

Agency Report
Department of Human Services
Oregon Project Independence Pilot

Analyst: Laurie Byerly

Request: Acknowledge receipt of a report on an Oregon Project Independence pilot project serving younger adults with disabilities.

Recommendation: Acknowledge receipt of the report.

Analysis: The budget report for HB 5201, the omnibus budget reconciliation bill for the 2014 regular session, included a budget note directing the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a pilot project to expand Oregon Project Independence (OPI) to younger people with disabilities. At the May 2104 meeting of the Emergency Board, DHS reported on the pilot plan and received \$3 million General Fund to support the project. The current report is the agency's update on the pilot and a recommendation on how best to expand the program permanently.

For context, historically OPI has served individuals not receiving Medicaid who are age 60 and older or who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder. It provides in-home services to assist individuals with activities such as eating, dressing, personal hygiene, mobility, housekeeping, shopping, transportation, medication management, and meal preparation. Since 2005, ORS 410.435 has permitted DHS, contingent on the traditional program population receiving sufficient services, to expand OPI eligibility to cover persons 19 years of age or older with physical disabilities. No formal sufficiency standard has been developed and the program was not expanded prior to the pilot.

The agency reports that 287 individuals in 13 counties have been served by the pilot project, with an expected 450 participants served by the end of the biennium. Dominant client characteristics include being between ages 50 and 59, receiving disability income, having Medicare coverage, living alone, having a monthly income of less than \$1,500, and assessing as moderate to high risk for out of home placement. Monthly direct service costs for the OPI pilot consumers are trending at about \$350 per month, which are similar to costs for the traditional population.

DHS estimates that a biennial General Fund appropriation of at least \$27.5 million would be needed to support an expanded, age-neutral OPI program. This funding level assumes about \$6 million of that amount would serve the younger population. The program is not currently funded at this level.

If adequate funding were to be provided, the agency indicates it would want to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for transitioning to an expanded program. That plan would address concerns such as global versus segregated budgeting, transition timelines, and capacity for all Area Agencies on Aging to serve additional clients.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends acknowledging receipt of the report on an Oregon Project Independence pilot project serving younger adults with disabilities.