

# Self-Sufficiency Programs

# Vision into Action

# Guide 2024



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# Introduction

## Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP)

SSP implements policies, programs and services aimed at meeting people's basic needs to support individual, family and community well-being. Our staff provide benefits distribution, tailored coaching and navigation of services and supports. We provide services to people in Oregon across the entire lifespan to reduce poverty and stop the cycle of poverty.

## What's different

SSP is working toward a future where its services and resources are centered around whole-person well-being. The goals of SSP's Vision into Action reflect a paradigm shift that focuses on economic stability, mobility and well-being, moving away from a more restrictive model shaped by federal programs to one that honors the lived experience of the people we serve. The transformation centers on the **principle that poverty alleviation is SSP's central role**. The four goals of Vision into Action:

1. Our services lift people out of poverty and keep them from experiencing poverty in the first place.
2. Our policies and practices reduce the racial wealth gap and support each person served to achieve financial stability.
3. Our holistic services are tailored to connect people with future-focused skills, training, and education to secure stable and well-paying jobs connected to their long-term goals.
4. Our case management, resource navigation support and referrals are accessible and equitable so people can address the barriers unique to them.

## Why now?

In 2023, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) took major steps to consolidate all human services eligibility functions into a single program called Oregon Eligibility Partnership (OEP). This shift created an obligation and an opportunity for SSP to clearly articulate a new path forward, prioritizing actions to support individual and family well-being.

Guided by Governor Kotek's priorities for improved public service, ODHS' [Equity North Star](#) and [Building Well-Being Initiative](#) and aligned with Child Welfare's (CW) [Vision for Transformation](#),

SSP created a high-level Vision into Action describing the journey to change systems that don't work for the people we serve and strengthening relationships with community, the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal partners. ([Appendix C](#)) Vision into Action is a bridge strategy for 2024 through this period of transition and as ODHS creates an agency-wide strategic plan by June 2024.

## The guide

To connect the high level vision to priority actions “on the ground”, SSP has engaged staff, community partners, the Nine Tribes of Oregon and ODHS partner programs and consulted research and best practices to develop a Vision into Action Guide. ([Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#)) This guide is intended to provide clear, actionable priorities to steer our work in 2024, leaving room for managers and staff to think and act creatively. It calls staff to take initiative within their respective jobs to achieve the vision with manager guidance and support. It is a “living” document that we will seek to continuously improve as we move forward, listen to the people we serve and measure short-term outcomes in service of anti-poverty goals.



### What you need to know

Vision into Action focuses SSP's commitment to do our part to end poverty in Oregon alongside state, federal, community and funding partners, the Nine Tribes of Oregon, and the people we serve. It guides our work in 2024 through organizational shifts and as ODHS develops a strategic plan.

## Priority actions

The road map to support the well-being of individuals, families, Tribal members and communities requires a focused effort. We know that we can't do everything at once, nor do we have unlimited resources to accomplish all that we'd like, so we need to prioritize and phase actions to move toward the goals.

## How we prioritized actions

We offered opportunities for community partners and the Nine Tribes of Oregon to share their experiences with service delivery and what needs to improve, gaining valuable insight from those who responded. Through a survey provided to all SSP and OEP staff, nearly 1300 staff (a 50 percent response rate) provided recommendations of how to best achieve a vision of equitable and effective service delivery that contributes to well-being. We consulted national and Oregon-specific research on promising practices. And we developed a decision matrix which provides analysis

of the actions, outcomes, feasibility, responsibility and potential measures – with an expectation that actions in 2024 must be resource-neutral. All these input streams led to the priority actions summarized below.

## How we get there

To make progress toward the four goals, we must ensure that actions reflect the following principles in Vision into Action:

- Lead with equity
- Partner and collaborate (with communities, Tribal Governments and ODHS partners)
- Honor lived experience
- Support a well-trained and diverse workforce

We also will incorporate the principles of [ODHS' Equity North Star](#) (Inclusivity, Equity, Service, Well-Being) and ground our processes in the six elements of [ODHS' RiSE culture](#):

- Safety, well-being and belonging
- Honor and value each other
- Equitable treatment and racial justice
- Collective responsibility and growth
- Meaningful participation and shared power
- Interconnected communities

Vision into Action also aligns with ODHS' customer service mission, defined as: "At ODHS, customer service means providing services and supports that help build well-being for people while treating them with dignity and respect; honoring their time, unique needs and culture; and using accessible formats and language."

## Leadership and cross-program commitments

For each of the four goals, we have identified specific commitments and actions that SSP leadership will take, either within SSP or collaboratively across ODHS programs, who is responsible for leading implementation and when. Cross-program objectives and actions have been mutually identified and implementation will require collaboration, shared leadership and resources.

## Staff roles

Staff in every position across SSP can and must do their part to implement Vision into Action. Actions will look different for family coaches, policy analysts, or administrative support specialists, and they will vary by geographic location as well. Vision into Action sets the direction we're going to meet the goals and needs of individuals and families and create a culture of flexibility and innovation for staff. Rather than a prescriptive list, we've provided examples of actions by SSP job type or position ([Appendix A](#)) that staff might take to support each of the goals.

As we implement this action guide, we will ask staff to share examples of new approaches that are working, ideas for what they'd like to do and what they need to be successful. We will work with SSP managers in district and program leadership to provide support and clear guidance to ensure staff are empowered to take action. Every SSP staff member will be expected to complete a short online learning module and work with their manager to develop their unique Vision into Action personal plan by June 2024. The personal action plans will reflect what each SSP staff member can do from their position to best support the people we serve and will be included in their Performance Accountability Feedback (PAF) in Workday, the ODHS human resources system.

We also recognize that this work needs to be done in collaboration with community and Tribal governments. SSP staff who engage with community partners, Tribal governments and staff, and those who provide direct service delivery will provide critical connections to inform and adapt our work going forward.

**Measurement and Accountability** — Each action is accompanied by draft measures of success in the decision matrix document, which will be refined in 2024 with input from community and Tribal governments to monitor progress and course correct as needed. A priority for SSP in 2024 is continuing to improve our accountability by refining and revising how we measure our impact. This work will be guided by the priorities in the Vision into Action. Long-term goals will be measured by the SSP Key Performance Measures, which review outcomes based on annual surveys of the people SSP serves.



### What you need to know

The Vision into Action Guide is built on the foundation of the ODHS Equity North Star and Building Well-Being Together Initiative and developed with input from staff, community partners and Tribal governments. It sets priority actions for leadership and cross-program collaboration in 2024 and provides flexible guidance for staff to take actions based on their individual work roles.



# **Vision into Action goals, objectives and priority actions.**

# End poverty

**Our services lift people out of poverty and keep them from experiencing poverty in the first place.**

## What this means

At its core, SSP is about helping people achieve economic stability so they can thrive and reach their full potential. This kind of work is ambitious, and it takes time.

Many people we serve are in crisis. Their time and energy go toward meeting urgent needs like paying this month's rent or making sure their children have enough to eat. We work with them to find those immediate solutions.

Our vision also aims to make a long-lasting difference for Oregon families and communities. Doing anti-poverty work means helping people move from crisis to surviving to thriving, keeping them from returning to a cycle of poverty in the future through accessing resources from ODHS, community partners, Tribal governments and other funding streams.

### SSP leadership commitments

Objective	Actions	Owner*/partner <b>*bold type below indicates primary responsible party(ies)</b>	Timeline
Change policies, processes and practices to support economic stability	Seek new sources of funding and the ability to braid and stack funding, including government, foundation, private sector, and collaboration with Tribal governments through the work of the SSP/CW funding committee.	<b>SSP/CW Funding Committee</b> , ODHS Chief Operating Officer, Budget Office, Office of Tribal Affairs	July 2024
Change policies, processes and practices to support economic stability	Review federal and state regulations and provide guidance to staff on areas of flexibility. Update all rules, guides and tools. Advocate for changes in federal and state regulations if applicable.	<b>Program and policy teams</b>	2024 and ongoing

## ODHS/OHA Cross-program collaboration

Objective	Actions	Owner*/partner <b>*bold type below indicates primary responsible party(ies)</b>	Timeline
Improve eligibility application processes	Continue cross-program coordination with OEP, Aging and People with Disabilities (APD), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and ODHS Director's Office to improve call wait times and easier access.	<b>OEP, SSP, APD, OHA, ODHS</b> Director's Office	Over 2024 OEP will take on increased responsibility, fully transition by the end of 2024
Improve eligibility application processes	Provide processes and resources to enable partner organizations and Tribal governments to assist people with the eligibility process.	<b>OEP, SSP, APD, OHA, ODHS</b> Director's Office, Office of Tribal Affairs	July 2024
Build cross-program and community partnership	Collaborate with other ODHS programs to leverage resources. For example, explore cross-program staff training to support human-centered, empathetic service delivery.	<b>SSP, CW, APD, OEP</b>	Cross-program training assessment by July 2024
Build cross-program and community partnership	Find ways to strengthen and bring resources to communities and Tribal governments to provide culturally responsive services. As districts contract for services, assess communities being served, identify gaps, and explore options to tap into local resources through contracts, grants or other funding sources.	<b>District and Program Managers, CO Program Managers</b> , Family Preservation team, Office of Tribal Affairs	End of 2024



## What you need to know

We need to identify new ways to better support people through new funding sources, by looking for flexibility within regulations or changing regulations, increasing our collaborations and by making the eligibility process more accessible.

### Example:

An SSP District hosts a Virtual Resource Fair that includes staff from other ODHS programs and community organizations. The group shares information around a specific topic each month such as resources to meet basic needs including food and housing. Information shared is available districtwide as a reference staff can use when helping people.





# Support financial stability

**Our policies and practices reduce the racial wealth gap and support each person served to achieve financial stability.**

## What this means

“Wealth” means the total value of assets (like property and savings) minus debts (money you owe to others). Over time, wealth is passed along from generation to generation — and often so are the barriers that lead to poverty. The racial wealth gap is the large difference in wealth between different racial groups caused by many historical and ongoing discriminatory practices. In the U.S., the average Black and Hispanic or Latino households earn about half as much as the average white household and own only about 15 to 20 percent as much net wealth.<sup>1</sup>

SSP’s vision aims to make a long-lasting difference for Oregon families and communities. To do this, we must address systemic policies and practices that have disproportionately impacted some communities, especially communities of color, such as those that have contributed to the racial wealth gap. This includes addressing wealth-stripping practices in our policies and services like child support pass-through or disregard, the “benefits cliff,” Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card fees and check cashing fees.

