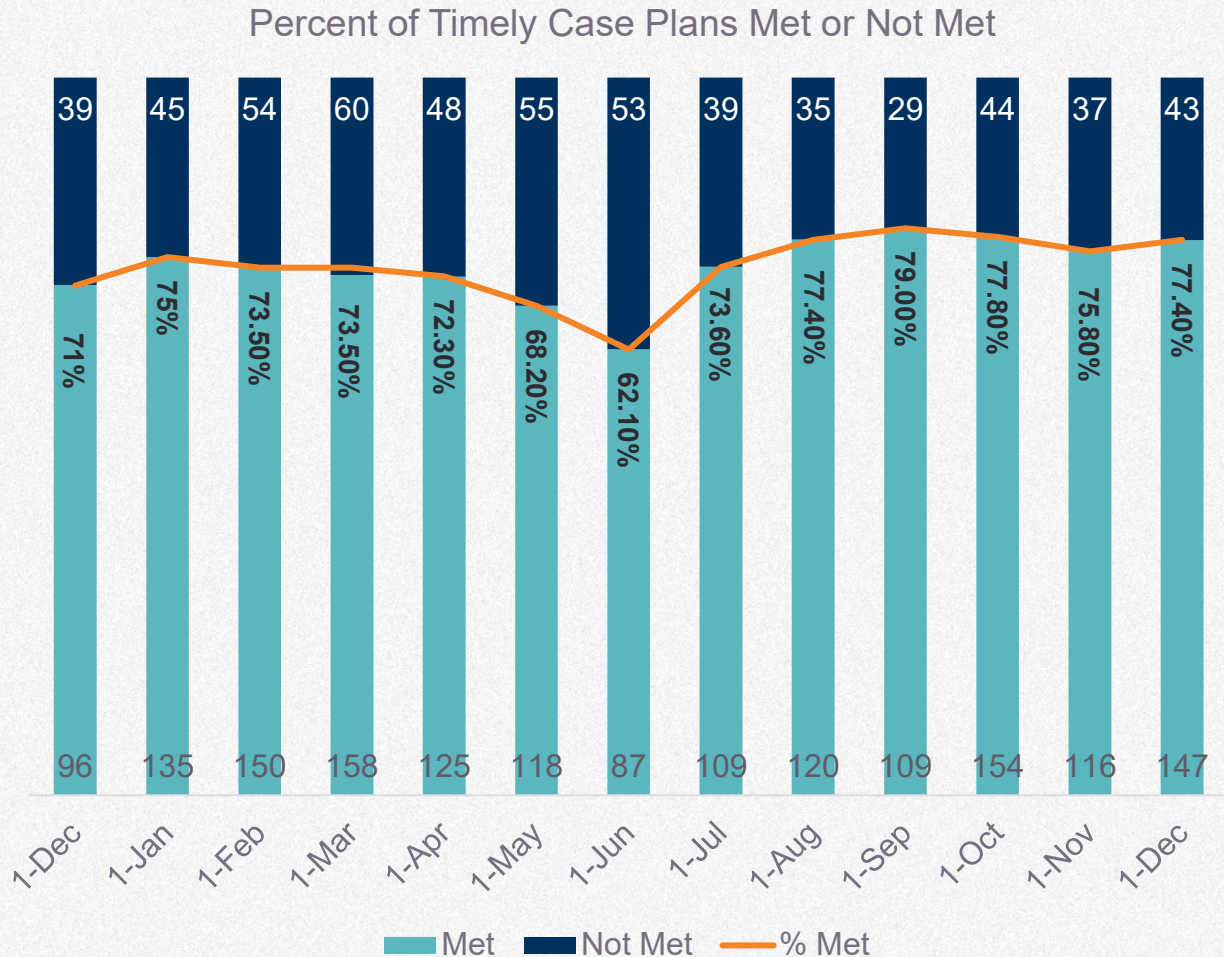
Why it is important

It is a federal requirement that initial case plans should be completed within 60 days of a child's placement in foster care. Each case plan is the "road map" for families and Child Welfare, identifying the necessary steps toward family reunification and case closure.

