

## **DHS: Helping Oregonians Reach Their Full Potential**

The mission of the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through services that protect, empower, respect choice and diversity and preserve dignity. DHS consists of the following programs: Aging and People with Disabilities, Self Sufficiency Programs, Child Welfare, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Developmental Disabilities Programs. As demand for human services continues to outpace the resources available, and as Oregon demographics continue to change, DHS continues to strengthen, streamline and transform agency operations and service delivery through an equity lens.

### **Accountability for results**

- Director Erinn Kelley-Siel eliminated DHS's divisions (and their directors) and restructured DHS into five programs under a new management system. The new system defines the outcomes for each program and puts essential staff for each program's design and delivery under a clear leader. The new structure consolidates regulatory, investigative, IT, data, and program integrity support into functional areas, giving those areas clear missions and accountability.
- The new DHS executive team has an aggressive culture-change agenda focusing on accountability for results, continuous improvement and workforce development.

### **Modernization of human services delivery**

- Process improvements have already reduced response times and saved over 8,060 hours of work per month determining eligibility for food stamps and other programs, enabling staff to manage a rapidly increasing caseload with fewer staff.
- The DHS Modernization Initiative, working closely with the Oregon Health Authority's insurance exchange project, will revolutionize the way DHS and its partner agencies deliver human services and will result in new, innovative and more efficient technology systems that will improve and streamline operations in our field offices and support the Department's goal to improve service equity. The initial step will be the online SNAP/Medical application, which has been online for about a year. The next stage is to automate both the application and eligibility determination, allowing for a streamlined system to free up time currently spent on paper and manual processing and allow for that time to be re-invested in working with clients and community partners. The second benefit of the initiative is a community approach to meeting families' needs. Different families have their own needs and modernization is designed to technically and practically better meet them.

### **Child safety and family stability**

- In the last five years, DHS has safely reduced by 18% the number of children experiencing foster care in Oregon, by developing better tools to determine the safety of a child in a household, providing more effective in-home services, improving efforts to locate family members, and increasing foster care exits.
- With support in the Governor's Recommended Budget, DHS is implementing a new model of community-based services designed to expand on efforts to preserve families and reunify more children with their parents (SB 964 (2011)). In addition, DHS is implementing a new model of child welfare intervention, called Differential Response, that will transform the initial child welfare response to a report of abuse and result in more children remaining at home safely with their families.

### **Long-Term Care 3.0**

- For decades, Oregon has been nationally recognized for innovation and success for its long-term services and supports system for older adults and people with physical disabilities. However, today people are living longer and healthier lives. Oregon's senior population is projected to grow from 502,000 to 950,000 by 2030. While we prepare for this growth, we know that we must do more to prevent entry into publicly-funded long term care, address current system gaps and to ensure the long term financial sustainability of our Medicaid long term care system. Oregon is invested in planning, modernization and innovations to successfully address future needs and demands.
- DHS, with the Oregon Health Authority, is coordinating accountability for client outcomes, especially for seniors and people with disabilities served in the Medicaid Long-term Care system. This includes a focus on system evolution that will maximize results and resources for long term care services and ensure joint accountability with Coordinated Care Organizations health outcomes new strategies to prevent/delay entry into Medicaid LTC programs. The result will be an improved ability to serve individuals with higher acuity levels in home- and community-based care settings and maximize federal resources.

### **Protection and safety of vulnerable adults**

- DHS began an aggressive plan to close gaps in the safety and protection system serving seniors and adults with disabilities, including developmental disabilities. Those efforts have included enhanced background checks, improved training with better investigation standards, improved relationships with local law enforcement and community partners and the initiation of an annual Adult Protective Services (APS) data report.
- DHS recently consolidated all staff involved in protecting vulnerable individuals into one office. The creation of the Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations provides increased capacity for outreach and education, help in standardizing abuse investigations for all vulnerable populations, more statewide consistency, and the ability to better compile and use data and metrics to more effectively track trends. Abuse of the elderly and people with physical, mental and developmental disabilities has significant human and financial consequences. DHS has strengthened the quality of our response to reports of abuse and neglect and our capacity to prevent abuse in the first place. DHS is also ensuring compliance with state and federal mandates designed to ensure the safety and health of Oregonians in licensed care settings.

### **Employment outcomes**

- Three major programs – Developmental Disability programs, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, have set out an aggressive agenda to increase employment for people with disabilities, for low-income parents and for individuals of color. Oregonians access DHS services when they have significant financial need and can't meet their most basic human needs – food, shelter, and safety for their families – on their own. Given the purpose of these programs, it is no surprise that the economic recession triggered a dramatic increase in demand for these services. Targeting increased employment outcomes across programs within the Department, the agency focuses on strengthening programs that support job skill development and increase employment outcomes for low-income families and on strategies to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all types.
- The Employment Related Day Care program helps very low-income working families arrange and pay for quality child care, which nurtures a child's learning and development so the child is better prepared to succeed in school. The result is expanded opportunities for low-income parents to access child care subsidies and training for providers in support of positive child development.