



# Eastern Oregon Border Board

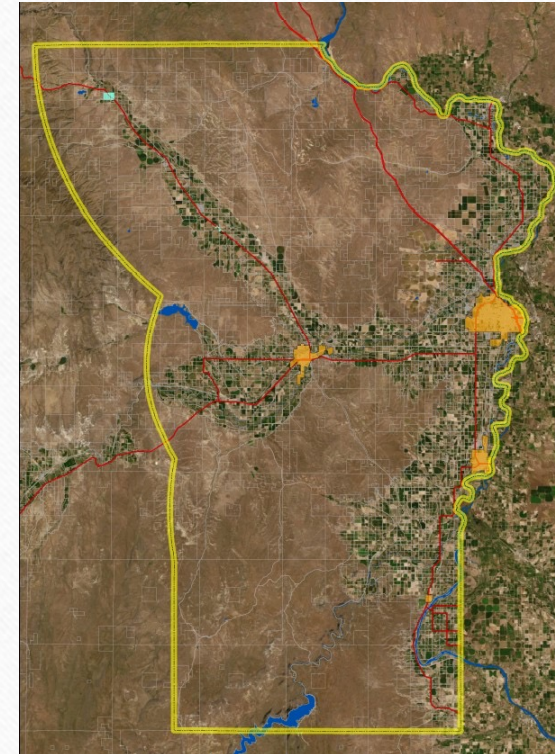
Strengthening Our Region's Economic Future

# Background on Border Board

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- Far eastern Oregon is economically depressed relative to the rest of Oregon and compared to thriving Idaho communities mere miles away.
- Far Eastern Oregon's growth is stagnant and losing businesses and residents to Idaho at a staggering rate.
- Neighboring Idaho's very different political landscape and policies create unique challenges for our region.
- In 2017, HB2012 created the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region, Board, and Fund to address these issues.

# Border Region – At a Glance



# State of the Region

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- The work of the board has been informed and shaped by ongoing listening sessions with local stakeholders.
- The Border Board was fortunate to receive a Data Science for the Public Good grant in 2020.
- Now our work is further informed by empirical data.

## Population

- ◆ Malheur County saw a slight decrease in population, Payette County experienced a slight increase (ACS, 2010-2018).
  - ◆ Ontario: 6% decline
  - ◆ Fruitland: 4% increase.
- ◆ Malheur County and Payette County both experienced a decline in the share of the white population (ACS, 2010-2018). .

