Oregon Department of Human Services

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

Oregon Eligibility Partnership

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February 2023

Outline

I. **Who we are**

II. Who, where and how we serve

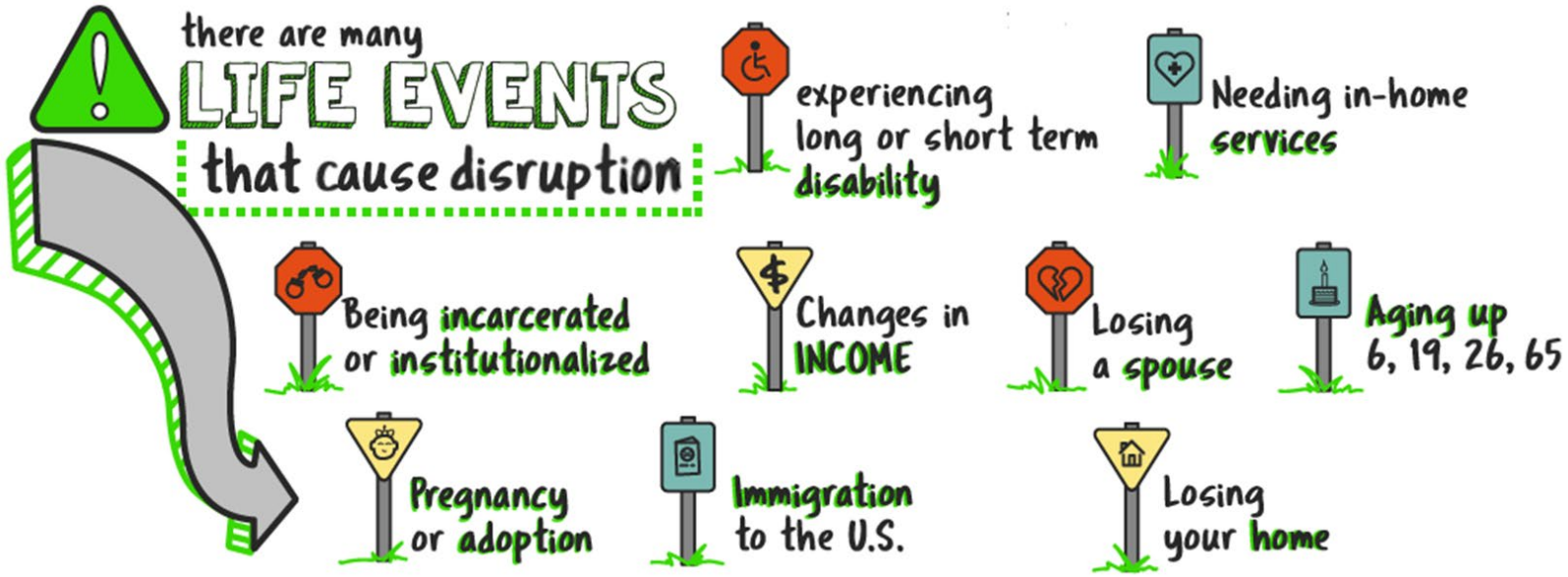
III. The work ahead

IV. Governor’s Budget

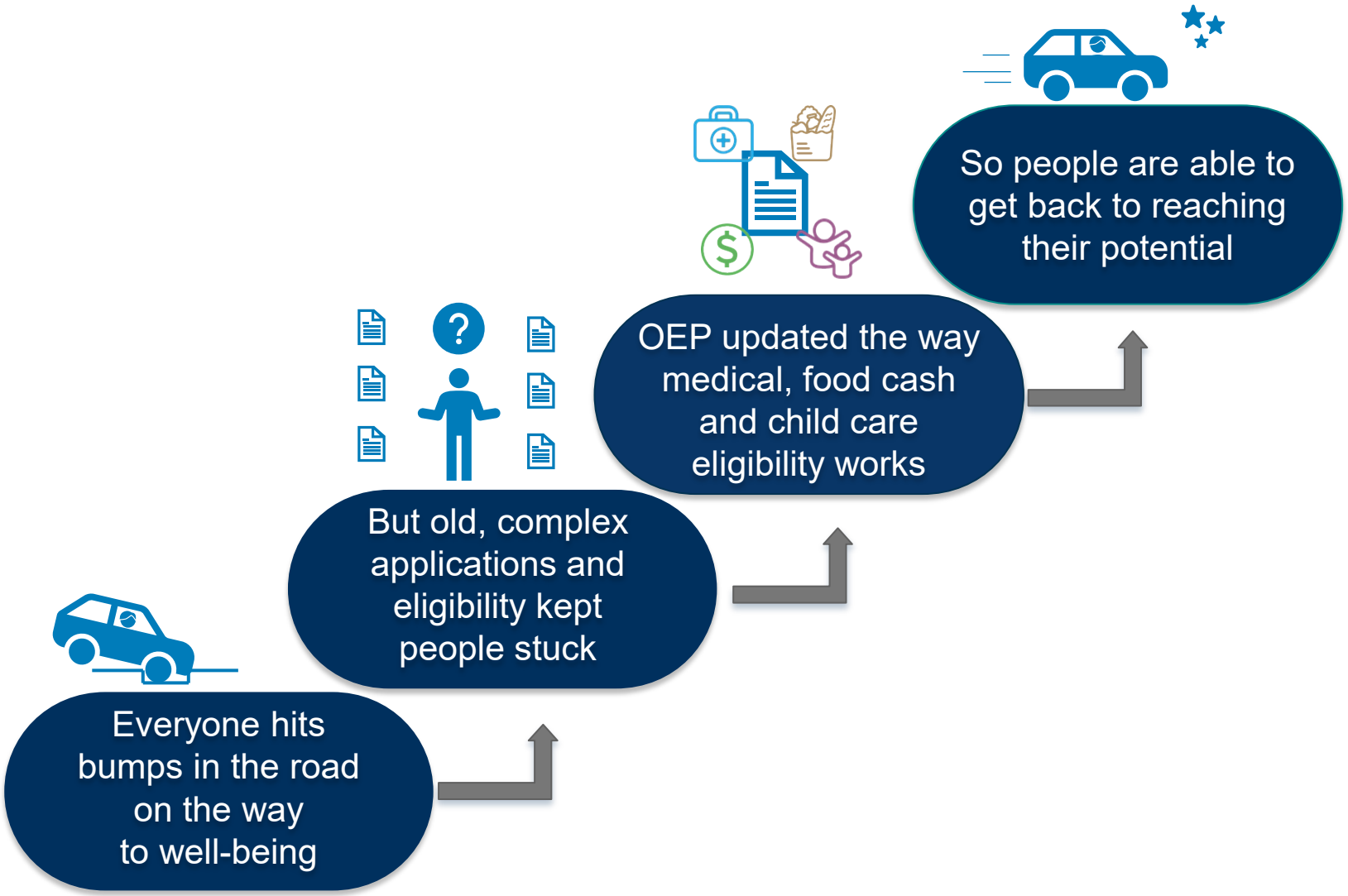
V. Closing remarks

Oregon Department of Human Services

Why we do our work: Life events



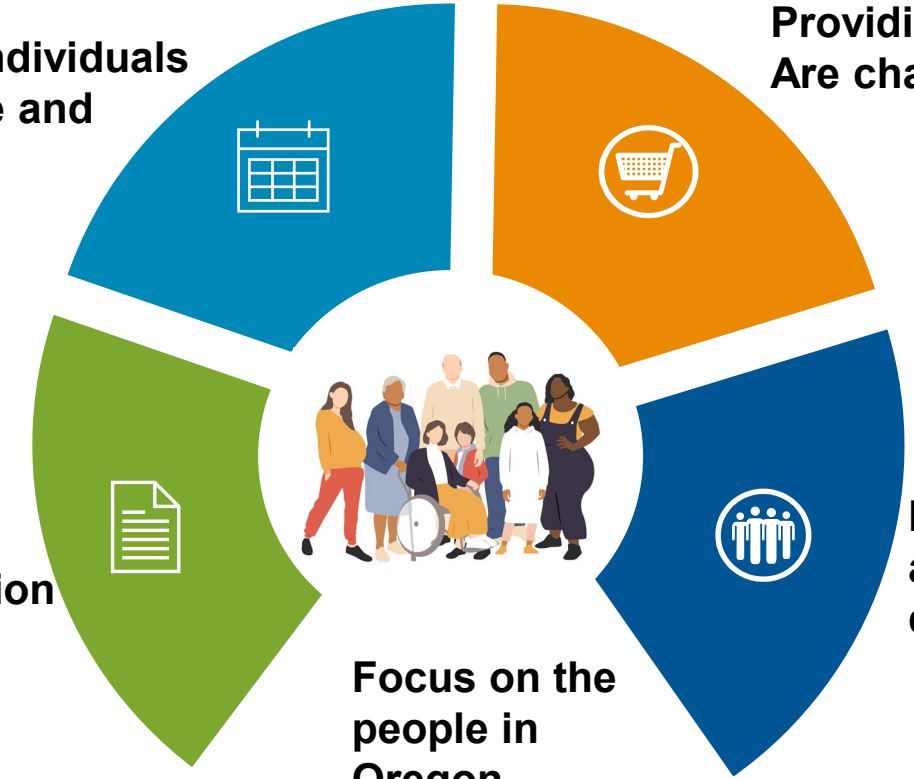
Why we do our work: Opportunities to thrive



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



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

Focus on the people in Oregon.

