

Director's Message



May 3, 2023

Building Well-being Together Initiative

The [Building Well-being Together Initiative](#) is the Oregon Department of Human Service's (ODHS) effort to focus on the whole well-being of people, families, and communities, especially those being left behind due to race, age, disability, identity and place. To do that, we need to work together with other government agencies, Tribes, providers, and communities to ensure that everyone has the services and supports they need. Last year, we shared the initiative with partners, providers, and the community and invited them to join us in working toward creating the future of human services in Oregon.



One of our focus areas this year is to start constructing a strategic plan with staff, community, partners, and Tribes. We are also testing out solutions to improve services and supports, as well as making necessary structural and organizational changes to be able to deliver on Governor's priorities.

There is already transformational work happening across ODHS. **I am pleased to share a few examples with you below.** There is so much happening across our agency, and there is still much more to do. I look forward to sharing more soon. Thanks so much to all of you for the work you do.

In service,

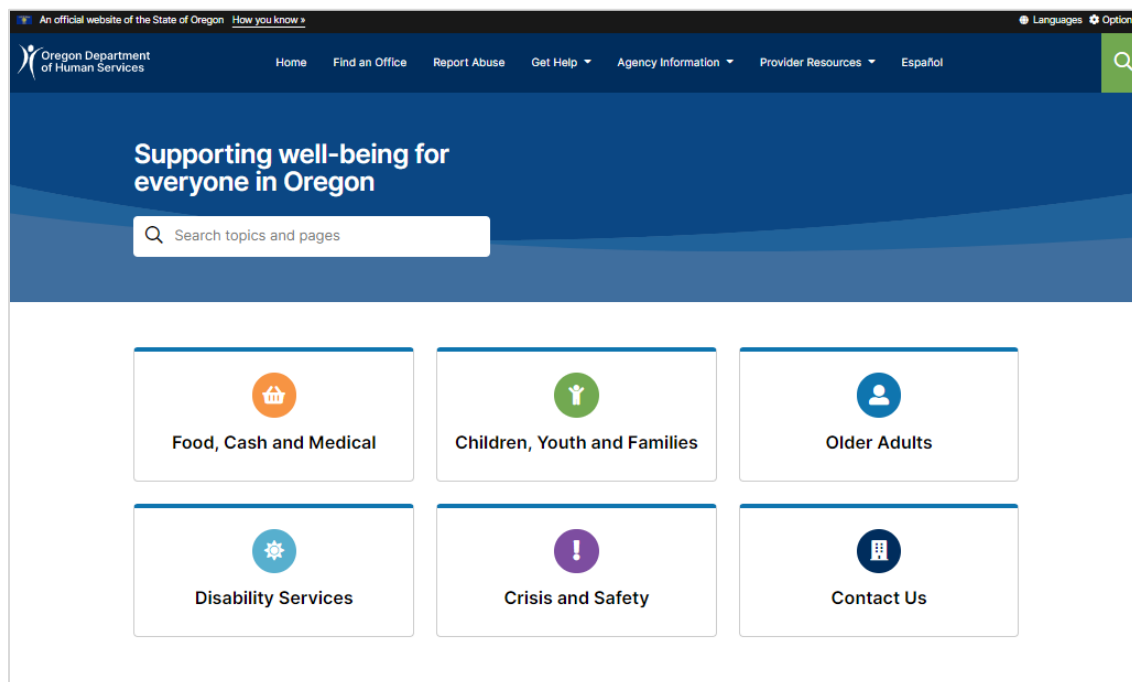
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- [Website redesign creates better access to information people need](#)
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Website redesign creates better access to information people need

Redesigning the Oregon Department of Human Services website can help create a better electronic “front door” to the services we provide. Our website is visited almost 10 million times a year. We want clear, plain language people can easily understand. We want the ability to have web pages easily translated. We want services to be easy to find, especially when many people we serve need to find information quickly. The goal of all this work is to make it easy for anyone to find what they need by working with people, providers, and communities to rethink how we show up online. We’re continuing user testing in English and Spanish over the next two months and plan to launch June 27.

[Find out more, preview the new site and offer feedback](#)



Preview of new home page

Breaking down barriers to support connections in Malheur County

[River Bend Place](#) is a 56-unit affordable housing development for individuals and families, serving 96 residents in Ontario, Oregon (Malheur County). An additional 15 to 25 non-residents also access services monthly through this site. The facility is owned by

Northwest Housing Alternatives and currently 2 ODHS staff work out of this facility on most Fridays. Multiple other providers also are connected through their support of people at this location.

These organizations (Northwest Housing Alternatives Resident Services, Community in Action, Lifeways, Origins Faith Community Outreach Initiative, Malheur County Health Department, ODHS, Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living, St. Alphonsus, Valley Family Health Care, City of Ontario, Housing Authority of Malheur and Harney County) recently came together to find ways to break down barriers to service for residents. They created a Release of Information form so support organizations can share basic information among each other without having clients repeat themselves multiple times and to help individuals connect. Another idea was to set up a lobby computer to allow anyone to come in and apply for benefits, without having to rely on an ODHS staff being there to assist.

While not all residents receive ODHS services, the resident services manager has worked with ODHS staff to offer up-to-date information so those who may be eligible for services but wary of connecting with a government agency can build connection. These changes have ended up supporting not only the residents but the public neighbors as well, as River Bend is closer than the ODHS Ontario office to some larger housing developments in the area. While collaboration can take more up front work at the beginning as well as ongoing coordination, the benefits to the community are lasting.



Photo courtesy of River Bend Place



Changes to Employment Related Daycare helps Oregonians

On Jan. 1, 2023, the Employment-Related Daycare program (ERDC) made changes to increase well-being and economic mobility for Oregonians. “The cost of child care should not be a barrier for people to get the education they need to better their lives and the lives of their families. The expansion of ERDC is one way we can help our families and our communities,” said Oregon Department of Human Services, Self-Sufficiency Interim Director Claire Seguin.

[Read about how recent changes to ERDC will increase benefits for Oregonians](#)



[Building Well-being](#) is a call to action for our agency to do better to support every Oregonian, and you are integral to this system-shift. Please reach out and let us know what you think at building.wellbeing@odhsoha.oregon.gov. We'd love to hear from you!