



Oregon
Safe Families
for Children
Collaborative



Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Children: *Summer* 2024

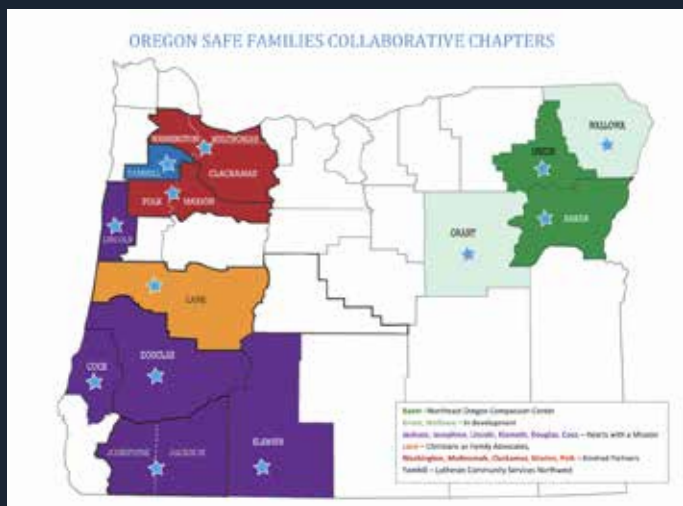
Safe Families of Baker County help a teen mom realize her dreams. Page 4.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing of *CHILDREN*

This issue is focused on increasing the social and emotional well-being of children. At Safe Families, we believe that by increasing these factors, we can help enable children to grow up safe and secure and to reach their full potential in life.

In this issue, you'll see how several young adults found purpose and meaning after connecting with Safe Families. You'll also see how volunteers surrounded two young, overwhelmed mothers, and how that support changed everything.

Enjoy!



The mission of Safe Families is expanding all around Oregon and serving hundreds of people. This updated map shows where all of our chapters are currently located. We are excited to continue our focus on family preservation throughout Oregon.



Forming New Bonds and Creating *FRIENDSHIPS*

When Jamie found the eviction notice in her mailbox, it was devastating. She was already struggling with isolation as well as a disastrous co-parenting situation with her ex.

She decided that the only option would be to live with her son in her car while she worked to devise a plan to get back up on her feet. Without reliable childcare or an address, finding stable employment seemed impossible, and accessing assistance was proving fruitless.

However, despite these obstacles, Jamie was determined not to give up and believed that she would find a way to make a better life for her and her son.

Jamie had little support, but that wasn't going to stop her, but it did make her current situation much more challenging.

One day, she got in touch with Safe Families of Josephine County. They connected her with a community partner who wanted to address her most pressing situation first - her housing. They provided crucial resources to cover her back rent, ensuring several more months of stability in her apartment.

Next, Safe Families introduced her to a dedicated parent mentor who was a constant source of emotional support and encouragement. The two formed a meaningful connection that continued to uplift and inspire Jamie.

The security and encouragement gave Jamie the confidence to secure childcare and stable employment. The feeling of having a network of people looking out for her has greatly improved her stress levels.

Reflecting on her journey, she shares, "Safe Families for Children has helped me form new bonds and friendships with people that I've really come to cherish. I was in a pretty sticky situation, and they were able to help me in time of need. They continue to show compassion and support for me and my children. They have helped me realize that I'm not alone and it's okay to ask for help."

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*Name and photo have been changed for privacy



From the Streets to *GRADUATION*

The streets were a better option for Maddie than the family situation she'd left behind. However, that didn't mean that life was easy. Far from it. Maddie had left her family as a 15-year old with nowhere to live except for the streets. And on top of everything else, Maddie had a baby daughter she was raising as she tried to navigate treacherous life on the street. Things looked hopeless for a teenage mom with no support or anyone to guide her.

At times the overwhelming isolation and chaos caused Maddie to experience mental breakdowns and as a result she oftentimes found herself turning to drugs to numb the pain.

School wasn't a priority. How could it be? She had to stay in survival mode living day to day, somehow supporting herself and her daughter.

