



RAISE UP OREGON AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION TEAM

MEMORANDUM

GWYN BACHTLE
*Early Learning Programs
Director, Oregon Early
Learning Division*

HEIDI BEAUBRIAND
*Nurse Coordinator,
Oregon Department of
Human Services*

JOAN BLOUGH
*Community Systems
Director, Oregon Early
Learning Division*

CHELSEA BUNCH
*Housing Integrator,
Oregon Housing and
Community Services*

KIRSTIN HOLMAN
*Program Design Manager,
Child Care Policy & Direct
Pay Unit, Oregon
Department of Human
Services*

STEPH JAREM
*Director of Health Policy,
Oregon Health Authority*

DAVID MANDELL
*Prenatal-to-Three
Systems Fellow, Oregon
Early Learning Division*

CARMEN URBINA
*Deputy Director, Oregon
Department of Education*

CATE WILCOX
*Maternal Health Director,
Oregon Health Authority*

KARA WILLIAMS
*EI/ECSE Director, Oregon
Department of Education*

Staff

REMEMBER WATTS
*Oregon Early Learning
Division*

To: Members of the Early Learning Council

From: Raise Up Oregon Agency Implementation Coordination Team

Date: 6/29/2020

RE: Innovative Responses to COVID-19

The Early Learning System is comprised of five state agencies, listed below, that provide crucial services and supports to families with prenatal-to-five children. Each state agency took actions to support families furthest from opportunity across Oregon in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Raise Up Oregon Agency Implementation Coordination Team (RUOAICT) has identified innovations from the response that provide better coordination or service to families.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA):

- OHA is rapidly working to expand Medicaid and WIC services as application numbers rise.
 - WIC has seen a net increase of 1,600 recipients each month since March 2020
- Telehealth and telemedicine services are expanding, including creation of telehealth guidance for nursing and home visiting.
- Stabilizing Medicaid coverage for individuals and families through retention policies through securing an emergency 1115 waiver: temporarily waives income verification for new enrollees; pauses any automatic disenrollment from coverage; ensures that any federal aid or state unemployment benefits would not disqualify OHP members from continuing to receive coverage.
- Utilizing Community Health Workers and Traditional Health Workers, in conjunction with grants to 120 community based organizations and local public health authorities as part of Oregon's Framework for Reopening Oregon, to:
 - Provide information on COVID-19 and perform contact tracing activities in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive
 - Strengthen social services and wraparound supports related to quarantine and isolation, especially for individuals, families and communities most impacted by racism and oppression
- Expansion of 211 system to support increased communication with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS):

Child Welfare (DHS-CW):

- Moved the system for parent-child interactions to be virtual. Instead of one in-person visitation per week, children now have daily opportunities to video correspond with parents. Immediate feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive as they are able to connect more regularly with their children. When social distancing restrictions are lifted, video correspondence will be able to complement in-person visitation to increase quality of interactions and relationships.

Self-Sufficiency Programs (DHS-SSP):

- Implemented telephonic or photo signatures for programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC), decreasing stress on clients without easy access to technology or transportation, and enables physical distancing as families do not need to come into a local branch office.
- Direct Pay Unit implemented process changes to assist providers, including the ability to email forms and questions, decreasing hold times for phone calls and promoting additional avenues of communication.
- ERDC increased the timeframe to complete CPR trainings to within 90 days of DHS approval instead of at screening (as well as allowing for online trainings) as a way to reduce barriers for new regulated subsidy providers.
- Increased the initial income limit for ERDC eligibility to 250% Federal Poverty Level or 85% State Median Income, whichever is greater; as well as decreased copayments to \$0 through the end of their current certification period. Starting 7/1/20, new cases and re-certifications will have copay assessed.
- Expanded number of absent days a provider may bill DHS for eligible children, as well as for any short-term COVID-19 related closure.

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS):

- OHCS has received \$95 million in funding in response to COVID, which has created three new programs:
 - Rental Assistance: \$55 million in rental assistance to be provided through Community Action Agencies
 - Energy Assistance: \$15 million in utility assistance to be provided through Community Action Agencies
 - Affordable Housing Provider Stability: \$20 million to provide operating loans to affordable housing providers
- Previous funds include over \$3.5 million to convert winter shelters to social distancing shelters.
- OHCS is chairing the [COVID-19 Statewide Homeless Populations Task Force](#) to provide a statewide platform for strategizing, information sharing, and collaboration, guidance and resource attainment.
- The Governor's Office, alongside OHCS, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, farmworker advocates, and farmers, developed a [\\$10 million housing response fund](#) available to agricultural producers to provide safe housing options for farmworkers and to meet Oregon Occupational Safety and Health temporary rules.

Oregon Early Learning Division (ELD):

- To staff emergency child care facilities that are unable to operate due to a shortage of qualified employees, the ELD developed a substitute and staffing pool of 587 approved individuals that have background checks and basic training (147 additional applied with requirements not yet met; as of June 4, 2020).
- To distribute Emergency Child Care Grants, the ELD developed a new system to get dollars to providers faster, including distributing \$8 million to over 1,800 providers as of June 2020. This system will be utilized to deliver an additional \$30 million authorized by the Emergency Board action from July through December to more providers, including to offer assistance to child care programs re-opening this summer.
- Developed a new supply delivery system to deliver critical supplies to child care facilities necessary for emergency child care operation during COVID, such as bleach, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and food items. Since March 2020, ELD has fulfilled 4,500 orders for 850 different child care providers.
- Oregon Pre-Kindergarten and Preschool Promise have coordinated opening of food pantries to serve families, as well as offering prepared meals for pick-up or delivery.
- CCR&Rs increased child care vacancy checks from monthly to weekly, ensuring Oregon's child care database has up-to-date information on vacancies in each county and state-wide. This information also helps to ensure that families have access to timely information about vacancies in emergency child care programs via 211.
- Coordinated with OHA, ODE to ensure that facilities and child care are available for agricultural workers.
- Launched weekly calls with child care providers by facility type, including a call for Spanish language providers (all types) on Saturdays to support them in implementation of COVID-19 safety requirements.
- Added a public dashboard to ELD's COVID-19 page displaying the number of emergency child care slots and vacancies by age and county.

Oregon Department of Education (ODE):

- ODE [created a webpage](#) with resources specific to the provision of special education for young children and families during the school and program closures related to COVID.
- EI/ECSE Programs are finding creative ways to connect with families through the use of technology:
 - Clackamas, Multnomah, Intermountain ESD EI/ECSE programs are using Google Classroom and Google meet-ups to engage with families online
 - Clackamas ESD is collaborating with Head Start partners using Classroom Dojo
 - Linn-Benton-Lincoln ESD has expanded use of the Blooms App and are also offering virtual family support through weekly Zoom webinars
- Pivoted professional development to virtual sessions, including ODE's Summer Institute, an annual cross-sector professional development institute for early childhood, and the implementation of the Pyramid Model, a state-wide systemic improvement plan.
- Developed virtual supports for early learning programs implementing LEAP, a practice based on the idea that children on the autism spectrum learn better in integrated settings alongside their typically developing peers. Weekly recorded videos are released for children and families, and there are bi-weekly Zoom meetings with the LEAP implementation team from Denver University.