



May 29, 2024

To: Sen. Gelser-Blouin, Chair Senate Interim Committee on Human Services  
From: Oregon Community Brokerages  
Re: ODDS Leadership Needs

Dear Sen. Gelser-Blouin and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we contract with ODDS to provide case management services to more than 7,500 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people to what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that make up life.

Thank you to the committee for inviting reflection on the ODDS search for a permanent Director. Before we offer our thoughts, we want to offer our deep gratitude for Interim Director Dana Hittle, and the skill, knowledge, and authenticity she has brought to her work already. We have benefited from the gifts of many talented leaders over the years, and we are grateful to add Dana to that list.

Oregon has been a trailblazer in IDD services for decades but has paused along the way. We need visionary leadership to continue down the path. At its best, Oregon has invested in community living, community connection, and individual empowerment. It will take the work of continually choosing those values in order to make progress. We face challenges with the workforce crisis and inflation that continuously puts human support last. We are challenged to maintain the clarity of our mission to empower people with IDD in the face of competing interests and demands. To bring our community together, we need a person with a strong understanding of Medicaid programs to work alongside us to craft the better future we are aiming for and bring people together to contribute their work toward that united end.

Oregon's IDD services system has clearly articulated values, refined over decades of ground-breaking commitment to listening to, supporting, and following the lead of people with IDD. See our statutes, our ODDS strategic plan, the mission and values

statements of ODDS and our community partner organizations. But even more importantly, see our actions. See our closure of institutions for people with IDD. See our full investment in community living. See our commitment to full, competitive employment for people with IDD. The Oregon IDD service system is an inspiring story of progress written by activism, passion, and community-building. The right candidate to lead ODDS will be as excited to be a part of that path forward as we are to have them join us.

A hiring process that reflects our core values and culture will include self-advocate panelists. It will ask the candidates to demonstrate their understanding of our values and how they apply to the choices in front of us. The ODHS-led hiring process culminating in early 2024 elicited a wealth of good information from candidates about their work experience, personal/professional values, and leadership qualities. The IDD community needs to hear all of that, and they also need to hear that the candidates understand where we've been, know what is important to this community, understand the regulations in play, and have an idea of what comes next.

Thank you for the opportunity to look to the future. We stand ready to do our part to get there.