

VERBAL TESTIMONY

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carla Tazumal, my pronouns are she/her, and I serve as the Community Developmental Disabilities Program Director with Lane County. Primary responsibilities of the program include determining eligibility for services, conducting abuse investigations, conducting foster licensing duties, and providing case management services to individuals who experience an intellectual or developmental disability. There is a program like the one I am responsible for serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community across the state.

These services are a lifeline for the people we serve. For example, case managers connect people to vital services like housing, healthcare, and transportation. They monitor the services being provided to ensure health and safety. They are responsible for tasks such as ensuring medication is being administered appropriately and people have access to safe and supportive living environments. Foster licensors provide recruitment and training to local foster providers to support them to meet the complex and individualized needs of the people needing services.

Our services are funded through the Oregon Department of Human Services. Over the past few years, our funding level has remained flat at roughly 86% of what would be considered full funding. This is historically less than what APD receives. And unlike APD we serve both children and adults. It would be beneficial for us to reach the same levels of funding that their division has been appropriated.

Unfortunately, our underfunding has led to high caseloads, challenges in completing timely follow-up related to abuse allegations, and extended timelines for completing eligibility determinations to support access to vital services. This has occurred while demands for services have increased. In fact, over the past two years we have experienced about a 20 percent increase in the number of people served. And the complexity of needs of people we serve has expanded.

We are partnering with the Brokerages this session to seek support to restore our programs to 100% of full funding. Such investment would draw down significant federal match and will help solve many of the staffing related issues that are being experienced across the state. The reality is that full funding is critical to covering the costs to recruit and retain a skilled workforce and manage the increasing costs resulting from inflation. Full funding is critical for the programs to continue to perform the services necessary to support the health and safety of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

An additional concern is the plan for the state to remove foster licensing from the Community Developmental Disabilities Programs. This will result in the loss of recruitment, training, and technical assistance provided by local programs to providers in their communities.

In closing, to support people with disabilities access to vital services to support their health and safety, I urge you to support full funding for community developmental disabilities programs as well as support to retaining these programs' role in foster licensing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these requests.