



Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
and Linn County
Annual Report

January 2022
Edition 1 - 2021

This report covers the many ways in which OCWCOG has impacted
your community over that last year.

A Message from the Executive Director

I am proud and excited to provide the first ever, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) year-end County reports. The Council of Governments (COG) impacts many people throughout the Linn/Benton/Lincoln Region by our various services like delivering hot meals and a warm smile to a family in need, providing small business loans to improve the vibrancy and livability of our communities, or orchestrating multi-million dollar transportation initiatives.

In the next few pages, you will see highlights of the work we do and how that has affected your County over this last year. The report is not exhaustive, but merely a snapshot of the great work which is being authorized and championed by 19 cities, 3 Counties, the Siletz Tribe, and the Port of Newport in the Linn/Benton/Lincoln Region.

The work captured in this report is being carried out by approximately 200 staff in every corner of the Region. These dedicated individuals care deeply about the area and everyone living in it. They are committed to making the Region a more livable, safe, and prosperous area for generations to come. As you know, 2021 was extremely challenging in numerous ways and many of our staff have adapted to delivering services from their homes, in an ongoing response to the COVID pandemic. We have adjusted other programs and processes to provide continuous services safely to many of our consumers, where in-person contact was still required.

Here at the COG, we are always looking to improve and better serve the people of our Region. Last year we went beyond our normal practices and explored alternative funding opportunities to enhance and expand services. We have begun participating in regional conversations regarding housing solutions, and are leading an effort to explore a Regional Bias Incident Response system.

I am grateful for the support of our staff, our many community partners, and our active Board of Directors for the support and hard work it takes to provide these services to you.



Ryan Vogt
Executive Director



Senior and Disability Services

The Senior and Disability Services (SDS) department is committed to providing services and supports to keep older adults and people with disabilities independent, safe, secure, and healthy in your communities. SDS staff provide case management, and authorize and coordinate supportive services such as assistance with dressing, bathing, toileting, and grooming.

- Approximately 808 Linn County residents received these vital services in their home on any given day.
- Another 352 residents received these services daily in one of 45 longterm care facilities. These care facilities include: Assisted Living, Memory Care, Adult Foster Homes that serve older adults and people with physical disabilities, and one nursing facility.



Eligibility

Eligibility workers processed 6,957 applications for Food and Medical benefits in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties in 2021.

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) workers within the Senior and Disability Services department investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect of seniors and adults with disabilities.

- APS screeners received 1,679 calls of concern about the safety and health of these citizens in Linn County. These calls led to:
 - 469 community APS investigations.
 - 200 facility APS investigations.

Aging and Disability Resource Connection

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is a free service that offers the public a single point of entry to access resources, information and assistance on issues affecting older adults and people with disabilities regardless of their income.

- Call center agents answered 274 calls from Linn County residents requesting information and assistance in 2021.



Community Service Programs

In Linn County, Community Service Program (CSP) staff and volunteers supported programming at: Albany Senior Center, Lebanon Senior Center, Sweet Home Senior Center, Brownsville Senior Center, Sweet Home Elks, Timber Ridge School, SMART Reading, KidCo Head Start, Sunrise Elementary School, YMCA of the Willamette Valley and Happy Place Childcare. Programming was supported by various federal, state and city contracts and grants, as well as Samaritan Health Services Social Accountability Grants, Trust Management Services, City of Albany Development Block Grant, Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund, and the Oregon Community Foundation. The CSP Department served Linn County this past year through various programming, including:

Meals On Wheels: Meals on Wheels serves fresh, hot, nutritionally balanced meals to older adults, adults with disabilities, and spouses/life partners who often live alone and have limited resources or ability to care for themselves. Along with a nutritionally balanced lunch, MOW provides a daily well-check and social connection, thereby assisting limited-income, low-mobility clients to remain safe and independent in the home of their own choosing, for as long as possible while avoiding premature placement in a facility.

In 2021 a total of 143,129 meals were served in Linn to include:

- 135,161 home delivered meals, delivered to the porches of our homebound clients.
- 6,438 congregate meals, served “grab and go” style during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1,530 “blizzard boxes”, which contain 5 emergency shelf stable meals.

Meals on Wheels was awarded a \$13,000 District Grant from the Rotary Club of Corvallis. A multi-club grant, the Rotary Club of Corvallis partnered with Greater Corvallis, Philomath, Albany, and Newport Clubs to obtain matching grant funding from Rotary District 5110. The grant helps support Meals on Wheels in Linn, County.



Stand-By-Me (\$BM): Stand By Me-Oregon is a financial empowerment program that replicates \$BM Delaware; a proven coaching model that helps provide financial stability to individuals and families. There are four primary outcomes: budgeting, reducing debt, improving credit ratings, and building savings.