What we are doing

To further improve the timeliness of case plans, the permanency consultants review each monthly report to identify and prioritize local offices that are performing below the state average. They collaborate with the program managers and staff of these local offices to identify barriers and solutions as well as assist in implementing strategies to improve performance.

Data dashboards are available to supervisors and caseworkers to facilitate local discussion regarding timeliness. Permanency consultants reinforce the use of data by providing monthly reports.



Note: Timeliness of case plans is measured in accordance with policy allowing up to 60 days to complete a family's case plan. For this reason, data for this measure will be reported with a 60-day lag.

Recurrence of maltreatment

What is the measure

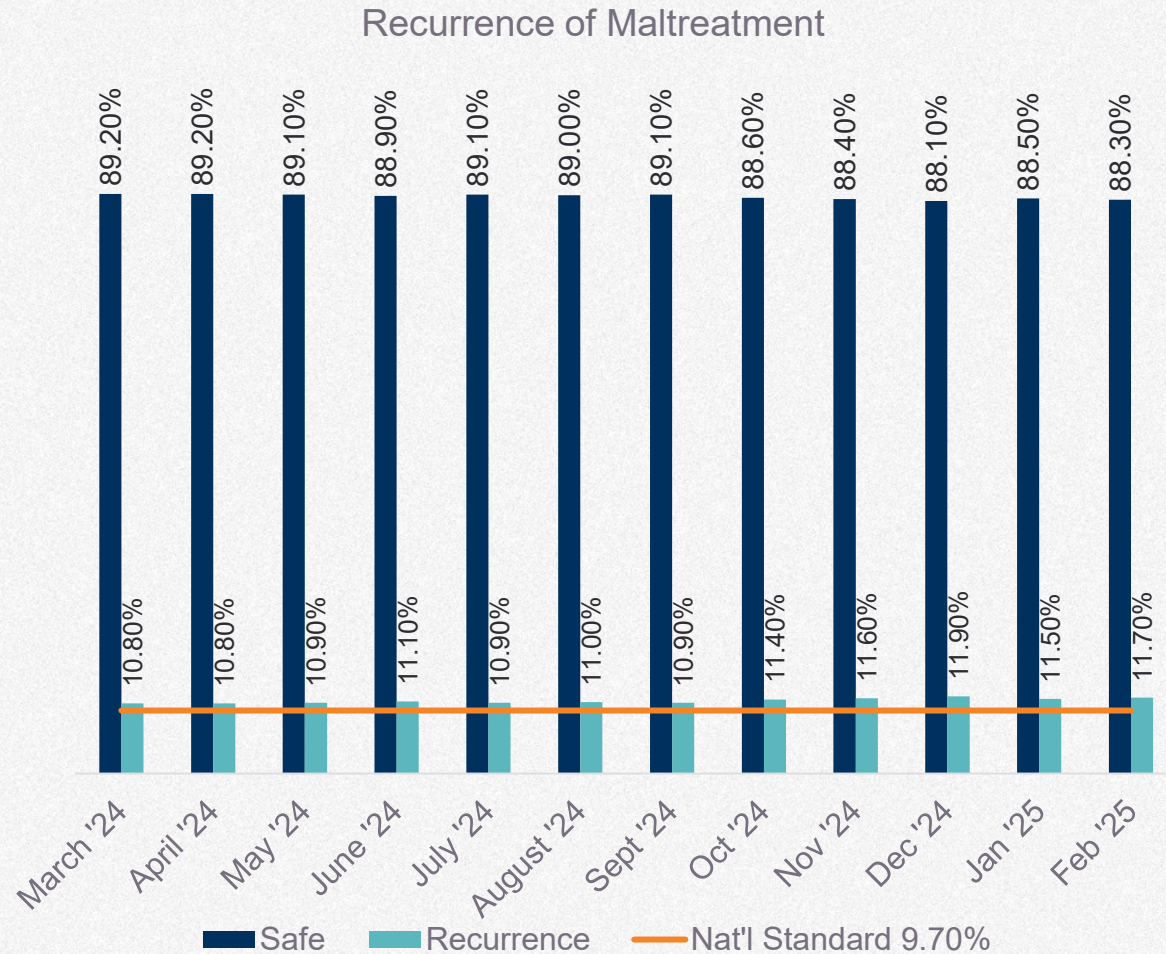
Recurrence of Maltreatment is defined as children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated report of maltreatment during a 12-month target period. The date the report was received determines if a child is counted in the 12-month target period and is used to determine whether maltreatment recurrence occurred within 12 months. This metric also includes reports of maltreatment occurring outside of their time in CW custody.

