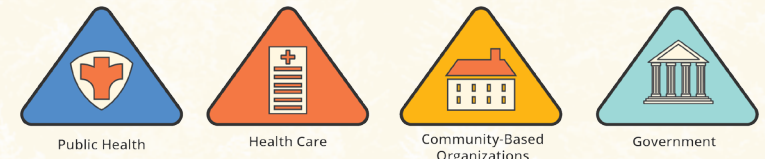


## Improving Community Health Through Cross-Sector Partnerships

### Case Study Summary Report: The Challenges, Benefits and Value of Cross-Sector Partnerships



#### Background

Health starts—long before illness—in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and jobs. Public health agencies in Oregon are collaborating with community partners to make communities healthier and ensure that people have access to critical prevention services. Community partnership development is a foundational capability for state and local public health agencies in Oregon and for many decades, local public health agencies throughout Oregon have demonstrated skill and dedication in forming cross-sector relationships with private, public, and governmental organizations that share many of the same goals. **The purpose of this report is to increase understanding of the effective formation and use of cross-sector partnerships to improve community health.**

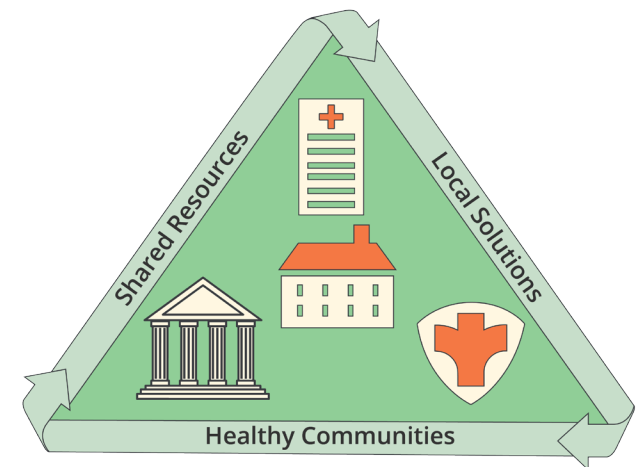
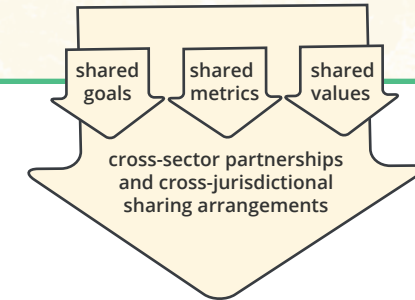
#### Overview

Under the direction of the Oregon Health Authority, the Rede Group interviewed 26

individuals from local public health departments, coordinated care organizations, community-based organizations, the Oregon Health Authority, and other partnering agencies that were involved in five separate collaborative projects. Interviewees were asked questions about how they formed the partnership, what motivated them to collaborate, the structure of the partnership, and outcomes of the project.

#### Interviewees agreed that the cross-sectoral partnerships:

- ▶ Were essential to advancing work that would not otherwise have been accomplished
- ▶ Facilitated innovation in ensuring access to high quality, culturally appropriate health care
- ▶ Increased capacity, reach, and skill of individuals and organizations involved, laying the foundation for future collaborative work
- ▶ Allowed for a comprehensive spectrum of strategies to address shared priorities



## Case Summaries

### Improving Food Security in Hood River

Based on the results from a Community Food Assessment showing that one in five people in the community missed meals regularly, partners implemented the Veggie Rx program; making fresh fruits and vegetables more available as one approach to reduce food insecurity.

#### Key Partners:

1. Hood River County Public Health Department
2. PacificSource Community Solutions CCO - Columbia Gorge Health Council\*
3. Gorge Grown Food Network

### Addressing Childhood Obesity in the Columbia Gorge

Partners focused on policy, systems, and environmental change in order to identify a set of strategies for a multi-faceted approach to help children grow up at a healthy weight.

#### Key Partners:

1. North Central Public Health District (Wasco, Sherman, & Gilliam Counties)
2. North Wasco County School District
3. Mid-Columbia Medical Center
4. PacificSource Community Solutions CCO
5. Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization
6. Oregon Solutions

### Improving the Health of Mothers & Babies in Central Oregon

Partners collaborated to develop and implement a regional approach to an integrated perinatal continuum of care model. This model would address the goals identified through the Regional Health Improvement Plan, specifically getting more women into prenatal care and reducing the rate of infants born at a low birth weight.

