



# RS EXCHANGE

## REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

### Weekly Report

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

## Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

### Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Mid-Valley Community Outreach Alliance** – a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) group meeting weekly, which representatives from Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas (MLP), Latino Business Alliance (LBA), Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC), Oregon Employment Office – Woodburn, Advanced Economic Solutions, Farmworker Housing Development Corp (FHDC), Unidos Bridging Community, Western Oregon University (WOU) Multicultural Center, Mano a Mano – Salem, Izo Marketing, City of Independence - Community Engagement, Portland General Electric (PGE), Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC), Oregon Education Association, the Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC), Northwest Human Services, AHIVOY, and Micronesian Islander Community OREGON. Strategic Economic Development Corp (SEDCOR), Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP), the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG), Business Oregon, and the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center join the meetings as well.

- This week, the members discussed systematic inequities. The focus was on how to move from “talk to action” within local governments and systems.

*What could a local government do to build an inclusive and diverse approach?*

- Conduct an enterprise-wide cultural audit of policies, committees, and employment practices
- Launch a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) office/department
- Hire a Chief Equity Officer
- Establish DEI in the Local Emergency Plans. All state, regional, and local emergency planning should include BIPOC outreach. The plan should have the network connections established and have multiple languages imbedded in any response.
- Commit to committee membership that has all BIPOC communities represented.

- In addition, Marion County Behavioral Health Director joined the meeting to ask for input on an upcoming Oregon Health Authority Mental and Behavioral Health grant opportunity. The discussion focused on concepts and ideas on how to deliver mental health services to communities of color, seniors, and veterans.
- **Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team (ERT)** – includes representatives from the Counties, Willamette Workforce Partnership, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), the Small Business Development Center, early learning hubs, local emergency management, the Employment Department, Business Oregon, chambers, regional destination marketing organizations, utilities, non-profits, tribal government, and federal delegation representatives. The goal is to create robust communication and networks in the response and recovery work. The ERT has moved from two meetings per week to one until the end of June.
  - This week, Commissioners Pope and Kulla discussed next steps in county recovery efforts. Both agreed that broadband and childcare were be key areas for investment. Commissioner Kulla added that helping people feel safe while reopening is critical as well. The team members shared the following suggestions:
    - The need to focus on equity as part of the discussion around childcare and assure all providers have access to PPE and other necessary tools to reopen.
    - Encourage local governments to work with broadband providers to come up with local plan to work on expanding services and access to internet. Also suggested looking into providing ‘mifi’ services to hard-to-serve areas.
    - Need to work with multiple utility providers to assure utility poles are accessible and available.
    - Bring in utilities at the beginning of the planning process.
    - Encourage local governments to work with local school districts because they know where the students live that need broadband support.
    - Encourage the local governments to remember there are still businesses who are expanding and new businesses looking to open. Grants for businesses would be a good way to invest.
    - Emphasize the importance of small businesses ability to adapt and create new opportunities. This is critical step to making the recovery more robust and forward thinking.
    - Remember utilities also provide fiber and connect with public buildings and school districts. It is important to get everyone to work together to assure there is fiber available and conduit buried whenever possible.
  - In addition, Dennie Houle gave an overview of Business Oregon’s recently released Broadband Request for Proposal (RFP).
    - Released an announcement of RFP, deadline in July 2, 2020. The \$10,000 from the Emergency Board from CARES Act.
    - Focus is infrastructure for broadband.
    - Application is about 5 – 6 pages.
    - Focus on capacity building to meet underserved communities and unserved areas of the state.
    - All project expenditures must be completed by December 30, 2020.

- Regarding Phase 2 opening for Marion and Polk Counties, the chambers are seeking clear enforcement messaging about the face-covering requirement.

## South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **Millersburg Intermodal Facility** – Linn County owns approximately 190 acres of land – 60 acres that are being planned for the intermodal facility and an additional 130 acres of ancillary industrial development. The project (the 60 acres held for the intermodal facility) was awarded approximately \$25M in Connect Oregon funding to purchase and develop the site located adjacent to Interstate 5.
  - Update – Work has been ongoing over the past several months. RS was provided an update earlier this week. The project managers have submitted their Joint Permit Application (JPA) and are close to submitting their 100% design to Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). There are also ongoing negotiations with Union Pacific. The most pressing topic the group wanted to discuss was additional funding needed in later phases of the development. The Connect Oregon funding is sufficient to purchase the site and get it to the point of operation, but to realize the full potential, additional funding is being pursued. Currently, the group is looking at United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding. RS will continue to work with the project managers as state permitting needs continue as well as support efforts to find additional funding for the project.
- **The SVMC Economic Recovery Team** – includes representatives from the Employment Department, Business Oregon, local and regional economic development professionals, Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), ports, and federal delegation representatives. The Team meets regularly to share information, identify immediate needs and understand impacts. Impacts as a result of COVID-19 are impacting all industry sectors in the region.
- Identified needs/challenges/opportunities this past week include:
  - Businesses continue to have questions and concerns about enforcement of face coverings.
  - Concerns related to phasing and what might cause a county to move back a phase. More clarity on the parameters for requiring a county to move back a phase is being requested. Some level of predictability would be helpful for businesses and others that would need to prepare.
  - There is a significant amount of confusion related to leisure travel and the messaging related to that.
  - Multiple counties have been facing challenges regarding negotiating contracts with hotels/motels for non-congregate isolation needs. Partners have been able to connect with county representatives to discuss resources and assist them through this process.
  - Many counties are transitioning Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations and beginning to focus more on the recovery efforts while still maintaining some structure to work on response as needed.
  - WIB's still have disaster recovery and employment recovery funding available.
- Best Practices
  - Corvallis/Benton County Economic Development has published several videos they have produced with local businesses that are implementing creative practices as it relates to reopening under current guidance. Two of these videos are linked below.
    - <https://vimeo.com/431881903>

- <https://vimeo.com/430114367>

## Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua:**
  - **South Coast Umpqua Recovery Team:**
    - Reports of businesses closing due to inability to bring employees back.
    - South Coast will be launching a “friends and family” visitation program.
    - Bandon Dunes is very active with workforce housing. Happy to provide tours/information on program.
- **Southern Oregon Region:**
  - **Southern Oregon Recovery Team:**
    - Entire meeting focused on discussions with regional internet service providers regarding possible expansion of service. Representatives of Link Oregon, USDA, LS Networks, Charter, Zipy and several local internet service providers (ISPs) all participated.
  - **Rogue Workforce Partnership (RWP)/AllCare Collaboration:**
    - This Fall, SNAP recipients will receive career coaching support and training thanks to a grant of \$150K from AllCare, matched with \$150K in RWP training funds, and also matched by SNAP Employment and Training Program. RWP will partners with WorkSystems Inc. on program delivery and oversight.

## Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team** – Metro Regional Solutions (RS) is partnering with Greater Portland, Inc. (GPI), to co-convene a Metro Economic Response Team in order to share information and resources related to COVID-19. In addition to state agencies (Business Oregon, Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor & Industry, Small Business Advocate, Oregon Housing & Community Services, and Travel Oregon), a number of partners in the Portland-metro region have been invited to participate including business associations, city and county economic development practitioners and elected leaders, community-based organizations, labor, members of the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and workforce development organizations.
  - Update – Thank you, State Representative Lew Frederick and Constantin Severe, the Governor’s Public Safety Policy Advisor, for providing an overview of the police accountability reforms that are proposed for the special legislative session. The bills are as follows:
    - Arbitration Awards
    - DPSST Discipline Database
    - Attorney General (AG) Force Investigation
    - Duty to Report & Intervene
    - Crowd Control Munitions
    - Chokehold Ban