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

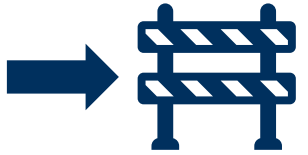
Our responsibility to agencies and our staff

- **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.

Urgency with our work ahead

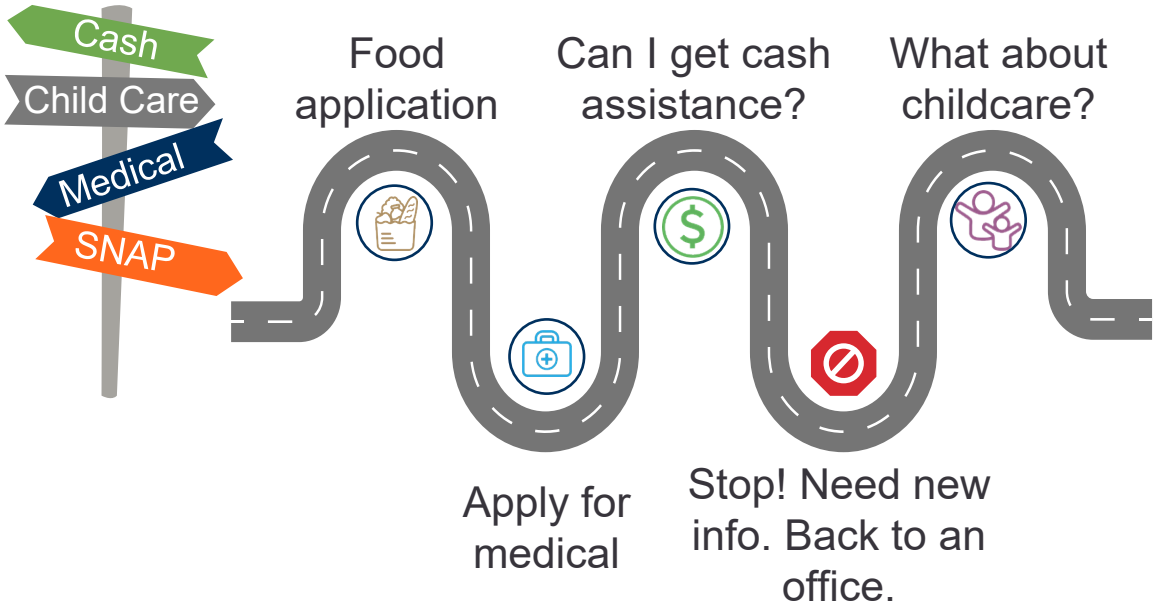
Align eligibility staff and operations under a single program

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



One application

You choose how to apply

Evolution

2020

ONE system launches to give the public a single application and streamlined process for eligibility

2021

OEP launches to align staff and operations behind the ONE system

2023

Proposed budget creates OEP as separate entity, funds backend technology upgrades.