#### Key Partners:

1. Deschutes County Public Health Department
2. Crook County Public Health Department
3. Jefferson County Public Health Department
4. Pacific Source Community Solutions CCO - Central Oregon Health Council

### Supporting Preconception Health in Southern Oregon

Partners implemented the One Key Question® initiative encouraging all health care and social service providers to routinely ask women about their reproductive health needs to better prepare for pregnancies and reduce unintended pregnancies.

#### Key Partners:

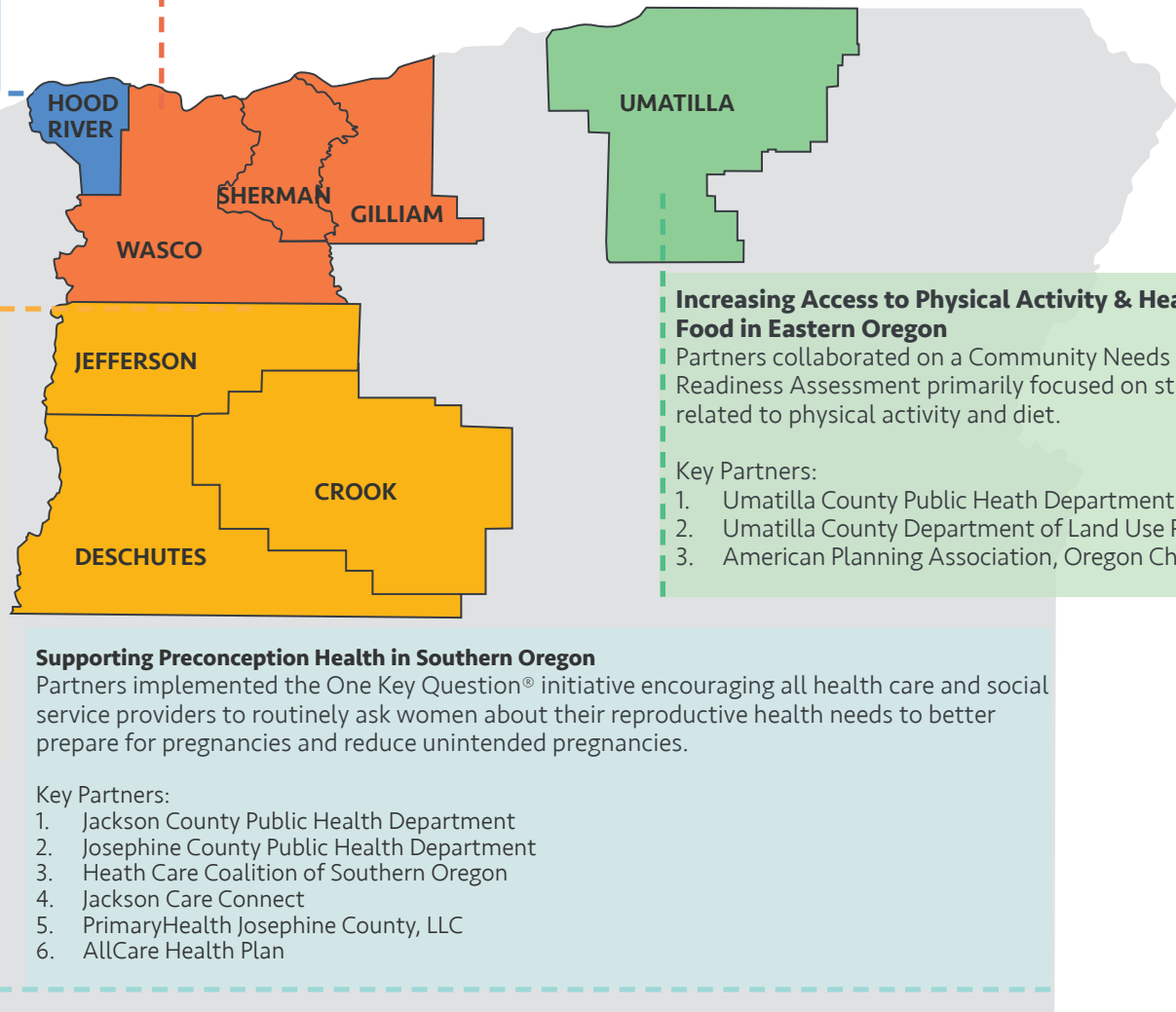
1. Jackson County Public Health Department
2. Josephine County Public Health Department
3. Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon
4. Jackson Care Connect
5. PrimaryHealth Josephine County, LLC
6. AllCare Health Plan