Why it is important

One of the primary purposes of Child Protective Services (CPS) interventions is to prevent future harm to children who have already experienced abuse or neglect.

What we are doing

The Safety Program began aligning CPS Fidelity Reviews with the CFSR case review schedule. Rather than two large statewide reviews twice yearly, CPS Fidelity Reviews will be done monthly alongside CFSRs district by district. This allows for smaller groups of reviewers and a more comprehensive review of practice in each district and aligns with the CQI implementation cycle. Districts receive an individualized report to be used in conjunction with CFSR results to inform CQI strategic planning.



Family Preservation updates

Strengthening and Clarifying Cross-Program Collaboration

Consistent collaboration, learning and support between Self Sufficiency and Child Welfare programs is at the heart of improving supports and services for families. Family Preservation demonstration sites have seen the impact of bringing together the anti-poverty work of SSP and the safety management work of CW.

What we are doing

Opportunity for Prevention and Transformation Initiative

In 2024, Oregon received a three-year grant through the Doris Duke Foundation to support the design of a new approach to serving children and families through concrete and economic supports that prevent child welfare involvement. The resources and technical assistance of the Opportunity for Prevention and Transformation Initiative (OPT-in for Families) will support continued development of work Oregon has already begun to develop alternatives to child welfare involvement.

[Interactive mandatory reporter training](#)

This new training helps individuals identify types of child abuse, learn how to report, and recognize when a family needs concrete or economic assistance.

Why it is important

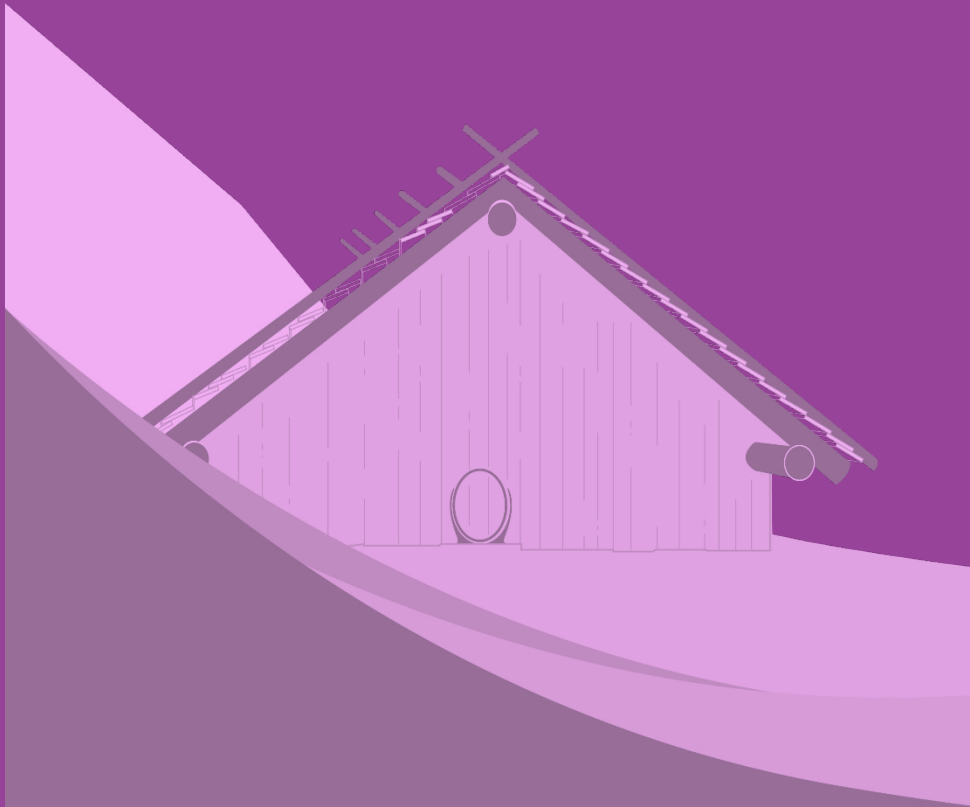
Meeting families' basic needs through *economic* and *concrete* supports in times of need is key to family stability. And family stability is key to child safety.