Who we are

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

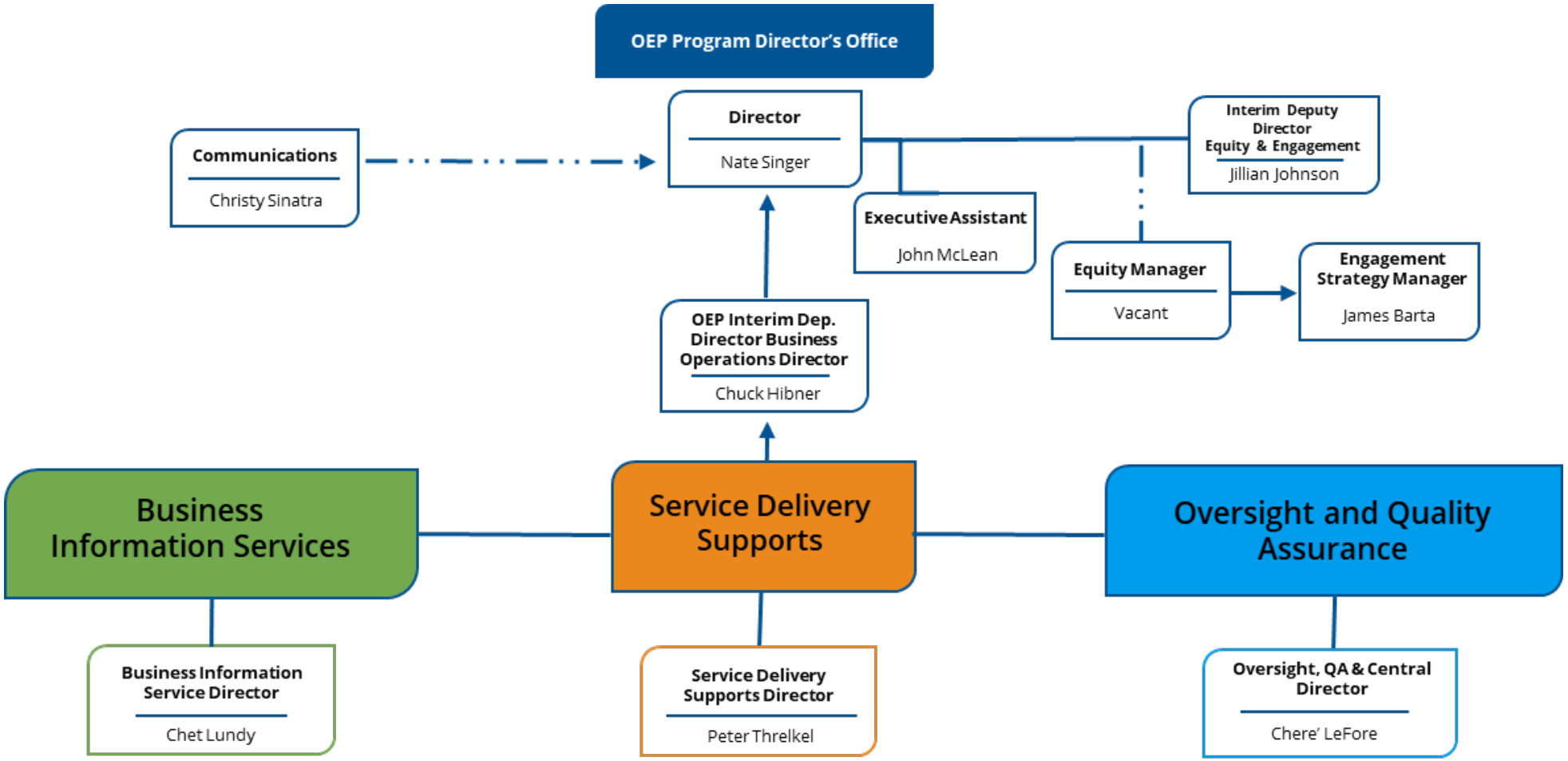
Service Equity

Customer Service

Consistency

Operational Efficiency

How we're organized



How we partner

Oregon Health Authority responsible for medical policy

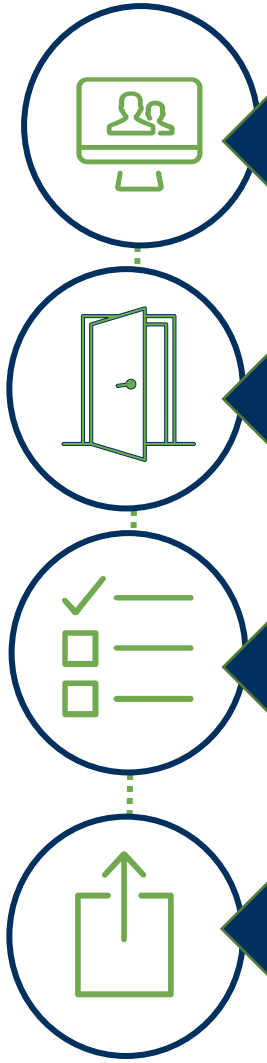
ODHS conducts eligibility through OEP and offers programs through APD and SSP

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 Assistors
  - Oregon Food Bank
  - Hunger-Free Oregon
  - Family Forward Oregon
  - College Benefit Navigators

Focus on customer service

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

A family in Eastern Oregon

"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."

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.

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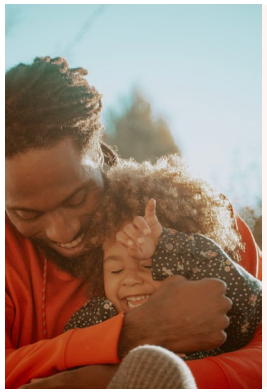
How our programs impact Oregon communities



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

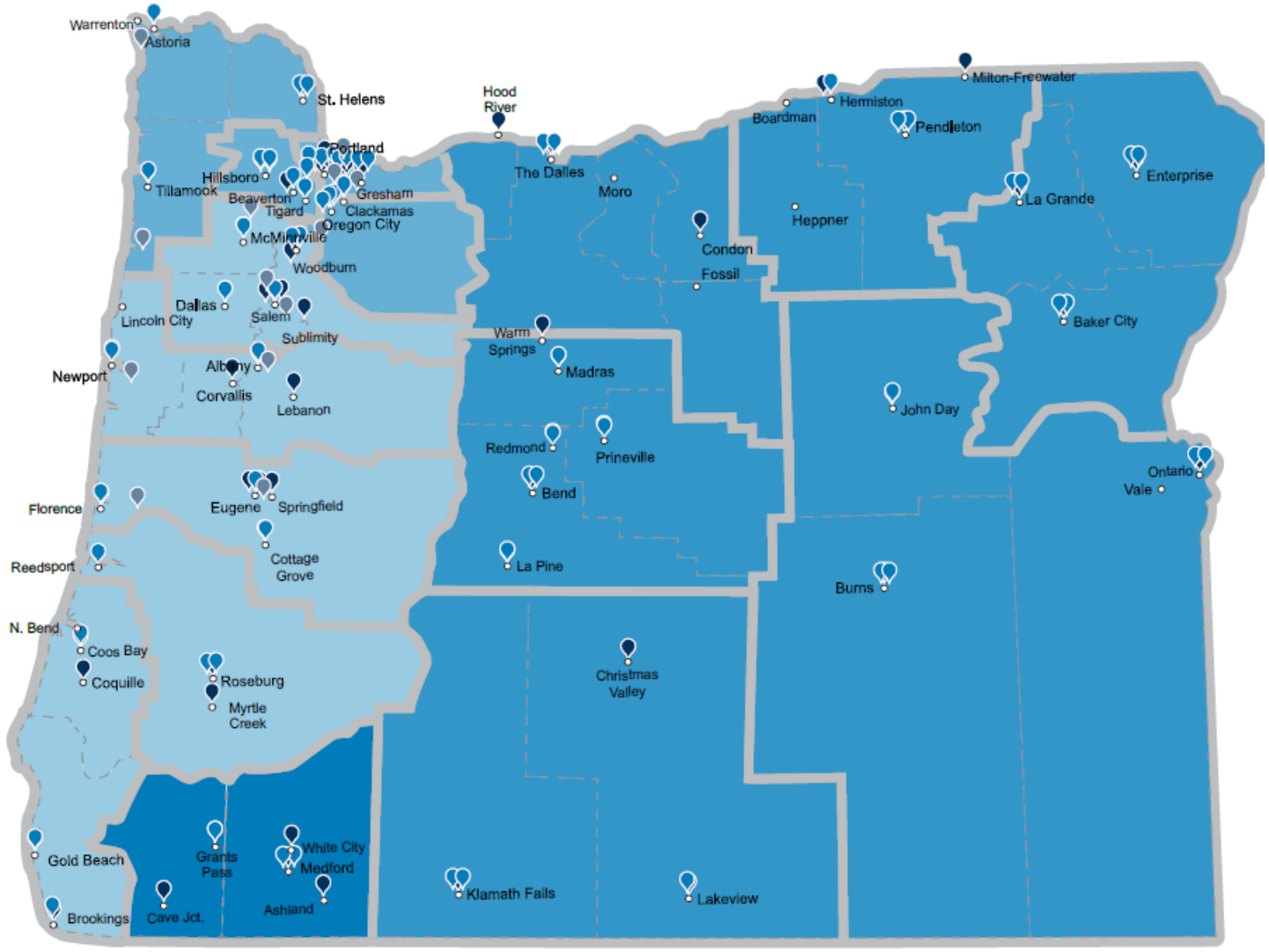
1.5 Million	1 Million	749,000	43	$2 Billion
1 in 3 people in Oregon are served through the ONE system	Applications processed since go-live; 44% submitted through the ONE Applicant Portal	People using the ONE Applicant Portal	Percentage of cases receiving multiple benefits through the ONE system	Amount of SNAP food benefits sent to people since go-live

34	2.1 million	44
Percent of medical caseload increase since the pandemic began	Number of calls taken in the last year from our ONE Customer Service Center	Percent of applications submitted online

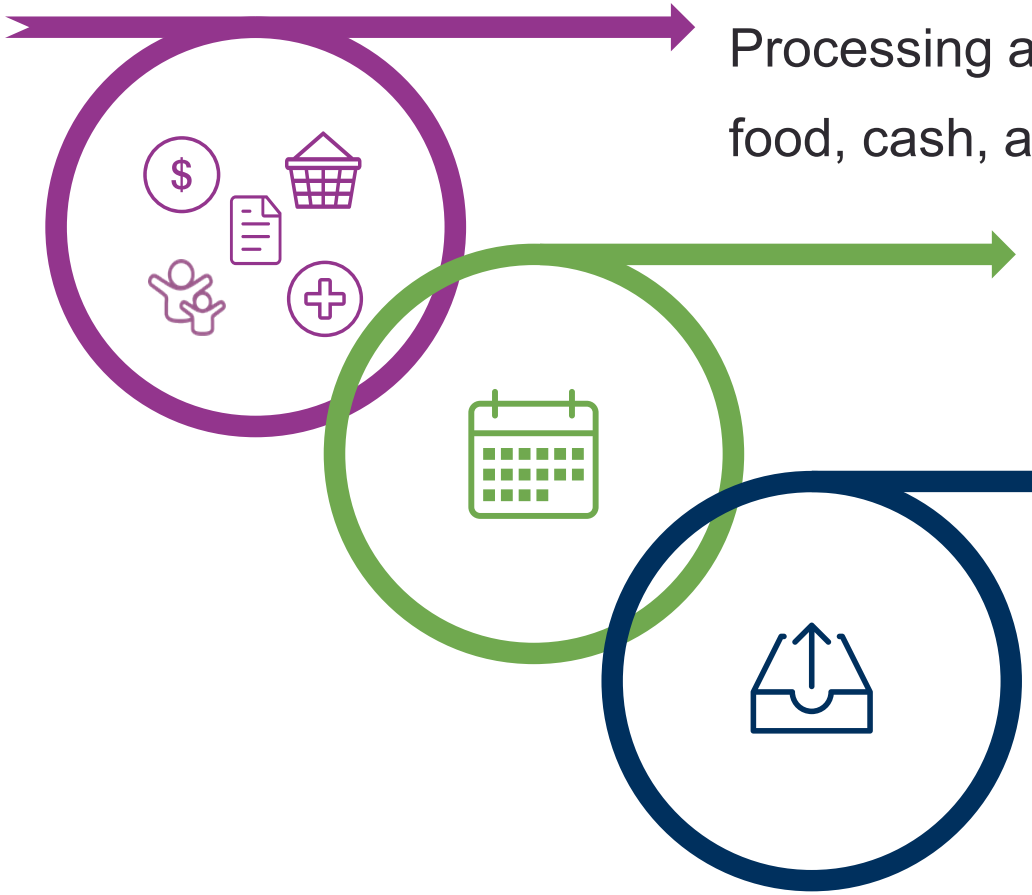
Where we serve

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.

