Oregon Eligibility Partnership

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Jillian Johnson, OEP Deputy Director
February 2023

Presentation to the 2023 Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Outline

I. Who we are
II. Who, where and how we serve
III. The work ahead
IV. Governor’s Budget
V. Closing remarks
Why we do our work: Life events

There are many life events that cause disruption:

- Being incarcerated or institutionalized
- Changes in income
- Immigration to the U.S.
- Pregnancy or adoption
- Experienced long or short term disability
- Losing a spouse
- Losing your home
- Needing in-home services
- Aging up to 6, 19, 26, 65

These life events cause...

- Confusion
- Gaps/loss of coverage
- Change in eligibility
- Financial impact

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Why we do our work: Opportunities to thrive

So people are able to get back to reaching their potential

OEP updated the way medical, food cash and child care eligibility works

But old, complex applications and eligibility kept people stuck

Everyone hits bumps in the road on the way to well-being
Our responsibility to those we serve

Doing Redeterminations timely, so individuals will not experience gaps in coverage and their benefits will continue.

Providing resources for individuals when there are changes.

Partnering with community, other agencies and support our workers doing this critical work.

Applications: Process timely application for individuals seeking medical, food, cash, and child care.

Focus on the people in Oregon.
Our responsibility to agencies and our staff

- OEP performs eligibility on behalf of Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), and ODHS programs.
- We ensure systems are in place for staff to utilize.
- We provide the operations, training, and support for internal and external communication to staff and to Oregonians around eligibility determinations.
| Align eligibility staff and operations under a single program | Implement focused teams to help with complex and unique cases. | Continue to remove administrative and programmatic barriers for staff and customers |
Improving customer service with ONE

Apply for medical

Food application

Can I get cash assistance?

What about childcare?

Stop! Need new info. Back to an office.

One application

You choose how to apply
## Evolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE system launches to give the public a single application and streamlined process for eligibility</td>
<td>OEP launches to align staff and operations behind the ONE system</td>
<td>Proposed budget creates OEP as separate entity, funds backend technology upgrades.</td>
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Who we are

Moving beyond program siloes to improve people's access to critical benefits

Service Equity

Customer Service

Consistency

Operational Efficiency
How we’re organized

OEP Program Director's Office

- Director: Nate Singer
  - Executive Assistant: John McLean
  - OEP Interim Dep. Director Business Operations Director: Chuck Hibner
  - Interim Deputy Director Equity & Engagement: Jillian Johnson
  - Engagement Strategy Manager: James Barta
  - Equity Manager: Vacant

Business Information Services

- Business Information Service Director: Chet Lundy

Service Delivery Supports

- Service Delivery Supports Director: Peter Threikel

Oversight and Quality Assurance

- Oversight, QA & Central Director: Chere' LeFlore
How we partner

ODHS conducts eligibility through OEP and offers programs through APD and SSP

Oregon Health Authority

Dept. of Early Learning and Care

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

Aging & People with Disabilities (APD)

ODHS Central Office

Oregon Eligibility Partnership

Self Sufficiency Programs (SSP)

Other Oregon Agencies

Community Partners

Oregon Health Authority responsible for medical policy
Key partners

- Oregon Health Authority
- Department of Early Learning and Care
- Oregon Employment Department
- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Department of Veteran Affairs
- Labor Unions
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Tribal Nations and Tribal Partners
- USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- Community partners and advocates such as:
  - 211info
  - Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)
  - Area Agencies on Aging
  - Community Developmental Disability Programs
  - OHP Application Assisters
  - Oregon Food Bank
  - Hunger-Free Oregon
  - Family Forward Oregon
  - College Benefit Navigators
The ONE system allows people to apply for medical, food, cash and child care benefits with one application online, by phone or in person at any Aging and People with Disabilities, Area Agency on Aging (Type B) or Self-Sufficiency Programs office.

- People can create an account online to expedite future case updates
- People can experience no wrong door and apply for multiple benefits with one worker at any office statewide
- People can monitor communications from the Department and track the status of their benefits online
- Verifying information can now be done by uploading documents online instead of by mail or office drop box

Focus on customer service
A family in Eastern Oregon

In this small community a mother who raised seven children, with five still in the home was diagnosed with an advance form of cancer. She tried to care for herself and family and finally reached out to us for help. Unfortunately, this mother lost her battle with cancer. The worker then had to work with the oldest daughter who took over as guardian for her family. In the end the worker was able to use her knowledge, process in ONE, to provide a spectrum of benefits from long-term care to the needs of a 2-year-old.

