



OREGON DEPARTMENT
of **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**



Oregon
Department
of Transportation

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs and ODOT Public
Transportation Division

Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program

August 2020

Special Transportation Fund Discretionary Grant Program

Second Solicitation

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Background

In autumn 2019, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) invited the Oregon Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Division (PTD) to develop and implement the Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program.

This program was created by a one-time allocation of \$500,000 to ODVA from Oregon Lottery dollars for the purpose of serving the transit-related healthcare needs of veterans living in rural areas.

The initial RVHT solicitation was released on April 10, 2020. Applications were due May 18, 2020 for projects beginning August 1, 2020. At the same time, many of Oregon's eligible STF Agencies were suspending service, heavily engaged in COVID-19 response, or both. Pandemic-related precautions were also an early challenge to assembling STF Committees. Perhaps as a direct result of these factors, the proposals received by PTD were insufficient to award the entire resource.



Additionally, after the first funding cycle, PTD was advised that the Oregon Lottery had been materially impacted by the closure of businesses where Keno and video gaming systems are prevalent. Because of this, ODVA asked PTD to limit initial RVHT awards to 90 percent of the allocation (no more than \$450,000). On July 15, 2020 the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved the first seven awards for a total distribution of \$230,000. **The round two solicitation seeks to award the remaining \$220,000 for seven months of project delivery (December 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021). Applications for this round of funding are due by 5:00 PM on September 18, 2020.**

It is ODVA's intent for RVHT to continue the good work started by Oregon's successful implementation of the federally-funded Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Program. Accordingly, round two RVHT applications are invited from STF Agencies in areas that are not already receiving services from a Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Grant award.

Please note: all nine of Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes are **eligible** RVHT recipients, even if they are primarily located in an area that is served by a federally-funded Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Program.

Source Link: [RVHT projects approved by OTC on July 15, 2020](#)
[RVHT Program Training Webinar – Recorded April 13, 2020](#)
Webinar Password: RVHT2020program

New Administrative Rule

The Public Transportation Division identified the Special Transportation Fund (STF) Discretionary Program as an eligible program to receive the RVHT resources from ODVA. In addition to providing legal authority to administer the project, the STF Discretionary Program offers a familiar framework for PTD and STF Agencies. On August 12, 2020, the OTC approved the following permanent administrative rule establishing the eligibility criteria for the RVHT program:

OAR 732-020-0050

- (1) As used in this rule, “veteran” has the meaning given that term in ORS 408.225(1)(f).
- (2) For purposes of Discretionary Program grants to provide medical access transit services for veterans, the eligibility criteria listed below apply. A STF Agency is eligible to apply if
 - (a) It is an Indian Tribe; or
 - (b) It is not located, in whole or in part, in an area which will receive a Highly Rural Transportation Grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs at any time during the period for which the Discretionary Grant is sought.
- (3) A Project is eligible for a Discretionary Grant if it will provide medical access transit services to veterans who reside in census tracts to which, as of July 3, 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture assigned a primary Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) code of 4 through 10.

Source Links: [ORS 408.225](#)

Eligibility

For Providers:

Pursuant to OAR 732-020-0050(2)(a) above, Oregon’s federally recognized Tribes are eligible RVHT recipients, irrespective of rurality. The remaining STF Agencies with a service area that is not served by a federally-funded Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Grant Program are eligible if Census tracts within the STF Agency’s area of service are assigned a primary Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Code of 4 through 10 – please see Appendix A.

Source Link: [Rural-Urban Community Area \(RUCA\)](#)

For Passengers:

RVHT follows the statute establishing eligibility for preference in public employment. To simplify who is entitled to use proposed services at the local level, transit providers may rely on form DD214 presented

by a veteran as evidence of eligibility. Veterans discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable are welcome.

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

The goal of the RVHT Program is to overcome transit-based barriers between veterans living in rural areas and the healthcare services they've earned. Through awards of **operations** and **purchased services** grants to eligible STF Agencies, RVHT's objective is to inspire innovative local solutions to transit challenges such as:

- Lifeline transit service in bedroom communities;
- Schedules and frequencies that conform to veteran's needs;
- Appointments with out-of-market specialists and regional veterans hospitals;
- Ongoing appointments for the treatment of chronic conditions;
- Access to behavioral health services, counseling, and support groups;
- Periodic service to screening, detection, diagnosis, and disease prevention events; and
- Accessible transit for veterans living with disabilities.

