



Question categories: Grants/Contracts/Funding

Will there be an effort made to increase funding for ODHS contracts? It is very difficult to hire and retain staff when wages are what they are.

- A legislative task force ODHS has been involved with (Senate Bill 606) is looking at wages and compensation for nonprofits that contract with government agencies. We expect results of this SB 606 Modernizing Grant Funding and Contracting Task Force, which includes both house and senate members, in June 2024. The task force webpage is available at <https://www.oregon.gov/das/Procurement/Pages/taskforce.aspx>

What changes are coming for grant-receiving programs and agencies in the next year?

- ODHS has an increased focus on community-based organizations, who are best situated to help connect their communities with services. ODHS recently worked with the Nonprofit Association of Oregon to help them strengthen their members to be able to receive and handle the requirements and structures needed for state agency contracts and grants.
- In 2024, ODHS has created a Resilience Hubs grant. The [Resilience Hubs and Networks Grant](#) is intended to support places where people come together daily to share resources, support one another and can find resources during an emergency. The hubs will also support local networks of people and groups that help strengthen their communities.

How does an organization look for/create contracts with ODHS?

- [Oregon Buys](#) is the best way to connect with ODHS (and other state agencies) for opportunities to contract. If you are looking for expanded opportunities outside of your normal commodity code, the best way to look for opportunities is to do a search for Oregon Buys without signing into the system first.

What steps are being taken to increase opportunities for small organizations to partner with ODHS?

- There is 1 full-time outreach person at ODHS for business opportunities, and we will be hiring another one at OHA very soon. This position works with chambers of commerce, such as the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs and culturally specific chambers of commerce. We also look for ways to create

opportunities for smaller contracts that would be accessible for small organizations, instead of very large awards that go to one vendor.

Workforce

What do workforce development plans look like for caseworkers, SSA's, case aides, etc. in the immediate future and long term?

- Child Welfare has a variety of initiatives under way to develop and support the workforce, in line with the Vision for Transformation Guiding Principle 2: Enhancing our staff and infrastructure. Efforts include enhanced training for new workers, new training on OR-KIDS as well as a variety of topics such as fentanyl response, safety forms, well-being spaces and a Community Resiliency Model to help workers deal with stress and trauma.

What is ODHS planning to address the issue of the ability for providers to timely hire workers due to the excessive delay in getting Criminal Background Checks done? The process needs streamlined, or the criminal activity list needs adjusted to not require duplicate checks when people change jobs.

- The Legislature in the February 2024 session provided ODHS with funding to hire 11 additional positions in the Background Check Unit, which will reduce service delays. The Legislature also passed [HB 4122](#), which changes our systems by retaining fingerprints for participation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, requiring individuals to go through fewer background checks.

What are you doing to address the caregiver shortage in Oregon?

- The caregiver shortage is impacting many programs within ODHS that depend on the availability of quality providers to support clients. Our programs – in particularly Aging and People with Disabilities and the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services -- continue to work with the Legislature to ensure that rates are competitive, as well as focus on retention and recruitment initiatives.

Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS)

When ODDS licensing gets behind on their reviews, why don't they have the ability to extend the next renewal date by 2 years after their visit? Ex: We had a review due in November, and licensing didn't get out to the house until the following July (over a year). Then 3 weeks after the actual onsite review, the house received the renewal notice for November. Instead of changing the licensing date to match the 2-year rule, licensing said they had to keep it November and would schedule to return in less than 6 months. This seems extremely inefficient and unnecessary.

- Unfortunately, this is an area that is outside our state control. This is a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (federal oversight) requirement and written

into our statutes that we must conduct reviews and only allow licenses for two years and no longer.

The change to billing 344 days for 24-hr residential has made a significant negative impact on our organization's budgets and finances. We don't have the administrative capacity to adjust our billing processes, therefore we bill for 344-days, and typically only have 9-10 days to bill in the person's 12th month of their ISP before it renews. Some houses have 3+ ISP's that start in the same month, which means the 12th month of their ISP is only about 1/3 of a full month. Has there been discussion about having the flexibility to change ISP dates so providers don't have to deal with the volatility of funding in those short payment months?