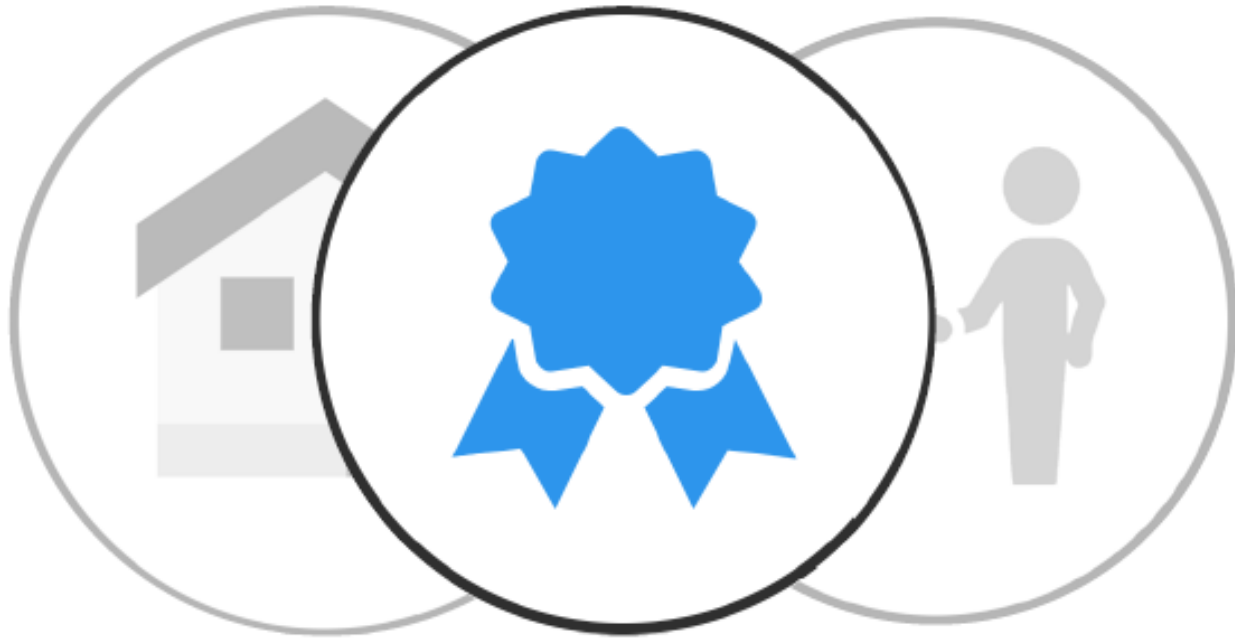
## Poverty, Unemployment and Income

- ◆ Poverty rates have declined across the region, but Malheur County experienced the smallest decline (25 to 23%) (ACS, 2012-2018).
  - ◆ Ontario: 47.4% to 35.5%
  - ◆ Fruitland: 12.7% to 13%
- ◆ Unemployment relatively similar across the region (BLS, 2010-2020).

## Tax Lot Data

- ◆ Data: 2019 tax lot data from the Malheur County Assessor's Office, Payette County Assessor's Office.
- ◆ Peak periods of construction
  - ◆ Malheur: late 1970s to 1980s.
  - ◆ Payette County: Steady increase since the 1980s.
- ◆ Malheur: Single family homes comprise 33% of all construction and 50% of residential.
  - ◆ Residential : 50% single family, 20% duplex, 10% high density, and other.
- ◆ Payette: 10 times greater residential construction, more commercial construction. Larger lot sizes.

# Licensure



## Recurring themes

Greater requirements for licensure in Oregon present a barrier to employment.

Lack of appropriate provisional licensure makes it difficult to attract workers from Idaho.

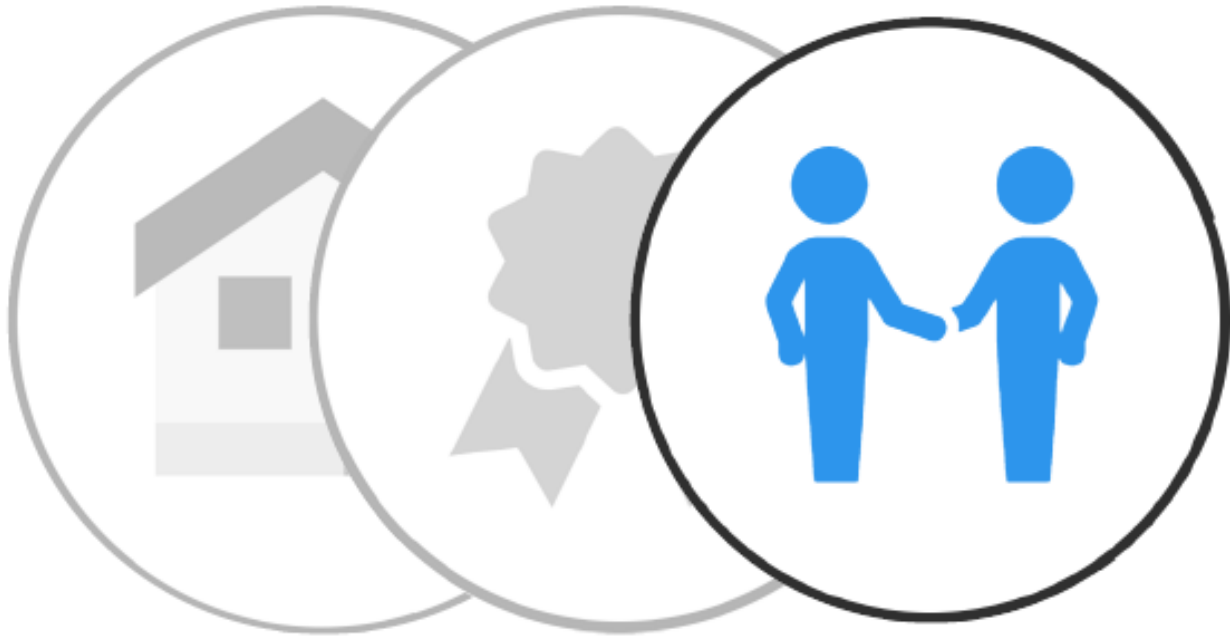
## Data

The National Occupational Licensing Database, National Council of State Legislatures

Occupational Employment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics



# Quality of Life



## Recurring themes

There is a perception that Malheur is a less desirable place to live.

## Data

American Community Survey  
Education and healthcare data

# Border Board

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Advocacy

# 2019 Legislative Session

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# House Bill 2933

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Clarifies, for purposes of Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board activities, that "workforce development" includes development of residential housing necessary to attract and keep employees in Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region.

Outcome: Passed the House, passed the Senate, and Governor Brown signed it!

# House Bill 2454

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Allows out-of-state applicant seeking occupational license in Oregon more time to meet Oregon standards if applicant is already licensed in another state and is seeking to work in Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region. Applicants granted licenses or other authorization under this section shall be required to meet all Oregon standards not later than two years following the date of initial granting of the license or other authorization.

Outcome: Passed the House, did not make it out of the Senate Committee on Rules. Tried again in 2021 Session – did not make it out of committee.

# House Bill 2457

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Directs Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, Department of Education and Office of Child Care to make specified evaluations to increase number of educators in Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region who are available to teach courses in secondary math and science and in career and technical education programs.

Deadline: 2024

Outcome: Passed the House, passed the Senate, and was signed by Governor Brown!

# 2021 Legislative Session

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# House Bill 2026 - Residency Preference

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- The property tax base, population, and residential development in the Border Region are stagnant while neighboring Idaho booms.
- The Border Region 'imports' a disproportionate majority of its workers.
- Snake River Correctional Institution, Oregon's largest prison, is located in the Border Region and was the largest state general funded public works project in state history.
- About 75% of SRCI's employees live in Idaho. The numbers are similarly astonishing in the local community college and Ontario school district.
- This dynamic is economically and socially disastrous.

