



FACT

OREGON

Empowering families
Transforming disability

July
2022
to
June
2023

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Families, Supporters, and Community Partners:

2022-23 was one of our most impactful years yet. Our **Support Line** data paints a compelling story of how busy and complex support to families has been post-COVID. Over this period, we provided support to 1,413 people from across every region of the state. Families and partners had almost 2,100 unique support needs, leading to more than 24,000 contacts! The most common support needs concerned IEPs/IFSPs, parent and youth participation in decision making, behavior supports, appropriate evaluation, least restrictive environment, and health and whole life planning.

Our full schedule of **trainings** covered a range of topics from early childhood through the transition to adulthood. At FACT Oregon, we pride ourselves on presenting useful, relevant, and high-quality trainings, leveraging relationships with partners across the state to bring families, youth, and professionals the information they need.

Training attendees overwhelmingly reported **significant gains in confidence**, with 94% rating their post-training knowledge as good or great. One series that we highlight within this report is our new **Self-Determination and Financial Empowerment** series for youth with disabilities. Participating youth were excited to take control of their own



finances, and they shared their financial visions, identified specific goals, and took steps towards achieving them. We're excited to continue this work in 2023-24.

The **Activate Your Advocacy** parent leadership program continues to grow a network of engaged parents across Oregon who are working towards equity-based school reform and systems change. Since its inception in 2021, we've trained 64 parent leaders! Several graduates provided powerful testimony during the **2023 legislative session** on issues impacting youth and families navigating disability.

The outpouring of support we receive from families, partners, donors, foundations, and businesses helps to fuel us and drive this important work forward.

On behalf of the FACT Oregon board and staff, I thank you for your support.

Christy Leese



Empowering Families. Transforming Disability.



The mission of FACT Oregon is to empower Oregon families experiencing disability in their pursuit of whole lives.

FACT Oregon empowers families, youth, and communities to navigate and advocate for the supports and opportunities people with disabilities need to thrive at home, in school, and in community.

Our peer-delivered services are free for families and include a Support Line, trainings, resources, community engagement, and advocacy. Since 2012-2013, we have served as Oregon's state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center for Special Education. We are also a Family Network serving families and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Multnomah and Washington counties.



Families crave support, resources, community, and collective action.

80,000 Oregon youth with disabilities receive special education services. As a group, they are disproportionately segregated, under-proficient in reading and math, and disciplined twice as often as their peers. This leads to some of Oregon's worst graduation and non-completion rates.

Most families we support struggle to understand and participate in the services and protections afforded them by federal and state law. They find systems cumbersome to navigate and feel ill-prepared to collaborate with school and service teams. For families navigating barriers or bias beyond a child's disability due to race/ethnicity, language, income, geographic location, or other factors, the challenges and gap in opportunity and access can be stark.

Families desire and need support, resources, community, and action to change these outcomes. They turn to FACT Oregon for accurate, family-friendly, and solution-focused information and support.

Our Goals and Work



FACT Oregon works toward a future in which communities are accessible and inclusive and where the self-determination of people with disabilities is assured. Together with families, youth, agencies, and community partners, we:

Strive for equity, disrupt ableism, and change how people perceive disability.

Promote disability rights concepts such as self-determination, supported decision-making, family and youth voice, and whole lives.

Center the wellbeing and full participation of families and youth navigating disability at home, in school, and in community.



Key Programs and Services

Support Line. Specialists answer questions and provide information to families and partners on special education, disability services, and community resources.

Trainings. We offer trainings to families, youth, and professionals on ableism, special education, inclusive practices, disability supports, financial empowerment, and whole life planning.

Outreach. We connect with families and partners through community events, committee and coalition work, resource fairs, eblasts, social media, and more.

Technical assistance. We support community partners to understand disability concepts and systems and services so they can better serve families and youth in their communities.

Advocacy. We bring family and youth voices to decision-making tables through parent leadership programs and public advocacy work.

Our Impact



Support Was Busier Than Ever



We support families to understand and navigate special education, disability services, and whole life topics. Staff are all parents; some experience disability.

- 1,413 unique families across the state connected with us – a 16% increase. They made 2,082 different requests.
- 73% of people called us for the first time.
- Families reported that the information was relevant (98%), easy to understand (96%), increased knowledge (96%), or helped them identify a next step to take (95%).
- The top 3 support needs were school and special education, parent and youth participation in decision-making, and behavior.

We Activated Parent Leaders



Activate Your Advocacy (AYA) equips and engages families to become activated leaders working for equity-based school reform.

- 19 parents participated in this year's AYA series.
- Topics included leadership, ableism, equity, educational laws and governance, disproportionality, and legislative advocacy.
- Graduates reported significant gains in confidence and knowledge.
- Graduates serve on local, state, and national advisory groups and on our staff and board.
- Graduates testified on numerous disability-related bills during the 2023 legislative session.

Trainings Boosted Knowledge



Trainings are delivered virtually, with some exceptions. Participants rate trainings as high quality, useful, well-organized, and relevant.

- We hosted and trained 1,082 people and presented to another 1,000+ at partner events.
- 93-97% of participants rated trainings as high quality, useful, well-organized, and relevant.
- 94% of attendees rated their post-training knowledge of the main topic area as strong.

Our Impact (continued)



Family Voices Created Change!



FACT Oregon provides testimony, supports families to share their stories, and represents families on advocacy coalitions. Legislative successes achieved by the disability community in 2023 include:

- SB 819 limits the use of Abbreviated School Days. FACT Oregon stands for the rights of students with disabilities to access a full day of school.
- SB 992 removes The Alternative Certificate as an option for completing high school. We encourage families and districts to work together to support youth with disabilities to access one of Oregon's 3 diploma options.
- SB 758 outlines timelines for districts to fulfill record requests made by families of youth receiving special education services. This ensures families have access to their child's information in a timely manner.
- Regional Family Support Networks were codified into law and funded through Oregon's general fund. Family Networks, including FACT Oregon, offer peer-delivered support to families of individuals with intellectual or developmental disability.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Financial Empowerment for Youth with Disabilities

This series introduces youth to the concept of self-determination and to financial goal setting, money management tools and products, budgeting, using credit, savings mechanisms, and benefits counseling.

Hands-on learning, games, and visual aids support strong knowledge gains, and families learn how they can further their youth's financial independence.

In 2022-23, 18 youth with disabilities:

- Discovered their money personalities, what things cost, how to plan for purchases, and pitfalls to avoid.
- Set SMART money goals, created budgets, tracked expenses.
- Learned how to access financial benefits counseling.
- Were excited to make decisions about their finances!

"I learned about how to be safe with my money and benefits. This impacted me because we will face the process of using money and benefits more carefully... and will not make big mistakes."

Keira

"I learned how to budget to save money for something you want. I will do budget meetings with my mom periodically."

Ella

In Their Own Words...



"I felt very supported and for the first time in a long time I felt like I was talking to someone who really understood my situation." - Trisha, parent

"[They] allowed me to talk and explain what I needed and how I felt unheard. It made me feel like I had someone on my side." - Angela, parent

**"Shout out to Britania for supporting a family I referred. As a team, the mom and student felt heard. Their request to switch classrooms was approved and connections were made. The student's anxiety has decreased, and the parent is relieved."
- Case manager**

"I feel more supported with opportunities to use my voice and knowledge. I feel like there is a community which helps when you feel alone as a parent of a disabled child. I now know how to share testimony to the legislature for bills that will impact our children." - Sara, AYA graduate

**"I am better prepared to serve the parents of ID/DD youth as a family partner in the county I serve."
- Skip, professional**

**"Heather went above and beyond to answer all my questions and didn't end the call until I felt confident with the information."
- Jennifer, parent**

**"I will follow legislation more closely and support bills that help with the future of the disability community and my child."
- AYA graduate**

**"I will be going into IEP meetings with more knowledge. I appreciate everything she helped me with."
- Cindy, parent**

**"I loved the idea of the one-page profile toolkit, complaint kit, the breakdown of how to advocate for my child. Wow!! Amazing!!" -
Yesenia, parent/professional**

**"My understanding and internalization of ableism and how I participate in its hegemony has leapt forward lightyears and will empower me to not only become a greater leader in the disability movement but also as a parent to children who experience disability."
- Marc, AYA graduate**

"Whitnie was amazing - she took time with me, asked me all the right questions, and guided me through how to get support. She showed me what that looks like on paper ...

**... and how it's measured. Now I feel like I have the tools I need to help my son. I am so incredibly grateful!"
- Nicole, parent**

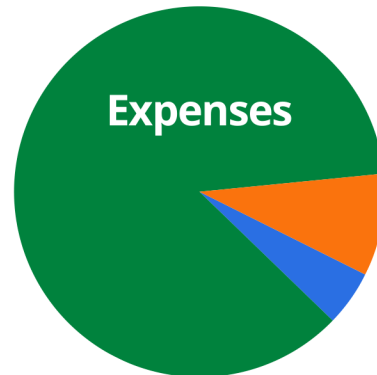
Financials FY 2022-23



Government
\$740,963

Contributions
\$289,537

Other revenue
\$52,557



Program
\$795,685

Management
\$82,463

Fundraising
\$44,792

Funding Partners (\$2,500+)



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