

ANALYSIS

Item 12: Department of Corrections

FORGE Fatherhood

Analyst: Steve Robbins

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Economic Stability Demonstration and Innovation Division, in the amount of up to \$1,250,000 to provide funding to expand an evidence-based parenting program specifically designed for incarcerated fathers.

Analysis: The Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, Engagement - Fatherhood (FORGE - Fatherhood) grant is focused on supporting programs that create stronger families and interrupt the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

Since 2014, the Department of Corrections (DOC) has operated the Family Advocate model at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in partnership with the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division to bridge the gap between child welfare courts and incarcerated women who have open cases. The program has demonstrated effectiveness in establishing mutually beneficial communication and visitation between agencies and family members. If awarded, this grant will be used to expand the program to men in at least one additional prison.

In addition to better coordinating child welfare cases for children of adults in custody, the funds will be used to add a father-specific parenting program to help participants understand child development and behaviors, learn the importance of being an involved father, promote positive communication with their child(ren) and caregivers, learn how to set limits and use nonviolent discipline techniques, and more. DOC will also utilize part of the funds to create parent/child enhanced visiting opportunities and provide free weekly parent/child communications. There are no state match requirements. If awarded, an additional review of federal terms and conditions of the grant will be necessary to ensure the agency's ability to comply.

The grant opportunity closed on July 29, 2025, and the Department submitted the required 10-day notice to the legislature on July 17, 2025. The grant's period of performance is September 30, 2025, through September 29, 2026. If awarded, DOC will return to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to request additional Federal Funds expenditure limitation.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means approve the request.

Request: Retroactive authorization to apply for a \$1,250,000 Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, and Engagement Fatherhood Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to pilot a Children of Incarcerated Parents program in two of Oregon's men's correctional facilities.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) requests retroactive authorization to apply for a grant of \$1.3 million from the Department of Health & Human Services. If awarded, funding would be used to pilot a Children of Incarcerated Parents (CIP) program to support incorporation of the CIP Bill of Rights (Senate Bill 241, 2017) and further the work done by DOC and the Oregon Department of Human Services to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

DOC has overseen a Family Advocate model at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility since 2014, which has proven successful in helping adults in custody build stronger family relationships. This program does not currently exist at any of Oregon's correctional facilities for men, but the FORGE Fatherhood grant would allow DOC to expand the Family Advocate model to at least two additional correctional facilities. Specifically, DOC would use grant funds to establish a father-specific pilot program designed to better equip fathers to intentionally, proactively, and responsibly engage in their children's lives. DOC also intends to use grant funds to create enhanced opportunities for parent/child visitations and communication.

DOC provided a 10-day letter to the legislature on July 20, 2025. The grant application deadline was July 29, 2025, and the anticipated performance period is September 2025 through September 2026. If the grant-funded pilot project is successful, DOC anticipates receiving noncompetitive continuation grants for four subsequent years beyond the original one-year grant project period. There is no state match required, but DOC will need to return to the legislature for additional Federal Funds expenditure limitation if the grant is awarded.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Oregon Department of Corrections

Headquarters
3723 Fairview Industrial Drive SE 200
Salem, OR 97302



August 25, 2025

The Honorable Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street, NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez:

Nature of Request

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) respectfully requests retroactive approval to apply for a competitive federal grant described in more detail below.

Agency Action

DOC Learned about a Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Family and Economic Stability Demonstration and Innovation Division grant opportunity in mid-July with a quick turn around requirement. We worked closely with DAS CFO and LFO to submit the required 10 day notification letter for the Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, Engagement – Fatherhood grant. The application process closed July 29, 2025.

DOC requests retroactive approval to apply for this grant in order to pilot a coordinated Children of Incarcerated Parents (CIP) program to support incorporation of the CIP Bill of Rights [SB 241](#) (2017) into its operations and DOC's and the Department of Human Services (DHS)/Child Welfare Division's work in creating stronger families and interrupting the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

The grant project concept is still under development, but DOC seeks to expand the successful Family Advocate model to at least two pilot men's institutions.

In place at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility since 2014, the Family Advocate model has demonstrated its effectiveness in bridging the gap between DHS/Child Welfare courts and incarcerated parents who have open DHS cases. The Family Advocate has proven extremely effective in assisting AICs to establish mutually beneficial communication and visitation between DHS, AICs, and DOC. Currently, there is no corresponding position for the men in DOC custody to conduct parenting-needs triage, connect individuals with resources, and identify and coordinate with DHS on upcoming facility special visiting events. For the grant project DOC's Coffee Creek Correctional Facility Family Advocate would triage and delegate cases during the intake process, and then route fathers to the new men's Family Advocate pilot sites.

Providing a means to better coordinate DHS and DOC efforts and resources in this manner would help remedy the stress and disruptions in child welfare cases. We anticipate locating fathers at an institution with an established point of contact for DHS Child Welfare (i.e., the Family Advocate) will significantly improve DOC/DHS and parent/child communications, including visitation.

We also intend to pilot use of an evidence-based, father-specific parenting program specifically designed for incarcerated fathers to help participants understand child development and behaviors, learn the importance of being an involved father, promote positive communication with their child(ren) and caregivers, learn how to set limits and use nonviolent discipline techniques, developing or rebuilding trust, reducing family conflict and enhancing family relationships, self-regulating and co-regulating to support healthy parenting. The parenting program offered through the Family Advocate may also be used to meet DHS family reunification plan requirements.

While enrolled in the parenting program, DOC also intends to use the grant funds to create parent/child enhanced visiting opportunities and provide free weekly parent/child communications.

The overall purpose of the grant project is to better equip fathers to intentionally, proactively, and responsibly engage in their children's lives; which we believe will not only lead to reduced recidivism but also build protective factors in their children and disrupt the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

DOC is seeking \$1,250,000 for the period September 30, 2025, through September 29, 2026 (year one). Noncompetitive continuation grants may be offered for years two through five of the project period, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress toward performance benchmarks, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the federal government. There is no match requirement for this grant.

If the grant-funded pilot project is as successful as expected, DOC anticipates receiving noncompetitive continuation grants for four years beyond the original one-year grant project period. During the continuation grant periods, DOC would work with LFO to request a policy option package to permanently fund the men's Family Advocate positions and imbed the practices and fatherhood parenting program in DOC's processes and services.

If we can "front-load" and support parental participation early in the permanency process, we will have more families in better condition and prepared for continuation of reunification services and success upon reentry.

Action Requested

DOC requests retroactive approval to apply for the FORGE Fatherhood Grant. If awarded the grant DOC will need to return to the legislature for additional limitation to expend the funds.

Legislation Affected

None

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Reese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Reese" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Reese

Director

cc: Amanda Beitel, Legislation Fiscal Officer
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