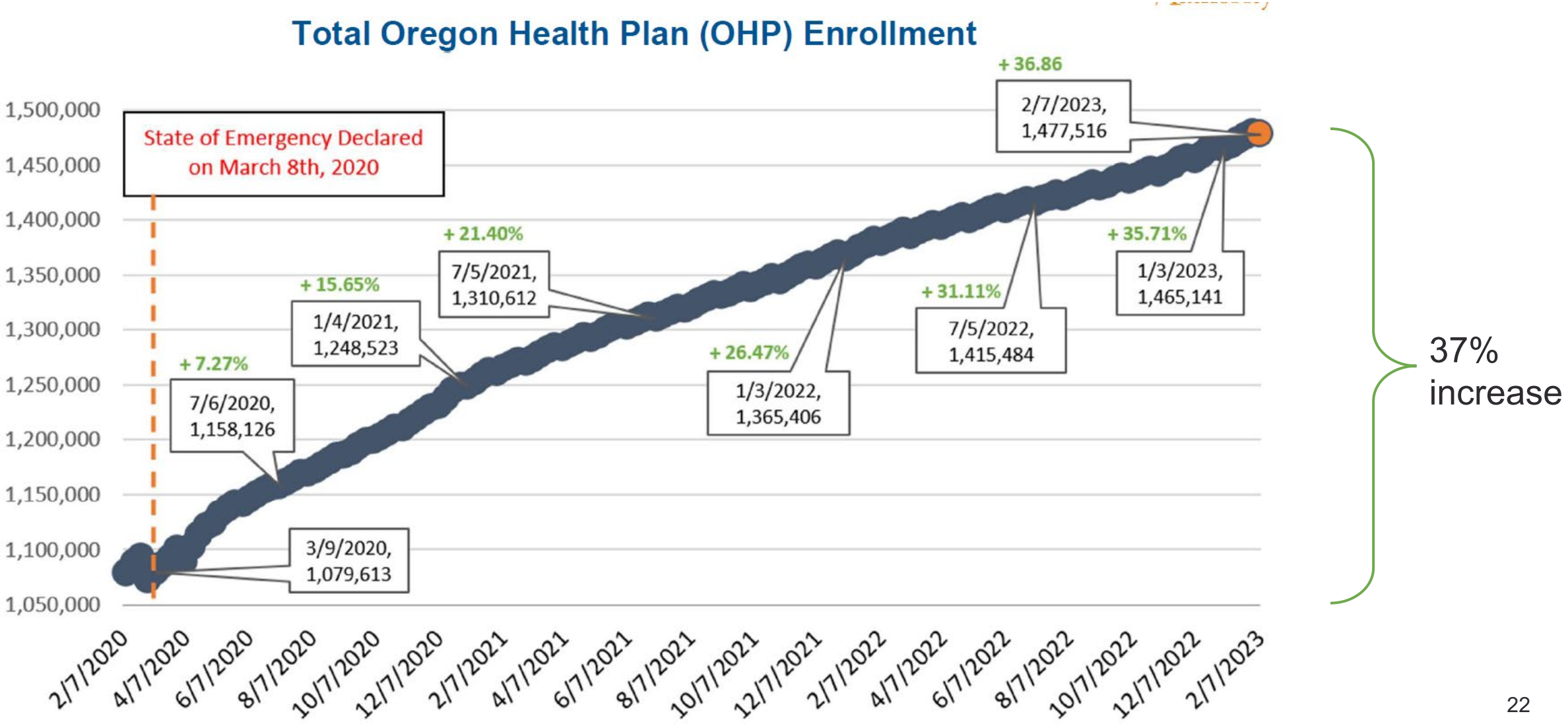
SUPPORT

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

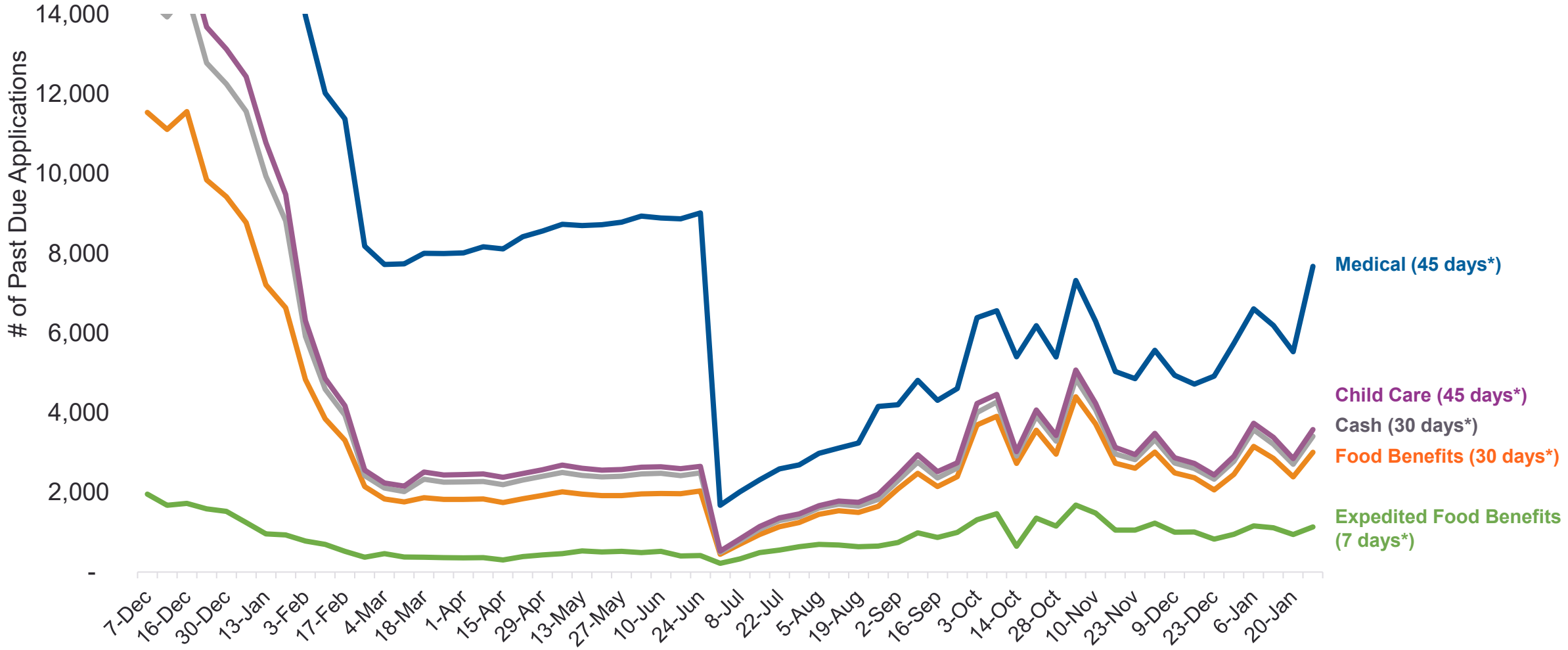
SERVICE

Staff treat individuals with dignity and provide equitable, consistent, and efficient access to benefits.

Historic demand for services



Backlog - Past Due Applications

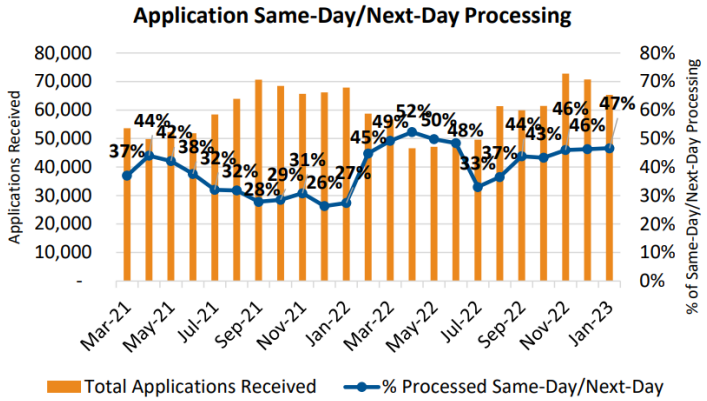


*Federal processing timeline requirements

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**.



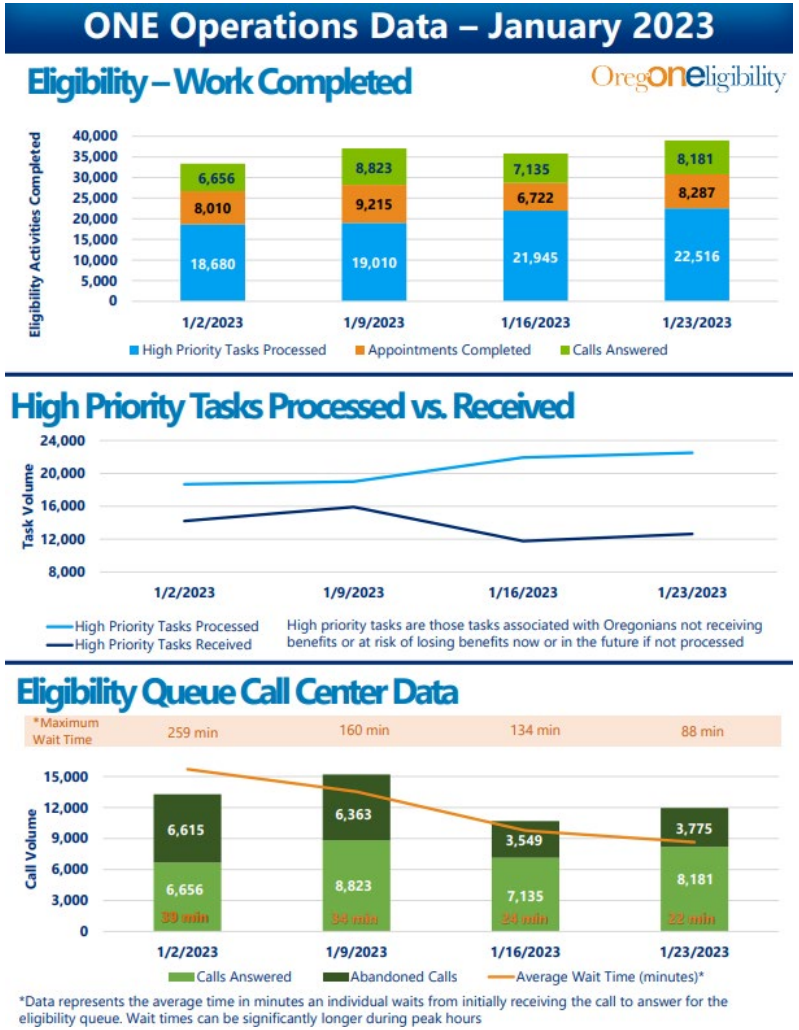
As of February 3, 2023, 1,527,038 Oregonians are receiving benefits through the ONE system.

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**

Priorities For Serving Oregonians

1. **Applications:** Provide benefits to Oregonians who currently do not have benefits



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

April 2023

Medical renewal process begins:

- Oregon Health Plan
- Long-term Care Services and Supports
- Medicare Savings Program helping pay for Medicare costs