[National data](#) highlights the connection between economic supports and child safety:

- Family income is the greatest predictor of maltreatment and child welfare involvement. Families living below the poverty line are over 40x more likely to enter the child welfare system than median-income families.
- A study of family preservation programs cited concrete services as central to achieving positive outcomes.
- For every additional childcare availability issue reported by families receiving TANF, the risk of supervisory child neglect increased by 20%.
- Difficulty finding childcare was a stronger predictor of *maternal* neglect than almost any other factor, including mental health, severity of drug use, use of public assistance.
- Families involved with child welfare who faced housing instability and participated in a supportive housing program (housing voucher + case management) experienced fewer removals (9% vs. 40% in control group after 2 years).
- Participation in SNAP (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program) and/or WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) jointly or alone, is associated with a lower risk of abuse and neglect reports.

Guiding Principle 2:

Enhancing Our Staff and
Infrastructure



Significant metrics for a
supported, skilled, and engaged
workforce that reflects the
communities we serve

Child Welfare Equity Initiatives

SOGIE/REALD Implementation Proposal

The Equity Coordinators are in a research and discovery phase to identify how other states have implemented data collection and reporting around sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), as well as race, ethnicity, age, language and disability (REALD). A proposal will take place to ELT regarding recommendations on implementation once the Legislative Session is over and all related bills are confirmed.

Lived Experience Reimbursement and Engagement

Two guides have been created to help Child Welfare program and local offices provide funding to individuals with lived experience who engage with our agency through panels, consultation, or workgroups. Partner engagement, particularly lived experience, is an important component of program and practice design and improvement. A guide supports consistent reimbursement to partners and accurate accounting of resources.

This guide has been utilized during the partner interviews in the Child and Family Services Review Round 4 Partner interviews conducted by the Children's Bureau. Non-ODHS staff were compensated for their contribution.

Youth Advisory Council

A Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop a Youth Advisory Council within Child Welfare has been awarded and has been submitted for funding approval. The selected vendor will provide training, coordination, scheduling, and compensation for youth participation.

Culturally Appropriate Training Procurement

A Portland-based program, Naturally Beautiful Project, provides safe and judgement free space for parents and children to learn the necessary tools to achieve healthy hair. Child Welfare has procured several modules for staff and resource parents to access on-demand through Workday Learning. The training is expected to be available by the end of June 2025.

The Equity Training and Workforce Development Team met with BIPOC Adoptees, a group that offers support and training cohorts for the Child Welfare workforce. Several cohorts of the training focus on cultural loss, interracial adoption, supporting culture, and more.

Workforce Well-being

Child Welfare Well-being Chats

These quick 20-minute chats are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month. These virtual meetings are open to all Child Welfare staff across the state and provide connection with peers and an opportunity to engage in well-being conversations.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) - Trauma Aware

Group or individual CISM debriefing sessions are available to Child Welfare staff after a traumatic or other powerful event. These debriefing sessions provide peer support and connection to process and normalize reactions to these types of event. Debriefings also provide additional resources and connection to more intensive support if needed for participants. CISM facilitators re-connect with each participant two weeks after a debriefing to check in and provide additional support or resources if necessary. These occur through Trauma Aware.

Community Resiliency Model (CRM) Workshops - Trauma Aware

ODHS is offering workshops to the CW workforce to build upon individual and community strengths in building resilience. CRM is a model provided through the Trauma Resource Institute and ODHS staff have been certified as teachers to provide these workshops. CRM offers skills that individuals and communities can use to reset their autonomic nervous system after experiencing a trauma or feelings of overwhelm and return to their 'Resilient Zone'.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) - Trauma Aware

ASIST is a suicide intervention program through Living Works. ODHS staff have been certified as trainers to lead these two-day workshops. ASIST teaches participants what risk factors, behaviors and comments that may indicate a person is thinking about suicide. ASIST provides skills, terminology, education and practice to respond and support someone at risk of suicide to build a safety plan and connect the individual to other community supports and resources.