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1. Wealth Inequality and the Racial Wealth Gap, [www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov)

## SSP Leadership commitments

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner *bold type below indicates primary responsible party(ies)	Timeline
Respect the sovereignty of the Nine Tribes of Oregon	Provide training to ensure staff understand Tribal sovereignty, consultation policy, and the unique eligibility standards for Tribal members	<b>Office of Tribal Affairs, District and Program Managers, Central Office Program Managers</b> , OEP Learning and Engagement Team	Initial trainings offered by March, 2024
Enhance recruitment, onboarding and retention to improve diversity in workforce	Implement a comprehensive strategy encompassing inclusive recruitment practices, diversity training, onboarding, and ongoing education to foster a culture of diversity, enhancing both recruitment processes and employee retention within SSP.	<b>SSP Director's Office</b>	End of 2024

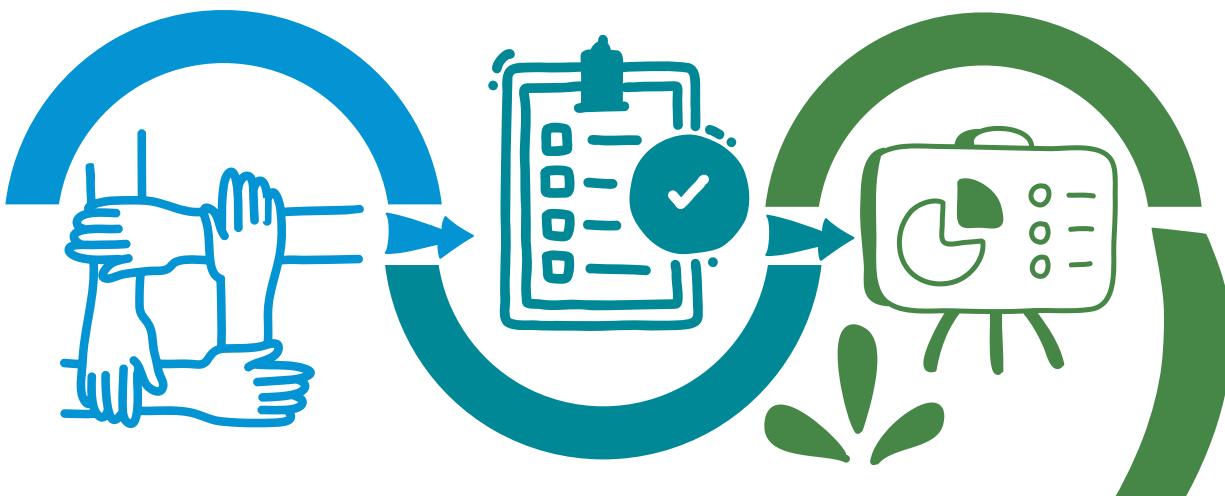
## ODHS Cross-program collaboration

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner *bold type below indicates primary responsible party(ies)	Timeline
Make data-informed decisions	Implement jointly developed research priorities and data infrastructure needs.	<b>ORRAI, SSP Policy Integration team</b>	2024
Make data-informed decisions	Complete SSP equity dashboard to provide accessible information about SSP program impacts and equitable access by population demographics.	<b>ORRAI, Office of Equity and Multi-cultural Services (OEMS)</b>	2024
Make data-informed decisions	Revise fundamentals map, reducing the number of measures, to ensure measures are feasible and tracked. Monitor and communicate progress regularly to leadership teams.	<b>SSP Management System Steering Committee, Central Office Programs</b>	April 2024



## What you need to know

We must address policies and practices that have disproportionately impacted some communities, honor Tribal sovereignty, diversify our workforce to reflect who we serve and use data to measure if access to our services and benefits is equitable.



### Example:

The Survivor Investment Partnership (SIP) collaborates with the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon, eight culturally responsive programs and 32 co-located domestic violence advocate program agencies to provide Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) services and supports to survivors. SIP is using a template that was developed to track demographic data and the voices of survivors and the agencies serving them. With the tracking, SIP will be able to identify patterns, disparities and effects of flexible funding on increasing access to services and supports for survivors within each community the DVSA providers serve.



# Honor individual goals

**Our holistic services are tailored to connect people with future-focused skills, training, and education to secure stable and well-paying jobs connected to their long-term goals.**

## What this means

We listen, honor lived experience and collaborate to ensure that people achieve their goals to the extent possible, instead of mandating outcomes set by federal or state program guidelines. These goals will be formed and set by the individual with ODHS navigation support.

Building on the services we currently offer such as Employment and Training, SSP envisions expanding the role of Family Coaches, connecting individuals and families to a network of resources across ODHS programs, state agencies, Tribal governments and community services.

## SSP Leadership commitments

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner	Timeline
Expand individual and family engagement	Complete an assessment and recommendations for redesigning the role of Family Coach to serve individuals and families seeking support from ODHS more equitably and holistically.	<b>Central Office</b> , Family Coaches, District and Program Managers, Operations Managers, Office of Tribal Affairs, Community Partnership Coordinators (CPCs), OEMS Community Engagement	March 2024

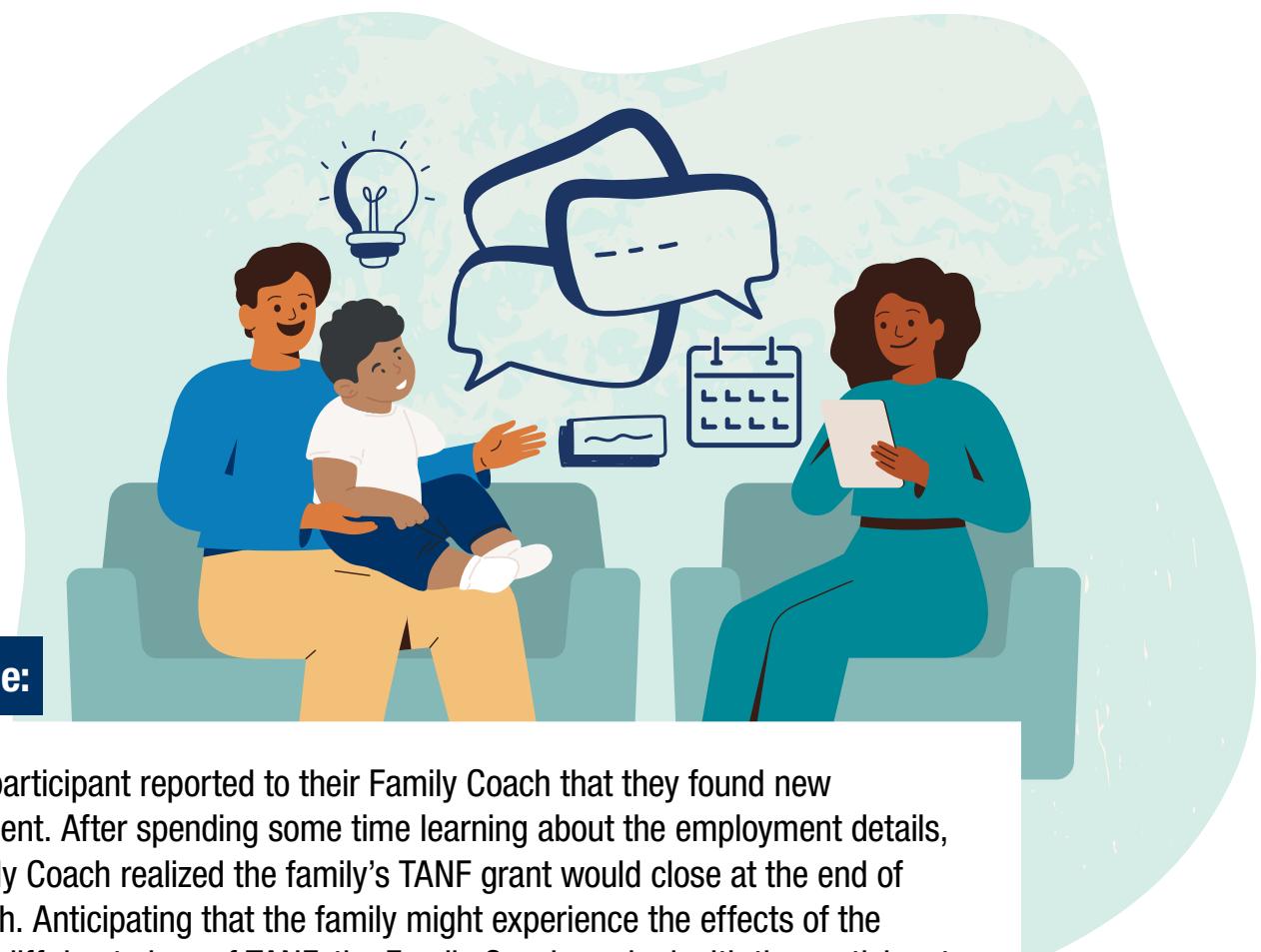
## ODHS Cross-program collaboration

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner	Timeline
Partner with other programs to provide tailored supports	<p>Assess opportunities and resources to collaborate with other ODHS programs and community-based organizations in service of shared clients. Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing education about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) resources to support TANF and SNAP recipients.</li> <li>• Developing and enhancing employment and training services that support a human services career track, connecting clients with TANF, SNAP, APD, VR and ODDS-related career opportunities.</li> </ul>	<b>SSP, APD, CW, VR, ODDS</b> , Office of Tribal Affairs, ORRAI	End of 2024
Partner with other programs to provide tailored supports	<p>Continue building a shared system with CW that supports family preservation, prevention, and promotion of well-being. Collaborate on developing shared language around “preservation” and “prevention”, program scope and expanding focus on upstream work to support families.</p>	<b>CW/SSP Executive Leadership</b> , Family Preservation team	Scope and language by 3/31/24



## What you need to know:

We must better engage with families and communities so they can guide us on how to best meet their needs and we must take a more holistic approach to helping them by expanding the Family Coach role and increasing our partnerships with other ODHS programs.



### Example:

A TANF participant reported to their Family Coach that they found new employment. After spending some time learning about the employment details, the Family Coach realized the family's TANF grant would close at the end of the month. Anticipating that the family might experience the effects of the benefits cliff due to loss of TANF, the Family Coach worked with the participant to assess ongoing monthly bills and identified payments allowable per Oregon Administrative Rule for utilities, transportation for employment and work clothes. These support services payments met all the necessary criteria set by regulations and will allow the family to be better prepared for the month following case closure. In addition, the Family Coach shared information with the participant about community resources that are available to help with housing and other needs and shared information about transitional benefits available.



# Provide equitable access

**Our case management, resource navigation support and referrals are accessible and equitable so people can address the barriers unique to them.**

## What this means

We recognize that each person's stories, needs, strengths and goals are unique and therefore we must ensure flexible support services that are trauma-informed, culturally respectful and that meet the needs of the individual where they are.

We provide access to services in familiar community settings and communications that are easy to understand and in the language preferred by the person being served.

Our orientation is to “get to solutions” for individuals and families, rather than solely being guided by federal regulations.

## SSP Leadership commitments

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner	Timeline
Transform workplace culture	Provide online learning module and engagement process for staff and managers on transformative approach. Every SSP staff member will complete the online training module and develop a personal Vision into Action plan in consultation with their manager.	<b>Central Office, Self-Sufficiency Training Unit (SSTU), District and Program Managers, Operations and Branch managers</b>	Managers complete by end of April; staff complete by June 2024
Transform workplace culture	Support RiSE awareness and training in each district, local and central office and establish RiSE champions in each location. Include trauma awareness and trauma-informed training.	<b>Central Office Executive Leadership, District and Program Managers, Operations Managers, ODHS RiSE team, ODHS Trauma Aware team</b>	End of 2024

## ODHS Cross-program collaboration

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner	Timeline
Improve resource navigation	Provide training and access for staff to learn how to find community resources for Oregonians and support referrals. Work with 211 and their Community Engagement Coordinators to provide resource navigation presentations in local offices. Connect staff with other resources like Community Resource Networks.	<b>Central Office Community Engagement, CPCs, District and Program Managers, OEP, COO, OEMS, Office of Tribal Affairs, Program and Policy teams</b>	Communication Spring 2024; organizational structure end of 2024
Improve resource navigation	Support ODHS work to fully access Community Information Exchange (CIE) platforms. CIE will expand referrals with community-based organizations (CBOs) that support individuals and families to prevent fragmented services and gaps in delivery and close the loop so SSP staff know if resources were received.	<b>ODHS Director's Office, Central Office Design and Implementation and Community Engagement, CPCs, Community Development Coordinators (CDCs), Program and Policy teams</b>	2024
Streamline contracting process	Enable cross-program contracting to make access easier for community partners and Tribal governments, promote cross-program coordination, increase internal and external collaboration.	<b>ODHS COO, SSP Business Management team, OEMS Community Engagement, Office of Tribal Affairs, CW, APD</b>	April 2024 quarterly collaboration for best practices between SSP/CW; desk guides/ workflow/training materials for contract admins for 2024



## What you need to know:

We recognize that each person's stories, needs, strengths and goals are unique, so we are changing the approach we take to better meet their goals.

### Example:

Staff at a district office worked together to create a warm and welcoming lobby environment for everyone. They provided a selection of toys and play area for families with children, comfortable seating and a number system so people didn't need to stand in line to receive service, welcoming signs and informational materials available in multiple languages.





# Community engagement integration

Centering community knowledge, partnering and collaborating, and honoring lived experience are fundamental principles underlying all Vision into Action goals and actions. The following priority actions are intended to support all aspects of SSP's work in 2024.

Objective	Actions	Owner/ partner	Timeline
Center community knowledge	Develop program-wide standards, based on the OEMS Community Engagement Framework and RiSE elements, that are coordinated by community engagement teams at the district and enterprise level. This action should be embedded into each of the four VIA goals.	<b>Central Office Community Engagement, District Leadership, OEMS Community Engagement, Office of Tribal Affairs, SSP Strategic Planning, Program and Policy teams</b>	End of 2024
Center community knowledge	Collaborate with OEMS and other programs to build local, trusted relationships with community partners and Tribal governments.	<b>Central Office Community Engagement, District Leadership, OEMS Community Engagement, Office of Tribal Affairs, SSP Strategic Planning, Program and Policy teams</b>	Ongoing
Center community knowledge	Community-facing staff (for example, family coaches, CPCs, CDCs, engagement specialists, etc.) work within the community to reshape service coordination and delivery. Use program-wide Community Engagement Framework standards to organize and support meaningful engagement.	<b>Central Office Community Engagement, District Leadership, OEMS Community Engagement, Office of Tribal Affairs, staff working with community</b>	End of 2024
Center community knowledge	Ensure all community-facing staff, including District Leadership, take the OEMS Community Engagement Framework training provided by the OEMS team.	<b>Central Office Community Engagement, District Leadership, OEMS Community Engagement, Office of Tribal Affairs, staff working with community</b>	September 2024

## Example:

Co-locating staff with a community partner for a few days each month helps build connections. An SSP staff member who does this is now able to collaborate with the community partner in helping individuals with domestic violence, housing, youth services and employment resources. This same staff member also attends community events to provide information about ODHS services.





# Next steps moving forward

**A vision and action guide are only useful if they are implemented, outcomes are monitored and continuously improved.**

**The “operating manual” for the Vision into Action Guide will include the following:**

## **Communications and engagement**

To be effective, the Vision into Action Guide must be embraced and informed by ongoing engagement with SSP staff, community partners and individuals and Tribal governments.

**Staff** — A comprehensive rollout and training process, including an online learning module, will be available when the guide is published. Our goals are to inform staff of the Vision into Action Guide priorities and next steps and engage them in creatively contributing to positive outcomes from their respective roles through development of personal action plans.

**Community and people we serve** — We will communicate with partners through the SSP Community Partner monthly meeting and through CPC’s local networks and continue to seek feedback for improvement and remaining gaps. We will work with the OEMS Community Engagement Team to advance a collaborative approach across ODHS and support Community Partnership Coordinator local engagement efforts. We will continue to conduct annual well-being surveys of the people we serve to monitor outcomes.

**Tribes** — We will continue to build relationships with the Nine Tribes of Oregon, through local and central office interactions and using the Tribal Engagement [Toolkit](#). We shared the Vision into Action Guide with Tribal Directors at the Tribal Directors’ Convening in October 2023 and January 2024. In accordance with ODHS Tribal Consultation Policy, SSP issued a “Dear Tribal Leader” letter on January 8, 2024, to invite consultation. Survivor Investment Partnership is co-creating inter-governmental agreements with Tribal governments to develop the process for how to use funds for Tribal members.

## Equity analysis

As we implement priority actions in 2024, we will use the OEMS Equity Impact Analysis tool (anticipated to be available in Spring 2024) to identify impact and strategies that will effectively support and reach communities of color and the Nine Tribes of Oregon. We will seek input on how to implement actions most effectively in culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate ways.

The OEMS Equity Readiness Assessment is a tool that will be used to support leaders in the agency with their equity journey. This tool will be used to identify learning opportunities and ensure leaders gain the knowledge and skills necessary to lead with equity.

The agency's recently completed [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan](#), will provide additional guidance with nine focus areas that align with VIA goals and principles.

## Phased approach

The Vision into Action Guide is an important tool but only works if fully embraced and implemented. Staff and managers in SSP have requested clarity, consistency and support as we continue to ramp up efforts to “get to solutions” for the people we serve. Therefore, we’re going to use a phased approach and take the time needed to learn and explore what the Vision into Action means to each staff member. Following the initial rollout of the Guide in late January 2024, we’ll spend February and March working closely with managers to ensure they understand and are ready to coach and support staff, as well as develop their own personal action plan. Once managers are fully onboarded, we’ll ask them to work with their staff teams throughout the rest of Spring to discuss Vision into Action, explore actions they can take, and develop their own personal action plans by June 2024.

## Future strategic planning

The Vision into Action is a bridge strategy for 2024. Following the completion of the ODHS strategic plan in June 2024 and the migration of eligibility staff and functions to Oregon Eligibility Partnership throughout 2024, SSP will be ready to undertake a more comprehensive strategic planning process, potentially starting in 2025.



### SUMMARY What you need to know:

The implementation of Vision into Action will include training and reflection periods, equity analysis, outcome measurement and continued engagement with all SSP employees, community and Tribal partners. Achieving the Vision into Action is a journey and not a destination and requires daily commitment.

# Appendices



# Appendix A

## Vision into Action by job type

Vision into Action sets the direction for Self-Sufficiency Programs for 2024 and beyond — but what that looks like will vary by job type, position and geographic location. Vision into Action sets the direction we're going to “get to solutions” as we serve individuals and families and create a culture of flexibility and innovation for staff.

In order to provide flexibility, we've provided examples that staff might take to support each of the goals. **These are not exhaustive lists or directions but rather ideas provided by staff in those positions to get you thinking.** Click on the position closest to your job type to jump to that section. And send more examples and ideas to [SSP.VisionIntoAction@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:SSP.VisionIntoAction@odhs.oregon.gov) as you implement Vision into Action!

### District Offices

- [Managers \(District Managers, Program Managers\)](#)
- [Supervisors and Leads \(e.g., Operations Managers, Engagement Specialists\)](#)
- [Family Coaches](#)
- [SNAP E&T Navigators](#)
- [Benefits Eligibility Workers](#)
- [Community Engagement Specialists \(Community Partnership Coordinators, Community Development Coordinators\)](#)
- [Business Operations Specialists](#)
- [Support Staff](#)

### Central Office

- [Program Managers](#)
- [Policy Analysts](#)
- [Business and Operations Specialists](#)
- [Training Unit](#)
- [Project Managers](#)
- [Support Staff](#)

## District Offices

### Managers (district managers, program managers)

**Create a work culture of safety, well-being and belonging** — Model listening and encouraging staff to bring their experience and their ideas to the table. Provide regular communication to all district or program staff that sets leadership expectations of respect, flexibility and a focus on outcomes for the people we serve. Increase the number of RiSE champions in your teams and ensure all staff receive RiSE training opportunities. Encourage participation in Employee Resource Groups.

**Establish space for staff to build on/expand community engagement** — Promote participation in community resource networks, service integration teams, provider network collaboratives, advisory and steering committees, and Equity and Inclusion Committees. Encourage and support staff and community ideas like fresh food markets and resource fairs.

#### SSP staff survey

“Creating a work environment where workers feel safe asking for the supports they need ... to identify the lack of equity for the clients they serve. Having a safe place to raise equity issues for themselves and our clients. Having an established systemic process that allows for the flexibilities needed to meet everyone where they are.”

#### SSP staff survey

“We need to be in the community. We all have community resource pages — people we turn to and recommend people to, every day for all sorts of things. We need to talk to those partners — ask them how we can help them. Attend their events or come alongside them in offering support... When we are community based we serve our neighbors BETTER.”

**Encourage creativity and flexibility to meet client needs** — During a recent all staff meeting, the PM was informed of several families with Tribal affiliation that could use some additional supports, such as those offered by JOBS Support Services. During the conversation, the PM learned that the families that are requesting additional supports are not eligible for TANF and thus support services are not an option. The PM offered a solution to their staff as their district was recently awarded Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds (PEAF). The distribution plan for PEAF funds was still under development in partnership with the local Tribal government; however, the PM offered to confer with local Tribal leaders about the request for assistance. After meeting, the Tribal government agreed to support the families identified with their current needs. The district was able to assist the families while remaining in compliance with PEAF rules.

**Seek flexible resources that meet the needs of your community** — Tap into grant writing resources like the SSP/CW grant writing committee or arrange training for a few staff. Invite 211 outreach staff to share resource information with your district. Take advantage of specialized funds like Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds to support members of Tribal nations. Track and maximize use of JOBS support funds for clients.

**Collaborate with Partners** — District 4 is working in partnership with the local Community Action Agency, Coordinated Care Organization, relief nursery, Early Learning Hub, Area Agency on Aging and other partners to work on Deeper Poverty Prevention. In partnership, we are shaping the vision, scope, and decision-making process. We are working towards short and long-term goals and are exploring and shaping how we can provide better services to our community before they become homeless or in need of TANF assistance. Current populations of consideration are parents and/or youth in their homes who are older youth, and children who are 5 and under and touch the Early Learning System.

## Supervisors and leads

**Create a work culture of safety, well-being and belonging** — Model listening and ask yourself how you are encouraging staff to bring their experience and their ideas to the table. Increase the number of RiSE champions on your teams and ensure all staff receive RiSE training opportunities. Encourage participation in Employee Resource Groups and Equity and Inclusion Committees.

### SSP staff survey

“Treating my employees with respect, valuing their input and ideas, encouraging all staff to bring their experiences to the team.”

**Encourage creativity and flexibility to meet client needs** — Change practices that don’t meet people’s needs to ones that do — like supporting interactions with clients in the location of their preference, rather than requiring them to come to an ODHS office. Help staff to see opportunities to get to solutions, not just obstacles. Address policy, program and organizational barriers that impact access to equitable and person-centered supports.

**Coach staff to get to priority actions** — Commit to regular conversations with your team about how you can collectively work differently to support economic stability and mobility for the people we serve. Ask questions about what the team or individual can STOP doing in order to START doing new approaches. Encourage curiosity, continuous learning, transparency and a willingness to learn from mistakes and course correct. Provide tailored coaching and support to team members based on unique skills, strengths and experience.

**Establish consistent communication channels** — Find out how your team members best receive and retain information and make sure they receive updates in that manner. Advocate for accessible, plain

language communications to both staff and community members. Seek feedback and guidance from those most impacted (families, communities, staff...) around how to strengthen existing service array and inform those providing input of the actions taken or proposed in response to feedback/guidance.

**Respect Tribal sovereignty** — Prioritize learning, understanding and sharing with staff the unique eligibility standards for the Nine Tribes of Oregon. Spend time familiarizing yourself with the Tribal Engagement Toolkit and Tribal Consultation Policy. Encourage staff to participate in learning opportunities provided by the Office of Tribal Affairs.

**Foster strong partnerships** and lines of communication with CW counterpart to deepen collaborative work.

**Encourage “out of the box” thinking** when developing plans with families to allow as much flexibility as possible with support services. If barriers continue to arise elevate these concerns to policy for possible review and adjustment of barriers (e.g., rules against using support service dollars to purchase eyeglasses).

**Participate in local service networks** — Participating in local service networks provide wraparound approach with partners to connect Oregonians with the resources they need. Examples include: [Service Integration](#), [Community Resource Networks](#), [Adult Services Teams](#), [Community Information Exchange \(Connect Oregon\)](#).

## Family coaches

**Be creative and flexible to meet client needs** — Change practices that don't meet people's needs to ones that do — like supporting interactions with clients in the location of their preference, rather than requiring them to come to an ODHS office. **Example:** A TANF participant reported their new employment to their family coach. After spending some time learning about the employment details, the family coach realized the family's TANF grant would close at the end of the month. Anticipating that the family might experience the effects of the [benefits cliff](#) due to loss of TANF, the family coach worked with them to assess ongoing monthly bills and identified payments allowable per Oregon Administrative Rule for utilities, transportation for employment, and work clothes. These support services payments meet all criteria of OAR and will allow the family to be better prepared for the month following case closure. In addition, the family coach let the family know of community resources that are available to help with housing and other needs and they shared the transitional benefits they are eligible for.

**Co-locate with a community partner a few days each month** — *“I am continuously learning and growing and making new connections. I work in a location with a community partner and other community partners across the street from us. We all collaborate to provide DV, housing, youth services, employment, etc. I attend community events and inform the community about what ODHS and other community members have to offer.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Meet people where they're at and honor their lived experience** — *“Working with Oregonians where they are at in life, engaging from a trauma-informed lens, providing clients with necessary accommodations, communicating and listening with empathy, do all I can to help anyone who applies for benefits. Offer additional resources if clients are not approved, help clients with understanding complex processes. Treat every client as a human deserving of respect and help.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Collaborate and coordinate regularly and often with OEP and eligibility workers** — As eligibility staff and roles transition throughout 2024 to OEP, maintain regular communication and relationships with eligibility workers to ensure warm handoffs.

Build relationships and understanding of resources so we don't duplicate service delivery with community organizations. This can occur through participation in local service networks. See example under “Community Engagement Specialists”.

## SNAP E&T Navigators

**Be creative and flexible to meet client needs** — Change practices that don't meet people's needs to ones that do — like supporting interactions with clients in the location of their preference, rather than requiring them to come to an ODHS office. Ask them how they'd like to be contacted. Many Oregonians communicate much better with text. Make appropriate accommodations for those that need them. For example, one SNAP E&T Navigator holds office hours in the Sweet Home Library to accommodate those that cannot make it to the closest ODHS SSP office in Lebanon.

**Meet people where they're at and honor their lived experience** — *“Working with Oregonians where they are at in life, engaging from a trauma-informed lens, providing clients with necessary accommodations, communicating and listening with empathy. Treat every client as a human deserving of respect and help.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Clients are experts in their own lives** — Don't assume you know what's best for them. Ask what they need. Be curious and supportive. You are there to help them navigate but they are steering the ship and deciding which route to take.

**Community engagement** — Get out in the community and meet with contracted SNAP E&T partners to build relationships. Offer to hold office hours at local SNAP E&T providers or at community-based organizations to provide in-person SNAP E&T connections, services and information. Foster good engagement with the Community Engagement Specialist in your local area to collaborate at resource and job fairs to represent the SNAP E&T program for individuals receiving SNAP benefits. Be available to provide them information about the employment and training opportunities available to them through the SNAP E&T Partner Network.

## Benefits eligibility workers

**Fill the gaps** — *“Leading with equity in my role as a BEW looks like providing Oregonians with the information they needed to be successful within ODHS programs and providing resources where there are gaps. Ask, Offer, Ask, is an excellent example of this. Meeting the Oregonian where they are at and not assuming their needs is also where I focus this as well.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Meet people where they’re at and honor their lived experience** — *“Working with Oregonians where they are at in life, engaging from a trauma-informed lens, providing clients with necessary accommodations, communicating and listening with empathy, do all I can to help anyone who applies for benefits. Offer additional resources if clients are not approved, help clients with understanding complex processes. Treat every client as a human deserving of respect and help.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Collaborate and coordinate regularly and often with family coaches** — As eligibility staff and roles transition throughout 2024 to OEP, maintain regular communication and relationships with family coaches to ensure warm handoffs.

## Business operations specialists

**Learn and share information** — Pay attention to resource information and pass it along to your team. For example, Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles offers training and information to support people applying for identification cards — a common need for the people we serve.

**Customer service** — it starts with us, from the top down. The way we show up for our coworkers affects how our direct service workers show up for our clients. When sending communications, think about how to most clearly message and remove internal jargon. When we implement process and procedures, think about who is affected and what those effects could be. If a process only benefits you, is it a process improvement or just the way you want things done?

**Find solutions** — You’re an expert in the guidance on how things need to get done to adhere to OAR’s/ ORS’s. Don’t let them get in the way of thinking just because something has “always been done that way.” Can we invest in changing a system or are there alternative ways to get something paid for?

**Guiding the work** — Rather than focus on telling people what to do, we should provide oversight into how to get from A to B. As long as people are getting the desired goal, we should let them navigate it as they see fit, but we can give a general outline of how they can achieve it. Sometimes a plan won’t work, but let’s have a conversation about what needs to get done so their plan can work!

**Enhance recruitment, onboarding and retention** — Support continued improvements to create inclusive recruitment practices, diversity training, and onboarding. Champion thoughtful hiring practices that include bias training for interviews. Build relationships with community partners to broaden the talent pool of applicants.

**Support consistency in practices** — Help support staff by advocating for consistent inter-office practices, like scheduling at Store Front Offices. Local flexibility is important, and staff need to know what to expect to the extent possible.

## Community engagement specialists (CPCs, CDCs)

**Partner with community to bring resources** — First Thursday is a monthly resource event in District 6 hosted at a local church and organized by SSP Community Partnership Coordinators. It started as a resource event in partnership with the local foodbank and was hosted in the SSP front lobby, where several local partners were in attendance to share about resources. It has since outgrown the SSP lobby and includes more than 30 community partners who bring resources, including food, clothing, showers, pet services, and information, to share to the 300+ community members who attend. This event is supported by 30+ employees across SSP, CW, and APD from all job classifications.

**Share information through relationships and outreach** — Participate in local events and community meetings, where information can be shared with partners and community members about services. Examples include but are not limited to school events, resource fairs, collaboratives, community events and festivals, provider meetings, etc. Share resources like the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) heating season toolkit with SSP colleagues and community partners.

**Intentional resource communication** — Email: Collect program updates and resource information and send a consolidated email with information to district or area specific staff, and contracted partners on a recurring weekly schedule. Newsletter: Create a monthly newsletter with important resources and program updates. The newsletter can be sent electronically to workers, families and made available at the front desk. Internal meetings: Provide reports and updates on local community resources.

District 10 hosts a monthly **Virtual Resource Fair**. This virtual space is a one-hour meeting for SSP, CW, VR, and APD to receive community presentations and information around a specific topic of the month. Topics include basic needs, food, shelter, support systems, employee resources (etc.) and are sent to workers in advance. Topics are selected and scheduled intentionally based on needs throughout the year. Information shared during these meetings is housed in a One-Note that is available district wide for reference.

**Build a structure/system to organize information about local programs and resources** — OWL: [D2 Resource Page](#), [D4 Community Resource Hub](#) Spreadsheet: [Union County](#) Lobby slideshow: [D16](#).

**Coordinate engagement and outreach activities** — District 8 has an OWL page titled [CORE \(Community Outreach, Resources, and Engagement\)](#) that outlines a clear process for requesting to participate in a local event. This site includes a guide for tabling events, an initial event planning form, calendar, process for checking out tabling furnishings and equipment requests, post event report, and a link to reporting safety incidents.

**Participate in local service networks** — Participating in local service networks provide wraparound approach with partners to connect Oregonians with the resources they need. Examples include: [Service Integration](#), [Community Resource Networks](#), [Adult Services Teams](#), [Community Information Exchange \(Connect Oregon\)](#).

**Coach other staff and share best practices** to help them meaningfully engage internally with partners and externally when out in the community at events or meetings.

## Support staff

**Bring empathy and respect into every interaction** — *“Treating every caller with respect and care, making sure needs are met and that I follow through with any commitments I make to that person, whether by completing my case well or by following through with emails or call backs that have been promised during our interaction.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Serve Oregonians in their primary language** upon initial call/visit through use of bilingual workers or [language services](#).

**Create a welcoming environment when community members come into an SSP office** — *“I would like to see our lobby look more like a school lobby, with informational bulletin boards, self-serving resources, and cultural recognition/celebration bulletin boards. I think a big screen TV that rolls a slideshow of community events with Time and Place as well as photos of those participants would help promote a sense of ‘us’.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Engage, learn and grow to inform your perspective** — Participate in an Employee Resource Group and volunteer for [ERG community-focused events](#). Attend Equity and Inclusion Committee meetings in your district. Volunteer to support community resource fairs or food fairs — or suggest ideas for events like those if they aren’t happening in your district.

**Encourage and build new ideas** — Bring an open mind and curiosity to your work. Ask yourself if the way you’re doing your work is the best approach or if it’s just the way it’s always been done. Discuss new ideas with your supervisor to determine if they meet approval to try. Be prepared to discuss pros/cons and tradeoffs and to adapt and learn if something doesn’t work.

## Central Office

### Program managers

**Seek data to inform programs** — The Survivor Investment Partnership (SIP) collaborates with the Nine Tribes of Oregon, eight culturally responsive programs and 32 Co-located DV Advocates program agencies to provide Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) services and supports to survivors. Through a data collection template developed to track demographic data and the voices of survivors and the agencies serving them, SIP will be able to identify patterns and disparities, as well as be informed of the impacts of flexible funding such as increased access to services and supports for survivors within each community the DVSA providers serve.

Find new ways to support individuals to move out of poverty by helping them address barriers, access skills and training to be successful.

Establish different ways customers can access services and access them earlier in their journey.

**Elevate hope, share success stories** — “I helped a new client this quarter, a disabled veteran who recently lost stable housing through divorce, apply for SNAP benefits, and connect with other local services. He expressed complex emergent needs — particularly mental health support, utility/energy assistance, and food — and had only previous experience with seeking help from the VA, so was unaware of the local supports available to him beyond that. In addition to helping him apply for SNAP, I connected him with the Veteran Service Officer at our local Community Action Team office to ensure he got his other acute needs addressed as well.” — *Shared by Oregon State University, Columbia County Extension Services*

**Be a navigator and a partner** — A participant was referred by ODHS Eligibility Staff to a D3 STEP Navigator. After completing the employment assessment and discussing goals, the Navigator referred the participant to the Oregon Employment Department’s STEP Program to engage in Job Search Training. The individual had many challenges to overcome, including experiencing homelessness. The Navigator stayed in regular communication with the individual and provided resources obtained from their local ODHS Community Partnership Coordinator. In conversations with the Navigator, he expressed his ultimate goal was to obtain his CDL. The Navigator supported this goal by also referring him to Chemeketa Community College’s STEP Program. The participant continued to experience challenges and struggled to stay engaged with the two STEP Providers. With the continued support of the Navigator and both STEP Providers wrapping around the individual, he was able to meet his short-term goals of obtaining employment, completing his ODOT physical, and eventually receiving his CDL license. — *Shared by Employment and Training Policy team*

**Collaborate with partners** — A commitment to professional collaboration and partnerships at the state and local levels has elevated Oregon SNAP-Ed's influence. Several key organizational relationships and coalitions sustain these state partnerships, including the Oregon SNAP-Ed Nutrition Action Coalition (O-SNAC) which meets quarterly, the Nutrition Council of Oregon, and the Oregon Hunger Task Force. There is also special emphasis on regular communication with the other FNS programs such as Oregon Department of Education-Child Nutrition Programs, Oregon WIC, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, as well as with partner agencies such as the Oregon Dairy & Nutrition Council.

## Policy analysts

**Play in the gray** — The policy team works to “play in the gray”, meaning finding flexibility in federal policies to better support families we serve. This led to changes like removing consideration of last employment separation as an eligibility criterion for TANF and expanding support service payments to include eyeglasses.

**Incorporate lived experience** — Find ways to listen and learn from the lived experience of service recipients into policy changes. If a policy or practice isn’t serving individuals or families, find out what they need and figure out ways to get there.

**Invite questions** — Encourage staff to send questions into the policy inbox and incorporate “play in the gray” every day in policy discussions and questions that come in. Collaborate with direct service staff to understand impact and the needs they’re trying to address for the people they’re serving.

## Business and operations specialists

**Customer Service** — it starts with us, from the top down. The way we show up for our coworkers affects how our direct service workers show up for our clients. When sending communications, think about how to most clearly message and remove internal jargon. When we implement process and procedures, think about who is affected and what those effects could be. If a process only benefits you, is it a process improvement or just the way you want things done?

**Find Solutions** — You’re an expert in the guidance on how things need to get done to adhere to OAR’s/ORS’s. Don’t let them get in the way of thinking just because something has “always been done that way.” Can we invest in changing a system or are there alternative ways to get something paid for?

**Guiding the Work** — Rather than focus on telling people what to do, we should provide oversight into how to get from A to B. As long as people are getting the desired goal, we should let them navigate it as they see fit, but we can give a general outline of how they can achieve it. Sometimes a plan won’t work, but let’s have a conversation about what needs to get done so their plan can work!

**Enhance recruitment, onboarding and retention** — Support continued improvements to create inclusive recruitment practices, diversity training, and onboarding. Champion thoughtful hiring practices that include bias training for interviews. Build relationships with community partners to broaden the talent pool of applicants.

## Training unit

**Incorporate principles in training** — Infuse VIA principles into our Family Coach training series as well as Leadership in Action.

**Include real-world examples to improve learning** — Create realistic scenarios that staff can work through in a safe environment to give them experience in approaching the work from a more holistic manner.

**Diversity and inclusion** — Ensure training materials are reviewed by a diverse audience to ensure a variety of perspectives are included. Co-create materials with diverse groups when possible.

## Project managers

**Prioritize project portfolio based on VIA Guide** — Currently this is based on themes and measures that will be more robust with VIA and a cohesive strategic plan. We will be able to prioritize project requests in accordance with the identified goals and measures in the VIA to make sure all project activities are aligned.

**Work groups are diverse and representative of staff at all levels** — We will continue to ensure all projects are comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds and representative of those that we serve and those that are doing the work daily, as they are the subject matter experts. We will also continue to seek opportunities to infuse our communities as seen through the lens of our Equity North Star.

**Prioritize the use of equity tools** — We would like to make sure project initiatives are considering disparities and potential impacts to historically marginalized populations and creating mitigation plans alongside affected communities to ensure we don't further contribute to those disparities.

## Support staff

**Bring empathy and respect into every interaction** — *“Treating every caller with respect and care, making sure needs are met and that I follow through with any commitments I make to that person, whether by completing my case well or by following through with emails or call backs that have been promised during our interaction.”* (from SSP staff survey)

**Create a welcoming environment when community members come into an SSP office —** “*I would like to see our lobby look more like a school lobby, with informational bulletin boards, self-serving resources, and cultural recognition/celebration bulletin boards. think a big screen TV that rolls a slideshow of community events with Time and Place as well as photos of those participants would help promote a sense of ‘us’.*” (from SSP staff survey)

**Engage, learn and grow to inform your perspective —** Participate in an Employee Resource Group and volunteer for [ERG community-focused events](#). Attend Equity and Inclusion Committee meetings in your district. Volunteer to support community resource fairs or food fairs — or suggest ideas for events like those if they aren’t happening in your district.

**Encourage and build new ideas —** Bring an open mind and curiosity to your work. Ask yourself if the way you’re doing your work is the best approach or if it’s just the way it’s always been done. Discuss new ideas with your supervisor to determine if they meet approval to try. Be prepared to discuss pros/cons and tradeoffs and to adapt and learn if something isn’t working.

# Appendix B

## Background and process behind Vision into Action

### Situational analysis

To understand the directional shift that SSP is undertaking in Vision into Action, it's important to review the history of where we've been and how we worked.

**Before** — SSP structured our programs, policies and services in strict adherence to federal programs and funding sources, operating in a punitive model of compliance and an assumption that “we know best”. Examples of how that played out in practices include full family sanctions and disqualifications, communications that were inaccessible and not trauma-informed, and providing access to services only in SSP offices and not in community.

**Now** — We are increasingly centering individuals and families we serve at the heart of our work, recognizing the opportunity to partner and tailor services to meet their self-identified needs. We are “playing in the gray”, meaning we question whether restrictions are federally or agency-imposed and work to find solutions for the people we serve. We are shifting our focus to include prevention and whole well-being, including collaborating with Child Welfare on a Family Preservation approach to engaging and supporting families. We also partner across ODHS programs to show up as “one ODHS” and provide seamless service, no matter the door used to access.

**Future** — While we will continue to support connecting people to benefits, we are focusing on the tailored and inclusive supports needed to promote economic stability, mobility and well-being. We assert and embrace our central role to be poverty alleviation and prevention and we actively work to dismantle systemic racism that perpetuates racial wealth gaps. SSP will use both quantitative and qualitative data with an equity analysis to effectively monitor outcomes and guide decisions and actions.

### Creation of the Vision into Action Guide

As noted above, due to the number of changes happening in SSP and ODHS and the preponderance of guidance and feedback already in existence, SSP created the high-level Vision into Action with minimal new engagement of staff or community. We were intentional about creating an inclusive work group, representative of all types of positions and work locations across SSP, to guide the staff and community engagement process for development of the Action Guide. The Vision into Action work group met weekly starting in June 2023, serving as both subject matter experts from their roles and liaisons to colleagues in similar roles. Work group members provided advice as well as presentations to staff, facilitated discussions with community partners, and assisted with communication about the Vision into Action and

feedback opportunities. We convened a Vision into Action Employee Resource Group (ERG) Work Group in September, with representatives from nearly all ERGs, to provide outreach support for the staff survey as well as advice for development of the Action Guide. Guidance for the content of the Action Guide was provided by the “Blueprint Group” of policy, program and service delivery experts.

## Work group

- **Amber Murray** — Manager, Project Management Office
- **Colleen Bradford** — District 3, Community Partnership Coordinator
- **Dwight Palmer** — OEMS Service Equity Manager for SSP
- **Elizabeth Puckett** — Central Office Change Leader
- **Joanna Wright** — Continuous Quality Improvement Advisor, Office of the Director
- **Leona Enright** — Tribal Affairs Strategic Director of Tribal Initiatives
- **Melissa Castilleja** — District 1, Engagement Specialist
- **Miguel Angel Mendez** — Central Office Lead Policy Analyst TANF
- **Misha Mayers** — Central Office Community Engagement Coordinator
- **Raina Mills** — District 15, Family Coach
- **Ryan Groves** — District 11, Operations Manager
- **Sonja Wilder** — District 5, Administrative Support Specialist
- **Stephen March** — SNAP Employment & Training Navigator
- **Tiare Lipilio** — District 11, Tribal Family Coach
- **Zayra Longoria** — District 5 Program Manager
- **Dan Edison** — Vision into Action Project Manager
- **Patty Unfred** — Vision into Action Project Lead

## Blue print group

- **Bill Baney** — Design and Implementation Manager
- **Jen Corbridge** — Policy Integration Manager
- **Jessica Amaya Hoffman** — Interim Deputy Director
- **Xochitl Esparza** — Program Administration Manager

## ERG work group

- **African American Management Council** — Dwight Palmer
- **AbleNet** — Shawn Sullivan
- **Asian Pacific Islander Network (APINet)** — Radhika Mala, Luxie Daley
- **Black Employee Support Team (BEST)** — Whitlee Tarver, Lunita Renfrow, Waunessa Lincoln
- **Mental Health Matters!** — Colleen Taylor, DeAnn Caussyn, Mayra Guerrero
- **Mi Gente** — Lisa Moya
- **Pride** — Hope Birrell
- **Veterans (VERG)** — Cameron Russell
- **We Are Here Oregon Native Employees (WAHONE)** — Misha Mayers
- **Women's Equity Leadership Development (WELD)** — Tera Widger, Jessica Sargeant

Results from engagement with staff, community and Tribes can be found in [Appendix D](#).

# Appendix C

## Foundational guidance for Vision into Action

### ODHS Equity North Star

- Inclusivity — We inclusively lead with race and intersectionality to address the roots of systemic oppression that impact all protected classes.
- Equity — We are dedicated to make services, supports and well-being accessible to all.
- Service — We are committed to partnering with communities to develop and deliver policies and programs that are equitable and improve community conditions.
- Well-Being — Staff and communities will know services and supports are working when all who live in Oregon, regardless of identity or place, can achieve well-being.

### ODHS Building well-being together initiative

The goal of Building Well-being Together is to focus on the whole well-being of people, families, and communities, especially those being left behind due to race, age, disability, identity and place. It's a call to action for all of us — ODHS, other government offices, Tribes, providers, communities — to work together to ensure that everyone has the services and supports they need.

The Building Well-being Initiative will build ODHS future in two ways:

1. Strategic planning preparation: We need to know where we're going and figure out the path to get there.
2. Internal capacity building: At the same time, we need to fix some fundamental issues with the agency, make any forward progress we can now, and get better at making change happen.

The plan will:

- Adopt a short list of goals to work on over the coming years. These will be crafted with community members and create clarity about agency direction and priorities.
- Center equity and include people with lived experience, local staff, communities and Tribal Nations in the process.
- Flex ODHS's skills in collaboration as well as strengthen partnerships.

## ODHS Priorities

- Strengthening our foundations
- Preparing for and responding to emergencies
- Creating the future of human services

All with a focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

## Governor priorities

Focus on improved public service

- Housing/homelessness
- Mental/behavioral health
- Education

## RiSE — ODHS Organizational culture

RiSE is about creating an intentional, positive, equitable and trauma informed organizational culture. Its vision is an organization where we all feel safe, valued, supported, strengthened and engaged in our personal growth and the agency's growth.

- Safety, well-being and belonging — Individuals and environments contribute to physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, social, cultural and environmental safety, health and well-being.
- Honor and value each other — Relationships and communities flourish when everyone is valued for their full and authentic selves.
- Equitable treatment and racial justice — Becoming an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organization requires a relational and humanistic approach and active, intentional and consistent participation from each of us.
- Collective responsibility and growth — Our commitment, ideas and efforts are valued, affirmed and strengthened and we are connected through a collective responsibility to our communities.
- Meaningful participation and shared power — Individuals have the skills, resources and equitable opportunities to shape our environments and the direction of our agency.
- Interconnected communities — The organization, our communities and teams are linked through shared goals and collaboration.

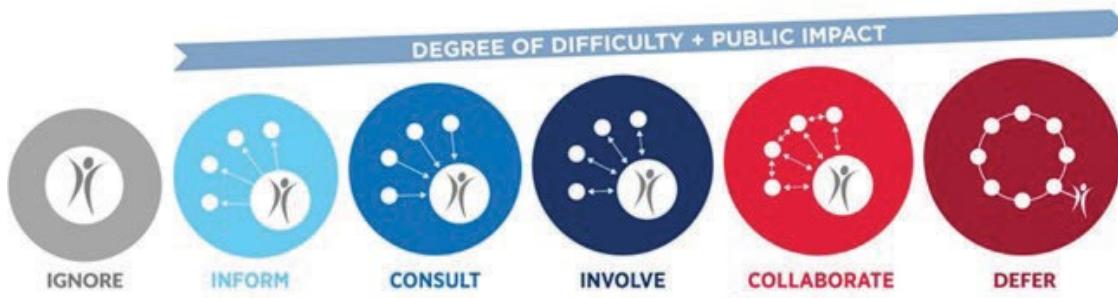
## **ODHS Community engagement framework**

- Community Engagement is an intentional, collective process during which people share their experiences and work together to create equitable and positive change.
- It requires participants to approach one another with humility, curiosity and mutual respect, sharing power and resources.
- Meaningful community engagement provides clarity and transparency, ensuring affected communities have access to full information and the ability to influence and impact decisions.
- Community engagement is essential to dismantling systemic and institutional racism and other oppressions because it is how we develop, implement and integrate emerging community-driven best practices.

## **Community engagement principles**

1. Be clear about the purpose and/or goals as well as the populations and/or communities you want to engage.
2. Develop trust and establish relationships with community.
3. Be truthful and honest with community about what you want to accomplish by engaging them.
4. Become knowledgeable about the communities' cultures, traumas, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, and demographic trends.
5. Learn about the community's perceptions of your agency and the community's history with you before initiating the engagement activities.
6. Community engagement can only be sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths.
7. Help develop the community's capacity and provide resources needed to make decisions and take action.
8. Be prepared to share power with the community and release control of the process and the outcomes.
9. Community collaboration requires long-term commitment by the engaging organization and its partners.