The RVHT Program prioritizes projects with clearly-identified needs and solutions that are efficient, effective, and measurable. Anticipated outcomes should be appropriate in scope and scale to the budget and time frame of a grant award. Projects should be supported by the public and consistent with state and local priorities as identified in adopted planning documents. To the maximum extent practicable, proposals should demonstrate coordination of transportation services and resources.

Please note: applicants are encouraged to think very broadly about the definition of *healthcare facilities* and related destinations. It is not necessary for a veteran to access a facility funded or operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to qualify for transit services under this program. Moreover, access to goods and services that contribute to a veteran's well-being should be accommodated. These may include (but not be limited to or limited by): community and walk-in clinics, including those staffed by nurse practitioners and in proximity to other destinations such as major retailers; vision services, including vision retailers; dentists and denturists; audiology and hearing aid clinics/retailers; physical or occupational therapists; pharmacies and durable medical equipment vendors; smoking cessation and weight loss services; palliative care; and alternative/cultural medical services.

Project Types and Eligible Use

This solicitation will consider proposals for operations and purchased services. These project types will minimize the recipient's reporting burden while providing the best opportunity to return quick results.

Outreach, Promotion and Mobility Management

A key lesson from previous veterans' transit efforts in Oregon is the importance of outreach, promotion, marketing, mobility management, and services that meet the unique needs of the service population. **All of these activities are eligible expenditures as components of operating proposals or contributors to the fully-allocated costs covered in a contract purchased services agreement.** Applicants are encouraged to think holistically about the scope of service necessary to be successful and to allow for these expenditures in their proposed project budgets.

Applicants adjacent to markets where Highly Rural Veterans programs have been offered are encouraged to engage neighboring service providers (please see Appendix C – Highly Rural Veterans Transit Providers) to leverage outreach efforts and materials that have proven successful. Likewise, Veterans Services Officers (please see Appendix D) and staff at veterans' medical facilities (please see Appendix E) are key allied professionals in quickly developing an awareness of services.

Another resource that may be instrumental to assisting veterans in learning about proposed projects is the Go Vets Program and Toolkit developed by Rogue Valley Transportation District.

Outreach and Education responses account for up to 30 percent of a proposal's possible score.

Source Link: [Go Vets Program](#)

Shared Rides, Costs, and Fares

RVHT seeks to serve the highest volume of veterans possible within available resources. Service to veterans in a share ride mode is encouraged (including with general public passengers sharing common origins, destinations, or routes). However, the absence of a shared ride option is not in and of itself, sufficient to decline a veteran's travel request for an otherwise eligible trip.

RVHT is limited to the fully allocated cost of serving veterans (incidental civilian costs from shared rides are ineligible). Veterans may not be charged a fare, co-pay, or other fee for using these services. A veteran may make a donation to providers that are structured to receive them. However, a provider shall not ask for or otherwise solicit a donation from RVHT passengers.

General Project Requirements

Pursuant to the crosscutting requirements of the STF Discretionary Program, proposed projects must be supported by a locally-adopted Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan. PTD will distribute RVHT awards through a discretionary selection process.

Consistent with traditional STF Discretionary processes, the STF Agency will evaluate local submissions through its STF Advisory Committee and will prioritize the projects it submits accordingly.

Funding Estimate and Local Match

PTD intends to award up to \$220,000 under this second solicitation. Initial distributions calculated by the online application form were based on the number of eligible census tracts (please see Appendix A – RUCA Coding) and then weighted for the number of veterans each tract contains. Oregon’s nine federally-recognized Tribes were then added at average weight each. Applicants are encouraged to consider these calculations as guidance PTD has developed for their convenience. They should **not** be regarded as an arbitrary upper limit that may stifle an otherwise compelling proposal.

Please note: No local match is required from funding recipients. The original source of support for RVHT is Oregon Lottery dollars which may be eligible for use as local match funding in complementary transit efforts. Please consult with your regional transit coordinator (RTC) if you are unsure (please see Appendix B – Key PTD Staff).

PTD anticipates making grant awards between \$20,000 and \$50,000. Actual results may vary based on the number, quality, and scalability of applications received.

