



Smart Investments for Oregon's People with Disabilities

Oregon Project Independence Pilot: Serving People with Disabilities

What is it? Oregon Project Independence (OPI) is an innovative, effective strategy to help reduce costs in Oregon's system of long-term services and supports. OPI provides a small amount of help to an individual who is at risk for premature or unnecessary placement in a more restrictive care setting and/or entering the Medicaid system. OPI was the first program of its kind in the nation to provide a safety net for people who could be diverted from Medicaid services and premature entry into restrictive and more costly care settings.

OPI serves a client at approximately \$300-\$350 per month, a dramatic cost savings compared to Medicaid services. To be eligible for OPI, one cannot currently be a Medicaid client or an Oregon Health Plan member. Currently, Medicaid long-term care clients also receive medical care through the Oregon Health Plan. OPI is designed to focus on prevention and intervention to help individuals remain independent and in their own home safely, at a significant cost savings for state and federal budgets.

In 2005, the Oregon Legislature opened the door to expanding this highly successful program to people with physical disabilities. However, these services have been unable to begin to this point.

What is the investment? Oregon's Legislature invested \$3 million to initiate a pilot project to serve people with disabilities through Oregon Project Independence for a one-year period. This investment is supporting health, safety and independence through the effective and efficient OPI program for people with disabilities. This is a proactive and cost effective step to improve health, quality of life and lower costs for state and federal budgets. Services began

What has happened? To date, this Pilot has served over 350 individuals with disabilities and is currently operating in six areas of the state. The pilot began services in Fall 2014.

- Over 75% of individuals in the pilot are at an income level less than \$1500 per month
- Over 90% are at an income level less than \$2000 per month
- Over 70% of individuals in the pilot are at risk for out of home placement
- Over 50% of individuals served are at a service priority level that would qualify for Medicaid

What's next? The Pilot has served over 300 individuals since service began in the fall of 2014 and is projected to serve a total of over 400 by the end of the pilot period. The Pilot is closely monitoring outcomes and pilot progress to report to the 2015 Legislature. It is critical to continue this project through the 2015-17 biennium at **\$6 million** to cover the two-year period and provide stability for those receiving services. Continuing this project will also allow further gathering of outcome data and help create a plan for Oregon Project Independence to move towards being age-neutral in future biennia.

Protecting this investment will continue to increase the independence, dignity, safety and quality of life for people with disabilities.

For more information, please contact Nicole Palmateer, O4AD, at nicole@o4ad.org or 503-463-8692.