

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of funding for the I/DD case management budget. My name is Kirsten Oster, and I am the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD) Program Manager for Washington County's Developmental Disabilities Division.

One of the primary responsibilities of my organization is to provide case management services to individuals who experience an Intellectual or Developmental Disability.

Case managers for an individual with an I/DD are a lifeline - they help connect people to vital services such as housing, healthcare, and transportation. And in the event of an emergency, case managers ensure individuals can evacuate and find a safe place to go.

Our programs are funded through the Oregon Department of Human Services. Over the past few years, our funding level has remained flat at roughly 86% of what would be considered full funding. This has historically been less than what APD receives, but we serve about the same number of people. It would be helpful for the I/DD system to reach the same levels of funding that APD has been appropriated.

Unfortunately, our underfunding has led to case managers being unable to provide the high-quality, consistent service they strive for, due to increasing caseloads and rapid turnover. An individual or family being able to work with the same case manager for a year has become a rare exception in our division. A consistent partnership with a case manager provides the stability someone needs to thrive in our communities and strengthens that lifeline.

We are partnering with the Support Service Brokerages this session to restore these programs to 100% of full funding. Such investment would draw down significant federal match and will help solve many of the staffing issues that our programs are experiencing across the state.

We urge you to support this request!

Sincerely,

Kirsten Oster, MSW, MBA
Program Manager

Washington County Health and Human Services
Developmental Disabilities Division