Source Link: [RVHT Application](#)

Coordination

ODVA and PTD recognize that for some STF Agencies, the time frame and available funding may not be sufficient to stand up a new program. In these cases, PTD offers three pieces of guidance:

1. STF Agencies are strongly encouraged to coordinate with nearby STF Agencies to submit joint-funded and mutually-beneficial proposals. Alternatively, neighboring STF Agencies may realize fiscal and operational efficiencies by proposing individual contract purchased services projects that coordinate through a mutual service provider;

2. STF Agencies near jurisdictions served by a Highly Rural Veterans program are encouraged to explore coordination opportunities that mutually leverage the available resources and capacities.
3. As suggested in the previous section, **ask for what your project needs**. Projects should feature a realistic budget and manageable outcomes for a nine month endeavor. The application addresses scalability:

- Up – Dropdown box containing options up to 200% at 5% intervals; and
- Down – Response to *minimum award to be viable* relative to proposed project budget

Second Round Grant Program Schedule

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aug 18 - Solicitation published; STF Agencies notified; Applications available Sept 18 - Applications due Sept 22 - Scoring/Selection Committee meets Sept 25 - Project selection recommendation sent to OTC Oct 22 - OTC considers project recommendation list Dec 1 - Agreements executed (projects start December 1, 2020)
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Scoring Criteria

The application incorporates goals set in the Oregon Public Transportation Plan (OPTP). Points assigned to each response are indicated on the application. Applicants are encouraged to read the application carefully and to respond to the guidance cues in italic print. The project scoring and selection committee will rank projects on how well the responses answer the question and indicate a consistency with the OPTP goals.

Additional information and an electronic version of this notice can be found on the Public Transportation Division website and Funding Opportunities pages here: [Funding Opportunities Link](#) . For information about Public Transportation Division resources and services, contact us at 503-986-3300 or pt@odot.state.or.us.

Appendix A: RUCA Coding

Rural-Urban Commuter Area (RUCA) Coding is a population density and travel orientation methodology developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services. This census-tract-based approach is utilized by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to determine rurality. In addition to compatibility with the standard used by the VA, RUCA provides this project with an effective tool to determine eligibility for veterans residing in areas that may be ineligible if we only considered the rurality of their county. For example, please consider

County X:

County X is rural by almost any metric you wish to consider. Its largest city is home to less than 15,000 people. However, one of Oregon's metropolitan communities has been growing across its boarder for the last few decades. A strict county-based definition of rurality may unfairly leave County X classified as ineligible.

County Y:

County Y is geographically large and diverse. Outside of one of Oregon's major metropolitan areas that call it home, there is only one community approaching 10,000 people. There are in fact, over 80 unincorporated communities within its borders. The coastal area of County Y comes up consistently in the veteran's healthcare access conversation as a place where more access services are needed. However, due to an urban area that's a 90-minute drive away, these populations would be ineligible if we applied a county-based population threshold on RVHT.

Primary RUCA coding breaks census tracts down as follows (paraphrasing for ease of understanding and reference):

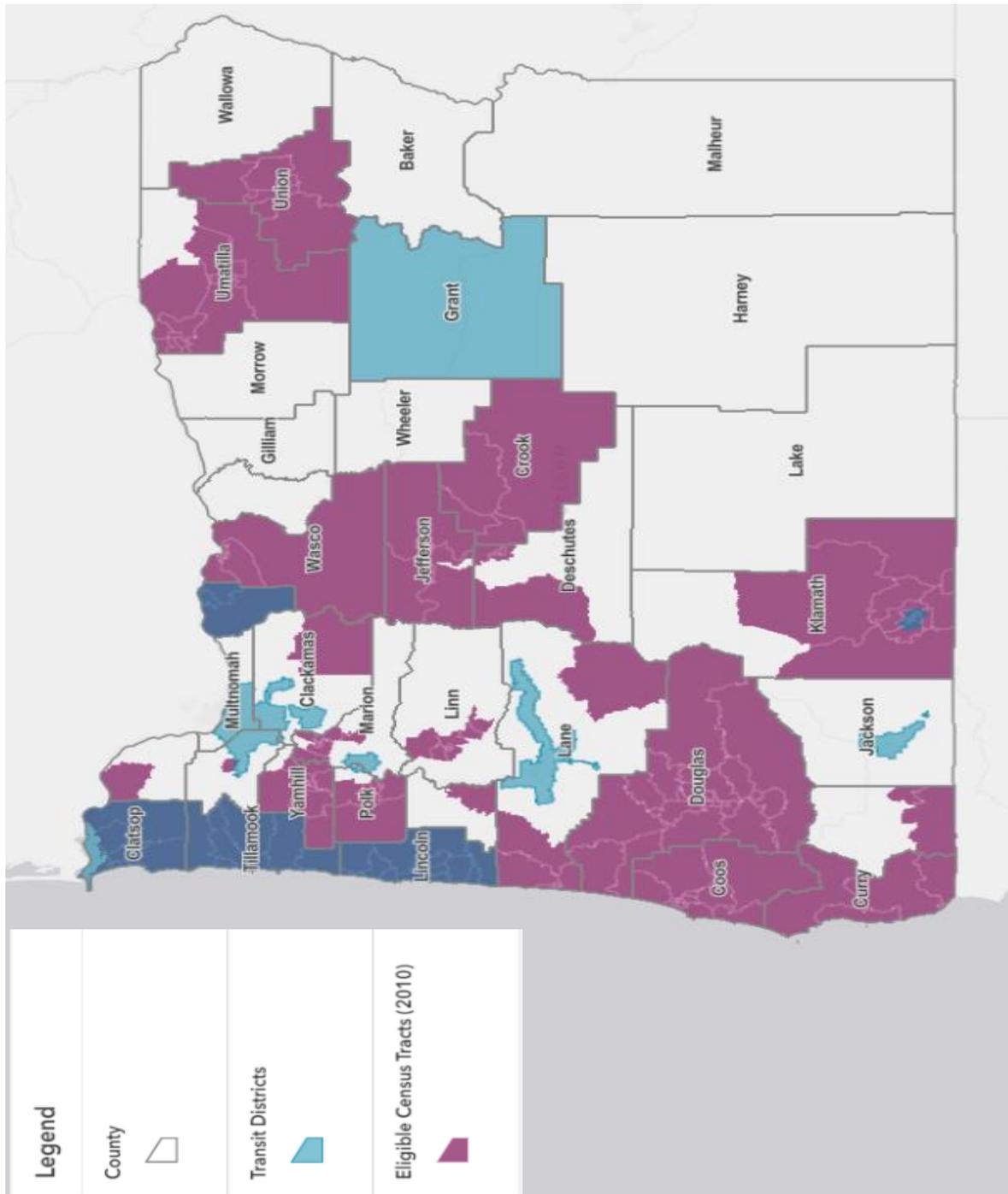
- 1 – 3 Metro areas (over 50,000 people) with varying levels of primary traffic flow moving between them;
- 4 – 6 Micropolitan areas (10,000 to 49,999 people) with varying levels of primary traffic flow moving within or between an urbanized area.
- 7 – 9 Small town areas (2,500 to 9,999 people) with varying levels of primary traffic flow toward micropolitan or other small town areas.
- 10 Rural areas with primary flow of traffic to a census tract outside the classifications above.

The RVHT Grant Program funds STF Agencies on the basis of the presence of census tracts classified by RUCA codes 4 through 10. Veterans living within such a tract are eligible to receive the benefit of these services even if the county (as in the examples above) may otherwise not qualify. In addition to RUCA codes, PTD considered the number of veterans residing in eligible census tracts and the number of eligible applicants to develop its distribution model.

In addition to the nine federally-recognized Tribes, the following counties were found to have eligible census tracts:

- Benton County 1 tract
- Clackamas County 1 tract
- Clatsop County 12 tracts
- Columbia County 1 tract
- Coos County 13 tracts
- Crook County 4 tracts
- Curry County 6 tracts
- Deschutes County 5 tracts
- Douglas County 22 tracts
- Hood River County 4 tracts
- Jefferson County 5 tracts
- Josephine County 2 tracts
- Klamath County 19 tracts
- Lane County 7 tracts
- Lincoln County 18 tracts
- Linn County 7 tracts
- Marion County 10 tracts
- Polk County 8 tracts
- Tillamook County 8 tracts
- Umatilla County 12 tracts
- Union County 8 tracts
- Wasco County 8 tracts
- Washington County 1 tract
- Yamhill County 12 tracts

In addition to the reference map on the following page, PTD has activated the data analysis view function in Remix for ease of identifying eligible areas and constructing routes and schedules to serve them.