Safety Culture Hour

Safety Culture Hour is a virtual event hosted by the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program twice monthly to promote a "safety culture" through community practice and shared learning. At the heart of a safety culture is psychological safety. Psychological safety is a belief nobody will be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

Lunch and Chat

Child Welfare Director, Aprille Flint-Gerner hosts a Lunch and Chat with frontline staff and supervisors to discuss various program topics and invite participants to contribute ideas. Topics covered in the first four sessions included centering child safety, compassion fatigue and burnout, psychological safety, and internal customer service.

New hires and promotions

What the measure is

Child Welfare caseworkers hired or promoted into SSS1 classification compared to caseworker separations.

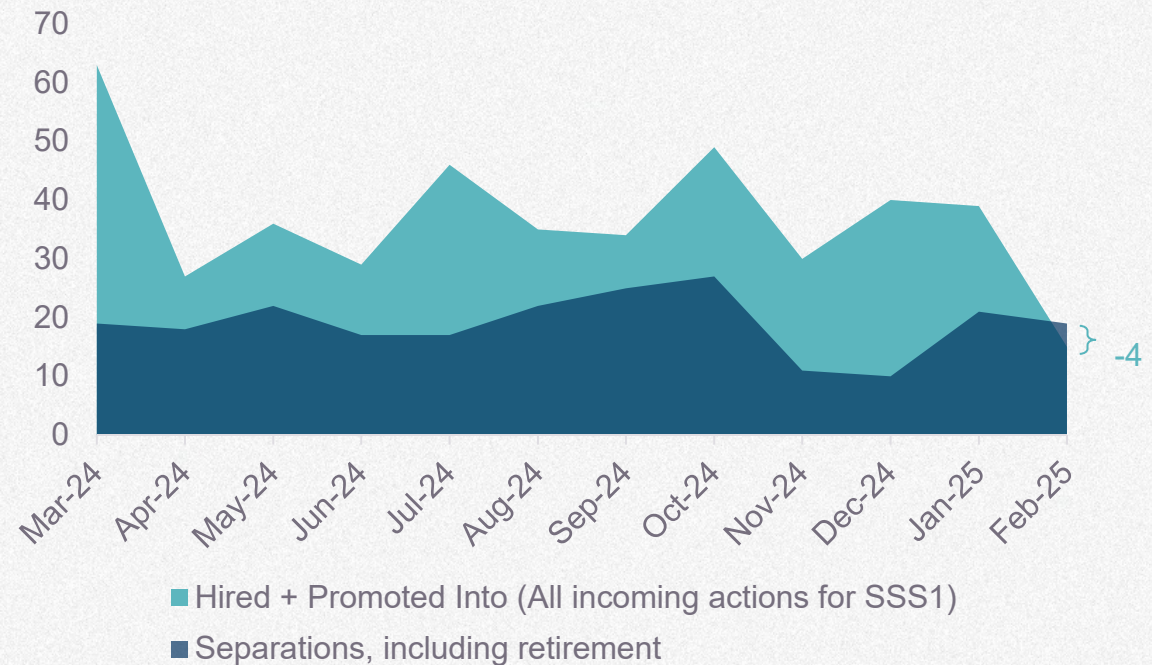
Why it is important

The 2023-2025 legislature approved a Policy Option Package (POP) that increased the allocation of Child Welfare safety positions. Through a phased approach, the last of those positions have been filled and onboarded. Child Welfare leadership will continue monitoring data for impacts of this increased staffing.

What we are doing

For all recruitments during the last 180 days, the average recruitment length from job posting to conditional offer was 57 days. ODHS continues to focus efforts on consistently achieving the goal of an average of 45 days or less to fill a vacancy.

