

News Release

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Oregon Child Welfare Director national appointment confirmed; Aprille Flint-Gerner to serve as Interim Director

(Salem) – The U.S. Senate has confirmed the appointment of Oregon Child Welfare Director Rebecca Jones Gaston to Commissioner of the [Administration of Children, Youth, and Families \(ACYF\)](#) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The ACYF oversees federal programs that support social services that promote the positive growth and development of children, youth and their families; protective services and shelter for children and youth in at-risk situations; and adoption for children with special needs.

"I'd like to congratulate Rebecca for her confirmation by the U.S. Senate as Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families," said Governor Kate Brown. "Under her leadership, we have made progress in Oregon to better stabilize our child welfare system and work towards a vision for transforming the system to better serve children and families. I'm so pleased that she will now bring the same talent and expertise to the federal level, to the benefit of families across the nation."

Jones Gaston joined the Oregon Department of Human Services as Child Welfare Director in 2019, following Governor Brown's executive order aimed at improving the child welfare system. Since that time, Jones Gaston had led the division in achieving the following:

- Reducing the number of children in foster care from over 7,000 to under 5,000; eliminating the use of out-of-state residential treatment facilities; and adjusting operations and policy to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining services for children and families.
- Leading the collaborative development of Oregon's [Family First Prevention Plan](#).
- Developing and beginning implementing of the Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation, which brings a racial equity and anti-racism lens to every aspect of the work of the division and emphasizes it will work to prevent maltreatment and the need for foster care, support families, and keep children in their homes whenever possible. Read more about the implementation of the Vision for Transformation in this [Update](#).

“We are proud of Rebecca and thankful for her impactful leadership over the past three years,” said Fariborz Pakseresht, ODHS Director. “Rebecca’s appointment and confirmation are a testament to the progress that has been made in Oregon child welfare as well as the [Vision for Transformation](#) created under Rebecca’s leadership.”

Effective Jan. 1, 2023, Aprille Flint-Gerner will begin serving as Interim Child Welfare Director. Flint-Gerner is currently the Child Welfare Division Deputy Director for Equity, Training and Workforce Development. Flint-Gerner is a social worker with more than 25 years of public service focused on system change on behalf of children, youth and families and the well-being of communities. Her past work includes serving as the Child Welfare Workforce Development Manager at the University of Nevada Las Vegas where she created, implemented, and managed effective workforce development assessment and training to Nevada child welfare workers, supervisors, and providers. Flint-Gerner is active with several initiatives aimed at eliminating disparate outcomes for youth most impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

“Aprille is committed to continuing the transformation begun under Rebecca’s leadership,” Pakseresht said. “Her strong commitment to equity and inclusion and experience in system change and improving outcomes for marginalized communities will ensure Oregon keeps momentum in better serving the needs of children, families and communities.”

“I am honored to help continue to bring the Vision for Transformation to life, by focusing on prevention and preservation, equity and workforce development, and being a data-informed system,” Flint-Gerner said. “Together – with our workforce and partners – we can keep improving outcomes and strengthening public confidence in our work.”