<https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b637e625625a47cda8b040647645cb35>

Appendix B: Key PTD Staff

General questions about the RVHT Program and technical assistance inquiries should first be directed to your RTC:

Jason Kelly	Region 1: Portland Metro	503.731.3092	Jason.D.Kelley@odot.state.or.us
Arla Miller	Region 2A: Northwest Oregon	503.949.5415	Arla.Miller@odot.state.or.us
Mark Bernard	Region 2B: West Central	503.986.3283	Mark.Bernard@odot.state.or.us
Jennifer Boardman	Region 3: Southwest Oregon	541.774.6371	Jennifer.Boardman@odot.state.or.us
Theresa Conley	Region 4: Central Oregon	541.388.6250	Theresa.L.Conley@odot.state.or.us
Frank Thomas	Region 5: Eastern Oregon	541.963.1362	Frank.Thomas@odot.state.or.us

Frank Thomas served as PTD staff lead during the development of RVHT and may be able to answer and explain more detailed questions.

For technical questions related to the on-line application, please contact:

Brian Roth	PTD Web Developer	503.986.3394	Brian.Roth@odot.state.or.us
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Appendix C: Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Providers

Jurisdiction	Agency	Contact	Phone
Baker County	<u>Community Connection</u>	<u>Joe Hays</u>	541.523.6591
Gilliam County	<u>Gilliam County Transportation</u>	<u>Marla Davies</u>	541.384.2252
Grant County	<u>Grant County Transportation District</u>	<u>Angie Jones</u>	541.575.2370
Harney County	<u>Harney County Dial-a-Ride</u>	<u>Angie Lamborn</u>	541.573.6024
Lake County	<u>Lake County Public Transit</u>	<u>Anne Kasbohm</u> <u>Andrea Wishart</u>	541.947.4966
Malheur County	<u>Malheur Council on Aging</u>	<u>Brittany White</u>	541.889.7651
Morrow County	<u>Morrow County Loop</u>	<u>Katie Imes</u>	541.676.5667
Sherman County	<u>Sherman Transit</u>	<u>Kelsi Phillips</u> <u>Marnene Benson-Wood</u>	541.565.3553
Wallowa County	<u>Community Connection</u>	<u>Connie Guentert</u>	541.426.3840
Wheeler County	<u>Wheeler County Community Transit</u>	<u>Jonathan Asher</u>	541.468.2859

Appendix D: Veterans' Services Officers

Service Area	Contact(s)	Phone
<u>Baker County</u>	<u>Rick Gloria</u>	541.523.8223
<u>Benton County</u>	<u>Linda McMillan</u>	541.758.1595
<u>Clackamas County</u>	<u>Janice Harlan</u> , Heather Miewald, Felicia Ridings Gina Thomas	503.650.5631
<u>Clatsop County</u>	<u>Luke Thomas</u>	503.791.9983
<u>Columbia County</u>	<u>Russ Clark</u>	503.366.6580
<u>Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation</u>	<u>Sam Spino</u>	541.429.7389
<u>Coos County</u>	<u>Matt Hays</u> Troy May	541.396.7590
<u>Crook County</u>	<u>Adam Williams</u> , <u>Erik Nelson</u>	541.447.5304
<u>Curry County</u>	<u>Tony Vouidy</u> , <u>Jessica Williams</u>	541.247.2713
<u>Deschutes County</u>	<u>Keith Macnamara</u> , <u>Carrie Lucas</u> , <u>Andrew Middleton</u>	541.385.3214
<u>Douglas County</u>	<u>Darlene Brandt</u> , Carrie Boothe, Kimberly Phillip	541.440.4219
<u>Gilliam, Sherman, and Wheeler Counties</u>	Bryan Hunt, Paul Conway	541.565.3408 541.763.3032
<u>Grant County</u>	<u>Katee Hoffman</u>	
<u>Harney County</u>	<u>Guy McKay</u> , <u>Tim Mosher</u>	541.573.1342
<u>Hood River County</u>	<u>Eric Akin</u>	541.386.1080
<u>Jackson County</u>	<u>Stephen Bobian</u> , Tonya Flockoi, Pat Plourd, Vickie Waltner	541.774.8214
<u>Jefferson County</u>	<u>Laura Moore</u> , <u>Kayla Goodman</u>	541.475.5228
<u>Josephine County</u>	<u>Lisa Pickart</u> , Renee Knight, Kelsey Kitts	541.474.5454

