



An Advocates Guide to the 2013 Co Chairs Budget

1. What is the Co Chairs Budget and how is it different than the Governor's Balanced Budget?

The Co Chairs budget is a budget developed by the 2 Co Chairs of Ways & Means. These budget drafters take into consideration the recommendations from the Governor's Balanced Budget, the priorities they have devised for their process, priorities from other members and the Caucuses and develop their recommendation for a budget to support the next biennium. The Co Chairs budget, like the Governor's Budget, is a recommendation of a plan and is not binding. However, it is often the framework from which more final decisions are made for the Ways & Means process. The Governor's budget is required by statute whereas the Co Chairs budget is not.

2. What did the Co Chairs budget recommend for services to Human Services?

The Co Chairs budget, as it was released, is a very high level document at this time. There are some broad recommendations in key areas such as PERS and investment in education. The Co Chairs budget made a significant increased investment in education, an unprecedented amount of \$6.75 billion for this next biennium. The Co Chairs budget recommends a lower amount of savings from PERS reform than the Governor's budget.

With regards to Human Services, the budget as it was presented did not give any specifics. However, in subsequent weeks and conversations, more information as to the intent of the Co Chairs has been shared. The Co Chairs budget plan proposes reductions made in other areas of the budget to fund the investment in education. The suggested cut to Human Services has been estimated at over **\$70 million**¹.

3. What would cuts like that to Human Services mean for Seniors & People with Disabilities?

This kind of proposed reduction could have significant impacts to budgets for seniors and people with disabilities. Cuts of this magnitude would seriously undermine Oregon's system of long-term services and supports that focuses on home and community based care and maximizing the independence of the person. These proposed reductions could result in²:

- Undermining Oregon's system of community based long-term care through disinvestment
- Threaten funding for Oregon Project Independence, a remarkably cost efficient and effective program that is saving the state millions

¹ Source: Campaign for Oregon's Seniors & People with Disabilities handout 3/15/13

² Source: Campaign for Oregon's Seniors & People with Disabilities Handout 3/15/13

- Fail to restore in home care hours for seniors and people with disabilities
- Divert new Federal K-Waiver funds from services for seniors and people with disabilities and move those funds to other areas of the budget
- Fail to invest in the infrastructure of eligibility and Adult Protective Services for individuals receiving Medicaid long-term care, thus further increasing the inequity in services that exists within DHS between Aging & Physical Disabilities program and other services areas of the Department.

4. What do the Co Chairs recommend for Oregon Project Independence?

Because this budget from the Co Chairs do not recommend any specific reductions for Human Services (or investments), we do not have a clear sense of what the recommendation is for Oregon Project Independence. The Governor's Budget recommended flat funding OPI at its current level of \$9.78 million. O4AD recommends investment to this program to restore it to the previous level of \$12.6 million. This would enable the program to address those individuals currently on waiting lists who are hoping to receive some care through this program. OPI is program that has proven its value, its effective services and its efficiency and should be a priority in the human services budgets.

5. What can I do as an advocate?

It is CRITICAL that budgets for this legislative body are NOT balanced at the expense of critical and necessary services to seniors and people with disabilities. Oregon's system of long-term services and supports, which prioritizes the independence, dignity, choice and safety of Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities should not just be protected and preserved but also should have investment made to reinstate the serious cuts that have been experienced over the last several biennium. The Co Chairs budget does not currently have specific recommendations for investments in programs such as home based care, community based care, Oregon Project Independence, Adult Protective Services and strengthening the infrastructure for the Medicaid long-term care system. **Your voice needs to be heard by your legislators to know that services and seniors and people with disabilities IS a priority.**

- Sign up today for o4ad's advocacy updates at www.o4ad.org.
- Attend O4AD's Day at the Capitol for Seniors & People with Disabilities on May 8, 2013. Register now at: <http://o4adadvocacyday.eventbrite.com>.
- Schedule time to talk with your legislators about the importance of prioritizing services for seniors and people with disabilities – you can find your legislators via O4AD's website at www.o4ad.org - Political Action
- Stay engaged! Connect with O4AD with questions or to talk about getting more involved with advocating on behalf of seniors and people with disabilities

Contact O4AD today! Email O4AD – info@o4ad.org or call us: 503-463-8692 to get involved. Your voice is critical as we work to protect and increase investments in services to seniors and people with disabilities. Our advocates are a critical voice for Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities.