

February 3, 2026

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

As an alumnus of Portland State University and current staff with the Portland State University Child Welfare Partnership, I am writing to urge you to **protect the Public University Support Fund (PUSF)** and to **protect ODHS from a potential \$4 million cut to its S&S budget** that would severely inhibit our ability to train new child welfare caseworkers to provide important, potentially life-saving services to Oregon families.

Our program services **all new ODHS Child Welfare Caseworkers and Social Services Assistants in the State of Oregon**. Per our most recently [Quarterly Report](#), in the final three months of 2025, we had a total attendance of 667 ODHS and Tribal child welfare staff across our 15 contracted trainings. In those three months, we had **99 training days, with 85% of those days hosting 2 to 3 trainings**. We regularly exceed our 80% proficiency benchmarks; in our last quarter, we managed to demonstrate that **100% of training participants demonstrated overall knowledge on child welfare concepts and skills**.

Our work provides ODHS Child Welfare with mandatory training that they, **by law, under ORS 418.702, must complete prior to beginning their important jobs** keeping Oregon families safe, and continuing education that they are required per ORS and OAR to complete regularly.

Additionally, I have personally provided support to ODHS outside of the scope of our contract to assist with hiring efforts and to consult on the development of a training on the Americans with Disabilities Act. My Logistics Manager has also provided hiring support.

The proposed funding cuts run a *significant* risk of destroying a 33-year-old infrastructure of cumulative training and knowledge infrastructure, and risk destroying a revenue stream for Portland State University while the University experiences a massive budget crisis. **A 27.3% cut of funding** to the program isn't just dangerous economically; cuts to our training program **will reduce training for new ODHS child welfare caseworkers** in compliance with Oregon law, which *will* inevitably result in staffing shortages and overburdened caseworkers. Caseworkers with an impossible caseload will result in a massive decrease in quality of services offered to Oregon families and youth.

Please continue to prioritize stable and strong funding for Oregon's public universities and the students they serve, as well as our Oregon Department of Human Services to ensure caseworkers have the skills and tools they need to service our community.

Sincerely,

Tyler Blankenship, CPACC
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