Hires & Promotions Into SSS1/Caseworker Classification vs Separations



Note: Data may change as the result of processes that have “completed” in Workday since the last data run.

Caseworker caseload averages hold steady to standards

What the measure is

Child Welfare caseworkers (SSS1 classification) are assigned cases (e.g., CPS: number of new assessments in the last 30 days, Permanency: number of children and young adults, and Certification: number of homes) as part of their caseload. This data will capture the monthly averages for each of the three casework roles.

Why it is important

Ensuring manageable caseloads is one way to develop and support the workforce. This will result in a decrease in vacancies, an increase in retention rates, an increase in longer tenures, increased promotions, and higher workforce morale, which all positively impact the children and youth we serve.

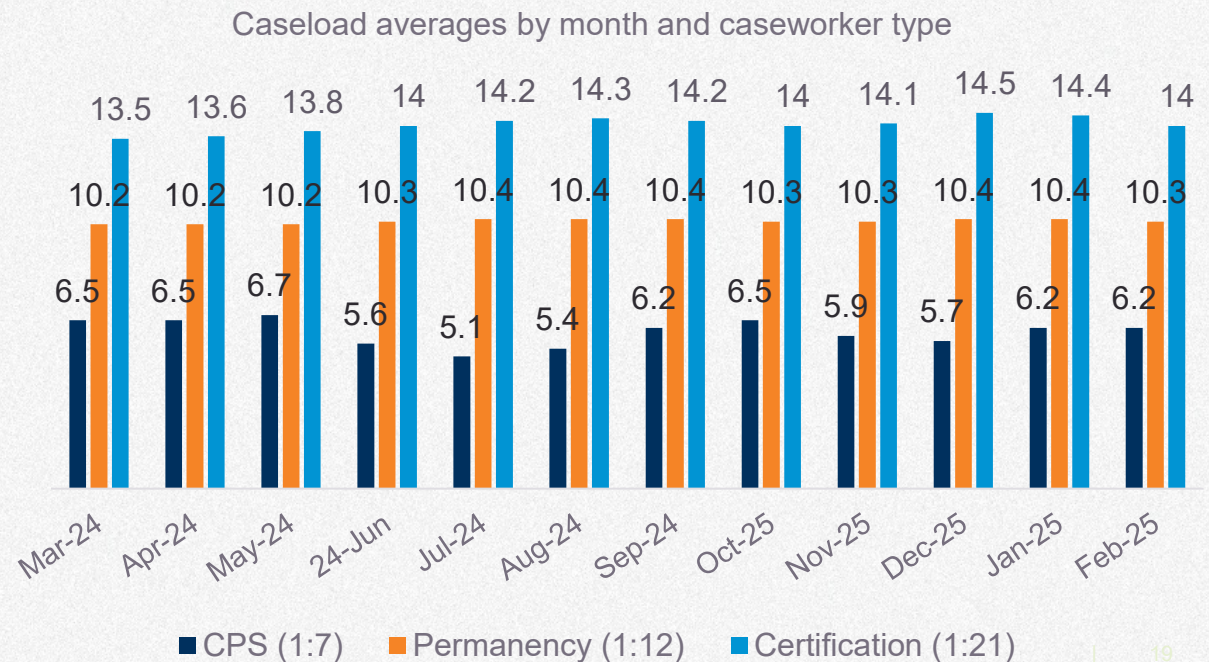
What we are doing

Each level of management is regularly using the dashboard. Frequent data validation checks are happening within Safety, Permanency, and Certification program staff.

Background

Caseloads play an important role in the legislative process and are used to inform legislatively granted position authority and budget. In implementing the Vision for Transformation, in 2022 Child Welfare established the state's goal for caseload ratio standards. To establish them, Child Welfare incorporated the CWLA Standards of Excellence, Council on Accreditation, timing studies done in Oregon in 2008 and 2017, and literature and research reviews. The average monthly caseloads for the specific caseworker roles are outlined below:

- CPS: 1 caseworker per 7 new assignments assigned in the last 30 days
- Permanency: 1 caseworker per 12 children and young adults served
- Certification: 1 caseworker per 21 certified resource homes



