



Eastern Oregon CCO Success Story



Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Success Stories are part of a series featuring innovative ideas and programs from across the state to advance learning and sharing across CCOs. This story demonstrates how Eastern Oregon CCO (EOCCO) effectively uses community spending initiatives through OHA to promote a holistic, community-based approach to advancing health for Eastern Oregonians.

Locally driven community spending efforts

EOCCO cultivates local connections across their geographic area to ensure community-driven solutions to the challenges their rural and frontier communities face. The Field Team, made up of staff from communities across Eastern Oregon, takes a coordinated approach to community health. By focusing on “upstream” factors like the social determinants of health and equity, EOCCO promotes a holistic vision of health where prevention is the most effective and affordable option.

With a diverse ownership structure that includes several providers and hospital systems that deliver quality care for Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members living in the EOCCO service area, EOCCO collaborates across health systems to meet the needs of their members and their community. Local community health needs assessment (CHNAs) and the resulting community health improvement plans (CHPs) inform EOCCO’s work. EOCCO’s relationships create flexibility so staff can respond to urgent needs and people get what they need, when they need it. Accessing resources can be a challenge for communities in Eastern Oregon, where getting to and from a doctor’s appointment can take four hours. Transportation is a significant barrier for residents of Eastern Oregon. EOCCO develops and promotes locally supported, innovative solutions to these obstacles by using their influence and resources to help their members.

Health-related services (HRS) are non-covered services that are offered as a supplement to covered benefits under Oregon’s Medicaid State Plan to improve care delivery and overall member and community health and well-being. [Read more on the OHA website.](#)

HRS in action: Fulfilling EOCCO’s goal for members to get what they need, when they need it

The Harney County Public Health Department received calls from mothers in distress because of a lack of formula due to a recall. In the rural and frontier communities EOCCO serves, it can take time for resources to reach people, and there are often not as many options available to consumers. With no WIC-approved formula available to low-income families, EOCCO was able to leverage HRS funds along with their buying power in the community to purchase formula for parents. The formula arrived the following day, and mothers were able to get what they needed to feed their babies.

EOCCO’s approach prioritizes...

- Getting people what they need, when they need it
- Aggregating community power
- EOCCO staff embedded in local communities
- Authentic engagement
- Solutions developed and supported by local communities

The **Supporting Health for all through Reinvestment (SHARE) Initiative** is a legislative requirement for CCOs to invest some of their net income or revenues back into their communities. CCOs must invest in services to address health inequities and the social determinants of health and equity (SDOH-E). [Read more on the OHA website.](#)

Feature program: Frontier Veggie Rx

Frontier Veggie Rx offers EOCCO members the ability to receive a voucher for fruits and vegetables after meeting with a provider to discuss household eating and food shopping habits. The program has helped communities in many meaningful ways. The program relies on local stores' ability to purchase and maintain a stock of fruits and vegetables, something that can be difficult for stores with limited shelf space and less buying power than in more populous communities. The Frontier Veggie Rx program has not only provided families with the means to buy healthy food, but it has grown local economies. Stores across Eastern Oregon counties are now able to maintain and reliably sell their growing stocks of fruits and vegetables, creating and diversifying business for local business owners.

EOCCO's Frontier Veggie Rx program was developed by the local community advisory council (CAC) in Sherman County. With HRS funds flowing through the local community advisory council, Frontier Veggie Rx was a huge success. Local CACs in neighboring counties took notice and started the program in their areas, resulting in locally supported programs across Eastern Oregon. The program has since spread to four other counties, with a fifth modeling their program after Frontier Veggie Rx.

Scaling Frontier Veggie Rx: From pilot to success in five counties

EOCCO not only supported the development of the Frontier Veggie Rx program, it spread the model to five counties in Eastern Oregon. Key to the success of the program is:

- Collaboration with local grocers and distributors
- Relationships with people in each community to champion the effort
- Consistent evaluation and monitoring focused on collecting stories to show ongoing impact
- Deep knowledge of the issues and opportunities in each community
- Responsiveness to the realities of the situations members and partners are facing
- Regular communication with EOCCO leadership to ensure ongoing support

Flexibility to provide support throughout COVID-19 and beyond

EOCCO demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Frontier Veggie Rx program initially required monthly follow-up visits with a provider for refills. The COVID-19 pandemic required EOCCO to reconsider how the program could be possible for families unable to visit their providers regularly. Program staff were able to make adjustments in response to the needs of their members and communities, ultimately resulting in reduced red tape and a more efficient program. Members are now able to access prescriptions by mail and renew them virtually.

Urgent housing support funds paired with strategic planning through SHARE

In 2021, EOCCO communities identified the need for \$344,000 to fund shovel-ready housing projects. With available SHARE funds only totaling \$314,000, EOCCO decided to contribute an extra \$30,000 in addition to their SHARE funds to ensure the need was met. While making significant investments in housing in their region, EOCCO took steps to learn more from their community about housing needs. Knowledgeable about community assessment and engagement, EOCCO convened the community to identify how it could best support existing efforts. This convening grew into a coalition dedicated to understanding challenges, identifying opportunities and advancing housing initiatives in Eastern Oregon.