“It was so good to work with someone who had known my family for years. There was no lack in coverage. It went so smooth.”
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How our programs impact Oregon communities

People can focus on their family well-being instead of affording the basics.

Children are better fed, helping them be ready to learn at school.

Strong and Thriving Communities

Parents can get the child care they need so they can work with less stress.

Older adults and people with disabilities can stabilize so they can get back to focusing on their goals.
## OEP by the numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.5 Million</th>
<th>1 Million</th>
<th>749,000</th>
<th>43</th>
<th>$2 Billion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 in 3 people in Oregon are served through the ONE system</td>
<td>Applications processed since go-live; 44% submitted through the ONE Applicant Portal</td>
<td>People using the ONE Applicant Portal</td>
<td>Percentage of cases receiving multiple benefits through the ONE system</td>
<td>Amount of SNAP food benefits sent to people since go-live</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>34</th>
<th>2.1 million</th>
<th>44</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of medical caseload increase since the pandemic began</td>
<td>Number of calls taken in the last year from our ONE Customer Service Center</td>
<td>Percent of applications submitted online</td>
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Where we serve

Key

- SSP Offices
- APD Offices
- Type B Transfer Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) Offices
Determining eligibility

- Processing applications for individuals seeking medical, food, cash, and child care assistance.
- Processing mid-certifications and redeterminations at 6-month, 12-month, and 24-month intervals.
- Updating case information for Oregonians as they report changes in their lives.
Engaging with and serving people in Oregon

**ENGAGE**

Staff work one-on-one with the people of Oregon and their families during stressful and vulnerable life situations.

**CONNECT**

Staff connect people with case managers and family coaches and community resources.

**PARTNER**

Community Partners input applications and engage with eligibility workers in support of those seeking benefits.

**COLLABORATE**

Staff work across ODHS programs and with partner agencies to share knowledge in order to better serve the people of Oregon wherever they choose to engage.

**SUPPORT**

Staff provide community with information on ODHS benefits and the multiple ways they can apply.

**SERVICE**

Staff treat individuals with dignity and provide equitable, consistent, and efficient access to benefits.
Historic demand for services

Total Oregon Health Plan (OHP) Enrollment

37% increase
Backlog - Past Due Applications

# of Past Due Applications

*Federal processing timeline requirements

- Medical (45 days*)
- Child Care (45 days*)
- Cash (30 days*)
- Food Benefits (30 days*)
- Expedited Food Benefits (7 days*)
Transparency in Data

Eligibility Operations Backlog

Driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, Oregon is seeing a continued historic demand for benefits like medical, food, cash, and childcare assistance. Between March and December 2021, over 600,000 applications for benefits were received in the ONE system, a 26% increase.

As of February 3, 2023, 1,527,038 Oregonians are receiving benefits through the ONE system.

Oregon has a higher standard of application processing than is federally required. We aim to receive applications and determine eligibility on the same day or next day. While our Same-Day/Next-Day service levels fell between March and December 2021, our steps to address the backlog started making incremental improvements in January 2022.

Every month we receive approximately 67,000 applications, 130,000 renewals and 100,000 benefits.oregon.gov
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2023-25 Priorities

- Finishing changes from HB3073 to support eligibility and the transition to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC).

- **1115 Waiver** implementation and funded areas within OHA.

- Medical redeterminations for the people of Oregon and new applications based on the 2023 Omnibus Bill.

- **Healthier Oregon Expansion** to all age groups.

- **Basic Health Program**

- Updates to Federal Programs through the Farm Bill Reauthorization.

- Improve **Customer Service** and functionality related to ONE and eligibility operations.
Historic Work Ahead

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023
• Emergency Allotment food benefits to SNAP households ($150 a month for a family of three) ended (March 1)
  • Public information campaign and partner coordination taking place now
• Begin redetermining eligibility for Oregon Health Plan (OHP) (April 1)
  • Coverage will end for people no longer eligible

Federal Public Health Emergency Ends (May 11)
Following temporary programs or regulatory flexibilities will end or phase out:
SNAP Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirements, Pandemic EBT and Summer PEBT food benefits, and SNAP temporary exemptions for students of higher education.
Public Health Emergency unwinding timeline