May 11, 2023

PHE expiration

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

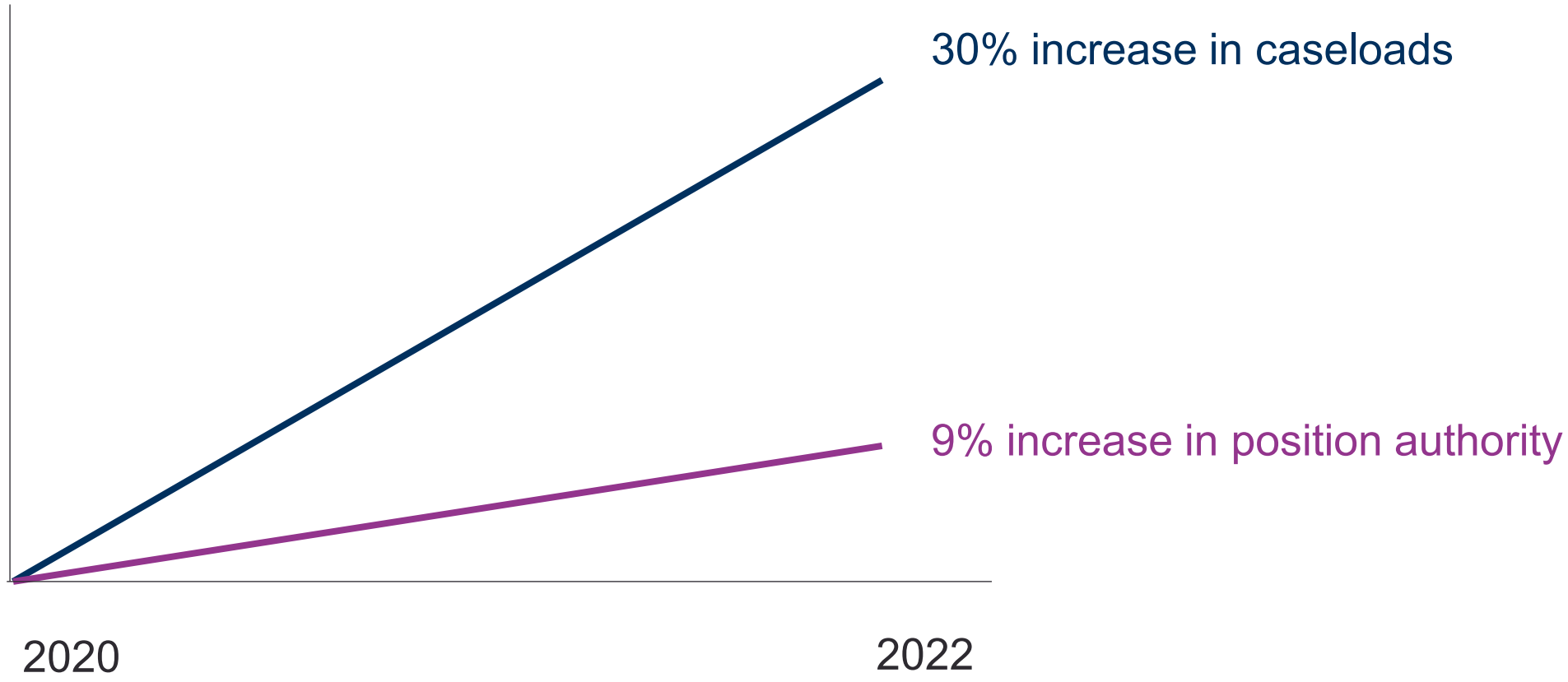
January 4, 2024

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



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

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

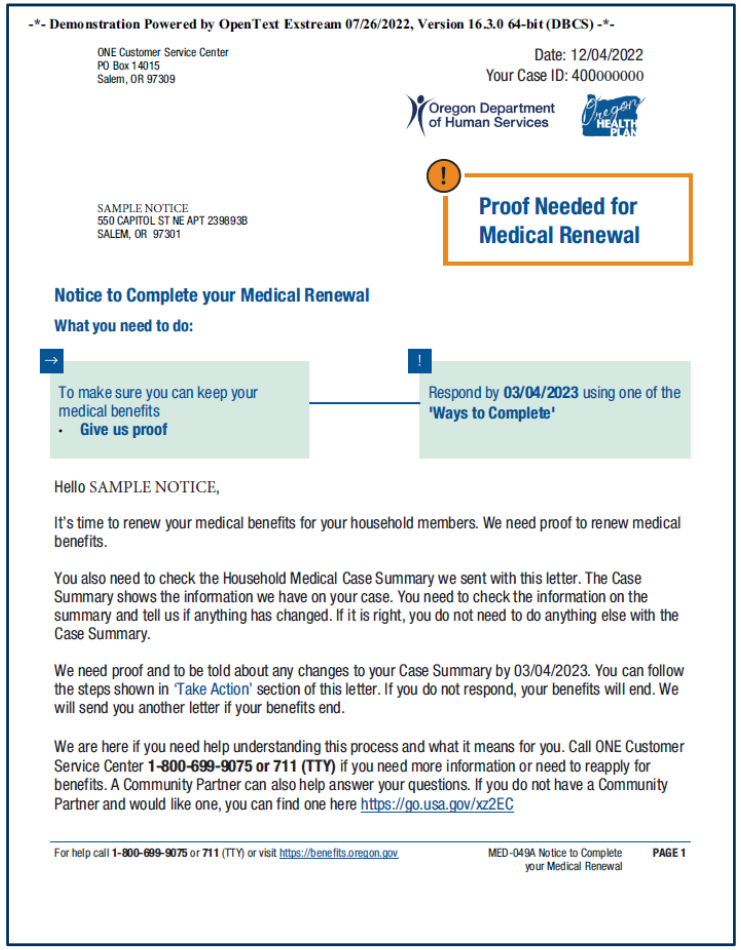
Call Back Option

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

Oregon ONE Mobile

Notice Redesign Project



-*- Demonstration Powered by OpenText Exstream 07/26/2022, Version 16.3.0 64-bit (DBCS) -*-

ONE Customer Service Center
PO Box 14015
Salem, OR 97309

Date: 12/04/2022
Your Case ID: 400000000

Oregon Department of Human Services

SAMPLE NOTICE
550 CAPITOL ST NE APT 239893B
SALEM, OR 97301

Proof Needed for Medical Renewal

Notice to Complete your Medical Renewal

What you need to do:

To make sure you can keep your medical benefits
- **Give us proof**

Respond by **03/04/2023** using one of the **'Ways to Complete'**

Hello SAMPLE NOTICE,

It's time to renew your medical benefits for your household members. We need proof to renew medical benefits.

You also need to check the Household Medical Case Summary we sent with this letter. The Case Summary shows the information we have on your case. You need to check the information on the summary and tell us if anything has changed. If it is right, you do not need to do anything else with the Case Summary.

We need proof and to be told about any changes to your Case Summary by 03/04/2023. You can follow the steps shown in 'Take Action' section of this letter. If you do not respond, your benefits will end. We will send you another letter if your benefits end.

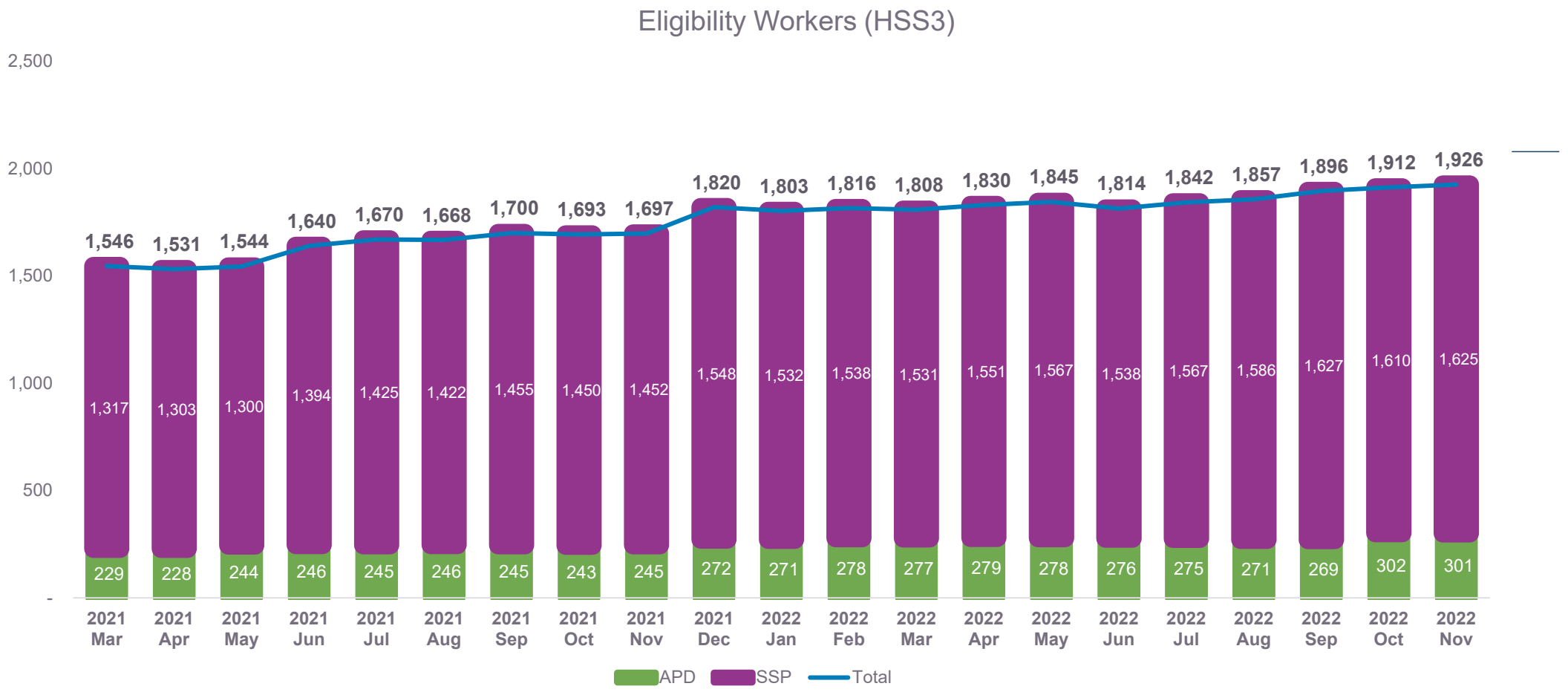
We are here if you need help understanding this process and what it means for you. Call ONE Customer Service Center **1-800-699-9075 or 711 (TTY)** if you need more information or need to reapply for benefits. A Community Partner can also help answer your questions. If you do not have a Community Partner and would like one, you can find one here https://go.usa.gov/xz2EC

For help call **1-800-699-9075** or **711** (TTY) or visit https://benefits.oregon.gov

MED-049A Notice to Complete your Medical Renewal **PAGE 1**

- 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.