Guiding Principle 3:

Utilizing Data with
Continuous Quality
Improvement Systems (CQI)



Enhancing the Structure of our
System by using Data with Continuous
Quality Improvement (CQI)

System transformation through partnerships

Why it is important

ODHS is transforming the child welfare system in collaboration with Tribes, community members, families and children with prior system experience, resource and adoptive parents, service providers, and policymakers. This values-based approach holds equity and a belief that children do best growing up in a family at the center of helping families achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

Strategic Planning with Tribes

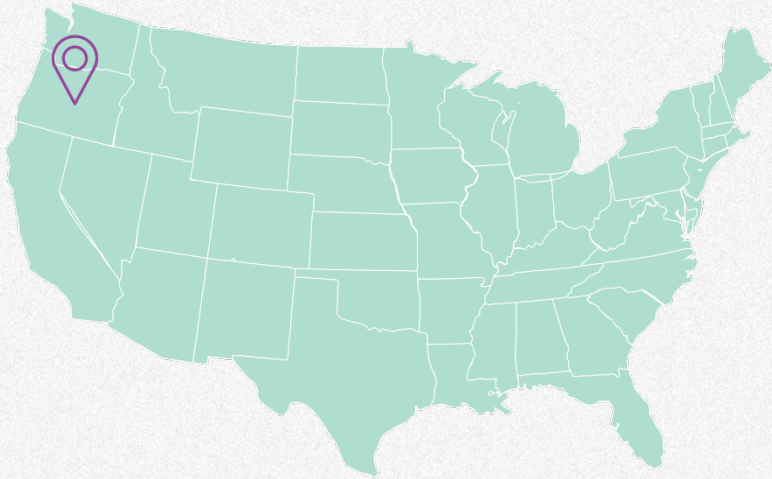
On February 25-26, 2025, ODHS met with Tribes to discuss planning and opportunities available to Tribes through Title IV-E Family First Prevention Services.

Meeting participants included representatives from five of the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians. Additional participants included partners from the Children's Bureau and ODHS Tribal Affairs and Child Welfare.

Discussions included:

- ODHS's commitment to Tribal sovereignty and decision-making regarding prevention planning.
- A review of Oregon's current Title IV-E Family First Prevention Plan.
- Family First opportunities for all Tribes, and those available to each Tribe with IV-E State Plans.
- Review of evidence-based practices and cultural adaptations.
- IV-E claiming for Tribal based practices.

Federal Performance Measure Dashboard



The [Oregon Department of Human Services \(ODHS\) Child Welfare Federal Performance Measures Dashboard](#) provides quarterly updates on an array of trends across the state for these Federal Performance measures:

- Maltreatment in foster care
- Recurrence of maltreatment
- Re-entry to foster care
- Permanency in 12 months
- Permanency in 12 to 23 months
- Permanency in 24+ months
- Placement stability

Definitions for the Federal measures are posted in the link above.

This dashboard, launched in December 2021, is designed from files produced by the University of Kansas Center for Research Results Oriented Management Application (ROM) using Oregon Child Welfare data. The ROM reports were transferred in December 2024 to the public-facing [Child Welfare Public Data Reports](#).

The Federal Standards for each measure are updated every few years. These standards will be updated on our Federal Performance Measures dashboard to reflect the changes in 2023. For more information, please refer to the [Children and Family Services Review Technical Bulletin 13A](#).

The Office of Research, Reporting, Analytics, and Implementation will update the data in April.

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services prepares an annual report](#) of state performance in the seven categories listed above. The report includes findings of analysis conducted on performance across states over time.

About

The [Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation](#) is the spirit of what we believe the child welfare system should be in Oregon.

Centered on three guiding principles, the [Vision for Transformation](#) is the roadmap and compass for the Oregon Child Welfare Division to transform itself and the greater child welfare system into one that supports and preserves families. These guiding principles are:

1. Supporting families and promoting prevention
2. Enhancing our staff and infrastructure
3. Enhancing the structure of our system by using data with continuous quality improvement

For questions or feedback about this report, please contact:
childwelfare.directorsoffice@odhsoha.oregon.gov