One day, Maddie got connected with Safe Families of Baker County. They soon arranged a host home for her and her daughter. This was an enormous help and gave her some "breathing room" as she navigated her difficult situation.

Because of Safe Families' support, Maddie was able to find other ways they could help her and her daughter. They were able to connect her with respite hosting and daycare and this allowed Maddie to begin to thrive. She went back to school and was even able to compete in the after school sports program. She also attended school events, got a summer job. And learned how to budget her money.

Soon, with the help of Safe Families, Maddie got help with her mental health issues and began to recognize her talents and passions. Her high school years continued. She was able to attend classes and work towards her goals while volunteers from Safe Families filled in the gaps in her schedule by hosting her growing daughter during the day and giving her encouragement and support to pursue her dreams.

The years were full and went fast until graduation. And then something amazing happened.

At graduation, Maddie was honored not once but twice. She was the class salutatorian and also received the Student of Merit Award. She was joined by her daughter as she walked across the stage to receive her diploma.

The principal acknowledged Safe Families and the support they had given to Maddie, knowing that without it, she wouldn't have walked across the stage, much less be honored and awarded the way she was that evening.

Maddie is now enrolled in Klamath Community College with plans to pursue an education in welding and has future aspirations of becoming a mental health therapist.



Celebrating a *GRADUATION*

Safe Families of Yamhill County Joined in a graduation Celebration with a girl they had supported for several years.

This past May, brought quite the celebration to the Safe Families of Yamhill Counties chapter! Staff and volunteers were excited as they celebrated with *Megan, a youth who they had supported for years, as she graduated from Air Force Basic Training.

For the past seven years, Megan's family had relied heavily on Safe Families of Yamhill County. As one of six children, it was hard for Megan to always receive the type of support and encouragement that she

needed from her single mother. So, Safe Families volunteers took on the role of encouragers and mentors with Megan as they regularly met with her, encouraged her, celebrated her, and helped her pursue her dreams.

Even recently, Megan was hosted by a Safe Families Host Family recently for seven months as she worked and waited to get into the Air Force.

And now in May, it was so exciting for the volunteers who supported Megan watch her come full circle and see how continued support and encouragement can help a youth reach her full potential.

*Name and photo have been changed for privacy

A Family *Restored*

As she moved into the shelter, *Janae felt more alone than she'd ever been in her life. Because she didn't have stable housing, she hadn't been allowed to keep her daughter. That had been pain enough in itself. Then, the isolation and lack of connection at the shelter added another layer of hopelessness. No one seemed to understand her and it was hard to find connection or someone to relate to.

Janae wanted more than anything to get her daughter back and she'd do whatever she needed to make that happen. The problem was she had no idea where to begin. Her current living situation seemed to be blocking her from finding a way forward.

Fortunately, someone at the shelter got her in touch with Safe Families of Douglas County. And with that connection, everything started to change. Volunteers sat down with Janae and helped her create a path that would move her forward. They found resources and helped her make a home plan. Other volunteers found a place for her at a maternity home which enabled her to be reunited with her daughter.

Not only was the maternity home a huge improvement from where she'd been living, but it also enabled Janae to connect with other moms like her, moms who were experiencing the same kinds of things she was. Slowly but surely, the isolation she'd been facing for so long was melting away. Safe Families volunteers and the other moms with whom Janae lived with were beginning to create a family. A family of support that surrounded Janae and her little girl. They were no longer alone. They were being embraced.

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Offering Safety and *SUPPORT*

Jessica was determined to get her GED—she'd seen enough to understand that she wanted a good future, and this would be the path to opportunities for her life. While life had been rocky and traditional learning had been a real challenge, she was still determined to succeed.

Then something tragic happened— one of her parents died unexpectedly and the numbness from grief killed all of Jessica's ambitions. The loss made it almost impossible to make it from one day to the next. The dream of obtaining a GED was moved aside, for she merely needed to survive.

As she continued to process her grief, Jessica soon found herself in need of a place to stay. She got in touch with Safe Families of Coos County, and they found a family to host her.