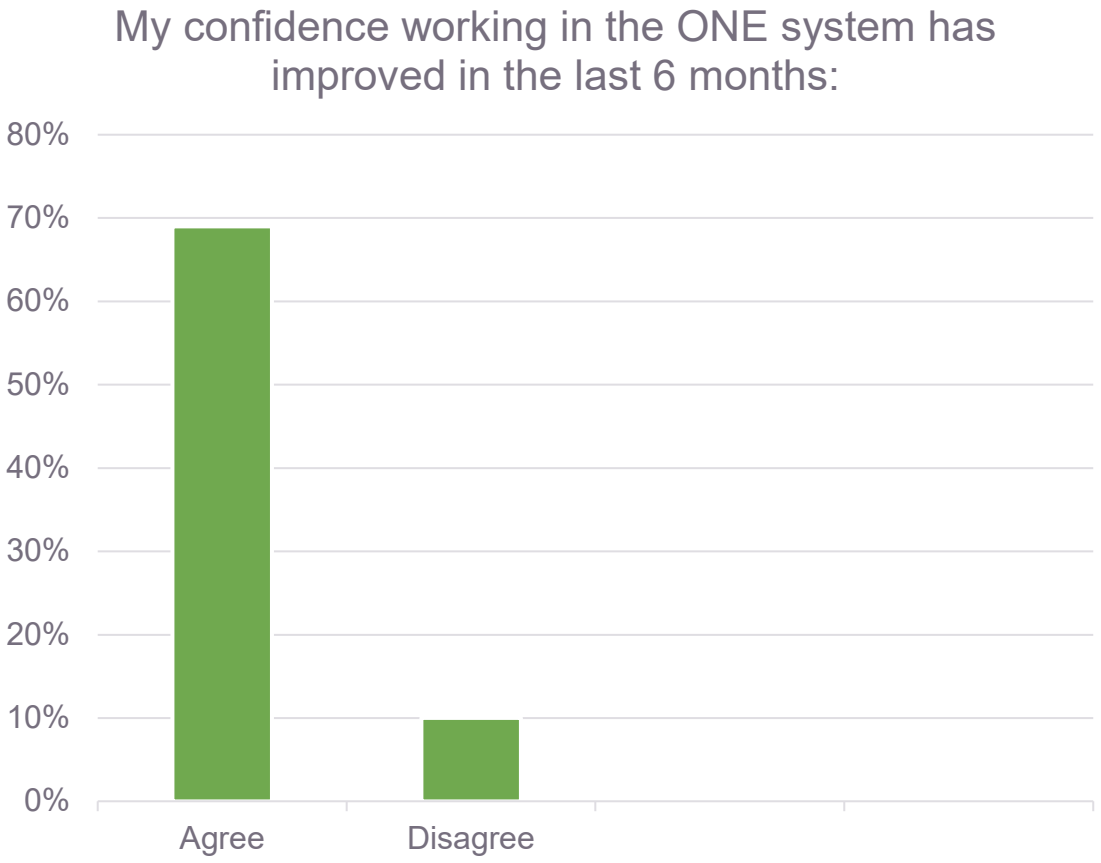
Eligibility workers hired at a steady pace



1,341 **budgeted** positions

1,926 **hired** positions

Supporting staff



Surveyed 1,288 staff across ODHS and AAA

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.