- With the compass rollout in June of 2022, the billing structure changed to the 344 day billing model, providers are being paid for 365 days in a 344 day period. This was done so if an individual is out of their residence for up to 21 days for a family visit or other reason the provider could still receive a full year payment. The breakdown of how the billing works is in the [guides and worker guides](#). There have not been discussions about changing the ISP dates for an individual, since the provider is receiving the full year payment in the 344 days the provider should have the necessary funds to cover the 21 days they are not able to bill in eXPRS.

After hearing feedback from ODDS providers about not being in support of the proposed changes to the Supported Living Model, has there been discussion within the department about how to keep it a comprehensive service?

- ODDS continues to meet to discuss rate model methodologies with the Supported Living Provider workgroup to develop a sustainable, accountable Supported Living rate structure.

The community I serve and support is that of brain injury. I have little to no knowledge of how to navigate our community into and through Multnomah County, APD, VR, other services they need – how can you help?

- Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) is in the process of implementing [Senate Bill 420](#) which will help individuals with brain injuries navigate many different systems. In the meantime, people are encouraged to connect with their [local APD office](#) or call the [Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon](#) at 855-673-ADRC (2372) for resources and help navigating systems.

Child Welfare

What strategies are you implementing to build consistency of response and assessment of safety for families?

- Child Welfare in 2022 adopted the evidence-based Structured Decision Making tool to support Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) staff in making consistent, accurate and equitable decisions regarding assignment of reports of alleged abuse to Child Protective Services. ORCAH has an evaluation plan that

measures progress toward the goals of Structured Decision Making and drives continuous improvement.

What cross-system collaboration and alignment efforts is ODHS participating in to build the continuum of care that prevents the need for CW/CPS involvement?

- ODHS participates in the [System of Care Advisory Committee](#), which is a central, cross-system forum for improving the continuum of care for youth. ODHS also is one of four states recently selected by the Doris Duke Foundation to test and build upon Oregon's approach to preventing child welfare involvement by connecting families to services provided by community-based organizations.

ODHS Human Resources

What is being done to address the number of positions that cannot be filled due to the classification and compensation review backlog? Some positions have not been filled for over two years based on our understanding.

- Human Resources has been able to reduce classification review cycle times significantly and continues to evaluate process and cycle times to ensure that we are able to fill positions necessary to provide services to Oregonians.

What kind of data do you need in order for there to be enough evidence that we need lower caseloads and add more workers across the whole ODHS?

- ODHS is currently working with our programs and an external vendor to update the existing workload models, using data such as the time it takes to do the work, best practices and comparison to other states, including where we can improve processes. The updated models will be presented to the legislature for approval for the 2025-2027 biennium.

What are the 3 top priorities in terms of change that you want to see for this agency?

- ODHS is focused on its mission to support well-being for everyone in Oregon. To do that, we need to move toward the Equity North Star, ensuring accessibility and excellent customer service for all. Our agency-wide strategic plan due in June 2024 will help pave the way, as will the ODHS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging plan recently released.

Would you consider perhaps setting up an employee suggestion box online?

- Yes. ODHS has had a number of suggestion boxes over the years. Currently, there is a [building well-being suggestion](#) box for employees to share ideas which allows for anonymous posting and is checked regularly.

Community Engagement

How do you feel you best serve underserved areas that are far away from your main office spaces?

- Creating accessibility is a key priority for ODHS and while we've made some steps over the past two years, with mobile vans building connection in more rural

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areas (currently in Hood River, Wasco, Coos, Josephine, Jackson and Washington Counties), there is more to do. On the north coast, we're also moving from one prior office in Astoria to three offices (Warrenton, Seaside, Astoria plus a mobile van) in the coming year.

I'm interested in learning more about ODHS and how we can partner to help the community.

- ODHS is always looking for more connections in the community. There are a number of ways to connect: if you are an organization or business that is looking for a contract/grant, please see Oregon Buys and sign up to receive updates on opportunities. Also, join the [Community Partner newsletter list](#), which will share periodic opportunities for engagement opportunities through ODHS programs.

How open are you to Public and Private long-term partnerships?

- ODHS is open to all partnerships and we encourage you to connect with us. If you are an organization that would like to reach a specific region or program, we encourage you to reach out to either odhs.info@odhsoha.oregon.gov, which is checked regularly, or find the specific information you would like [in the agency directory](#).

Aging and People with Disabilities (APD)

Are there any efforts/incentives to recruit/establish more Adult Foster Homes?

- Yes. The Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) has recruitment efforts underway for Adult Foster Home (AFH) providers. APD is committing financial resources for a media campaign to promote the AFH program, and to support those interested in seeking licensure as an AFH provider.

