

Report on Client Bill of Rights Survey

Open periods: July 23 - August 17, 2021, February 16 - May 17, 2022

Total Responses: 199

189 in English

7 in Spanish

2 in Arabic

1 in Russian

Top identified goals in the current draft of the Client Bill of Rights:

Answer choices	English	Spanish	Arabic	Russian	Total
Clear and easy language access for all clients that does not require additional advocacy or multiple steps to get this support	87.83% 166	100% 7	100% 2	100% 1	88.44% 176
Clear and easy ways to receive support if a client has a physical or mental disability without needing to provide documentation	87.30% 165	100% 7	100% 2	100% 1	87.94% 175
Client's gender is honored and respected including pronouns. Applications allow for self-declaration of gender markers or the ability to opt-out	77.78% 147	71.43% 5	100% 2	0.0% 0	77.39% 154
All clients have the right to an interpreter, advocate and/or peer support with a clear procedure to make this request	88.36% 167	100% 7	100% 2	0.0% 0	88.44% 176
Phone interactions include limited wait times (no more than 15 minutes), clear guidance on how to access what is needed in client's language, and no disconnected interactions.	78.31% 148	71.43% 5	100% 2	0.0% 0	77.89% 155
A clear application timeline including specifics on turnaround time for response from an application, receiving an interview, and receiving an eligibility decision.	85.71% 162	71.43% 5	100% 2	0.0% 0	84.92% 169
ODHS develops an agency-wide framework and timeline for becoming a Trauma Informed agency with guidance from experts.	75.13% 142	42.86% 3	100% 2	0.0% 0	73.87% 147
No sexual harassment	82.01% 155	71.43% 5	100% 2	0.0% 0	81.41% 162
Accurate and easily-understood information about the clients' case and transparency on benefits decisions. This includes eligibility workers willing to answer client questions in transparent and accurate ways that inform clients on their choices including the impacts and outcomes of their answers to eligibility and programmatic decisions.	83.07% 157	100% 7	100% 2	0.0% 0	83.42% 166
Each client should receive written assurance of privacy and confidentiality	70.90% 134	100% 7	100% 2	0.0% 0	71.86% 143
A clear procedure for reporting issues & support that guarantees no worker retaliation	83.07% 157	85.71% 6	100% 2	0.0% 0	82.91% 165
ODHS provides a space to engage with clients regularly that inform their policy and procedures	71.96% 136	57.14% 4	100% 2	0.0% 0	71.36% 142
Client rights are clearly displayed within office settings, on the ODHS website, and in the application packet or portal including in all client languages	78.31% 148	85.71% 6	100% 2	0.0% 0	78.39% 156
ODHS documents and publicizes metrics that track client rights to ensure transparency and accountability.	75.13% 142	42.86% 3	100% 2	0.0% 0	73.87% 147
Total respondents	189	7	2	1	199

Highest rated: Clear and easy language access, rights to an interpreter, 176/199 or 88.4% of respondents

Lowest rated: ODHS space to engage with clients, 142/199 or 71.4% of respondents

Suggestions for additions:

Client protections and treatment -

- Peer review process for applicants and participants in confidence without retaliation
- Advocates present for all interactions with clients
- Attitude changes - less judgment, gatekeeping, skepticism from ODHS, instead an attitude of wanting to get people on the benefits they need
- No racial or ethnic discrimination (reiterated multiple times in both opens)
 - From one respondent: "clients have the right to be free from harassment based on perceived or actual mental status/disability, gender identity/presentation, immigration status, ability to speak English, age, sex, race, sexual orientation, or any other protected class."
- Workers will follow through on commitments made to clients, or offer a timely explanation, and alternate plan.
- Allowing clients to fill out the online application without an email, providing other contact information instead.
- If a worker is unable to get back to a client, there should be a back-up worker who can respond within a reasonable time (a couple of days).
- Clients having the right to access alternative means of communication such as sign language interpreters, use of an aac (augmentative and alternative communication) device, or, and this is especially important during covid, lip reading (they make special lip reading masks).
- Offering a paperless option
- Offering a way to apply that doesn't include the phone. This can be a barrier for disabled folks.
- Along with clarifying 15 minute wait-times and what that would look like, offering "more ways to connect to program via chat/text/email"

Availability of Bill of Rights -

- Making the Client Bill of Rights available in more forms than just written somewhere, have it gone over and known by all clients

More training for ODHS -

- Poverty-informed training for all DHS employees through Communication Across Barriers to ensure that clients are treated with dignity by the people working their cases and answering their questions
- Clear language and training for ODHS staff on policies and benefits available, so that they can properly explain policies to clients
- Employees learning about power disparities and dynamics so that they can understand how that plays out in their interactions with clients. This can serve to teach them about how to lessen the unintentional gate keeping behaviors they perpetuate to people seeking services.
- Training for ODHS to provide support and resources for domestic violence survivors
- That clients are supported correctly by staff especially for DDS kplan only hours as often DHS staff will decline a client from ohp and benefits not realizing they qualify for this under a different qualifier for the state of Oregon. Many advocates and families have had to explain this to inexperienced case managers and supervisors.
- Smaller caseloads for caseworkers
- All front-line staff members are trained on customer service, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Staff are trained and available to answer questions on application process for clients

Definitions and category improvements -

- Defining sexual harassment by working with Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and/or the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

