

News Release

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Oregon selected by Doris Duke Foundation for grant funding work

(Salem) – The [Doris Duke Foundation](#) selected Oregon and three other states to be part of a three-year, \$33 million initiative to test and build upon Oregon’s new approach to serving children and families. This approach combines anti-poverty programs with coaching models to ensure child safety, keep families together and prevent unnecessary child welfare involvement. Oregon began using this approach in 2022 and has eight demonstration sites statewide. The state has seen a steady decline in children in foster care, down from 7,908 children in 2018, to 4,597 in 2023.

The Opportunities for Prevention and Transformation Initiative, or [Opt-in for Families](#), will provide the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and its community partners with technical assistance to continue the work of connecting families at risk of child welfare involvement due to lack of resources with needed material and community supports.

“This investment serves as an incredible opportunity to deepen and expand Oregon’s commitment to children’s well-being,” Governor Tina Kotek said. “It’s also a meaningful recognition of the hard work that has come before it. I am hopeful that Oregon’s most vulnerable children will benefit greatly from this effort. Thank you, Doris Duke Foundation.”

The Doris Duke Foundation is investing in cost-effective and scalable models to prevent abuse and neglect. According to the foundation’s Child Well-being Program Director JooYeun Chang, “Oregon has demonstrated leadership and commitment to innovative models that reduce the need for surveillance-based child welfare involvement which too often results in lasting trauma to families and communities and misses the opportunity to help them thrive.”

With the launch of Opt-in for Families, a pilot program will design a referral system to route reports to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) that are not considered child abuse following a screening process. Nationally and in Oregon, about 50 percent of all calls to child abuse hotlines are not found to constitute abuse. However, these reports often indicate serious economic needs and other

hardships that can result in increased risk to the safety and well-being of children. Opt-in for Families will link these families to voluntary assistance programs from community organizations and ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs, such as food benefits, cash assistance and services for domestic violence survivors.

“Oregon is committed to improving child safety and family well-being by focusing on safety nets and resources that keep families together,” said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht. “We are honored to partner with the Doris Duke Foundation to develop and test programs that address poverty, provide individualized supports and reduce the need for child welfare interventions.”

South Carolina, Kentucky and Washington, D.C. were also selected by Doris Duke Foundation to be part of this initiative because of their programs related to early childhood education and other child welfare prevention efforts.

[Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab](#), [Chapin Hall](#), [Foster America](#) and [Think of Us](#) will provide technical assistance to ODHS and the Doris Duke Foundation to build and evaluate ODHS prevention work for eventual rollout across Oregon.

Resources

- Doris Duke Foundation Opt-in for Families [press release](#)
- Learn more about [Opt-in for Families](#)
- Learn about ODHS [Family Preservation](#)
- For video interviews and other video footage on ODHS programs related to the grant please contact: Lindsay Magnuson, lindsay.magnuson@odhs.oregon.gov

About the Doris Duke Foundation

The mission of the Doris Duke Foundation (DDF) is to build a more creative, equitable and sustainable future by investing in artists and the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research, child well-being and greater mutual understanding among diverse communities. To learn more, visit www.dorisduke.org.

About the Oregon Department of Human Services

The mission of ODHS is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

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