As the Host Family got to know Jessica, they found out about her dream of getting her GED and how she'd had to put that dream on hold. That's when the Safe Families team decided to rally around her and make it possible for her to reach that goal.

They met with the school counselor and got Jessica enrolled in the local high school. The school counselor recognized Jessica's unique situation and advised her not to go with the traditional

school route. Instead, she introduced Jessica to AYA, a local organization that provided alternative schooling options for youth.

Life started to improve for Jessica as she continued to experience safety and support with her Host Family. This allowed her to take GED classes with an individualized plan. This proved to be a successful plan.

Jessica is now on track to complete her GED within six months of starting the program, something that earlier never would have seemed possible.

She knows that none of this would have been possible without the Safe Families team and the team at AYA who worked together to ensure that Jessica has a strong future.

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Volunteer Position Feature: *Host Families*

Host families voluntarily take in children for short periods of time. They are screened and approved by Safe Families for Children staff.



If you are looking for a truly rewarding and challenging experience, consider becoming a Safe Families Host Family. You will make a lasting impression on a child in need and possibly change the trajectory of a family in crisis. Host Families serve as the backbone of the Safe Families movement. Without families opening their homes and opening their hearts, we could not care for vulnerable children in our communities.

To be a Host Family, you must be at least 25 years old, emotionally and financially stable, mature, law abiding, healthy, and active. You also must be willing to engage in a long-term friendship with a family in need, agree to not use drugs, and refrain from using profanity or engaging in other negative behavior that may impact a child.





Knowing Her Kids Were Cared *FOR*

Safe Families of PDX cared for a mother's two children while she served time in jail.

The thought of leaving her two children in foster care was terrifying for *Heather. She'd grown up without parents and bounced around the foster care system her entire life. She would do anything to ensure that her two children didn't have to experience the same thing.

So, Heather made a call to Safe Families of the PDX area. She was in a unique situation. She would be facing a court trial soon and there was the looming possibility that she would need to serve jail time. If that were the case, she didn't have family or friends where her kids could stay and as a result, they would end up in the system.

Safe Families assured her that despite the outcome of her trial, she would be supported.

They found a perfect family to host the kids if the need arose. The Host Family had children the exact same age as Heather's kids.

Safe Families also found Family Coaches who agreed to help the Host Family and check-in and support Heather—something she had never had before.

The days leading up to the trial were less stressful than they could have been because Heather now had a solid plan. She also had a strong team of people around her encouraging her and pouring into her life. At the trial, Heather learned that she would need to serve three months. While it was still difficult, she was going to serve her sentence knowing her children were safe and taken care of and that she had a team around her to encourage and support her.

During the time she served her sentence, her new Safe Families friends sent Heather notes of encouragement, and she was relieved by the fact that her kids were in a safe and caring place.

After serving the three months, Heather was immediately reunited with her children—something that would have been difficult without Safe Families.

Heather shared, "I don't know what would have happened to my kids if it wasn't for Safe Families. I am so thankful."

Heather's support system is still present in her life—but now they're more like family. And life is very different for Heather from how it was a few short months ago.

Her call to Safe Families changed everything.



Being Seen and *Valued*

Safe Families of Jackson County helps a teenage girl understand her value.

By the time *Hannah was in high school, the situation at home had finally gotten bad enough that she couldn't stay there any longer. It had never been good- she'd never been seen or supported, but this time she no longer felt safe in the house with her mother.

Hannah got in touch with Safe Families of Jackson County, and they found a family to host her so she had a safe place to stay. She was uncomfortable at first, living with another family, plus she'd been worn down from her own upbringing and didn't feel like she mattered or that anyone would want her around.

Yet, her host family was determined to make her feel like she was one of their own. They did this by taking her grocery shopping, planning special meals, attending sporting events and by being embraced by their home group.

With the stability and encouragement from her host family, she was able to focus on her remaining classes and successfully graduate high school.

This accomplishment not only boosted her self-confidence but would also open up many opportunities for her future.

Little by little, Hannah opened up to her family. One day the culmination of love and support made her decide that maybe she didn't need to hide anymore.

Now, with the continued support of her host family, Hannah is taking the next steps in her journey. They're helping her search for employment and prepare for the responsibilities of adulthood. The family's ongoing support and connection have given Hannah the confidence and skills she needs to build a better future for herself.

Their unwavering dedication to her has transformed her outlook on life, demonstrating the powerful impact a caring and supportive environment can have on a young person's development.

Great THINGS

Safe Families of Douglas County has partnered with NeighborWorks Umpqua and HADCO to provide support to their property residents.



Safe Families of Marion and Polk Counties has had successful in-person training events that have resulted in 41 new volunteers in the pipeline.



Safe Families of Lane County hosted a Hope & Purpose Conference in June with nearly 100 people in attendance.



Safe Families of Yamhill County has recruited 84 new volunteers to work with the families they serve.

Beginning to Dream *AGAIN*

Safe Families Volunteers Help a Mom Find a New Dream

A short time ago, neither *Lindsey's nor her children's future looked very bright. How could it? With two kids and another one on the way, Lindsey felt like she was at a dead end. Everyone was depending on her, but she had nothing left to give them. She'd recently walked out of a domestic violence situation, leaving them without a place to live and with no career or job to support her family. The isolation was devastating.

It was hard enough to face the bleak future for herself, but Lindsey was heartbroken that she didn't have a solid plan to offer her children. She just couldn't see a way forward.

Then one day, Lindsey got in touch with Safe Families of Lane County. They quickly set up a hosting for her children and began to make valuable connections for Lindsey. She started to build friendships with the volunteers who gave her continued guidance and support. The best part for Lindsey was she now knew she had someone she could call when she was in need. That removed a huge burden from her.

Through the support of Safe Families, Lindsey was able to find new housing. She was also able to do something she'd never really done before-dream. She's now working towards a big dream of hers- her dream of being certified for in-home childcare.

Thanks to Safe Families of Lane County Lindsey's future is looking brighter every day.



*Name and photo have been changed for privacy



Discovering His *Future*

Safe Families of Lincoln County helps a boy in middle school find connection and purpose.

* James' grandmother called Safe Families of Lincoln County right after his last fight. This fight had been the worst one yet. As a member of the Lakota Tribe of North Dakota, he wore a braid to middle school and was constantly bullied for it. This time, classmates actually cut the braid off his head. This then escalated into a fight where James revealed his pocket-knife—something that ended up getting him expelled. What made matters worse was that he had already been kicked out of two other schools for fighting.

It wasn't just the fighting that his grandma was concerned about. She worked full-time and James was alone at home a lot of the time. She'd taken him in since his parents were both in prison for life for gang violence and drugs. She so wanted to see him thrive and experience a life that was different from his family. She hoped that Safe Families could somehow help.

Safe Families knew it was essential for James to start forming connections. The staff slowly started to build trust with James and his grandma and he started to open up. They found out that he had a passion for weight-lifting and getting stronger, but he had no way to pursue that passion. Volunteers decided to cover the cost so James could start working out at a community center after school and on the weekends.

Next, Safe Families realized that it was vital for James to connect with people his own age. So, they helped him get involved with the local Wyld Life group, a Christian youth group for middle schoolers, and that summer he was able to attend camp. For the first time in his life, he got to be a carefree kid for the week who was focused on friends and fun.

As the relationship with Safe Families deepened, Safe Families tried to connect James with a male mentor, but with the distrust and pain he'd experienced in the past, he wasn't ready for that. However, he was willing to attend Safe Families pizza gatherings with other middle school boys. There James learned social/emotional skills, physical life skills (water safety, fire safety, finance, construction, landscaping, fishing, mechanics) and even how to make homemade pizza!

Now, things are really looking up for James. He has been looking forward to attending his second Wyld Life camp this summer. A generous donor from Safe Families is paying for him to attend.

Now, James has also decided that it would be in his best interest to meet one on one with a male mentor and will start doing this as well. His connections with Safe Families and Wyld Life have paid off— James hasn't got in one fight this year.

The contacts and community in his life have helped James realize that he has gifts and passions. And a future.

Great THINGS

Safe Families of Baker County has partnered with their local Rotary Chapter who decided to fund their entire food budget for their youth outreach events for the entire fiscal year.



Safe Families of Josephine County has seen an increase in community involvement and has received referrals from several new community partners.



Safe Families of Jackson County has partnered with Kairos to offer a Collaborative Problem Solving Training.



Safe Families of Coos County is now sharing office space with their local ODHS.



Practical Help Changes a *Life*

Safe Families Volunteers Gave a Mom the Ability to Start a New Life with Her Children After a Domestic Violence Situation

When she left her abusive husband, *Maria knew things weren't going to be easy. She'd been a full-time homemaker and had never worked outside the home. She felt very unsure about having any skills to earn a paycheck and support her children. To make matters even more difficult, Maria experienced several medical issues that at times could be debilitating.

But even with challenges and unknowns, she'd made the decision to remove herself and children from a dangerous and violent situation.

Once she moved out, Maria found it even more difficult than she'd imagined. She was isolated and lost as how to navigate her new life. How would she make money for her family? Where did she go for even basic items? How did she apply for a job?

And then on top of everything, the overwhelming loneliness weighed heavily on her.

One day, Maria got in touch with Safe Families of Marion and Polk Counties. They soon began to surround her with volunteers who quickly became like family to Maria and her kids.

One volunteer took on the role of a Family Friend and would cook meals for Maria's family and help her clean her house.

Another volunteer understood that Maria had a lot to manage emotionally and not many people to talk to. That volunteer became a listening ear as Maria processed all that had transpired in recent months and the pain she was working through.

A third volunteer would provide transportation for Maria as well as help gathering resources for her family.

Maria now has a new path forward, away from her abusive past and surrounded and supported by people who have become like family to her.



*Name and photo have been changed for privacy



A Father and Son *Connect*

Safe Families of Klamath County connected with Kevin when he was at his lowest. As a disabled young man with only one working arm, he had trouble working and difficulty driving. Not only that but Kevin had also just finalized a messy divorce. He tried his best, but life was discouraging, and the discouragement had helped him pick up bad habits along the way including behaviors that eventually resulted in him becoming homeless.

There was one positive in his life though, his 18 month year old son. Kevin loved his son but didn't quite know how to be a responsible and consistent parent in the boy's life. But he was willing to work towards whatever was necessary to get there.

Things started to turn around when his neighbors offered Kevin a room in which to stay. However, the room wasn't up to par to have his son visit him and with his disability, fixing it alone was too difficult.

That's when Safe Families was able to step in and start helping. They fixed up the room and got it ready for the child. Not much later around Christmas time, Kevin wanted to give his son a special Christmas but didn't have the funds to do so. Safe Families stepped in again purchasing gifts that Kevin could give his son.

From there, Kevin's relationship with Safe Families rapidly started to grow and he found the family and support that had been foreign to him most of his life.

He moved to a transitional house and a volunteer was willing to transport Kevin to pickup his son. Sometimes the volunteer would transport both to fun places so they could build extra special memories together.

Other volunteers filled in gaps to give Kevin some strong foundations. He met with a man who did a weekly Bible study and taught Kevin about managing his finances. This helped quite a bit. Later, he got connected to a church and Bible study where someone transported him, so he never had to worry about transportation.

Someone else connected Kevin to education resources and would drive him to doctor's appointments and peer support groups.

With all the help and support from his newfound family, Kevin continued to make progress and was soon ready to move into a place of his own. Safe Families volunteers located a landlord who would rent an apartment to him. However, he didn't have the resources to buy furniture. That didn't matter as volunteers donated enough furniture to nicely furnish his new place.

Volunteers also coordinated with the Relief Nursery staff to make sure Kevin had the support to meet his son's needs.

So much has changed in Kevin's life and now with a more stable lifestyle, he can have his son three and a half times a week!

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES INTACT

FIND YOUR AREA CHAPTER BELOW TO GET STARTED

Baker County
541-519-6436
amicka.nocc.safefamiliesbc@gmail.com

Josephine County
541-450-9270
Mariah.n@hwam.org

Marion and Polk Counties
(503) 580-4672
mww@kindredpartners.org

Coos County
541-900-5230
stephanie.l@hwam.org

Klamath County
541-816-1666
bethany.h@hwam.org

Multnomah, Washington, & Clackamas
503-906-1027
info@safefamiliespdx.org

Douglas County
541-900-5252
Liberty.d@hwam.org

Lane County
541-515-7233
AngelaA@cafaweb.com

Union County
541-519-6436
amicka.nocc.safefamiliesbc@gmail.com

Jackson County
541-951-4289
Heather.s@hwam.org

Lincoln County
541-261-7410
marisa.d8@hwam.org

Yamhill County
971-241-1817
mbarry@lcsnw.org

April - June 2024 Numbers

COMBINED COUNTIES

182

Day Hostings

48

Night Hostings

921

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 96
(6-11) 104
(12-17) 20
(18+) 10

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	200
ODHS SS	19
ODHS CW	16
Self Referral	36
Counties Total	271

BAKER COUNTY

17

Day Hostings

9

Night Hostings

72

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 14
(6-11) 6
(12-17) 6
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	7
ODHS SS	4
ODHS CW	2
Self Referral	3
Counties Total	16

COOS COUNTY *In Development

0

Day Hostings

0

Night Hostings

2

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 0
(6-11) 0
(12-17) 0
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	6
ODHS SS	1
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	0
Counties Total	7

DOUGLAS COUNTY

9

Day Hostings

1

Night Hostings

68

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 9
(6-11) 1
(12-17) 0
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	58
ODHS SS	0
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	7
Counties Total	65

JACKSON COUNTY

56

Day Hostings

3

Night Hostings

20

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 0
(6-11) 57
(12-17) 0
(18+) 2

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	6
ODHS SS	0
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	0
Counties Total	6

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

18

Day Hostings

3

Night Hostings

91

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 15
(6-11) 6
(12-17) 0
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	10
ODHS SS	1
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	2
Counties Total	13

KLAMATH COUNTY

3

Day Hostings

3

Night Hostings

159

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 1
(6-11) 4
(12-17) 0
(18+) 1

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	15
ODHS SS	1
ODHS CW	5
Self Referral	6
Counties Total	27

LANE COUNTY

3

Day Hostings

2

Night Hostings

7

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 1
(6-11) 3
(12-17) 1
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	6
ODHS SS	0
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	0
Counties Total	6

LINCOLN COUNTY

16

Day Hostings

7

Night Hostings

150

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 10
(6-11) 5
(12-17) 7
(18+) 1

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	25
ODHS SS	6
ODHS CW	2
Self Referral	1
Counties Total	34

MARION & POLK COUNTIES

4

Day Hostings

3

Night Hostings

24

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 1
(6-11) 0
(12-17) 0
(18+) 6

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	5
ODHS SS	1
ODHS CW	1
Self Referral	2
Counties Total	9

MULTNOMAH, WASHINGTON, & CLACKAMAS COUNTIES

49

Day Hostings

17

Night Hostings

318

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 42
(6-11) 22
(12-17) 2
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	62
ODHS SS	5
ODHS CW	6
Self Referral	15
Counties Total	88

UNION COUNTY *In Development

0

Day Hostings

0

Night Hostings

0

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 0
(6-11) 0
(12-17) 0
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	0
ODHS SS	0
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	0
Counties Total	0

YAMHILL COUNTY

7

Day Hostings

0

Night Hostings

10

Support Services

AGES:

(0-5) 3
(6-11) 0
(12-17) 4
(18+) 0

REFERRALS:

Community Referral	0
ODHS SS	0
ODHS CW	0
Self Referral	0
Counties Total	0

Circles of *SUPPORT*

Keeping Children Safe and Families Together—April 1st to June 30th, 2024



15 Oregon Counties provided **921** *SUPPORT SERVICES*



The Seven Most Frequently Provided *SUPPORT SERVICES*

Mentorship

Transportation

Financial Support

Food

Housing

Education

Employment



323

304

116

93

49

28

8