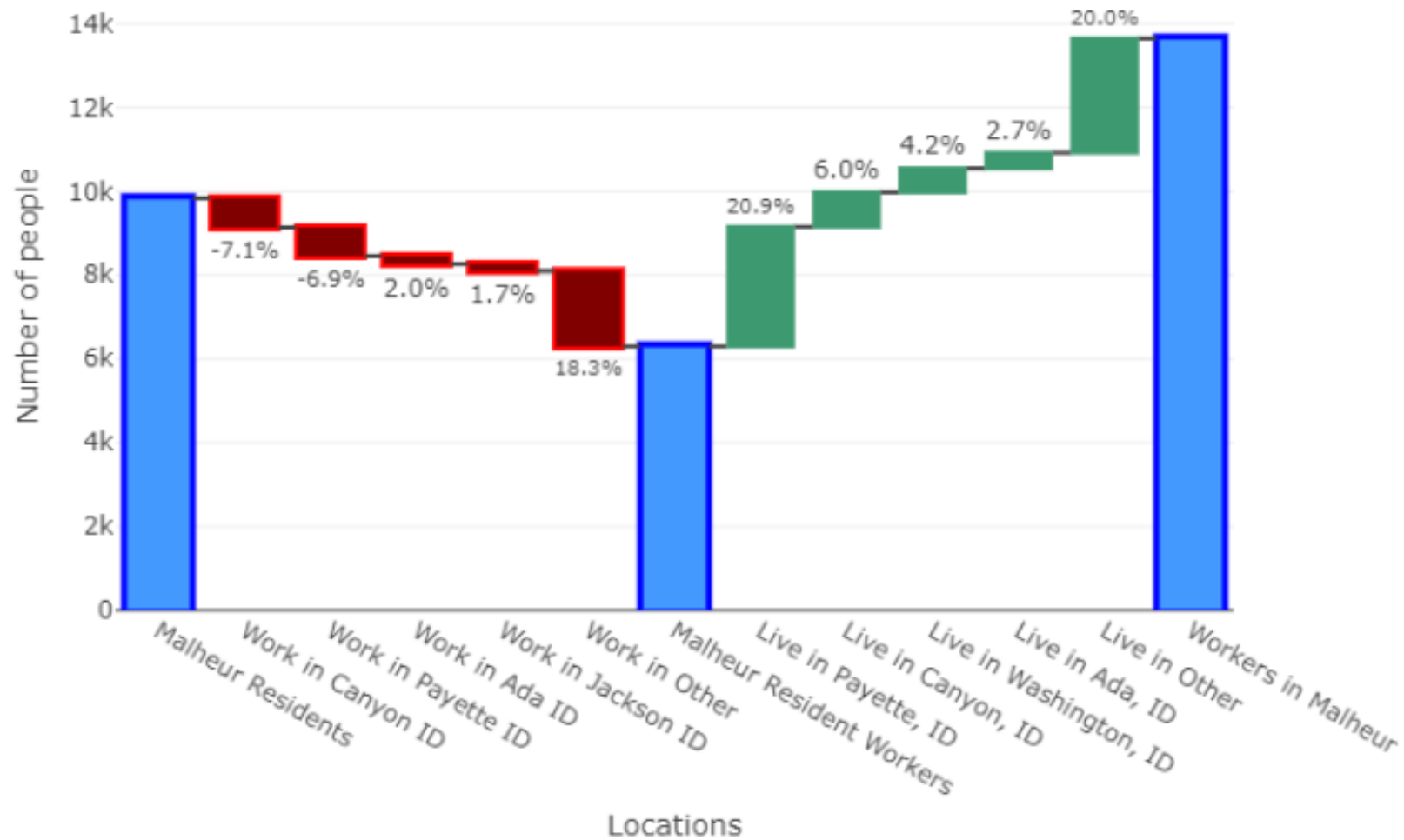


## - Justification -

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- The economic poverty in the Border Region is intertwined with social poverty, largely attributable to the imported workforce.
- Far too many good paying, taxpayer funded workers live in Idaho and do not meaningfully participate in the Border Region's financial or social stability.
- Raising a community out of economic stagnancy cannot be achieved only by creating jobs. Harvard economist Raj Chetty's Opportunity Atlas' findings support this – there is no association between job growth and economic mobility for poor residents of the affected areas.
- When the community's residents do not fill the jobs, such job growth often results in exacerbation of poverty and community decline.
- The bottom line: The Border Region is a good place to live and work and the Border Board needs help in making this a priority.

