



An Advocates Guide to the Governor's Recommended Budget

1. What is the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB)?

Under Oregon law, the Governor releases his recommended budget at the beginning of December prior to the regular legislative session (December of the even numbered year in preparation for the session starting in January). Oregon requires a balanced budget – expenditures must be balanced by revenue. The Governor's Balanced Budget is a recommended budget – the Oregon Legislature then takes this budget under advisement and crafts their own budget - commonly referred to as the “Co Chairs Budget” for consideration by the legislative body. You can read the GRB at <http://www.oregon.gov/gov/priorities/pages/budget.aspx>.

2. What were the recommendations for services and supports to seniors and people with disabilities?

The GRB recommends continuing most of the investments that have been made during the 13-15 biennium for 2015-17. The GRB budget is \$812.8 million in General Fund and \$2,754.6 million total funds for Aging & People with Disabilities Division programs, 13% above the 2013-15 Legislatively Approved Budget.

3. What are the strategic investments that are continued?

Strategic investments that are included in the 2015-17 GRB include:

- Oregon Project Independence expansion for services to seniors. **\$20 million**
- Options Counseling services through the ADRC (Aging Disability Resource Connection). **\$1.4 million**
- Gatekeeper program through the ADRC. **\$1.7 million**
- DHS APD Innovation Fund
- Support to mitigate the negative impacts of sequestration to Older Americans Act programs throughout the state. **\$2.4 million**
- Special Capacity Development through APD
- 95% Equity funding to support Area Agencies administering Medicaid long-term services and supports
- Continuing workload based staffing for State and Area Agencies working with the Medicaid program
- Support for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman as they take on responsibilities for Conservator/Guardian programs

4. What are areas of concern with the GBB?

There are some areas of concern in the proposed budget. They include:

- **Oregon Project Independence (OPI) Pilot Project for Persons with Disabilities.** Currently, the Oregon Legislature funded a pilot project to extend OPI services to this new population. The request was to continue funding for this pilot through the 2015-17 biennium. This request was not included in the Governor's Recommended Budget. The Pilot is currently operating in five areas around the state and has clients on the caseload who are able to maintain their independence in their own home and avoid premature or unnecessary entrance into entitlement programs such as Medicaid. OPI provides services at a significant cost savings compared to programs such as Medicaid and is a smart investment with the goal of increasing independence and prioritizing prevention and early intervention. Securing support to continue this pilot through the 2015-17 biennium is a high priority for O4AD. **\$6 million.**
- **Evidence based health promotion and disease prevention.** The 2014 February session provided funds for these programs through savings realized from the revisions to the Senior Medical Expense Deduction. Evidence based programs are based on research and offer **proven** ways to promote health and prevent disease. Evidence based programs have undergone review by the Administration for Community Living Administration on Aging process. Currently these important prevention and intervention programs specifically targeted to seniors and people with disabilities are being implemented around the state through the ADRC network. It is critical to continue this investment in order to realize continued cost savings and healthier communities – in line with Oregon's overall goals in health system transformation. **\$1.25 million.**

5. What happens next with these recommendations?

The Ways & Means Committee of the Legislature will now use the GRB as a framework for consideration of this budget. There will be significant discussion around the areas identified in the GRB. Ultimately, the Co Chairs of Ways & Means will release their own version of a budget for the 2015-17 budget biennium for vote by the Legislative body. O4AD will be working closely with legislators to insure that the critical investments made in this previous biennium continue to serve seniors and people with disabilities in the next biennium. Evidence based health promotion and disease prevention along with services for people with disabilities through Oregon Project Independence are necessary elements of our system of long-term services and supports.

6. What happened with the savings from the Senior Medical Expense Deduction?

During the Special Legislative Session in 2013, changes were made to the Senior Medical Expense Deduction in order to lower the overall impact to state revenue and dollars. During the hearings on these changes, it was estimated that the savings that would be realized would be as follows:

2013-15 \$82 million	2015-17 \$117 million	2017-19 \$158 million	2019-2021 \$205 million	2021-23 \$244 million
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There were important investments for services and supports to seniors and people with disabilities made from approximately half of the savings realized in the 2013-15 biennium, with the remainder of funds moved to the General Fund for other programs. These investments included expansion of Oregon Project Independence for seniors, Older Americans Act support, Special Needs Transportation support, Caregiver Training, and Dementia programs. It is important that the Legislature continues to prioritize investment in programs for seniors and people with disabilities from the funds realized through revisions of the Senior Medical Expense Deduction. With a quickly increasing number of seniors and people with disabilities needing long-term services and supports, and a continued emphasis from Oregon on home and community based care to honor the independence of each individual, a continued investment of at least half of savings from this revision is appropriate and acknowledges the source of the savings that are being enjoyed by the State General Fund.

7. How can I help educate legislators as to the importance of investing in services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities?

Your voice matters! Join our advocacy network to receive the latest information on what's happening at the capitol and with the budget. Let your local Area Agency on Aging and/or Advisory Council know you want to advocate. We can help you get involved with your legislators!

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.