



Bend Chamber Operational Funding Proposal to Deschutes County Commission November 15, 2023

The Work of the Bend Chamber

Supporting a thriving business community by:

- **Convening** and connecting businesses and thought leaders to solve business, employer and economic challenges
- **Advocating** for businesses at the local, state and federal level
- **Resourcing** businesses with health insurance, information and other assistance
- **Developing** tomorrow's **Leaders** through Leadership Bend and other programming
- **Initiatives** that benefit businesses throughout Central Oregon and their employees, including housing, childcare, and workforce development

In addition to its work to support businesses, the Chamber supports multi-year, key initiatives that have deep impact to businesses, employers and their employees. These initiatives, including midmarket housing, childcare, workforce development and others, are complex and require sustained and collaborative effort to achieve results. The Chamber's Workforce Housing Initiative is one of these efforts, and has been the Chamber's prime focus since 2022.

Workforce Housing Initiative 2024-2025

While there is a shortage of all levels of housing, the Bend Chamber's focus is middle-market housing, where there is a quickly vanishing supply for an important part of Central Oregon's labor pool and the greater community.





Goal:

Increase rental or ownership housing for the Bend workforce in 80-120% income band

- *Track middle market housing additions against City of Bend Housing Needs Analysis*
- *Successfully advocate for policies and legislation that supports AMI 80-120 housing*
- *Identify and enable collaboration and investment in building more AMI 80-120 housing*
- *Continue to be a champion (social and other) communicator of ideas, projects and need for AMI 80-120 housing in the community*

Initiative Elements:

Projects:

- Increase rural and urban ADU units by updating the Chamber’s toolkit, and collaborating with Deschutes County and City of Bend ADU programs
- Invest in projects that incentivize AMI 80-120% housing and targeting local employees

Project Policy & Funding

- Track progress of the State Housing Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC) to identify and advocate for policy changes to increase housing.
- Advocate for modest, well-planned expansion of Urban Reserves (HB 3414)
- Advocate for additional investments for pre-development and infrastructure

Partnerships & Collaboration

- Work with major employers and employer clusters to develop strategies to add housing
- Identify developers who are interested in connecting with employers as potential housing lessors or investors
- Partner with public, private and nonprofit organizations with shared advocacy goals

Project Assistance & Consulting

- Assist with permitting and project advancement at City and County level
- Identify community asset opportunities in housing projects (response to employer need for more childcare, connectivity, etc.)

Potential Project Investment

As part of the Chamber’s ongoing investment opportunities that add to financial viability of delivering AMI 80 – 120 housing for Bend’s workforce, create a sustainable, revolving loan fund using public and private money to invest in workforce housing development projects within the Bend, Oregon UGB.

To create a viable public/private partnership, the Bend Chamber proposes building upon past work and formalizing the Central Oregon Workforce Housing Collaborative. The Collaborative will include employers, local government, and strategic partners. The Collaborative will be led by the Bend Chamber, and membership is by invitation. Collaborative members are responsible for bringing capital, land, or other assets to the table as a condition of membership. An environmental scan of Collaborative



members and their assets will be conducted, and recommendations made on how to best leverage individual assets.

Outreach

Build collaborative partnerships to support deployment of investments for employer-driven or supported workforce housing projects.

- **Develop collaborations** with local employers, developers and land owners.
- **Fund Mechanics:** Mix of public, private and philanthropic dollars to fund low interest, short term loans (under 36 months) to spur workforce housing projects.
- **Metrics of Success:** Short-terms goals include securing public and private capital investments to create and sustain the fund; developing a coalition of willing developers and employers to drive the work; marketing the fund to developers and promoting partnerships among coalition employers.

DESCHUTES COUNTY LOTTERY FUNDING REQUEST

- To support economic and business support efforts, and key initiatives, the Bend Chamber requests an investment of \$75,000 from Deschutes County Video Lottery Investment Funds to specifically support our 2024 workforce housing program support.
- The Chamber's work continues year over year, and sustained, annual financial support from Deschutes County enables our organization to plan and execute our programs and initiatives moving forward. We request an annual contribution to support this work.
- These funds will build capacity within Chamber operations and project investments that will support Deschutes County businesses and the economy.