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

Self Sufficiency Programs

General fund	Total funds	Positions
$218 million	$450.1 million	1,834

Aging and People with Disabilities

General fund	Total funds	Positions
$62 million	$124 million	323

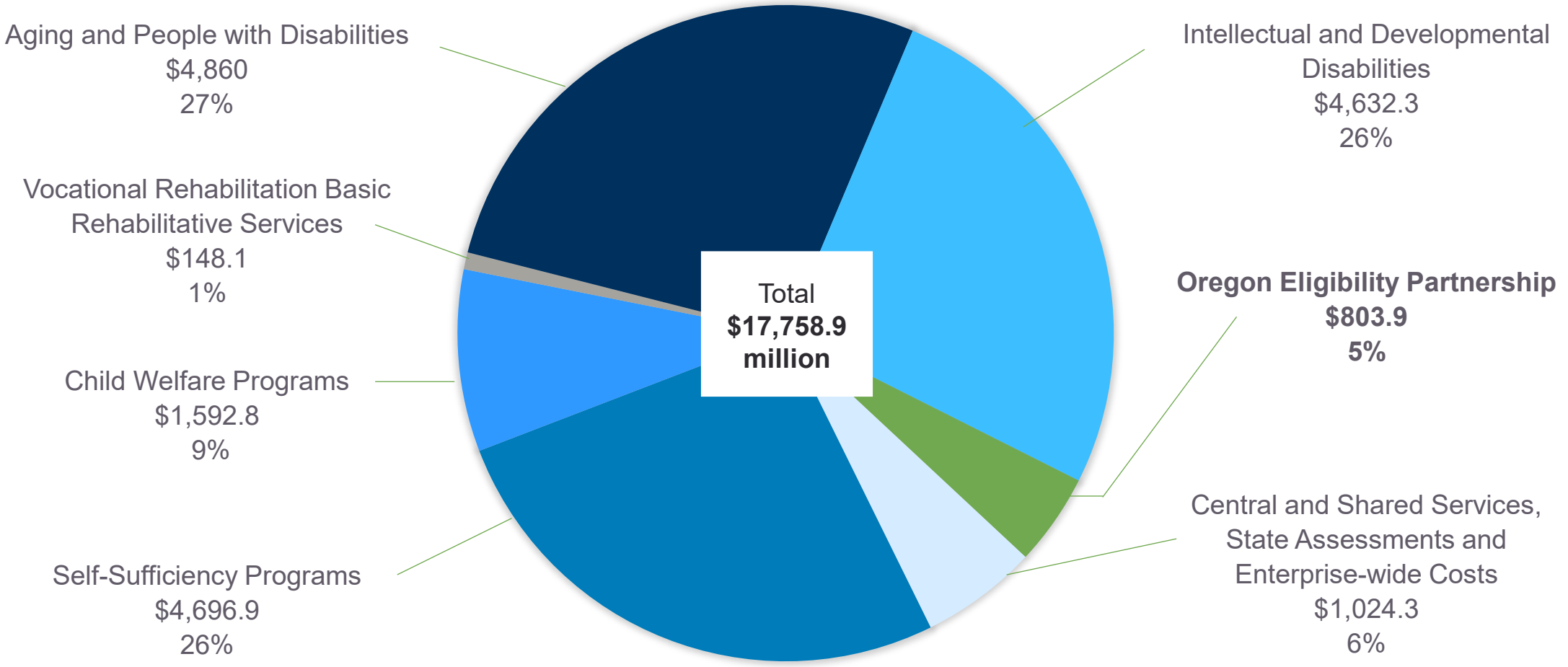
Central Services

General fund	Total funds	Positions
$53.1 million	$135.5 million	84

one Oregon Eligibility Partnership

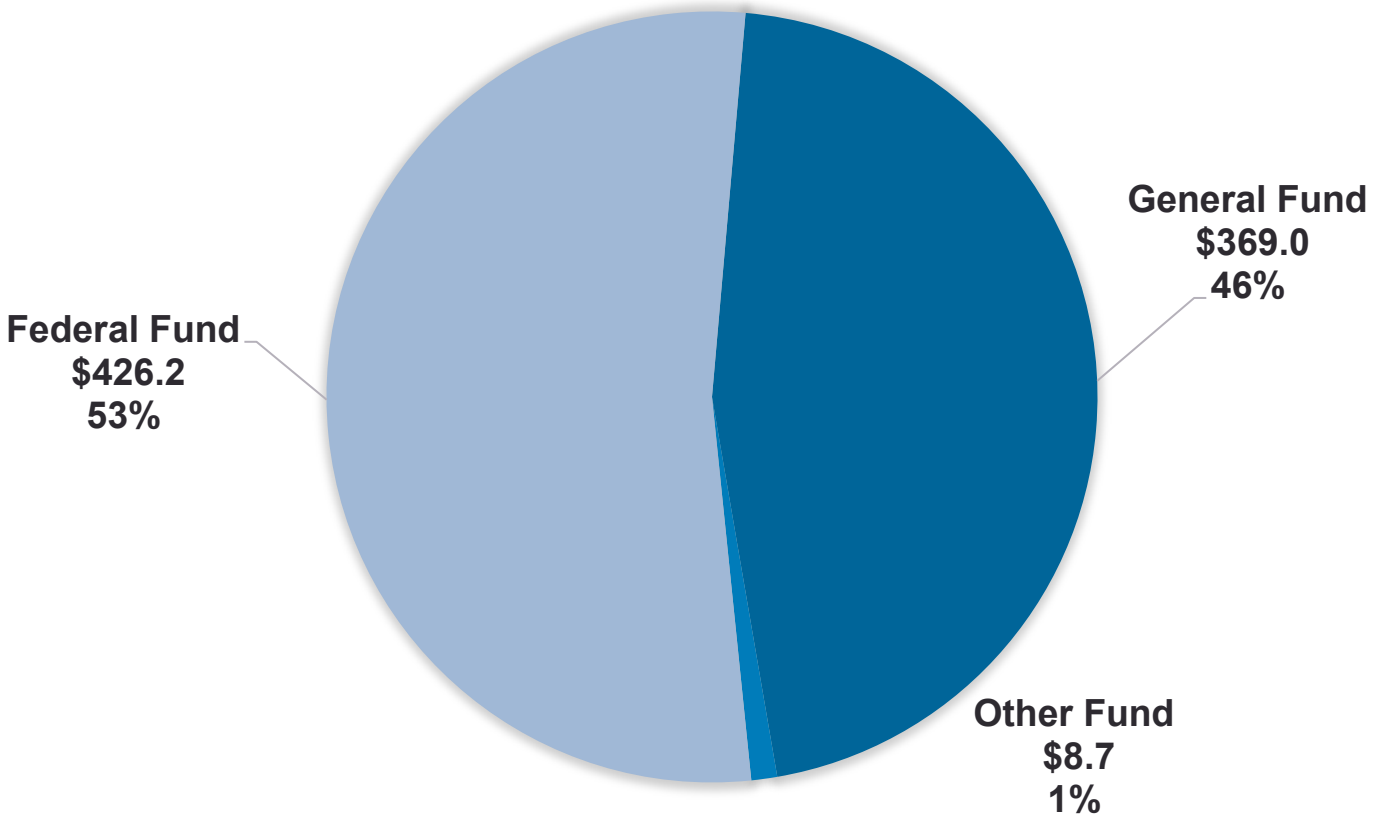
General fund	Total funds	Positions
$334 million	$710.6 million	2,241

2023-25 Governor's Budget:
Total fund by program area: $17,758.9 million



All dollars in millions

Oregon Eligibility Partnerships
Total by fund type: $803.9 million



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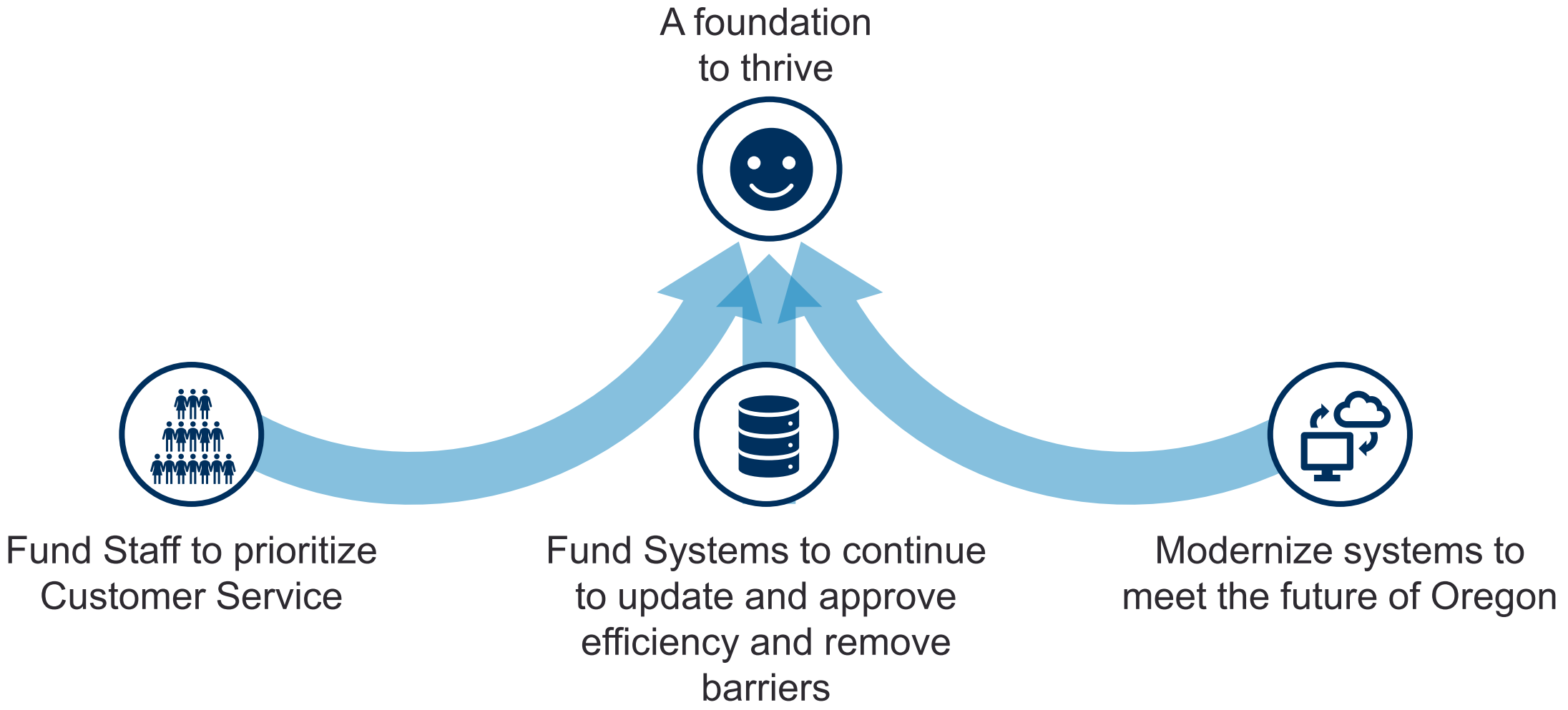

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Questions?