## Levels of community engagement



## SSP Draft impact plan

Guiding principles:

- Supporting and promoting stability and well-being
- Investing in staff and infrastructure
- Data-informed enhancements
- Providing a holistic and diverse service array

## CW Vision for transformation

Guiding principles:

- Supporting families and promoting prevention
- Enhancing our staff and infrastructure
- Enhancing the structure of our system by using data with continuous quality improvement

## Data: KMPS and fundamentals map

**Key performance measures:**

- Housing stability
- Food security
- Self-efficacy/hope
- Customer satisfaction
- Living wage jobs

## Outcome measures:

1. Highly engaged, skilled, professional workforce
2. Workforce reflects communities
3. Strong sustainable and outcome-oriented community relationships
4. Improved economic stability
5. Safe, stable, attached families
6. Increased family goal attainment
7. Awareness of and access to services
8. External customer satisfaction

## State of SSP 2023

**Goals:** Vision into Action goals

**Paradigm shift/Future:** Rooted in equity, policies, programs and service delivery drive to economic stability, mobility and well-being.

*“Our transformation is centered on the conviction that poverty alleviation is our central role — not merely administering benefits and gatekeeping people’s access to them.”*

### Top Strategies

- Community integration and voice
- Family coaches offering tailored support
- Focus on economic stability and concrete supports
- Deep collaboration with our system, program and community partners
- Engage all SSP staff, especially those in service delivery

### What we need to be successful

- **Data infrastructure** dedicated to measure outcomes
- **Investments in staff** that reflect comprehensive needs including community work and intensive case management
- **Shared services** that support contracts, grants, braided and stacked funding
- **Strong partnerships** with ODHS programs and other state agencies

## **Our commitments**

- Measure our progress and hold ourselves accountable.
- Center our work in the communities we serve, listen and prioritize actions accordingly.
- Continue the journey to become an anti-racist organization and address systems and policies that create poverty and disparities.
- Collaborate with our ODHS partners and other state agencies on integrated service delivery that promotes well-being.
- Look for efficiencies in funding, business processes, and service delivery to effectively use resources.



# Appendix D

## Feedback informing Vision into Action

### Staff input

#### Employee wellbeing and work culture

Source: Employee engagement survey September 25, 2023

Administered by Human Resources (HR), using [Gallup Q12 tool](#)

1,880 SSP staff responses

- 36 percent “engaged” — involved and enthusiastic about their work, loyal, productive (u.s. average is 33 percent)
- 50 percent “non engaged” — less likely to put energy and passion into their work, less loyal/ productive (u.s. average 51 percent)
- 14 percent “actively disengaged” — emotionally against the organization, not loyal, likely to undermine efforts of others (u.s. average 16 percent)

Questions	SSP Mean (out of 5)	ODHS Mean	Category mean - SSP
Q00 — On a five-point scale, where five means extremely satisfied and one means extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with your agency as a place to work?	3.62	3.54	Category mean
Q01 — I know what is expected of me at work.	4.20	4.18	Basic needs (what do I get?): 3.07
Q02 — I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	3.93	3.93	Basic needs (what do I get?): 3.07
Q03 — At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	3.80	3.75	Individual (what do I give?): 3.75
Q04 — In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	3.20	3.21	Individual (what do I give?): 3.75
Q05 — My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	4.11	4.14	Individual (what do I give?): 3.75
Q06 — There is someone at work who encourages my development.	3.90	3.81	Individual (what do I give?): 3.75

Questions	SSP Mean (out of 5)	ODHS Mean	Category mean - SSP
Q07 — At work, my opinions seem to count.	3.43	3.41	Teamwork (do I belong here?): 3.61
Q08 — The mission or purpose of my agency makes me feel my job is important.	3.98	3.95	Teamwork (do I belong here?): 3.61
Q09 — My coworkers are committed to doing quality work.	3.96	3.88	Teamwork (do I belong here?): 3.61
Q10 — I have a best friend at work.	3.07	3.01	Teamwork (do I belong here?): 3.61
Q11 — In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	3.93	3.83	Growth (how can I grow?): 3.96
Q12 — This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	3.99	3.87	Growth (how can I grow?): 3.96

## Q12 Plus

Questions	SSP Mean	ODHS Mean
At work, I am treated with respect.	4.03	3.94
My agency cares about my overall wellbeing.	3.50	3.33
I have received meaningful feedback in the last week.	3.29	3.20
My agency always delivers on the promise we make to customers.	3.32	3.13
My immediate supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at my agency.	3.85	3.79
My supervisor creates an environment that is trusting and open.	3.95	3.92
My supervisor is willing to listen to my work related problems.	4.16	4.17
I continually work with my supervisor to clarify work priorities.	3.82	3.80
I trust the leadership of my agency.	3.35	3.21
I am well informed about what is going on at my agency.	3.38	3.25
My workplace has systems in place to encourage collaboration.	3.55	3.42
I feel safe in my work environment.	3.81	3.76
Everyone at this agency is treated fairly, regardless of ethnic background, race, gender, age, disability, or other differences not related to job performance.	3.66	3.57
ODHS provides a work environment free from discrimination, harassment or workplace intimidation.	3.69	3.58
If I raised a concern about ethics and integrity, I am confident my employer would do what is right.	3.68	3.54
I would recommend my agency to friends and family as a great place to work.	3.68	3.52

Questions	SSP Mean	ODHS Mean
Did you experience stress during a lot of the workday?	YES – 67%	
Cultural humility is demonstrated by my team being responsive to the needs of all individuals.	3.88	3.82
My work unit embraces diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.	4.09	4.02
My supervisor values and seeks a full spectrum of diversity and other individual differences in the workforce.	4.11	4.12
My work environment is open to the expression of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs.	3.76	3.70
My supervisor hires mindfully to build a diverse, productive, and healthy team.	3.97	3.93
My program/unit leadership values and seeks a full spectrum of diversity and other individual differences in the workforce.	3.93	3.88

## Vision into Action staff survey

Source: Staff VIA Survey October 2–16, 2023

ORRAI received 1270 total responses to the survey (692 complete responses, 578 partial responses). Partial respondents failed to provide an answer to one or more of the survey questions. In analyses of individual questions results, we include all responses, even those given by respondents who did not complete the entire survey.

Respondents identified themselves as either Management (105) or Non-Management (1100), and either Direct-Service (961) or non-Direct-Service (244) roles (65 respondents did not answer either demographic question). We received responses from all 16 service districts, as well as Central Office and OEP (including statewide) staff.

### Survey questions and results

Questions	Response themes
1. Please name or describe two areas where you feel SSP is doing a good job delivering services to Oregonians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “No Wrong Door” policy</li> <li>• Ways to apply</li> <li>• Same day/next day</li> <li>• “Where they are”</li> <li>• Customer service</li> </ul>
2. Please name or describe two areas of service where you feel SSP could be doing a better job delivering services to Oregonians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait times</li> <li>• The ONE system</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• The VEC</li> </ul>

Questions	Response themes
3. What does “leading with equity” look like from your role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Where they are”</li> <li>• Treat people “the same” – AND recognize need for individual approach</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Respect</li> </ul>
4. What tools and/or resources do you need to fulfill your vision of leading with equity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Staff – more staff and specialized staff; support for staff</li> <li>• Community – engagement and resources</li> </ul>
5. How can SSP improve partnership and collaboration, both internally and with community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community partners — time and contracts</li> <li>• Time — to collaborate and be in community</li> <li>• Events — increase outreach</li> <li>• Communication — within SSP/ODHS and with community partners and recipients</li> <li>• Information consistency, brevity and clarity</li> </ul>
6. How can you in your role improve partnership and collaboration, both internally and with community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources for referral</li> <li>• “Continue” — staff feel they are already doing their best given constraints</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Community partners</li> </ul>
7. From your role, how can we offer services that best meet the needs of the people we serve by honoring their lived experiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Time — more time to spend with clients and more efficient processes</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• “Where they are” — mobile vans mentioned frequently</li> </ul>
8. What do you as a staff member need to feel supported and successful in your role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Time — to do work, for training, tech/tools to improve efficiency</li> <li>• Management — importance of good managers, disconnect between Central Office management and branches</li> <li>• Resources — updated, accessible community resource lists</li> </ul>

*See survey report for more detail on responses.*

## Policy analysts

Source: Multiple work sessions at All-Analysts Meetings

Key policy recommendations:

- Research and communication with federal partners and other states to learn more about constraints and flexibility (need additional staff resources).
- Deep research into SNAP CFR — gray areas, loopholes, excluded or in-kind assets. Use info to find new ideas to help families.
- Find flexible grant funding and support CBOs to apply for funds; provide additional technical assistance to community partner organizations.
- Increase staff resources (analyst teams, Family Coaches) and training.
- Change no-adult standard policy for TANF (discriminates against blended families).
- Seek additional funding for ERDC, including TANF families and non-citizen families.
- Improve internal communication about policy and other changes.

## Community partnership coordinators (CPC)

Source: Vision Into Action Activity during CPC Quarterly on Oct. 3t

Key recommendations:

- Comprehensive training with clear expectations from the central and district level.
- Outreach vans for all districts. Meeting Oregonians where they are at and serving them how they need to be served.
- Human centered: serve Oregonians not the program. Acknowledge past trauma and hurt. Have healthy open discussions.
- Add Full-Time Equivalent to increase Community Engagement efforts and decrease case load size.
- Work as a team to collaborate and prevent silos. Be intentional.
- Be trauma informed internally and externally, acknowledging the need and correlation of the two.

## Program managers

Source: Multiple discussion sessions at PM meetings

Role of Family Coaches:

- Need to continue to do eligibility for TA-DVS to be survivor-centered and trauma-informed.
- Engage in community outreach; meet families where they are located.

Additional recommendations:

- Partner with CW on community events.
- Joint meetings and case staffings with CW workers and FCs.
- Create more communication channels, like videos, to use in staff huddles to connect staff to ODHS and SSP vision and goals.
- Cross-program leadership (SSP, OEP, CW, APD, AAAs) communication regularly to all levels of agency.

## Operations managers

Source: Table discussion and activity with six question prompts, in-person meeting Aug. 8

1. Where are we doing a good job of serving Oregonians?
  - » Community outreach, innovation and flexibility to meet needs, “no wrong door”, passion of staff, getting to “yes”
2. What’s one thing we can do to improve the customer experience?
  - » Reduce call wait times, train staff faster, ONE system issues, improve lobbies, consistency across programs.
3. What does “leading with equity” look like from your role? What do you need to lead and serve with equity?
  - » Listening (takes more time), treat people as individuals with different learning styles, honor individuality of staff.
4. How can SSP — and you — improve partnership and collaboration, both internally and with community?
  - » Community outreach and integration, team building/relationships, leadership listening sessions with staff, job shadowing, consistent messaging SSP/APD.

5. How can we truly center the experience of individuals, families, Tribes and communities? What does that look like in practice?
  - » Build relationship first, respect experience, be aware of personal bias, involve community before decisions are made.
6. What do you — as a staff member — need to feel supported and successful in your role?
  - » More managers and staff/lighter workload, streamlined hiring process, training, clear communication.

## Central office staff

Source: August 23 Teams presentation with central office staff, 60-70 people in attendance

- Look at roadblocks to spending funds on customers — processes, funding sources, etc.
- What does measurement accountability look like? Will individual staff be responsible?
- Amount of money allocated for TANF hasn't increased so it covers much less. How do we respond to different poverty level and increase our level of support?
- Staff experience trauma due to workload and stress, difficult to retain employees, need to address in VIA.
- Need a transition period and support services for people getting off TANF, previously had a fund for this but discontinued due to lack of funds.
- Case management terminology. Call the position "family coaches" who focus mostly on post-TANF — but not restricted to TANF.
- Appreciate proactive, prevention-focused approach.
- Ask question of staff — What would you do differently if you could? Survey?

## SSP/CW recruitment and hiring work group

Source: Work group (primarily DMs and PMs) discussion at Aug. 31 meeting

- Training and onboarding — takes too long to get people trained
  - » While waiting for training to occur, assigning staff to job shadow other staff — creates burnout for existing staff and not a positive experience for new staff.
  - » Difficult to assess skill sets in trial service when it takes so long to get training completed.
  - » Need better training for HSS1s.

- » Current workload model doesn't include training.
- » Consultation and Training Support positions are training SSS1s — don't have that resource for other positions.
- Career paths
  - » Be clear/intentional about the minimum qualifications and attributes needed for specific jobs — for example, eligibility and family coaches require very different skills and support for separate career paths.
  - » We're doing better at hiring people with lived experience, but they are often not prepared for the role, creating a potentially traumatizing and negative experience.

## Community input

### SSP community partner meeting

Source: Breakout groups in Oct. 12 partner meeting

Themes:

- Train and empower community partners to complete SNAP intakes.
- Show up in community — such as mobile vans — to provide services.
- Have SSP staff co-located with regular schedules at community partner locations.
- Better and clearer communications about what SSP/ODHS does and how people can access services.
- Improve wait times.
- Difficult to access ODHS staff.
- Improve use of plain language, translation services and writing for low literacy levels.

### Community voice forum November 2

Source: Invited participants — community partners, Tribes, CPC outreach, additional invited partners — 45 people attended

Themes:

- Long wait times
- Application processes confusing, not accessible

- Presence at community events, partner locations
- Language and literacy
- Trauma-informed workforce
- Public access to resource information
- More in-person meetings to build relationships
- More ODHS staff to do work
- Allow community partners to do eligibility interviews
- More collaboration with community partners, contractors
- Change call hold music — trauma-inducing

## **Community survey — open mid-October through November 9**

Source: Open-ended anonymous survey using same three questions as community voice forum; 50 responses

Themes:

- Need for consistent, accurate, and accessible information to Oregonians and community partners.
- Frustration with staff attitude towards clients and community partners, noting lack of empathy, trauma informed approach and insufficient cultural awareness.
- Asking for faster, more streamlined processes that allow partners to work with Oregonians more effectively, noting computer processes, long phone wait times, and delays in eligibility decisions.
- Use community outreach and engagement to help provide positive interactions between Self-Sufficiency and community.
- Would like to see more work on language services and translations. Noted the language on forms is too complex and plain language versions should be created, as well as more translation availability.

## **Customer service and access to services**

Source: Annual Key Performance Measure customer survey 2023

Preliminary data:

- Yearly survey — typically in Summer or early Fall

- Method:
  - » Originally in the ODHS lobbies (paper and online using lobby computers)
  - » Conducted over the phone during COVID-19 pandemic.
  - » Currently deployed online through email.
- Languages: Eleven (previously five languages)
- Audience: Customers who applied or re-applied for SNAP in a particular month(s)
- 4,098 complete responses
- Survey respondents closely mirrored racial demographics of SNAP recipients.

Demographics	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Target
Customer satisfaction — total	80.5%	88.8%	89.9%	89.5%	76.0%	90%
White	~82%	~90%	~92%	~90%	77.7%	90%
Non-White	~80%	~86%	~88%	~89%	79.2%	90%
Unknown					74.6%	90%
Individual with disability					72.2%	90%
Food security	12.3%	25.3% EAs begin	39.1%	33.5%	18.0% EAs end	40%

Customer voice:

*“It is very frustrating to me that the “poverty” level of income doesn’t actually reflect the actual point at which people are struggling to make ends meet. Making a salary of \$50,000 still isn’t enough to buy a house or have any real stability. Even if you have no credit card debt.”*

*“I have been fortunate to have a case manager that is professional, helpful and kind. Always giving info to get all the benefits I am entitled to.”*

*“We were doing better when we got the extra emergency food stamps but since we don’t get them anymore, we have been struggling to get enough food for the month.”*

## Expectations of SSP and CW leadership

Source: Three community listening sessions in August with SSP and CW Directors

One word expectation: “Transparency”

## SSP community feedback themes

\*The feedback below was received from the following sources: ODHS Economic Stability Community Engagement Sessions, SSP Partner Meeting Survey, TANF Equity Alliance Plenary Report, SSP and SNAP Partner Meetings, SSP and OEP Partner Community Engagement Communications.

### Communication and customer service:

- Language access:
  - » All written communication available in other languages
  - » Interpretive services available and utilized
- Policy and procedure understanding and alignment.
  - » Specifically: Store Front Office reception, call center staff, and eligibility workers
- Trauma informed trainings for ODHS workers — specifically referring to how workers speak with Oregonians seeking assistance.
- Address ONE account creation barriers, specifically around identity confirmation for those with no credit history.
- Clear communication for Oregonians seeking assistance.
- Opportunities for Community Voice.

### Partnership:

- Clear communication for partners — requests early communication so they can prepare their communities.
- Understanding ODHS representatives' roles and being ability to reach out to them outside of the partner meetings.
- Need for an outlet to give feedback for those unable to give it verbally, in the moment.
- Collaborating on new processes rather than being informed of the new process.
- ONE system training
- Ability for Community Partners (CP) to assist with SNAP in addition to medical applications.

### Additional service needs:

- Lack of childcare availability, especially outside usual business hours
- Need for housing and transportation assistance.
- Cash assistance for those without dependents.

- TANF insufficient to meet basic needs.
- Need for mental health support; example: Case Worker doesn't understand or have the time to spend due to case load size.
- Need for efficient SSP services in rural areas.

## Input from Tribal Governments

Tribal Director's Convening October 3 — The only Tribe in attendance was Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs so we couldn't share the Vision into Action presentation broadly. Leona Enright from Office of Tribal Affairs followed up with 1:1 meetings with each of the Tribes and we were invited to attend the meetings below. In addition, several representatives from the Tribes participated in the SSP Partner Meeting breakout discussions and the Community Voice Forum November 2.

We also shared the Vision into Action Guide at the Tribal Directors' Convening in January 2024. In accordance with ODHS Tribal Consultation Policy, SSP issued a "Dear Tribal Leader" letter on January 8, 2024, to invite consultation; no Tribes requested consultation.

### **The Klamath Tribes Social Services Department, November 21, 2023**

- Ensure all SSP staff understand the unique eligibility standards for each Tribe. For example, a Klamath Tribal member seeking services in Portland Metro area turned down because staff member didn't understand eligibility for the Klamath Tribes.
- Trauma-informed training should include historical knowledge about the trauma experienced by the Tribes of Oregon and indigenous people in Oregon.
- Providing life and family coaches works very well — keep doing more of this.
- How can we provide resources to meet the needs of the people we're serving, such as:
  - » Bed bug epidemics require funds for laundry services, washer and dryer appliances
  - » Substance use treatment
  - » Pay fees to expunge criminal records so people can apply for jobs, housing, etc.
- Future discussion — barriers to employment

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**Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, (CTCLUSI), Kelly Bradley,  
Social Services Director, December 1, 2023**

- CTCLUSI covers five counties so there are challenges getting Tribal members to service locations and they often lack electronic access.
- Transportation is limited, especially public transportation, and the Tribe only has one person in their transportation division.
- Benefits applications can be cumbersome — example of elder who lost SNAP benefits and needed help reapplying.
- Partner with other Tribes, such as Coquille, and potential to collaborate with ODHS across Tribes.
- Request two days each month to have SSP staff work at Tribal office locations to provide direct service and eligibility support.
- Need state support for case management, housing, long-term care.
- CTCLUSI provides services to other Tribal members and community members but prioritize CTCLUSI members.
- Tribal identification requirements can be trauma-inducing and create barriers — why do they have to identify as a Tribal member to receive services?
  - » To access some government services, must have U.S. government ID not Tribal ID; federal Tribal ID doesn't qualify for Real ID.



# Appendix E

## Research and best practices

### Chapin Hall

Economic and material hardships significantly affect families involved or at risk of involvement in child welfare. Chapin Hall's research dives into the importance of economic and concrete supports as a preventive tool, emphasizing the need to prioritize strategies that boost economic resources to address disparities among families of color and to create a fairer system. Drawing from extensive research, it highlights how economic challenges impact family well-being and the effectiveness of programs offering direct aid like cash transfers and housing support. Chapin Hall's recommendations include integrating economic support into prevention services, broadening research on their impact, and advocating for community-driven approaches that build relationships and resources within family-centric systems.

### Baby's First Years

This study looked at how providing regular cash support to low-income families might affect the brains of their babies. They did this by giving some families a significant monthly cash gift and others a smaller amount, then measuring brain activity in the babies at around one year old. They found that the babies in the families getting more cash showed different brain activity patterns, especially in certain frequencies. These changes in brain activity are linked to better development of thinking skills later on. This suggests that giving families in need more money regularly might help shape how babies' brains grow and develop, potentially positively impacting their future learning abilities.

### Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED)

SEED was among the first Guaranteed Income research initiatives in the United States. The demonstration in Stockton, California began in 2019 by giving 125 Stockton residents \$500 per month for 24 months. The cash provided to participants was unconditional, with no work requirements or other strings attached. Rather than individual income limits, the program required participants to live in a neighborhood whose median income was at or below the city's overall median income of \$46,033. After the first year, key findings showed Guaranteed Income reduced income volatility; enabled recipients to find full-time employment; and alleviated financial scarcity, creating new opportunities for self-determination, choice, goal-setting and risk-taking. Participants were also healthier, showing less depression and anxiety and enhanced well-being.

## **Magnolia Mother's Trust**

Another of the nation's landmark Guaranteed Income programs, Magnolia Mother's Trust launched in 2018. The program provides \$1,000 per month for 12 months to Black mothers in Jackson, Mississippi, with no work requirements or other such conditions. The initial pilot served just 20 mothers, but the second, third and fourth cohorts served closer to 100 mothers each. To be eligible, participants must reside in a subsidized housing community. Results from the fourth cohort show that mothers were able to pay bills more consistently on time, were able to save money and cover unexpected expenses, gain employment, and move out of subsidized housing, and fewer mothers had personal and title loans. Importantly, the study also shows that the hurdles to exiting poverty for marginalized black women in an under-resourced community are significant and Guaranteed Income is just one piece of the puzzle. The study recommends government-backed Guaranteed Income programming that extends beyond one year.

## **Nature Communications**

This study looked for correlation between Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development data and macro-economic factors such as public benefit levels of state-level cost of living. The study found that adolescents in households with lower incomes had smaller hippocampal volume and higher internalizing psychopathology, which was more significant in areas with high cost of living but could be mitigated by more generous levels of cash assistance. The study shows the power of cash assistance in positively impacting child brain development and mental health and mitigating the effects of growing up in poverty.

## **Congressional Research Services**

This report outlines changes to the TANF program that have occurred since the 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act and the resultant deteriorating value of the TANF program. Lack of TANF Block Grant growth has driven declining participation among eligible households, and combined with rising rates of poverty, make clear that the TANF program in its current form is not effective at addressing poverty on a broad scale.

## **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: Work Requirements Don't Cut Poverty**

This paper summarizes several research studies that evaluated the effectiveness of post-welfare reform work requirements and state-level workforce programs and policies. The evidence suggests that any gains in employment or earnings are modest and fade over time, employment tends to be unstable, and populations with significant barriers to employment did not tend to overcome them because of these programs. Additionally, those who did gain employment did not exit poverty and some experienced even lower incomes.

## National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine: A Roadmap to Ending Child Poverty

This wide-reaching study looks at the impact of various forces on child poverty, including workforce and wage-focused policies, government taxes and transfers (such as EITC and the Child Tax Credit), and government benefits. The study concludes that labor-focused policies have not been effective at significantly reducing child poverty when the relationship to market-income, rather than just the poverty line, is evaluated. The study simulated four policy packages against the target of reducing child poverty by 50 percent within 10 years and found the most effective approach to be combining means-tested programs like SNAP and housing vouchers with expanded EITC and fully refundable Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits. Other effective elements included restoring benefits eligibility for non-qualified immigrants, federal childcare subsidies, increases to the federal minimum wage, and child support assurances—all policies that increase cash on hand for people in poverty.