- Thanks to a \$36,000 grant from The Oregon Community Foundation, \$Stand By Me financial coaches received specialized training from DevNW on obtaining and improving credit, creating savings, decreasing debt, student loans and home buying. We now offer coaching in English and Spanish.

Money Management for Seniors: This program provides free assistance with personal money management tasks through specially trained volunteers. Service is personalized, confidential, and safe; and is offered free of charge to eligible individuals.

- There were 35 Linn County seniors or people with disabilities who were served in 2021.
 - 7 were assisted as Bill Pay clients who receive assistance in budgeting and check writing.
 - 28 used the program for Representative Payee services. A Representative Payee is someone appointed by the Federal Benefit payers to manage benefit payments on behalf of an incapable beneficiary.



AmeriCorps Seniors - Foster Grandparent Program: National Service Foster Grandparent volunteers, sponsored by OCWCOG, tutor and mentor local youth ages 3-18 in public schools, after school, and through various literacy programs.

- In Linn County, 20 Foster Grandparent volunteers served an estimated 55 local youth through its mentoring and tutoring Program, chiefly online, due to the pandemic.
- Linn County boasts the largest corps of volunteers in the OCWCOG region and currently serves students from Timber Ridge School, SMART Reading, KidCo Head Start, South Shore Elementary, Sunrise Elementary School, YMCA of the Willamette Valley, Albany Boys and Girls Club, Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Santiam, and Happy Place Childcare.

AmeriCorps Seniors – RSVP: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is America’s largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over. RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve. Volunteer community duty station opportunities include food pantry assistance, SHIBA Medicare counseling, money management coaching, meal delivery, reading with youth, tax preparation, gleaners, and more.

The most active RSVP program, The Senior Health Insurance Benefit Assistance Program (SHIBA), is administered by OCWCOG on behalf of the State of Oregon. This Program educates local residents on Medicare benefits elections. SHIBA counselors provide one-on-one free counseling as well as “New to Medicare” Seminar classes. Volunteers are certified by the State and serve both remotely and at the OCWCOG, Sweet Home Elks, Lebanon and Albany Senior Centers.

- Last year, SHIBA volunteers served 511 Linn County residents.

AmeriCorps Seniors - Senior Companion Program:

Senior Companion volunteers provide assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. Through this program, volunteers keep seniors independent longer and provide respite to family caregivers.

- In 2021, 8 volunteers completed 1082 rides for local homebound seniors residing in Albany, Lebanon and Sweet Home. These clients were not eligible for Ride Line, and are screened and referred by in-house Options Counselors.



Oregon Project Independence: Oregon Project Independence (OPI) is a program providing assistance that supports daily activities of living which can be provided by home care workers or in-home care agencies. Examples of in-home assistance includes help with dressing, meal prep, bathing, shopping, and housekeeping. OPI is an alternative to Medicaid and offers up to 20 hours a month of in-home assistance.

- There was approximately 110 Linn County residents that benefited from this program in 2021.

These community-facing programs were provided thanks to braided funding from federal, state and city contracts and grants, as well as supports from Samaritan Health Services Social Accountability Grants, Trust Management Services, Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund, and the Oregon Community Foundation.

Community and Economic Development (CED)

Transportation Services and Planning

Transportation is the largest program area within Community and Economic Development (CED), and provides an array of services including these programs:

Cascades West Ride Line: The Ride Line program is the region's Non-Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT) for physical, dental, drug and alcohol, and mental health treatment. For the year 2021 Ride Line has made an incredible impact in Linn County by:

- Providing 88,219 rides for 3,480 people.
- These rides put over \$3,074,000 back into Linn County.
- Planning the expansion of Ride Line to Medicare consumers through benefits with the Samaritan Advantage Health Plan. This project will launch in 2022.

Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO): AAMPO's role is to coordinate transportation planning efforts in the greater Albany area and to serve as a forum for cooperative decision-making. AAMPO works closely with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and assists in coordinating regional transit, facilitates public participation in transportation planning, and oversees specialized projects. Some of the 2021 accomplishments for AAMPO were:

- Began the AAMPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.
- Stimulus funds awarded in the amount of \$850,000 is being passed through to these local projects:
 - \$100,000 for Millersburg's Woods Road shared use path design and right-of-way acquisition.
 - \$350,000 for Albany's Queen Avenue rehabilitation.
 - \$150,000 for Benton County's Gibson Hill Road modernization.
 - \$175,000 for Tangent and Linn County's Old Oak Drive/Old Oak Road improvements. around Tangent Elementary School
 - \$75,000 for a yet to be determined project in Jefferson. Most likely a new pedestrian crossing identified in the city's forthcoming Transportation System Plan.



Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT): provides a forum for local governments to collaborate on local, regional, and State transportation issues in the Region. The CWACT is chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and provides input, advice, and recommendations to the OTC and ODOT on State transportation plans and policies. In 2021, CWACT provided input on multiple State funding programs including recommendations for funding priorities in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), reviewed applications for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Discretionary Grant Program, and provided feedback on ODOT's "Leverage" funds that were added to ODOT projects within the region.



Transportation Options Program: This program provides outreach, education, and carpool/vanpool matching services for commuters living or working in the Region. The program connects commuters within the Region and beyond, to major cities such as Eugene, Salem, and Portland. Our program administered a challenge for bike month in May with 42 participants across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties traveling over 2,400 miles, saving over 2,000 lbs of CO₂, and burning 200,000 calories! 33 participants received safety related prizes. Staff participated at in-person tabling events at the OSU Beaver Fair and Linn Benton Community College Welcome Day engaging over 100 people. The annual Get There Challenge in October had statewide participation of over 1,400 participants and 13 prize winners from our region.

Other grants received from STIF to assist in transportation improvement efforts in Linn County are:

- \$280,000 to do the Mobility Hub design work for LBCC and OSU Hubs.
- \$150,000 to update the Human Services Coordinated Plans for Linn/Benton/Lincoln Counties.
- \$64,280 to build the Regional Transit Access Plan.

Other transportation related projects that impact Linn County are:

- Completion of the Seamless Transportation Project connecting bus service to all three Counties, with real-time bus information and online ticketing.

Community Development

The Community Development program seeks to improve the quality of life for residents in Linn County. OCWCOG has professional staff to assist communities, especially smaller communities, with specialized tasks. Here are some of the projects Community Development has worked on in Linn County:

- Providing staffing to the Cascades West Regional Consortium and helped secure a \$130,000 grant from Business Oregon to fund a wetlands mitigation bank feasibility study.
- Secured technical assistance from Department of Land Conservation and Development to develop a Regional Housing Toolkit, working with Sweet Home and Harrisburg on their housing development planning goals.

Economic Development

OCWCOG provides staffing for the Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD), which creates, adopts and works to implement the priorities of the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). OCWCOG supports local economic development initiatives through research, grant writing, convening, project development and management, and technical assistance.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Grants: CARES funding is designed to assist partners with responding to the specific recovery needs in the unique communities across the district. Eligible applicants included City and County governments in the Region to support economic resiliency and recovery. In Linn County three CARES micro-grants were awarded:

- \$10,000 was awarded to the City of Sweet Home for a streetscape project. This grant will be used toward a public plaza, street furniture, signage, pedestrian lighting, public art, and landscaping will be added to create a vibrant downtown. Parking will be made uniform and easier. Additional outdoor spaces will allow more flexibility for local businesses by providing space for dining, pop-up markets, and public events.
- \$10,000 was awarded to Halsey/Mid Valley Partners for branding and website. MVP consists of Lebanon, Sweet Home, Philomath, Adair Village, Brownsville, Harrisburg, Monroe, and Halsey. This grant will help define the geographic boundary, values, and goals for economic resiliency in the MVP region. A website will be created with new branding that unifies all eight cities committed to the partnership, and will serve as a regional resource connecting local businesses to resources for recovery and expansion.
- \$10,000 was awarded to Harrisburg for the Taste of Tri-County and Business Expo. This event rotates between three different cities and three different counties on an annual basis. This event improves collaboration between participating businesses as well as cities and is supportive of business. These funds will allow the purchase of items that enhance the event and lower expenses for the event in the future.
- \$4,000 was awarded to Lebanon for the Annual Art Walk. This event fuses downtown businesses and the art culture bringing locals and out-of-town visitors into Lebanon. The Art Walk jump-starts the downtown economy with popup galleries within businesses and performing artists in City parks. The Art Walk was held in November and creates opportunities for strengthening the economic recovery and resiliency of downtown Lebanon.



Cascade West Business Lending: Cascades West Business Lending (CWBL) efforts aim to encourage new employment opportunities, and promote a stable and diversified economy in the tri-County Region. CWBL delivers expert commercial loan packaging, closing, servicing, and collection services through various direct and indirect loan programs. Our team provides administrative services, technical assistance, and professional lending services through contractual partnerships to local government and non-profit organizations, who offer economic development oriented commercial loans. Our Small Business Lending program currently has over \$3.45 million in loans throughout our tri-county region.

- In Linn County we funded a \$266,000 loan to purchase a building for a new counseling center in Albany.

Technology Service Contracts

OCWCOG Business Services provides Information Technology (IT) services and supports to member agencies. In Linn County, we have agreements to provide support to:

- Brownsville
- Millersburg
- Sweet Home
- Tangent