# Worker Flow: Malheur County

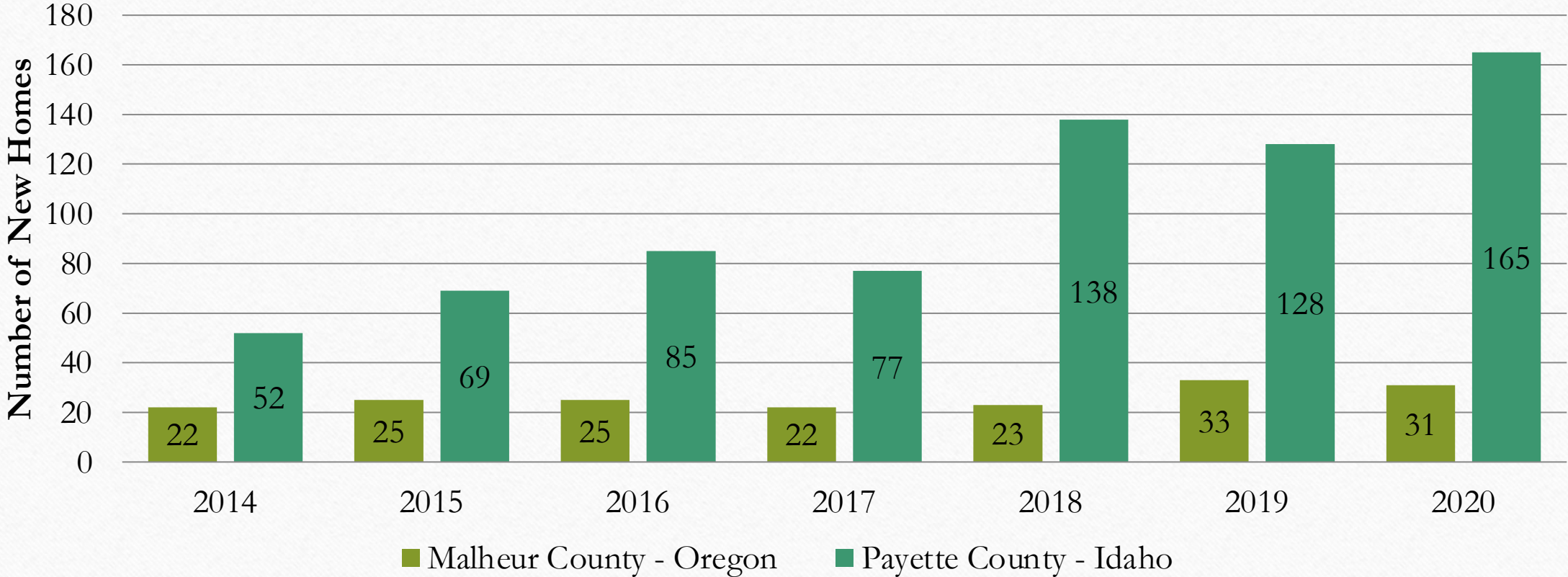


# HB 2026 B

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- Gives residents of Malheur County a boost in applying for public employment in the region.
- Applicable only in the Border Region.
- Does not supplant qualification and merit-based hiring.
- Compliant with applicable law.
- Passed: House Vote: 53 aye – 5 nay, Senate Vote: 27 aye – 2 nay  
Signed Into Law July 19, 2021

# Border Region New Home Comparison



# SB16 - Qualifying Land

- **Subject to a county review board process**, EFU land in the Border Region **may be rezoned** to rural residential, allowing the development of one residential unit per parcel, provided that:

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  - The land **has not been farmed** in the prior three years;
  - The land is **not high-value farmland** by soil classification or viable for profitable farm use;
  - Rezoning **will not force a significant change in accepted farm practices** on surrounding lands;
  - The lands are **not within a critical groundwater area** or subject to groundwater withdrawal restrictions;
  - Deed restrictions required to **protect the rights of neighboring farm and rangeland**;
  - The rezoning **must comply with any other criteria adopted by the county**;
  - Minimum lot size of 2 acres and **no more than 200 acres total** could be rezoned under this Bill; and
  - The rezoning has received a **public hearing and a written opinion from a review board**.

# SB16 – Process

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- Initiated by a willing property owner.
- Still subject to all other development safeguards.
- Review board - 4 members appointed by the county:
  - One member who represents the interests of the farming community;
  - One member who represents the Border Board;
  - One member who is a member of the planning body of the County; and
  - One member who is a member of the governing body of the County.