Will a policy proposal to relax resource and income eligibility limits for Oregon's version of the federal Medicaid Buy-In work incentive (Employed Persons with Disabilities, EPD) Program be submitted in the 2025 Regular Session as part of ODHS' Budget Request?

- At this point, we don't yet know which Policy Option Package proposals will be included in the Agency Requested Budget (ARB). We will officially post the ARB Sept 1. and may be able to start sharing more specific budget priorities in the coming months.

Self-Sufficiency Programs/Oregon Eligibility Partnership

Why were local controls taken away for SNAP and Medicaid renewals?

- ODHS combined eligibility functions into a single program – the Oregon Eligibility Partnership, or OEP – in order to bring improved and more consistent service to Oregonians. Throughout this process of bringing operations together, we have maintained local, storefront offices to help people in their communities. Our goal continues to be to serve people no matter how they choose to engage with us – whether that be in person, on the phone, or online.

This document posted on the Oregon Department of Human Services Community Partner Meetings page: <https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/news/Pages/community-briefings.aspx>

Is there going to be more emergency funding for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, especially for small non-profits?

- In the 2024 Legislative session, the Legislature funded an investment to increase the maximum cash benefit available to survivors of domestic violence through the Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors ([TA-DVS](#)) program, providing more of the critical resources families need to move into safe housing.

How will you address food insecurity that is rising in Oregon and we (Oregon Food Bank) are seeing food insecurity and hunger increase in Oregon. We are seeing this both in the USDA reports as well as Oregon Food Bank's service statistics. We believe factors like the high cost of food and the end of pandemic-related assistance are driving this. In light of that, we would like to ask ODHS leadership how we can both maximize current anti-hunger programs, as well as what ways we can address exclusions in food assistance programs, particularly for Oregonians who are Immigrants who experience hunger at disproportionately high rates.

- With assistance from the federal government and state legislature, we've adopted the Summer EBT program for 2024 which will help children access extra money each month for food assistance. ODHS has also partnered with community organizations in various areas of the state to promote and hold free food fairs (Washington County, Medford, etc.)

Other

We have had significant issues with our ODHS office investigating claims of financial abuse. Is it protocol to not investigate unless there is physical proof of financial abuse presented at the time of reporting? Also, is it protocol to not give out the case number when asked?

- The Office of Training, Investigations and Safety (OTIS) can conduct financial abuse investigations if there are allegations of financial abuse to an adult patient at Oregon State Hospital, Stabilization and Crisis Unit, but we rarely get those types of cases. If it is a financial abuse case being conducted in the community of an adult receiving I/DD or Behavioral Health services, then more than likely it is a local (county) Community Developmental Disability Program or a Community Mental Health Program investigator. OTIS does approve those investigations conducted by county investigators, but rarely conducts them ourselves (although we can and occasionally do.) Regarding protocol, an investigator would need evidence that an individual is being financially exploited, in order to open an investigation.

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We have heard that ODHS will no longer be distributing air conditioners for seniors and people with disabilities through OREM instead they will be provided through the CCOs. When the weather heats up there is not time to process forms to get air conditioner units delivered. How can this be remedied? Why change something that has been working well?

- There have been two programs to distribute these, one funded through the General Fund of the state budget, the other through Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) using Medicaid. A bill recently passed in the latest legislative session to re-authorize and fund the General Fund program, meaning the program will operate in the same way it did the previous two years. Regarding the CCOs, over the last couple years OREM has been happy to partner with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to distribute air conditioners (AC) and air filtration devices (AFD). As the manager of the AC/AFD program, OHA sets the criteria for how these items are requested. As the air conditioner program matures OHA has decided that CCOs should be the points of contact to request and receive these devices. ODHS/OREM are also working with CCOs to see how we can speed up the authorization and delivery of units through Medicaid funds.

What will you do to keep us connected? Can we come and do a presentation regarding who we are and what we do at Women First?

- There are a variety of ways to stay connected with ODHS. The [ODHS community partner page](#) lists upcoming partner meetings (usually 1-2 times per year), and a periodic newsletter includes program-specific updates as available. If you are an organization that would like to reach a specific region or program, we encourage you to reach out to either odhs.info@odhsoha.oregon.gov, which is checked regularly, or find the specific information you would like [in the agency directory](#).