

Umatilla County CARE

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Good morning committee members,

My name is Briana Reyes and I am a CARE Specialist for the Umatilla county CARE Program. Over the last three years of employment I have helped many families through difficult times. These families have been referred by not only the schools but by community partners like Oregon Department of Human Services and Domestic Violence services.

From my position as a specialist I have been able to partner with schools, talk about struggling students, and meet with their families to find solutions to help encourage their children. When meeting with these families I have been able to understand their struggles and how they are needing assistance with finding resources to get the kids to school. This is where I have been able to lend a hand to help with their children's mental health crisis, translate for parents when meeting with community partners, teach teen moms how to make WIC appointments, and help find the parents homes, jobs, and support, so they are able to care for their children's needs.

I have also been made aware of the homeless youth in our community. This is a difficult situation for young adults when they have no support where they currently are in life and the unknown of what's next. I have been able to find solutions for the youth so they are able to focus on graduating rather than all the things they are not knowledgeable of. I know my clients are grateful for my support in all the ways I am able to uplift them during their time of struggles to get them to a better space mentally, physically, and emotionally.

The CARE Program is truly something magical that everyone should have accessible to them. Our team is knowledgeable on many different resources and how to access them for our families. We are constantly collaborating with our community partners, and making great relationships with them for the good of our clients. My hope and dream is that the state sees this as something we need in every county. We make a huge impact on our community in such amazing ways, and get to work with some amazing people. I truly love my job and everything I get to do to make a difference and care for people.

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In closing I strongly endorse house bill 2374, funding the CARE Program model throughout the state of Oregon. This would help get and keep children in education as it is a proven best practice. Thank you for considering my support.