- Expanding gender options for participants, from comment: gender should be “freeform as the gender suggestion is, above. Q Corp has a pretty good package of roll-up standards to allow the agency to meet its federal reporting requirements without constraining how people report information about themselves.”
- Clear explanation of “household members” and more flexibility in who can be included and excluded in that.
 - One respondent indicated that there was financial abuse in their household which required benefits for survival, but was denied because of that person’s inclusion in the household
 - Honoring different family units and structures in policies and language (multi-generational, single fathers, non-traditional)

Process/Recertification Improvements -

- Clarity on what is expected around financial reporting and documentation, more specificity than “prior month’s earnings”, the ability to talk it over with a caseworker
- Clarification of questions and what they are asking for
 - Adequate *reminders* and explanations about reporting requirements, which can be confusing.
- “Accessing a wage report rather than making clients struggle to provide proof of income”
- “application language that allows all workers to describe their situation. we don't all fit into one box-i was an independent contractor, not an employee and my pay would change from month to month. it was frustrating to have workers and the paperwork try to fit us all into one cookie cutter mold”
- A mobile system for recertification, easy way to renew benefits from year to year
- App formats for the ONE system and the system to track SNAP disbursements
- One place to find client eligibility requirements including income levels and available medical deduction levels are disclosed in a clear, easy to find/read format on the ODHS website and are updated within (a week? a month?) of taking effect. (Stated multiple times)
 - From another respondent: “Public access to clear information regarding who is eligible for food stamps benefits and what changes in circumstances can cause people already receiving benefits to loose them.”
- Notice of 90 days before termination of benefits, benefits cannot just be stopped without warning.
- Annual inflation adjustments with publicly accessible calculations and reasoning

Improving outreach -

- Ensure that ODHS conducts an educational outreach campaign to vulnerable communities, including farmworkers who speak Mesoamerican indigenous languages, about the programs and services available through Radio, TV, and community resource fairs.
- Making improvements to program and outreach for unhoused folks (named multiple times)
 - Reducing requirements and making online app easier for unhoused folks, especially unhoused minors
 - Another respondent named benefits as inaccessible for them when they were unhoused.

Benefits expansion -

- “Changing what the poverty limit is. I've been eating only when its free this week because i dont have enough for rent”
 - “Access to enough funding for a healthy and active lifestyle in a way that supports financial health and avoids a feeling of scarcity ”
- “A ‘path to independence’ where benefits phase out in a way that earning something more than you had before doesn't put you over a threshold and totally disqualify you from a program.”
- Inclusion and fair treatment of non-citizens in benefits programs

Demographics

Racial demographics -

- White/Caucasian - 72.02% (121)
- Latinx/Hispanic - 13.09% (22)
- Declined to answer - 8.92% (15)
- Native American/Indigenous - 4.76% (8)
- Black/African American - 4.16% (7)
- Slavic - 3.57% (6)
- Middle Eastern/Arab American/North African - 1.78% (3)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - 1.19% (2)
- Other - 4.16% (7)
 - Romani - 1.19% (2)
 - Indigenous Mexican - 0.59% (1)
 - Non-answers - 2.38% (4)

Gender -

- Women - 64.49% (109)
- Men - 13.61% (23)
- Nonbinary - 8.87% (15)
- Declined to answer - 7.69% (13)
- Transgender - 4.14% (7)
- Gender Nonconforming - 4.14% (7)
- Agender/non-gendered - 1.18% (2)
- Other - 3.55% (6)
 - Genderqueer - 0.59% (1)
 - Butch - 0.59% (1)
 - Cis male - 0.59% (1)
 - Nonbinary, but with a note on transition - 0.59% (1)
 - Non-answers - 1.18% (2)

Sexual identity -

- Heterosexual/straight - 55.62% (94)
- LGBT2SQIA+ or queer - 27.22% (46)
- Declined to answer - 16.57% (28)
- Other - 2.96% (5)
 - Asexual - 1.18% (2)
 - Lesbian - 0.59% (1)
 - Queer - 0.59% (1)
 - Questioning - 0.59% (1)

Identification as disabled -

- No - 55.62% (94)
- Yes - 44.38% (75)

Impact of identity on interactions with ODHS -

- No - 65.09% (110)
- Yes - 34.91% (59)

Of the yes answers -

- 64.41% (or 38 respondents) identify as disabled
- 49.15% (29 respondents) identify as LGBTQ2SIA+ or Queer, 32.2% (19 respondents) as Heterosexual or Straight and 23.73% (14 respondents) declined to answer
- 57.63% (34 respondents) identified as female, 20.34% (12 respondents) as nonbinary, 11.86% (7 respondents) as gender nonconforming, 8.47% (5 respondents) identified as transgender, 3.39% (2 respondents) identified as male, 3.39% (2 respondents) identified as agender, and 8.47% (5 respondents) declined to answer
- Racial demographics:
 - 64.41%% (38 respondents) identified as white
 - 13.56% (8 respondents) as Hispanic/Latinx
 - 5.08% (3 respondents) as Black/African American
 - 5.08% (3 respondents) as Native American/Indigenous
 - 1.69% (1 respondent) as Middle Eastern/Arab American/North African
 - 1.69% (1 respondent) as Slavic
 - 1.69% (1 respondent) as Asian/Asian American
 - 1.69% (1 respondent) as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 - 3.39% (2 respondents) as Romani, classified under other
 - 11.86% (7 respondents) declined to answer.