December 23, 2022
Federal funding bill approved

March 1, 2023
End of SNAP Emergency Allotments

May 11, 2023
PHE expiration

April 2023
Medical renewal process begins:
- Oregon Health Plan
- Long-term Care Services and Supports
- Medicare Savings Program helping pay for Medicare costs

June 2023
SNAP Exemptions for Higher Education Students
Phased out 30 days after the PHE ends for new applicants; at end of certification period for ongoing cases

July 2023
SNAP Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents work requirements
Resumes the second month after the PHE ends

January 4, 2024
Final medical notices mailed
Risks related to redetermination workload

- Wait times remain significant and will increase
- Eligibility queue has a backlog and processing time will increase
- Printing, translation and distribution of any PHE-related mailings are backlogged
- ONE System prioritization and concurrent implementation of 1115 Waiver (continuous eligibility, HRSN), Basic Health Program, HOP, Employment Related Day Care
- Eligibility workers have not done work in ONE without PHE flexibilities in place
Caseload increases outpace position authority

- 30% increase in caseloads
- 9% increase in position authority
Big risk: Outdated systems

• Demand for IT changes continue to outpace capacity

• Old backend technology is overloaded

• Limited experts that know how to program in old systems

• Significant retraining needed as regulation come back

- Historic demands
- Ending SNAP emergency benefits
- Reinstating regulations
Strategies and efficiencies to address workload

- Coordinating with managed care and CCOs
- Additional governance, hiring, training, and overtime
- Align verification or renewals across SNAP and other programs
- Sequence populations
- Increase verification timeframes
- Language Access Lines
- Call Back Option
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR)
- Oregon ONE Mobile
Notice Redesign Project

- Conducted discovery research to understand the current Oregonian experience with ONE notices.
- Identified barriers to comprehension, readability, and accessibility.
- Interviewed and surveyed 155 participants.
- Conducted evaluative assessments on the language and content.
- Currently updating notices based on feedback received.
Eligibility workers hired at a steady pace

Eligibility Workers (HSS3)

1,341 budgeted positions
1,926 hired positions
Supporting staff

Actions taken to support staff:

- Produced over 40 additional Take Time for Trainings for staff.
- Updating tools and one functionality based on Staff responses.
- Created a staff led Eligibility Continuous Improvement Committee.
- Creating focused teams and functionality for complex areas such as LTC Complex Intakes, ABAWD follow up, and working with community partners.

Surveyed 1,288 staff across ODHS and AAA
Delays in benefit delivery impact everyone

Historic demand for medical, food, cash, and child care benefits

Customer needs are outpacing our capacity to serve them timely

Benefit delays impact people’s health and employment, pressure our community partners, and can weaken Oregon’s economy
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General Fund investment highlights

**Strengthening our foundations**

- $46 million for OEP including ongoing technology maintenance and funding and position authority for eligibility staffing.
- $375,000 to continue for mainframe system upgrade

**Creating the future of human services**

- $7.8 million to support the Healthier Oregon Program
- $4.5 million to support the 1115 Waiver

Also includes $334 million for the creation of OEP from existing funds and $4.9 OF limitation for ERDC expansion.
### Movement toward Oregon Eligibility Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Sufficiency Programs</th>
<th>General fund</th>
<th>Total funds</th>
<th>Positions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$218 million</td>
<td>$450.1 million</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aging and People with Disabilities</th>
<th>General fund</th>
<th>Total funds</th>
<th>Positions</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$62 million</td>
<td>$124 million</td>
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<table>
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<th>Central Services</th>
<th>General fund</th>
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<th>Positions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$53.1 million</td>
<td>$135.5 million</td>
<td>84</td>
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2023-25 Governor’s Budget: Total fund by program area: $17,758.9 million

- Aging and People with Disabilities: $4,860 (27%)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Basic Rehabilitative Services: $148.1 (1%)
- Child Welfare Programs: $1,592.8 (9%)
- Self-Sufficiency Programs: $4,696.9 (26%)
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: $4,632.3 (26%)
- Oregon Eligibility Partnership: $803.9 (5%)
- Central and Shared Services, State Assessments and Enterprise-wide Costs: $1,024.3 (6%)

All dollars in millions
Oregon Eligibility Partnerships
Total by fund type: $803.9 million
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A foundation to thrive

Fund Staff to prioritize Customer Service

Fund Systems to continue to update and approve efficiency and remove barriers

Modernize systems to meet the future of Oregon
Closing remarks
Questions?