- Also, thank you to Constantin for sharing information about strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 in the state's correctional facilities including the early release of some inmates. A concern was raised around the fact that the inmates identified for early release do not reflect the disproportionate number of people of color who are inmates.
- **Listening Session with Fitness Industry** – Metro RS presented a summary of the Governor's Reopening Framework and industry-sector guidelines during a listening session hosted by Business for a Better Portland (BBPDX) and Prosper Portland. There were 45 participants. Questions/concerns/themes expressed included the following:
  - A concern that hot yoga is not excluded from reopening while saunas are.
  - Request that fitness instructors be exempt from face covering requirement especially since visitors / customers are exempt in cases of strenuous exercise. The argument was made that fitness instructors could keep six feet or more of distance from students in classroom and or there could be Plexiglas installed between fitness instructor and students.
  - Concerns about the commercial eviction moratorium being lifted and the need to extend the moratorium as well as the ability to break a commercial lease without penalty.
  - Need for financial assistance to acquire hand sanitizer in bulk at low-cost in addition to face coverings.
- **Listening Session with Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC)** – Metro RS participated as a panelist during a listening session hosted by the Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC) and Prosper Portland. There were 50 participants. Questions/Concerns/themes expressed included the following:
  - Request for heads up / advance communication in future reopening decisions;
  - Request for additional guidance on public restrooms;
  - Concern about the increase in homelessness. Recent Columbia University Study estimates that homelessness will increase 40 – 45 percent nationwide by the end of the year.
  - Questions for Multnomah County on the status of the Bybee Lakes Hope Center, Helping Hands, and support from Senator Betsy Johnson, Senator Lew Fredrick, and Senator Elizabeth Steiner-Hayward.
- **Listening Session with Russian-Speaking Businesses** – Thank you, Bryan Guiney, Business Oregon liaison to Metro RS for representing the state of Oregon during a Russian-speaking business listening session hosted by Mercy Corps Northwest and Prosper Portland. There were 10 participants. Key takeaways/themes/concerns:
  - Slavic identification was not an option in applying for Round 1 of the City of Portland/ Prosper Portland small business assistance grants.
  - Slavic small businesses need Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to protect employees and customers.
  - Questions about Unemployment Insurance eligibility for businesses/employees who can legally open/work but choose to close for safety.
  - Slavic is not a category for COBID, a program for businesses doing business with state, certification.
  - Questions about delay in Oregon Employment Department (OED) Unemployment Insurance claims/ payments.

- Reopening questions for the State and County on reopening timelines, large events, and venues, and the fate of the Portland Slavic Festival this year.  
<https://www.slavicfestivalportland.org/>
- **Willamette Falls Legacy Project (WFLP)** – Metro RS participated in quarterly WFLP partners’ meeting with Metro Councilors Christine Lewis and Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Clackamas County Commissioners Martha Schrader and Paul Savas, State Representative Mark Meek, city of Oregon City Mayor Dan Holladay and Grand Ronde Chief of Staff Stacia Martin. Received an update on the project’s financial status as of Q3 FY 2020. The project currently has \$14,983,873 remaining from the initial contributions from the public partners. The estimated cost for construction of the first phase is between \$20M and \$50M depending on the approach is selected. The gap of \$7M-\$37M is expected to be partially filled by \$6M from the Willamette Falls Trust. The remaining \$1-31M, is expected to be filled by partners and the property owner. Next steps include selecting an approach for Phase 1, establishing and funding the construction budget for Phase 1, formalizing agreements between the Grand Ronde as the private property owner and public partners, finalizing construction drawings and permitting for phase 1, and beginning construction.

## North Central Region – Nate Stice

- **North Central Oregon Recovery Team** – The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Region Regional Solutions stood up the bi-state Columbia Gorge/Mid-Columbia Bi-State Economic Resilience Team. The structure for the team was outlined in a 2019 report produced by [MCEDD](#), based on work Regional Solutions led efforts around fire recovery for the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire and 2018 Grass Fires.
  - The emphasis of the team this week has been three-fold: 1) preparing for phased and ongoing training to support business in phase two and; 2) working with Hood River County on mandatory face covering implementation; 3) educating the economic team about important work partners are doing with underserved communities, in particular the Latinx population.
  - Highlights:
    - 1) The Hood River Chamber, Hood River Public Health, Regional Solutions, and Business Oregon collaborated on a training for businesses around the new face-covering requirement.
    - 2) The team heard from the Washington Department of Ag and hosted The Next Door Inc. to learn more about their programs serving farmworkers and the Latinx population. Members of the team are helping to amplify The [Next Doors’ “Essential” campaign](#) to combat stigma around farmworkers.

Next week the team will focus on: 1) training around workplace outbreaks; 2) broader phase two training; 3) digging into indicators to think about the status of the regional economy and path forward.

## Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Disaster Declaration** – Governor’s letter was sent to Secretary Perdue requesting a disaster declaration for Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes counties, along with other counties, for agricultural damage related to a heavy windstorm in late May.