**Passed: House Vote: 53 aye – 5 nay, Senate Vote: 27 aye – 2 nay**  
**Signed Into Law July 19, 2021**

# Other Border Region Advocacy Efforts

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- Eastern Oregon Childcare Resources workgroup
- Cultural District Listening Session
- Economic Impact of the Arts Funding
- Ontario Airport Technical Advisory Committee
- Ongoing Engagement
  - State Level Leaders, Agencies and Organizations
  - Border Region Community Groups
  - Border Region Leaders – county, cities, boards
  - Media Outlets, Speaking Engagements

Border Fund

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Programs



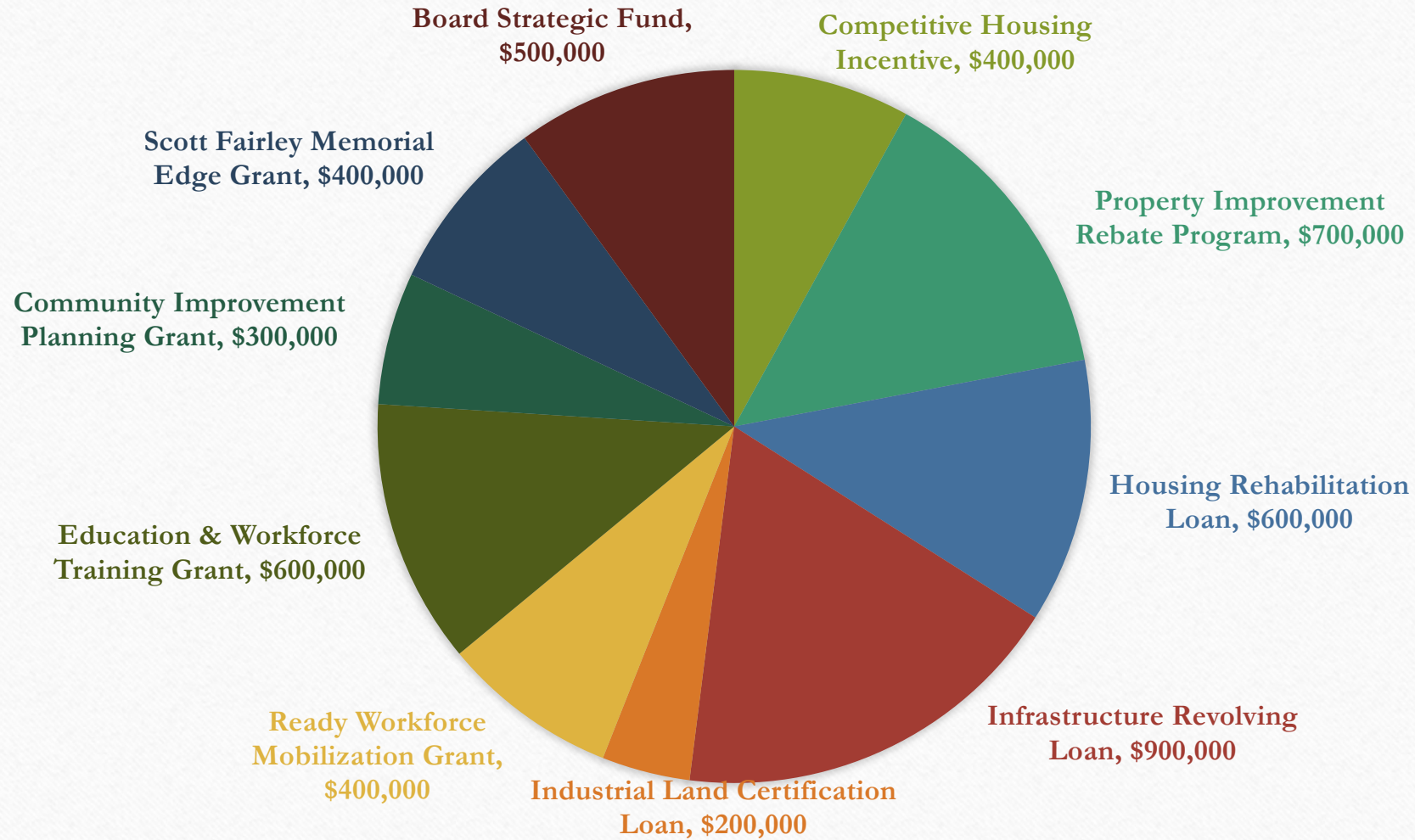
# Priorities

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All Border Board programs are designed to significantly impact education, workforce, and/or economic development capacity in the region. The Board prioritizes funding for projects and programs that:

