



Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, and members of the committee,

My name is Carrie Brickey and I am the Executive Director for Alternative Services-OR, Inc. We support 93 vulnerable Oregonians diagnosed with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in 24 hour residential group homes. We operate 25 homes across 6 counties in Oregon. We currently employ 212 Direct Support Professionals but have 40+ open FTE DSP positions.

Thanks to the DHS Wage & Rate study conducted at the legislature's request, for the first time we have a concrete amount showing the true funding gap. The study shows that a staggering \$558 million is needed to properly fund these services. While this number may seem high, it is reflective of the chronic underfunding we have experienced for years. This gap represents the urgent need for investment in a workforce that has long been overlooked. I urge you, as legislators, to prioritize IDD services and do whatever is necessary to move us toward closing this gap. Without action, providers cannot keep up with rising costs, leading to high turnover, service disruptions, and reduced access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Providers cannot raise rates (or DSP wages) on their own—we are almost entirely dependent on state funding (and the federal match for state allocations).

Unlike other industries, IDD services face:

- No built-in cost-of-living increases
- No private pay market
- Limited fundraising options

Organizations are already exceeding state-funded wage in rate models just to find and keep staff, draining reserves to stay open. Over the past four years, we've had to make difficult decisions, including closing 9 homes, due to persistent underfunding and lack of staffing. Without increased funding, my organization and organizations like mine will shrink, and more providers will be forced to close or reduce services.

I am here today to ask you to prioritize the funding of IDD services and to provide any possible increase toward closing the \$558 million gap. This is not a request we make lightly, but one made out of sheer necessity. Our ability to continue providing high-quality care for Oregonians with IDD depends on your commitment to increasing funding.

Please champion increased IDD funding in the 2025-27 DHS budget. The individuals and families who rely on these services cannot afford another year of uncertainty and underfunding. With your support, we can move toward a future where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the care and services they deserve.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Carrie Brickey
Executive Director