Service Area	Contact(s)	Phone
<u>Klamath County</u>	<u>Kathy Pierce, Teri Gentry</u>	541.883.4274
<u>Lake County</u>	<u>Charles Pike</u>	541.947.6043
<u>Lane County</u>	<u>Joseph Reiley</u> , Nathan Walker, Whitney Walker	541.682.4191
<u>Lincoln County</u>	<u>Devin Whitaker</u>	541.265.0570
<u>Linn County</u>	<u>Kim Grooms</u>	541.967.3882
<u>Malheur County</u>	<u>Connie Tanaka</u>	541.889.6649
<u>Marion County</u>	<u>James Riddle</u> , Tim Boykin, Eddie Grainger	971.707.4400
<u>Morrow County</u>	<u>Linda Skendzel</u>	541.922.6420
<u>Multnomah County</u>	<u>Jamison Purry</u> , Pete Prez Josh Davis, Fleetwood Legare	503.988.8387
<u>Polk County</u>	<u>Eric Enderle</u>	503.623.9188
<u>Tillamook County</u>	<u>Bill Hatton, Diane Niflis</u>	503.842.4358
<u>Umatilla County</u>	<u>Glen Scott, Lola Lopez</u> <u>Sunshine Mason</u>	541.278.5482
<u>Union County</u>	<u>Brian Blais</u>	541.962.8842
<u>Wallowa County</u>	<u>Ted Thorne</u>	541.426.0539
<u>Wasco County</u>	<u>Russell Jones, Patrick Wilbern</u>	541.506.2502
<u>Washington County</u>	<u>Sean Files</u> , Matthew Gunn, Colette Klein, Deana Levinson, Jason Muehe, Daniel Perritt, Yvette Porter, Wendy Socha, Sage Takayama	541.846.3060
<u>Yamhill County</u>	<u>Jerry Wilson, Claudia Castro</u>	503.434.7503
Statewide Veterans Services	Karen Burch, Deanna Erhardt, Donna Hunt Vicky Kaufman, Doug Yerke	503.412.4777

Appendix E: Veterans Health Care Facilities

Community	Facility Type	Affiliate	Phone
<u>Bend, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	541.647.5200
<u>Boardman, OR</u>	Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic	<u>Walla Walla VA Medical Center</u>	541.481.2255
<u>Boise, ID</u>	VA Medical Center	<u>Boise VA Medical Center</u>	208.422.1000
<u>Burns, OR</u>	Outreach Clinic	<u>Boise VA Medical Center</u>	541.573.3339
<u>Enterprise, OR</u>	Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic	<u>Walla Walla VA Medical Center</u>	541.426.0219
<u>Eugene, OR</u>	VA Clinic	<u>Roseburg VA Health Care System</u>	541.607.0897
<u>Fairview, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	503.660.0600
<u>Grants Pass, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Southern OR VA Rehab Center</u>	541.955.5551
<u>Hillsboro, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	503.906.5000
<u>Klamath Falls, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Southern OR VA Rehab Center</u>	541.273.6206
<u>La Grande, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Walla Walla VA Medical Center</u>	541.963.0627
<u>Lincoln City, OR</u>	VA Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	541.265.0547
<u>Newport, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	541.265.4182
<u>North Bend, OR</u>	VA Clinic	<u>Roseburg VA Health Care System</u>	541.756.8002
<u>Portland, OR</u>	VA Medical Center	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	503.988.8387
<u>Salem, OR</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	971.304.2200
<u>Vancouver, WA</u>	VA Medical Center	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	360.759.1901
<u>Walla Walla, WA</u>	VA Medical Center	<u>Walla Walla VA Medical Center</u>	509.525.5200
<u>Warrenton, OR</u>	VA Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	503.220.8262
<u>West Linn</u>	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	<u>Portland VA Health Care System</u>	503.210.4900
<u>White City, OR</u>	VA Rehab Center and Clinic	<u>Southern OR VA Rehab Center</u>	541.826.2111