

# SACU operational plan

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**Date:** Sept. 28, 2026

**To:** Intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) community members

**From:** Acacia McGuire Anderson, Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), and Winston Brown, Director of the Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU)

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Hello,

We have an update on the Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU) operational plan. This news is for the whole community. It's most important for:

- Individuals served by SACU and their families
- SACU staff and union partners
- Case management entities (CMEs)
- Anyone with questions about SACU

## **Why is SACU making a new operational plan?**

The Oregon Legislature passed a bill in May 2025. It directed us to work with the community to make a new work plan for SACU that:

- Follows federal rules for home- and community-based services with the intent of getting to and staying in full compliance
- Improves crisis care to help people stabilize in less time
- Supports people to move back to their communities successfully
- Has phases with the first phase starting July 1, 2027.

The bill told us to finish the plan and submit it to the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means by Sept. 30, 2026.

## **What is new since our last update on the SACU plan?**

### **Outreach and feedback**

Last fall, we held listening sessions in regions with SACU houses. We heard from SACU residents, self-advocates, family members, support workers and providers, case management staff, union members, and neighbors. Thank you, all who attended and shared.

One main theme we heard was that SACU residents must have direct input in developing the new plan. So, earlier this year, our leadership team went to each SACU house. We talked with residents and staff. We heard their needs,

fears, concerns, and hopes. We heard about what is and isn't working for them. This feedback helped shape the new plan.

The feedback we heard from our partners also helped. We have been working with partners to examine how SACU works, understand service gaps, and find ways to better support individuals who are in crisis to move back into their communities.

Here are some of the main themes from this feedback that have been guiding our work:

- SACU is an essential safety net. It fills a gap in the system where other services cannot safely meet the needs of those in crisis. We must strengthen SACU's role as a crisis stabilization service.
- Stabilization is different for each person. There is no single timeline for individuals to stay at SACU. Our services and plan must be flexible. When people leave SACU too soon, they risk going back into crisis. We need clearer entry and transition criteria.
- Mental and behavioral health care are key to stabilization. Partnerships across systems are essential. We must strengthen our work with Oregon Health Authority to better support those at SACU.
- Access to our services shouldn't depend on where a person lives. SACU is only in the Willamette Valley. Our plan needs to help people across the state.
- Federal compliance is about individuals' rights and dignity, not getting rid of safety. Any changes to our processes need to happen in ways that support each person's safety and stability.

- For individuals to make successful transitions back into the community, staff and partners must share responsibilities. Case management support must be consistent when someone is at SACU and throughout their transition back into the community. Providers need support and training to help transitions succeed.

As we move forward, we will continue to engage individuals, families, staff, labor, and our partners. Your feedback is essential to our mission.

## Contractors and plan development

We hired two contractors to work on the plan: [Weaver](#) and [Illuminative Strategies \(ISI\)](#). They are experts in home- and community-based services, Medicaid, and crisis intervention. They've been meeting with individuals, self-advocates, union members, parents and guardians, community partners, providers, case management entities, and staff.

We've been working with ISI to improve our compliance with federal standards for home- and community-based services. ISI has been working with staff and case management entities to map our processes. They're reviewing this data and our policies to see how we can improve our services while meeting federal requirements.

Weaver is an independent consultant. This means that they do their own research and work. In addition to their data research, they met with more than 400 people since April. They used what they learned to create options for the proposed SACU operational plan.

## What happens next?

Weaver is finalizing the proposed plan. We want to preview this plan with individuals, families, guardians, staff, labor, and partners. Then, we can submit the plan to the Legislature with a report about how the plan's different options might affect people. This context will be essential for the Legislature.

We don't have enough time to do this work before the Sept. 30 deadline. **To ensure this important step, we asked the Legislative Fiscal Office for more time to finish this work.**

We're eager to get more feedback and finalize the report. **Here are our next steps:**

- **September/October: We formed a Technical Advisory Committee.** The committee includes individuals, families, guardians, staff, labor, and partners. In the coming weeks, we'll review Weaver's plan and recommendations with the committee. Members will give us feedback on how the plan's options might affect members of their communities. For example, SACU residents can share how the plan might affect them. Staff can do the same, and so on.
- **November: We'll have follow-up discussions,** as needed.
- **December: We'll prepare a feedback report that includes what we've heard from TAC. We'll finalize the SACU plan.**
- **Jan. 8, 2027: We'll submit the final SACU operational plan and the feedback to the Legislature.**

## Thank you

Thank you again, all who have provided feedback and been part of our planning. We look forward to finishing the new operational plan and strengthening our services.

If you have questions, email [sacu.execteam@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:sacu.execteam@odhs.oregon.gov).

Sincerely,



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