### Increasing Access to Physical Activity & Healthy Food in Eastern Oregon

Partners collaborated on a Community Needs and Readiness Assessment primarily focused on strategies related to physical activity and diet.

#### Key Partners:

1. Umatilla County Public Health Department
2. Umatilla County Department of Land Use Planning
3. American Planning Association, Oregon Chapter



## Motivations for Developing the Partnership

Each partnership described their Community Health Improvement Plan, Community Health Assessment, or Regional Health Improvement Plan to be a main reason for starting the project. Other reasons for starting the project include: data showing a need for interventions to improve poor health in the community or the occurrence of a grant/funding opportunity.

## Metrics

All five partnerships identified metrics to monitor progress toward meeting project goals. Three out of five partnerships tracked metrics that aligned with a CCO metric. Three of the five reported making progress toward meeting metrics and all planned to continue tracking metrics after the project ended.

Project	Goals	Metrics	Successes
Improving the Health of Mothers & Babies in Central Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reduce low-birth weight rates</li> <li>▶ Increase access to perinatal care</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of referrals to WIC, home visiting, and maternal mental health</li> <li>2. Birth weight (longer-term)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Created a systematized approach for referring women to prenatal health care</li> <li>▶ Connected women with prenatal mental health</li> <li>▶ Created a regional tracking and coordination system</li> </ul>
Improving Food Security in Hood River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase food security</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of vouchers distributed</li> <li>2. Number of individuals screened for food security/number screened positive</li> <li>3. Voucher redemption rates/locations with highest rates</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provided locally grown, healthful foods to individuals experiencing food insecurity</li> <li>▶ Secured more than \$100,000 for the Veggie Rx program</li> <li>▶ Secured funding to staff a regional coalition of more than 35 organizations from two states</li> </ul>
Addressing Childhood Obesity the Columbia Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Decrease childhood obesity</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Size data from students</li> <li>2. Number of participants in programs such as walking groups and amount they walk</li> <li>3. Number of restaurants participating in Drink Fit</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Collected and tracked local data</li> <li>▶ Created a broad-based coalition</li> <li>▶ Funded a Collective Impact Health Specialist to expand the coalition and secure funding for additional projects</li> <li>▶ Offset restaurant licensing fees for restaurants participating in the Drink Fit program to reduce the amount of sugary beverages sold</li> </ul>
Supporting Preconception Health in Southern Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Decrease unintended pregnancy rates</li> <li>▶ Improve access to reproductive health care</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Long acting reversible contraceptive use</li> <li>2. Unintended pregnancy rates</li> <li>3. Teen pregnancy rates</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased the likelihood that a broad spectrum of providers ask the One Key Question®</li> <li>▶ Increased long-acting reversible contraceptive use by women of child bearing age</li> <li>▶ Developed a family planning referral grid</li> <li>▶ Ran a television and social media preconception health campaign targeting the Latino community</li> <li>▶ Expanded the project into neighboring Douglas County</li> </ul>
Increasing Access to Physical Activity & Healthy Food in Eastern Oregon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase access to healthy foods</li> <li>▶ Increase access to physical activity</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of people in the community reached by each project</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Created a broad-based coalition</li> <li>▶ Developed a Community Needs &amp; Readiness Assessment</li> <li>▶ Initiated action on sustainable community changes</li> <li>▶ Raised funds to provide “kick start” grants for community projects</li> </ul>

“We learned a lot about what others were doing in the community and they learned what we were doing. Overall, that helped to reduce duplication of effort and does create more opportunities to collaborate in the future.”

—Public Health Partner

“There’s a lot of synergy that can come from these intergovernmental, inter-agency collaborations”

—Tribal Government Partner

### Cross-sector Partnerships Create Value

- ▶ **Increased reach to specific audiences**  
Interviewees affirmed that when they worked across sector lines they were better able to reach specific groups with interventions. For example, in Southern Oregon the ability to reach more of the latina population with the One Key Question® initiative was greatly facilitated by the partnership

with the Coordinated Care Organization and the individual clinical and social service delivery partners. Similarly, in the VeggieRx Program in Hood River, health care providers conducted food insecurity screenings and provided vouchers for healthy food to patients identified as food insecure.

- ▶ **Leveraged funding and other resources**  
Interviewees reported success in leveraging resources through the partnerships- most often in the form of contributions of staff time from community partners. These in-kind resources were often substantial and sustained over a number of years. In addition, several partnerships were able to bring project-specific funding into the community.
- ▶ **Synergistic effect**  
Interviewees reported that these collaborations produced results that would not have been achieved by any one organization. For example, messaging from multiple trusted sources in the North Central Public Health District led to increased community awareness about the importance of childhood obesity prevention.
- ▶ **Increased capacity for future collaborations**  
Cross-sector partnerships are rooted in interpersonal relationships, and often success or failure depends on the quality of those relationships. Interviewees noted stronger relationships and increased capacity for future collaborations due to:
  - » Understanding the services provided by each organization; and
  - » Understanding the intersection of issues that each organization addresses, such as how land use planning affects population health.

- ▶ **Reduction of duplicated services**  
As cross-sector organizations worked together on collaborative projects they were able to identify areas where two or more agencies were providing a service in a duplicative nature. This awareness allowed for important conversations about how to streamline efforts, freeing up resources for other work.

### Sustainability

While all five projects identified mechanisms for varying degrees of sustainability, three projects identified concrete mechanisms for continued sustainability:

- ▶ The southern Oregon Preconception Health Campaign was a policy, systems, and environmental change project that has been institutionalized within the health care system in the region; OKQ screening has been embedded into electronic health records, and existing perinatal task forces are able to continue to move this work forward;
- ▶ Aspects of the Perinatal Care Continuum project, specifically case management and the nurse home visiting expansion, are sustainable due to the ability for providers to bill Medicaid for these services;
- ▶ Finally, in North Central Public Health District, the Blue Zone® project will continue to fund certain aspects of the Childhood Obesity project.

Two of the five projects do not have a concrete sustainability plan beyond the current funding mechanism:

- ▶ The Hood River Food Security project is looking for ways to institutionalize the project within CCOs and clinic care by motivating these partners to find funding mechanisms

to sustain the project on an ongoing basis. Along with finding continued and sustained funding sources, the creation of the Food Security Coalition is a sustained change and the coalition will continue to work on regional food security priorities; Interviewees for the Access to Physical Activity & Healthy Food project believe that without further funding some aspects of the project will not be sustainable; however, the community health needs assessment has been utilized in developing health improvement plans.

“The goal was to get it embedded in the system. It’s in the intake form for WIC, it’s in the protocol and in the electronic health records as part of the expected protocol for Federally Qualified Health Centers, it’s required by the Healthy Start Grant that gets money here, it’s included in the HeadStart program. It was all about getting it embedded in the systems so that it’s sustainable.”

—Community Based Organization Partner

### Tips for Successful Partnerships

Agencies working to improve health through cross-sector partnerships can use the following tips:

1. **Ground projects in local health assessments** and consider how the project supports priorities in community or regional health improvement plans.
2. **Develop shared metrics** that are relevant to all partner organizations.
3. **Use tools like memoranda of cooperation** or memoranda of understanding to add structure, clarify roles and ensure commitment of partner organizations.
4. **Use a convening organization** to manage the organizational duties of the project, allowing other partners to focus on attaining project goals.
5. **Build trust and support** for the project by communicating about anticipated changes to established practices, timelines for changes, and the benefits the community will receive.
6. **Focus on policy, systems, and environmental changes** to ensure sustainability of interventions after the project ends.
7. **Build relationships with colleagues in other sectors.** Established relationships create trust and can be instrumental to quickly implementing new projects when opportunities arise.



#### Acknowledgements:

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