- **Drought** – USDA issued a drought disaster declaration for Crook County. As a result, farmers in Crook County, and the adjacent Jefferson and Deschutes counties, are eligible for federal emergency loans.
- **Central Oregon Economic Response Team** is the Central Oregon Regional Solutions (RS) Team along with county commissioners, city leaders, chambers, economic and workforce development, local legislators, federal congressional delegation representatives and the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee have been meeting weekly since mid-March. Starting this week, the meetings will move to an every other week schedule.
  - Update – this week’s agenda focused on the regional economy.
    - 1) Unemployment data - Damon Runberg, Regional Economist, Oregon Employment Department (OED)
 

After the Phase 1 reopening in Central Oregon, there are still about 800 new claims on average every week. Nearly 20 percent of the workforce in the region becoming unemployed, which is highest in the state. This is due to a higher percentage of tourism and retail jobs. No particular racial group is disproportionately impacted, according to the data, though it’s possible some people are not counted in the unemployment data because they aren’t eligible for benefits. Business continue to report losses of revenue, decreased hours, and temporary closures due to the pandemic.
    - 2) Josh Lehner, Office of Economic analysis
 

It’s important regionally that enough businesses remain operational, even with reduced revenues, through the pandemic so that displaced workers will have job opportunities when conditions improve. This is an unknown for the region currently; there isn’t enough public funding to support the demand for financial relief for all the businesses that require it. It’s a difficult balance because some of the industries in most dire need now are not necessarily the ones that face the biggest long-term risk. Local restaurants, for example, are struggling the most now, though it may be that larger manufacturing is even more at risk as the pandemic plays out. Central Oregon has generally seen more economic fallout from the pandemic than the rest of the state, though Deschutes County in particular is expected to see the largest labor force growth in Oregon moving forward.

## South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **South Central Oregon Response Team** – South Central Regional Solutions (RS) Team along with county commissioners, city leaders, chambers, economic and workforce development, downtown organizations, local legislators, federal congressional delegation representatives and the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee have been meeting since mid-March.
  - Update – This week’s agenda highlights:
    - 1) Unemployment Data - Damon Runberg, Regional Economist, OED
 

Damon expects that there will be improvements in the labor market in the coming weeks and months as the data starts to capture the Phase 2 reopening. For Klamath and Lake Counties, unemployment claims peaked in March and started trailing off in late April, only to show another rise in early June. Overall, Lake and Klamath counties have fared better during the pandemic than most of the rest of the state from an employment lens.

- 2) Josh Lehner - Office of Economic Analysis talked about the industry-level outlook in Klamath and Lake Counties. For the South Central Region, the outlook is relatively good for recovery moving forward. Both Klamath and Lake Counties have businesses related to business and professional services and natural resources. These businesses should rebound quickly even if the long-term growth potential for these businesses isn't as high as some other sectors. That is relatively good news for the economic outlook moving forward in both counties. Demographically, both counties are expected to see modest population growth in the years ahead.
- 3) Regional housing discussion- Randy Cox, Klamath County Economic Development Association (KCEDA) had been working with two large employers to help fund middle market housing; both have been hit hard by the pandemic and are likely to pause their funding contributions for the foreseeable future. Most believe the housing needs are only likely to increase post-COVID, particularly with the "missing middle."
- 4) Broadband – Larry Holzgang – Business Oregon  
Larry has reached out to health care providers and school districts on proposals for increasing broadband service. The Klamath Tribes are also looking at using some of their CRF funds for this purpose.

## Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team (RERT)**– This week the Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team met and provided updates on how Phase 2 is going and the needs around personal protection equipment (PPE) for businesses in Eastern Oregon. Many of the counties (particularly the ones with active outbreaks) are interested in getting help from the state for PPE for businesses and would be willing to set up a distribution system for businesses within their counties. The RERT also got an update on the broadband grant RFP that is currently available through Business Oregon and had a discussion about what the region is hoping to see through the recovery phase of this pandemic. Both Economic Development Districts are getting funding from Economic Development Administration (EDA) to do resiliency planning and are working to get additional capacity through Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) participants.
- **Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Housing Project** – This week the Legislative Fiscal Office approved the plan from the CTUIR to use \$1M of the funding allocated by the Emergency Board in March in response to the February flooding. This project would use \$1M of the \$7.5M allocated for housing in Umatilla County to create up to 18 new manufactured housing spaces at the Lucky 7 manufactured housing park. This will provide new housing for both tribal and non-tribal members who were affected by the flooding this winter. CTUIR expects to break ground on this project within the next 90 days.