

Dear Committee Members –

I urge you to restore full funding of \$667,000 for the remainder of the biennium to the Family Networks in the DD Services Budget.

While there is a small amount of funding allocated in the currently proposed budget, it will not be enough to sustain the statewide system of family networks and it will still effectively eliminate the networks before the end of the year.

Reasons to protect the Family Networks:

- Vital lifeline for over 12,500 families which is more than the number of children served by the formal DD Services system.
- With full funding the state allocation would equate to a cost of \$54 per family, and because funding does not increase as more families engage, the cost per family actually decreases per year.
- It is not the time to take essential support away from vulnerable families who are more experiencing more sustained isolation and stress, and for many families the Networks are the only system of support they are engaged with during this ongoing pandemic.
- Family Networks have the unique ability to connect families, to offer immediate support and practical strategies – which frequently and effectively averts crisis especially when families cannot quickly access medical, educational or behavioral health systems.
- Family Networks provide an important infrastructure of support and advocacy for families that would otherwise fall through the cracks in our formal service systems.
- Professionals including medical doctors, judges, educators, social workers, and DD Services case managers refer families to Family Networks, and without full funding, this will be yet one more resource families will lose when they need it most.
- Family Networks build capacity in communities to welcome and include children with disabilities – to increase equitable access and combat unintended discrimination – by partnering with and offering training to local libraries, museums, fairs, youth sports coaches, and schools.

Thank you for your help in this very urgent matter!!!



Cheryl Cisneros, Executive Director

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Please include support@creatingops.org in scheduling requests

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Regional Family Network for Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties