FACT Oregon Impact Report 2022-23 (Accessible Text Version)

# Message from the Executive Director

Dear Families, Supporters, and Community Partners:

July 2022-23 was one of our most impactful years yet at FACT Oregon. Our Support Line data paints a compelling story of how busy and complex support to families has been post-COVID. Over the year, we provided 1:1 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 six most common support needs concerned specific questions about a child’s IEP/IFSP, parent and student participation in decision making, behavior supports, appropriate evaluation, least restrictive environment, and health and whole life planning.

Our training schedule over the year was also full and covered a wide 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.

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 Reese

# 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 2012-13, 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 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 in school, at home, and in community.

# Key Programs and Services

**Support Line.** Specialists (all parents of youth with disabilities) answer questions and provide information to families and partners on special education, disability services, and community resources.

**Trainings.** We offer trainings 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.

# Summing Up a Productive 2022-23

Support Was Busier Than Ever

### We support families experiencing disability to understand and navigate special education, disability services, and whole life topics. Support staff are all parents; some also have lived experience as a person with a disability.

* 1,413 unique families across the state connected with us – a 16% increase. Families made 2,082 different support requests.
* 73% of callers were first time users, up from 64%.
* Families reported information was relevant (98%), easy to understand (96%), increased knowledge (96%), and helped them identify a next step to take (95%). And support specialists were helpful and kind (99%)
* 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 is a training program that 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, disproportionality, educational laws and governance, 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 for families, youth, and professionals are delivered virtually, with some exceptions. Participants overwhelmingly rate trainings as high quality, useful, well-organized, and relevant.

* We trained 1,082 unique people at various trainings throughout the year and presented to another 1000+ 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.

## Spotlight on Self-Determination and 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 how you can budget to save money for something you want. I will do budget meetings with my mom periodically.” – Ella, youth

“I learned about how to be safe with my money and benefits. This impacted me because in life, we will face the process of using money and benefits more carefully… and will not make big mistakes.” – Keira, youth

## Family Voices Created Change!

### FACT Oregon often provides testimony and supports parent leaders to share their stories with legislators and policymakers. We also represent families on advocacy coalitions. Some of the legislative successes that the disability community achieved in 2023 included:

* SB 819 limits the use of Abbreviated School Days for students with disabilities. FACT Oregon stands for the rights of students with disabilities to access a full school day.
* 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 three 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 disabilities.

# In Their Own Words

## Heard and Supported

“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

“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.” – Trista, 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 parent is relieved.” – Case manager

## Confident and Prepared

“Heather went above and beyond to answer on my questions and didn't end the phone call until I felt confident with the information she provided.” – Jennifer, parent

“I am better prepared to serve the parents of ID/DD youth as a family partner in the county I serve.” – Skip, professional

“I feel more supported with opportunities to use my voice and knowledge. I feel like there is a community which helps one when you feel alone as a parent of a disabled child. I now know how to share testimony to the Oregon Legislation for bills that will impact our children. So many things I have learned in this short time, and I will continue to grow and learn.” – Sara, AYA graduate

## Equipped and Empowered

“My recent call to FACT and Whitnie was so 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

“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 and professional

“The information presented today will help me in my role as a case manager for a homeless youth organization. I now have a better understanding of how I can advocate for youth in the school setting or coach their parents to advocate for them.” – Cortney, professional

## Activated

“I will be following legislation more closely, and supporting bills that help with the future of the disability community and my child.” – AYA graduate

“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 as a role model, but also as a parent to children who experience disability.” – Marc, AYA graduate

“Getting involved will do two things: I’ll understand closely how things are working and be the squeaky wheel armed with knowledge towards equality. You guys are helping me to tailor a mindset of new possibilities. Thank you!” – Dulce, AYA graduate

Financials FY 2022-23

### Revenue

Government $740,963; Contributions $289,537; Other revenue $52,557

### Expenses

Program $795,685; Management $82,463; Fundraising $44,792

Funding Partners ($2.5k and over)

US Department of Education Office of Special Programs

Oregon Health Authority

Oregon Department of Education

Oregon Department of Human Services

Meyer Memorial Trust

James F and Marion L Miller Foundation

The Collins Foundation

Oregon Community Foundation

The Juliet Ashby Hillman Foundation

The Standard

Charter Mechanical Contractors

The Robert D. and Marcia H. Randall Charitable Trust

New York Life Foundation

Special Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)

OnPoint Community Credit Union

OCF Joseph E Weston Public Foundation

The Autzen Foundation

Jackson Care Connect

CareOregon

Oregon ABLE Savings Plan

Becker Capital Management

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