## Coalition of Communities of Color: Addressing the Racial Wealth Gap

This report provides baseline data demonstrating inequities in wealth and asset accumulation between communities of color and white people in the United States. It outlines dominant culture approaches to wealth building which often focus on individual factors like skill deficits, without addressing “predatory mechanisms of disenfranchisement” and institutional racism in our nation’s economic structure. The report identifies wealth building, economic stability and ending wealth stripping practices as three key building blocks to closing the racial wealth gap. This report is foundational in informing practices beyond providing aid and mitigating the impacts of poverty, but rather creating a more economically just future for people of color in Oregon.

## Opportunity Insights

Opportunity Insights has led the nation in broad-scale research on the drivers of economic stability and mobility. Their research uses “big data” and identifies barriers to economic opportunity, such as neighborhood, levels of community racial bias, and education quality. In their work on [racial disparities](#), they identify Black men as having the least intergenerational upward economic mobility and cite that differences in family characteristics and in individual ability do not explain the differences in economic mobility. The Black-white racial gap is also persistent regardless of neighborhood. The data suggests that policies specifically focusing economic mobility supports for Black men are necessary to address disparities in intergenerational wealth.

## Urban Institute: Housing Matters for Upward Mobility

This report outlines the essential role housing plays in upward mobility, which is defined as not just a matter of economic success, but also power and autonomy and being valued in community. The research finds five key housing metrics that can increase access to upward mobility in a community: housing quality, housing affordability, housing stability, housing that builds assets and wealth, and neighborhood context. The research cautions that focusing on just one of these metrics can have an overall negative affect on mobility—such as renting a high-quality but unaffordable house in an expensive neighborhood—thus policymakers should focus on the whole “bundle” and think holistically about housing.

## **Policy options to support economic stability and mobility, summer 2023**

Source: ODHS commissioned a report from ECO NW, with input from two community advisory sessions (March and May 2023), analyses of ODHS programs and costs, and an “environmental scan” of population, economic and policy environments.

### **Environmental scan key findings:**

- A history of institutional racism sits at the foundation of economic instability for many Oregonians.
- U.S. public social spending — while still below levels of other wealthy nations — has recently increased and helped bring poverty rates down.
- The cost of housing has outpaced incomes for years, undermining the gains of expanded social spending and exacerbating financial instability.

### **Policy options to improve economic stability and mobility**

Guided by community input, social science evidence base, applicability to target populations (families with young children experiencing poverty, young adults aging out of foster care, people with disabilities, older adults, veterans)

- **Building a guaranteed floor of support.** Community advisors expressed a strong interest in exploring programming that would deliver a reliable source of support regardless of a beneficiary’s working status. ODHS could initiate a guaranteed income demonstration in collaboration with a sizable network of pilot projects across the U.S. organized by Stanford University’s Basic Income Lab. Additionally, the department could advocate for expansions to Oregon’s just-passed Child Tax Credit — a national version of which cut child poverty rates in half during the pandemic. Finally, the state could consider increasing property tax exemptions for U.S. veterans with disabilities.

- **Providing for basic needs.** State-funded rental assistance has gained prominence given the high share of Oregonians who struggle with high rents and limited federal housing aid. In this area, ODHS could eliminate the time limits on its Independent Living Housing Subsidy Program for youth exiting the foster care program. The agency could also explore Minnesota's Supplemental Aid Housing Assistance program, which provides state-funded rental assistance to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries who spend more than 40 percent of their income on rent.
- **Supporting work.** ODHS could promote the expansion of the state's supplement to the Earned Income Tax Credit, which draws on an especially strong evidence base and a recently improved take-up rate in Oregon. Increased state spending on Employment Related Day Care has strong community support and could boost labor force participation. And an increase in the asset limit for the Medicaid Buy In program would allow more people with disabilities to build wealth through work.
- **Investing in mobility and wealth-building.** Two asset-building programs show promise. Connecticut and Washington, D.C. have recently enacted Baby Bond programs aimed at reducing racial/ethnic wealth gaps. Additionally, New Brunswick, Canada, has shown how High School Learning Accounts can improve high school and college graduation rates among students from families with low incomes.

# Appendix F

## Program collaboration

We met with each ODHS program director and some Central/Shared Services such as Human Resources in Fall 2023 to share SSP's Vision into Action and discuss potential areas of priority collaboration. Below are notes from those discussions:

### A. Office of Developmental Disability Services

- a. Poverty — services and issues overlap with communities served — both adults and parents of children with disabilities
- b. Support to connect ODDS direct support professionals/workforce who are eligible for SNAP/TANF and other services (some of ODHS' most diverse workforce)
- c. Get data on overlapping populations served — such as TANF families over 60 months increasing — do they have ODDS connections as well, are there other supports they need?
- d. Need for shared data — and other cross-program initiatives and support services
- e. Program overlap at the local level — attend meetings of direct service teams to discuss
- f. Central office policy overlap as well — attend policy meetings to discuss

### B. Aging and People with Disabilities

- a. Multi-generation approach — benefits both programs and all recipients
- b. Develop/cultivate shared culture that works for everyone who walks through the door, especially as we move to shared front offices.
- c. Anti-poverty and poverty prevention
- d. Cross-training across programs — for example, global training on “soft” skills, how to greet and welcome people
- e. APD workforce shortage of home care workers and PSWs — collaborate with SSP to recruit, create pipeline for clients to get jobs.
- f. Understand differences in people served and desired outcomes — APD focuses on long term care and support, clients likely won't leave program; SSP promotes self-sufficiency, transitioning out of the program.
- g. Accommodate different needs of clients in shared spaces — such as lobbies and waiting areas — elderly clients can't stand for long periods, people with children may need different spaces.

## C. Human Resources

- a. Connect to succession planning — critical positions and competencies identified by Aug. 31. Final plan completed mid-October.
- b. Employee Engagement Survey Sept. 25 — Gallup Q12 + additional questions TBD. Cross-promote and ensure we don't duplicate questions. Gallup will provide resources and tools to help build employee satisfaction.
- c. Connect with Human Resources as we determine whether work will fundamentally change, look at job classifications and PDs, org structure, consider funding sources for positions. Engage Suzy Parker, class comp specialist.
- d. Look at impacts from local, central and executive levels.
- e. Consider embedding search advocates at district level.
- f. Regional directors — still developing what that role will be. How will it be considered in VIA?
- g. Connection/overlap with Regional Demonstration Projects.

## D. Vocational Rehabilitation

- a. Connect on individuals who could be co-served.
- b. Coordinate resources — can be easier to access SSP resources.
- c. Better communicate about VR, explore collaboration and leveraging expertise — for example, STEP programs and ICAP, Disability — VR Counselors.
- d. Data sharing and collection issues are barriers to increased collaboration across programs.
- e. Federal funding for VR doesn't allow participation in ONE system.
- f. Co-location in some locations allow shared cases, referrals.
- g. Flexibility of VR funding can help with education, transportation issues.
- h. Engage early with TANF clients to share VR resources, services.
  - i. TANF meets immediate needs.
  - ii. VR supports long term needs
  - iii. iVR looks to SSP for financial support, childcare needs.
- i. VR supports long term needs.
- j. VR looks to SSP for financial support, childcare needs.
- k. VR serves adults and youth, as young as 14, with pre-employment transition services and summer work.

- I. Opportunity to partner and share networks in community across SSP/VR.
- m. Add VR workforce manager to SSP new employment workgroup (STEP, E&T).

## **E. Oregon Eligibility Partnership**

- a. Warm handoff — keep eligibility staff involved to ensure collaboration and coordination.
- b. Focus on how to serve families as a whole.
- c. Include OEP staff in VIA survey.

## **F. Child Welfare**

- a. Family Preservation
- b. Prevention work
- c. Coordinate Vision for Transformation road map and Vision into Action Guide
- d. Data literacy
- e. Implementation science



# Appendix G

## Acronyms and definitions

### Glossary:

**211** — [211info](#) is a private, community-based nonprofit organization funded by state and municipal contracts, foundations, donations, and community partners in Oregon and Southwest Washington. 211info serves Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties in Washington and the entire of State of Oregon.

**APD** — [Aging and People with Disabilities](#)

**BEW** — Benefits Eligibility Worker

**CDC** — Community Development Coordinator

**CIE** — Community Information Exchange [Community Information Exchange \(Connect Oregon\)](#)

**COO** — [Chief Operations Officer](#) for ODHS

**CPC** — Community Partnership Coordinator

**CW** — [Child Welfare](#)

**DEIB** — [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan for ODHS 2024-2026](#)

**DM** — [District Manager](#) for each of the 16 CW and SSP districts

**DV** — Domestic Violence

**DVSA** — Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**DVSP** — Domestic Violence Survivor Programs focus on increasing safety for survivors and their families, while decreasing the risk of returning to an unsafe situation through three survivor-centered and culturally responsive domestic violence programs.

**E&T** — Employment and Training Services are offered through the TANF Job Opportunity and Basic Skills program, JOBS Plus and the SNAP Training and Employment program

**EBT** — Electronic Benefits Transfer, the process for accessing SNAP benefits

**EIC** — [Equity and Inclusion Committee](#)

**ERG** — [Employee Resource Group](#)

**JOBS** — Job Opportunity and Basic Skills program

**KPM** — Key Performance Measures for SSP are the measures we use to evaluate our effectiveness. The five measures are: living wage jobs, housing stability, food security, self-efficacy/hope, customer satisfaction.

**OAR** — [Oregon Administrative Rules](#)

**ODDS** — [Office of Developmental Disability Services](#)

**ODHS** — Oregon Department of Human Services

**OEMS** — [Office of Equity and Multicultural Services](#)

**OEP** — [Oregon Eligibility Partnership](#)

**OM** — Operations Manager

**ORRAI** — [Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics, and Implementation](#)

**ORS** — [Oregon Revised Statutes](#)

**OTA** — [Office of Tribal Affairs](#)

**PAF** — [Performance Accountability Feedback](#)

**PM** — Central Office Program Managers run SSP statewide programs (like SNAP, TANF, YEHP, etc.); District [Program Managers](#) administer SSP programs at the district level

**Refugee Program** — Supports refugees and others with an eligible immigration status to get help with cash, medical, employment and other services when they first come to Oregon.

**SIP** — Survivor Investment Partnership

**SNAP** — Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides monthly food benefits to help purchase healthy food.

**SNAP-ED** — SNAP Nutrition Education Program

**SSP** — [Self Sufficiency Programs](#)

**SSTU** — [Self Sufficiency Training Unit](#)

**STEP** — SNAP Training and Employment Program

**TANF** — Temporary Assistance for Needy Families provides a monthly cash benefit to families with children who meet income limits

**VIA** — [Vision Into Action](#)

**VR** — [Vocational Rehabilitation](#)

**YEHP** — Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program works to end youth homelessness by facilitating safe and stable places to stay as well as services, supports and opportunities to help youth thrive.

Additional acronym definitions commonly used in ODHS may be found on the [OHDS internal web page](#).

Equity-related terms can be found in the [ODHS Equity Glossary](#).

## Definitions

**Community Engagement Framework:** Community engagement is an intentional, collective process during which people share their experiences and work together to create equitable and positive change. It requires participants to approach one another with humility, curiosity, and mutual respect. Meaningful community engagement provides clarity and transparency, ensuring affected communities have access to full information and the ability to influence and impact decisions. Community engagement is essential to dismantling systemic and institutional racism and other oppressions.

**Fundamentals map:** ODHS' management system uses tools like fundamentals maps for each program area to measure performance. SSP's fundamentals map monitors measures for both core business processes and outcomes of our services to gauge success and make necessary changes. SSP will be reviewing and updating our fundamentals map in the early part of 2024.

## Resources and links

[Building Well-Being Initiative](#)

[Equity North Star](#)

[Family Preservation](#)

[Nine Tribes of Oregon](#)

[RiSE culture](#)

[Tribal Consultation Policy](#)

[Tribal Engagement Toolkit](#)

[Vision for Transformation](#)

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact Oregon Department of Human Services Self-Sufficiency Programs at [odhs-ssp-inforequests@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:odhs-ssp-inforequests@odhs.oregon.gov) or 503-945-5600 (voice/text). We accept all relay calls.

