

Senate Bill 548 (2023) Report

September 15, 2024

Child Welfare Division
Oregon Department of Human Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with [Senate Bill 548 \(2023\)](#), Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) hereby submits a report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to human services describing the number of instances in the preceding reporting period that trash bags were used to transport a foster child's personal effects, the reasons for using the trash bags, the department's supply of appropriate luggage carriers and its supply inventory management practices.

As described below, since x date, the ODHS Child Welfare Division (CW) has procured, distributed, and maintained an inventory of luggage carriers to transport children's belongings to prevent the usage of trash bags to transport a foster child's personal effects. From July of 2023 to July of 2024 there were a total of 10 uses out of 16,603 moves conducted during the same period. In each instance in which a trash/disposable bag was used, the department has recorded the reasons which range from hygiene issues, (e.g., lice), or unique emergencies where getting to a luggage carrier would create a safety issue (e.g., a snowstorm). However, the leading cause reported in the last year was that the youths' belongings were brought or transferred to a CW employee or contractor with personal effects in trash/disposable bags (e.g. Resource parents, shelter services, CASA, or another individual had packed them in this manner). CW staff has been instructed to report this and transfer the youths' belongings to appropriate luggage carriers when this occurs.

BACKGROUND

[Senate Bill 548 \(2023\)](#), directs ODHS to maintain inventory of luggage carriers for use when transporting personal effects of foster children who are entering, transitioning, or leaving foster care. It additionally directs ODHS to report to the interim legislative committees related to human services annually regarding the number of instances in the preceding reporting period that trash bags were used to transport a child's personal effects, the reasons for using the trash bags, the department's supply of appropriate luggage carriers, and its supply inventory management practices.

Children may be removed from their homes and placed in protective custody when law enforcement or ODHS have determined that it is not safe for them to remain home. Generally, a court order is required for removal except in emergency situations. Children are placed in shelter care until juvenile court proceedings have begun to determine placement for the child's care with a noncustodial parent or relative, foster care, or adoption. Placements in foster care may not be permanent and children in foster care may experience several different placements throughout their time in the foster care system.

Number of instances

From July 2023 through the end of July of 2024 a total of 16,603 moves where personal effects were transported. There were 10 instances in which trash bags were used during this period.. CW staff has been instructed to transfer to luggage, when possible, to do so after it was safe, hygienic, or the youth was transferred to CW staff by whichever other individual who had placed the items into bags.

Month	Number of instances
July 2023	1
August 2023	0
September 2023	0
October 2023	1
November 2023	0
December 2023	0
January 2024	2
February 2024	2
March 2024	0

April 2024	0
May 2024	0
June 2024	0
July 2024	4

Reasons

ODHS CW is required to report any usage of trash bags to central office and when reported business coordinators reach out to review the case for the details. Local office leadership is expected to report monthly their current luggage inventory and any usage of inappropriate bags and has until the end of the month after initial reporting to provide a complete justification.

Type	Number of instances
Brought or transferred to CW employee or contractor with personal effects in bags (resource parents, shelter, CASA, or other individual packed them) *	6
Hygiene (Lice, mold, or soiled clothing)	2
Weather/safety	1
Extra duffle bags were brought and used but and they weren't enough to transport all the youth's clothing, these were transferred to luggage upon a subsequent trip by staff to gather more bags from local office.	1

*Caseworkers are instructed to report this and transfer the youths' belongings to appropriate luggage when this occurs.

The department's supply of appropriate luggage carriers

Over the course of the year 6,155 luggage carriers have been purchased by the department. Over the past year the department has provided 2,742 luggage carriers to youth. The department currently has a stock of 3,413 luggage carriers in inventory. Luggage carriers are available in all ODHS Child Welfare offices. Many offices also store luggage in the vehicles that transport children. The luggage carriers can be re-used and can be used for subsequent moves when necessary. This has allowed ODHS CW to conduct 16,603 moves with this supply.

Supply inventory management practices

Procurement

District, Program, and Office Managers have been provided with the appropriate billing codes and are directed to purchase appropriate carriers or replenish supplies. Luggage carriers may be purchased by Program and Office Managers following buy decision guidelines [OAR 125-247-0200](#) using Index 22150 and PCA 18501. We are not aware of any offices that are out of duffel bags or unable to replenish supplies.

Distribution and reporting

Luggage carriers are available in all ODHS Child Welfare offices. Many locations also store luggage in the vehicles that transport children. Local office leadership is reminded monthly to submit luggage inventory and any usage of trash bags. If there is any usage of trash bags reported a central office business coordinator reaches out for the details so the reason for use can be recorded and made available.



For additional information:
Contact Roberto Gutierrez
ODHS Government Relations Manager
roberto.gutierrez@odhs.oregon.gov
971-317-1265