Strengthening the Resource Grid to Support Families and Children

Parents, advocates, and policymakers know that children’s needs are as diverse as they are interconnected. When we put our minds, money, attention, and love toward improving the lives of children and youth we can make profound impacts. Children need financially secure families to grow into successful adults. They require conditions that promote their educational achievement, from quality prenatal care to K-12 education. Children need a healthy, balanced foundation for future success. To provide that foundation, children and their families must have access to the resources that they need to thrive. This access functions much like a power grid, but it is patchy and uneven in some areas. Policy changes and financial investments can help us repair and expand Oregon’s resource grid — so that every family and every child has the “energy” to achieve their full potential.

Data on child well-being paints a picture of how our children are doing. The 2019 County Data Book: Status of Oregon Children and Families compiles data on child well-being across a broad range of indicators. These outcomes can be linked to whether or not children and their families have access to the resources that they need to thrive. Indicator rankings help us see both where communities are plugged in to a grid of resources, and where there is an unreliable or patchy flow of resources to the grid. What we know from the data about Oregon’s grid is that rural and coastal counties are struggling economically and thus experiencing higher levels of childhood poverty — the grid needs strengthening.

Historical barriers to success also must be addressed. We know that not all children and families are thriving in counties with stronger economies, so the grid needs adjusting. These adjustments must address historical and current inequities. Systemic racism continues to drive poorer outcomes among our Native, Black, Latinx, and Pacific Islander and other Asian communities. Other entrenched barriers to accessing the grid exist for historically marginalized populations, including children with disabilities and LGBTQIA youth.
This is our work — this is the work of our communities — this is the work of our democracy. We must work together to create a reliable grid, so that all communities are equally plugged in, so that all our children have what they need. The resources that provide the fuel for a healthy thriving child are things that we all need to do well: good learning opportunities, healthy food, physical and mental health services, safe, affordable housing, and supportive relationships and communities. Oregon’s ability to provide our families, our communities, and our children with a consistent, reliable, effective flow of resources can be built through good policy, targeted investments, and strong community partnerships.

With the 2020 Children’s Agenda and the 120 Children’s Agenda partner organizations representing the wide range of policy areas impacting child well-being, we may not all be actively supporting each individual item on the agenda, but we stand together to propose legislative solutions and investments that will allow us to provide a strong foundation for Oregon’s future generation.

— Children’s Agenda Steering Committee
  Martin Carty, Oregon Primary Care Association
  Roberta Dunn, FACT Oregon
  Melissa Eribaum, Clackamas Women’s Services
  Courtney Graham, SEIU Local 503, OPEU
  Dana Hepper, Children’s Institute
  Jenny Lee, APANO
  Amanda Manjarrez, Individual Member
  William Miller, Native American Youth and Family Center
  Andrea Valderamma, Coalition of Communities of Color

When we work together to create a reliable grid, our communities are plugged in.
As we reviewed the concepts submitted for the 2020 Children’s Agenda, the following five have been selected as priorities:

✔ Expand Transition Services for Foster Youth
✔ Strengthen Oregon’s Response to Child Abuse with Increased Funding
✔ Family Preservation Project
✔ Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act
✔ Reducing collateral consequences for youth in the juvenile justice system

The first three were budget requests in 2019 for key programs that for a variety of issues did not make it across the finish line to be included in the 2019 – 2021 budget. We call on legislators to complete this “unfinished business” and allocate funding for the first three items above during the 2020 legislative session. The last two priorities are statutory changes coming out of legislative workgroups that help to address systemic failures in how our child welfare and juvenile justice systems operate and should be passed now.
Economic Security

Children need financially secure families with stable housing.

**PRIORITY**

**EXPAND TRANSITION SERVICES FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

Increase funding for the DHS Child Welfare Independent Living Program (ILP) to better meet the needs of all foster youth aging out of foster care.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon Foster Youth Connection

**SUPPORTED BY:**

**STOP SUSPENDING DRIVER LICENSES FOR NONPAYMENT OF FINES**

Suspending driver licenses for inability to pay fines keeps people from being able to pay their debts and traps people in a cycle of poverty.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon Low Center

**SUPPORTED BY:**

**PROTECTING FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL CUTS**

Proposed federal rules would take away food assistance (SNAP/school meals) from families in every corner of Oregon. We can take action to protect our communities.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

**SUPPORTED BY:**

**KEEP THE OREGON IDA INITIATIVE STRONG**

The Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) initiative helps build hope for Oregonians with low incomes. Federal changes have the initiative facing significant funding cuts. We need action in 2020.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Neighborhood Partnerships

**SUPPORTED BY:**
- American Association of University Women of Oregon, CareOregon, Children’s Institute, DevNW, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Forward, Habitat for Humanity of Oregon, Hacienda CDC, Housing Oregon, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Impact NW, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Native American Youth and Family Center, New Avenues for Youth, Oregon Foster Parent Association, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Oregon Head Start Association, Oregon Housing Alliance, Oregon Primary Care Association, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555

**LONG TERM RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS**

Oregonians with low incomes, including families with children, are at risk of homelessness. Oregon should study providing access to long term rent assistance to support housing stability.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon Housing Alliance

**SUPPORTED BY:**
- American Association of University Women of Oregon, CareOregon, Children’s Institute, Community Action Team, DevNW, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Development Center, Family Forward, Hacienda CDC, Housing Oregon, Impact NW, League of Women Voters of Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Neighborhood Partnerships, New Avenues for Youth, Open Adoption & Family Services, Oregon Center for Public Policy, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Food Bank, Oregon Foster Parent Association, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Oregon Law Center, Oregon Primary Care Association, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, Safe Routes Partnership Pacific Northwest, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, Youth, Rights & Justice, YWCA of Greater Portland
Children need quality learning environments beginning at birth

OREGON STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY
Create a statutory requirement for the administration of a statewide survey of Oregon adolescents in school that assesses the physical, mental/emotional and social factors impacting health, well-being, and educational achievement; stabilize funding to administer the survey and support schools in utilizing survey findings to make data-informed decisions.

SUBMITTED BY: Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

ENHANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD FACILITIES
Invest state bond dollars in preschool and infant toddler facilities to increase access to high quality early learning for low-income children.

SUBMITTED BY: Children’s Institute

SERVING OREGON’S UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH
Increase support for programs serving unaccompanied homeless youth and expand the types of services available to include Host Home Programs.

SUBMITTED BY: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Children should be safe and healthy

PRIORITY STRENGTHEN OREGON’S RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE WITH INCREASED FUNDING
Every child should receive child abuse prevention curriculum and have access to quality, comprehensive, child-focused services when impacted by child abuse. Better data will help our efforts.

SUBMITTED BY: ONCAIC, The Network

PRIORITY FAMILY PRESERVATION PROJECT
Provide funding for this proven model for strengthening families and communities, and establish Family Preservation Project in statute to ensure incarcerated mothers and their children receive these support services to address trauma.

SUBMITTED BY: YWCA of Greater Portland
**PRIORITY**  
**OREGON INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT**

Legislation is needed to implement the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to promote the safety of native children, preserve tribal families and communities, and recognize tribal sovereignty.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Native American Youth and Family Center  

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**PRIORITY**  
**REDUCING COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

This important first step in reforming how Oregon expunges records of youth involved with juvenile justice would establish a process for expunction and make “contacts” automatically expunged if the youth was not adjudicated in the juvenile court, helping to mitigate potential life-long consequences around employment and secondary education and housing access.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Youth, Rights & Justice  
**SUPPORTED BY:** APANO, CareOregon, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Forward, Hacienda CDC, Impact NW, League of Women Voters of Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Native American Youth and Family Center, New Avenues for Youth, Open Adoption & Family Services, Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Oregon Foster Parent Association, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Oregon Primary Care Association, Oregon PTA, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, Safe Routes Partnership Pacific Northwest, SEIU Local 503 (OPEU), United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, Washington County Kids, YWCA of Greater Portland

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**IMPROVE CASA PROGRAM SUPPORT; INCREASE NUMBER AND DIVERSITY OF CASAs**

Invest in Oregon CASA Network to implement greater program support and quality assurance. Invest in local program recruitment and training to increase the number and diversity of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs.)

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon CASA Network  
**SUPPORTED BY:** CareOregon, Community Action Team, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Development Center, Family Forward, Hacienda CDC, Impact NW, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, ONCAIC, The Network, Oregon Foster Parent Association, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Oregon Head Start Association, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, Washington County Kids, YWCA of Greater Portland

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**CLEAN ENERGY JOBS/CAP AND INVEST**

Cap and price carbon emissions and invest in climate resiliency across our communities.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon Environmental Council  
**SUPPORTED BY:** American Association of University Women of Oregon, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Forward, Hacienda CDC, Impact NW, League of Women Voters of Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Native American Youth and Family Center, Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices, Oregon Primary Care Association, Oregon Public Health Association, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

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**SAFELY STORE ALL FIREARMS**

Require the safe storage of guns when they are not under the owner’s immediate control, as well as mandatory reporting of lost or stolen guns.

**SUBMITTED BY:** State of Safety Action  

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**SUPPORT SCHOOL-BASED ORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS**

Include oral health in K-12 health curriculum standards; seek federal funding to train and deploy Community Dental Health Coordinators; protect CCO and DCO ability to support school-based oral health programs outside of paying encounter claims.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oregon Latino Health Coalition  
**SUPPORTED BY:** APANO, Children’s Institute, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Family Forward, Hacienda CDC, Impact NW, League of Women Voters of Oregon, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Native American Youth and Family Center, New Avenues for Youth, Oregon Dental Association, Oregon Foster Parent Association, Oregon Foster Youth Connection, Oregon Primary Care Association, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, Washington County Kids, YWCA of Greater Portland
2020 CHILDREN’S AGENDA PARTNERS

211info
All Born (In)
American Association of University Women of Oregon
American Heart Association
American Lung Association in Oregon
American Society for the Positive Care of Children
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
Basic Rights Oregon
CareOregon
Catholic Community Services
Causa
Central City Concern
Children’s Health Alliance
Children’s Institute
Children’s Trust Fund of Oregon
Clackamas Women’s Services
Coalition of Communities of Color
College Possible
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team, Inc.
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
FACT Oregon
Families First Parent Resource Center
Family Development Center
Relief Nursery
Family Forward
Family Resource Center of Central Oregon
Fight Crime: Invest In Kids
Foster Homes of Healing Fund
Friends of Outdoor School
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Hacienda CDC
Healthy Kids Learn Better
Housing Oregon
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization
Impact NW
Janus Youth Programs
Juliette’s House
Kinship House
Latino Network
League of Women Voters of Oregon
March of Dimes Greater Oregon
Mission: Readiness
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, Oregon Chapter
NAMI Oregon
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon
Native American Youth and Family Center
Neighborhood House, Inc.
Neighborhood Partnerships
Neighbors for Clean Air
New Avenues for Youth
Northwest Down Syndrome Association
Northwest Mothers Milk Bank
ONCAIC, The Network
Open Adoption & Family Services
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women
OregonASK
Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children
Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
Oregon CASA Network
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials
Oregon Council for Behavioral Health
Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
Oregon Dental Association
Oregon Education Association
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Family Support Network
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Foster Parent Association
Oregon Foster Youth Connection
Oregon Head Start Association
Oregon Health Equity Alliance
Oregon Housing Alliance
Oregon Hunger Task Force
Oregon Latino Health Coalition
Oregon Law Center
Oregon Montessori Association
Oregon Nurses Association
Oregon Oral Health Coalition
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon Primary Care Association
Oregon PTA
Oregon Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Institute
Oregon School-Based Health Alliance
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force
Oregon Student Association
Oregon Trial Lawyers Association
Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Partnership for Safety and Justice
Pearl Buck Center
Planned Parenthood
Advocates of Oregon
Playworks
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation
Pro-Choice Coalition of Oregon
Reach Out and Read
ReadyNation
Safe Routes Partnership
Pacific Northwest
SEIU Local 503 (OPEU)
Silverton Together
Somali American Council Of Oregon
State of Safety Action
TANF Alliance
Tax Fairness Oregon
The Family Nurturing Center
The Street Trust
The Urban League of Portland
United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555
Unite Oregon
Upstream Public Health
Voices Set Free
Washington County Kids
Youth, Rights & Justice
YWCA of Greater Portland