- Enhance prosperity in the Border Region
- Improve the Border Region's property tax base
- Improve the Border Region's competitiveness with Idaho
- Increase workforce availability and skills in the Border Region
- Improve the image of the Border Region
- Leverage the Border Fund with a complement of outside funding

# BORDER FUND INITIAL ALLOCATION - \$5 MILLION



# Competitive Housing Incentive Program

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Homeowners receive \$6,000 within 30 days of completion of a new stick-built, single family home or townhouse/duplex assessed at a value of at least \$125,000, as long as owner-occupied.

Homeowner is also eligible to submit a paid property tax receipt each year to be reimbursed a maximum of \$1,500 for up to 10 years.

# Property Improvement Rebate Program

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This rebate program is for improvements to existing residential, commercial or industrial properties and new development of multi-family residential, commercial and industrial properties within the Region to encourage workforce housing and/or economic development.

- Grant is for the lessor of \$20,000 or 15% of the increased tax value.
- Repairs/improvements must increase the tax assessed value by \$10,000 at a minimum.
- Building permits are required.
- Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, façade improvements, structural repairs, major remodels and new development of multi-family residential, commercial or industrial properties within the Region.

# Scott Fairley Memorial Edge Grant

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Edge Grants are awarded to applicants who show they can enhance economic vitality and opportunity with innovative and creative solutions in the Border Region. It is open to all residents, landowners, schools, businesses, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and community groups within the Border Region.

- Maximum grant is \$25,000.
- Preference will be given to applicants with matching funds.
- Grant recipient will need to provide a final report to the Board on the outcome of the project, its success and how it achieved the objective to support workforce and economic development in the Region.

# Education & Workforce Training Grant

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Awarded to local educational service providers for programs, equipment or facility upgrades specifically for workforce training.

- Industry letters of support required to support the need for training.
- A one-to-one match is required.
- Maximum grant is \$200,000 per project.
- Funds must be used for direct costs in accordance with the approved scope of work; indirect costs not eligible.
- Applications accepted on an annual basis pending funding availability.

# Community Improvement Planning Grant

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Local governments may apply for this grant to complete community improvement planning including, but not limited to, master plans, transportation, airports, parks, etc.

- Grants can be used as a match with local, state, federal planning funds, feasibility studies, preliminary engineering, and initial cost estimates.
- Maximum grant for one entity is \$200,000 for all projects.
- Preference will be given to projects that can leverage the most amount of funds.
- Applications will be accepted on an annual basis pending funding availability.

# Ready Workforce Mobilization Grant

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Provides grant funding to purchase equipment, facility upgrades, start up costs, expansion or other products and services necessary to mobilize a workforce around housing, childcare, transportation and accessibility.

- Preference will be given to projects targeting current or potential employees living and working or attending school full time in the Border Region.
- Applicants may be businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments, and educational service providers.
- Maximum grant is \$100,000 per project.
- Preference given to applicants who can prove sustainability of the proposed project.
- Applications accepted on an annual basis pending funding availability.



# Infrastructure Loan Program

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Local governments or developers within the Border Region may apply for a loan for infrastructure investments such as roads, water, wastewater, utilities, etc. to attract new residential, commercial, or industrial development.

- Maximum loan amount is \$250,000 or 25% of eligible project cost.
- Interest rate is 1% with a maturity not to exceed five (5) years.
- Repayment of the loan will be upon the sooner of lots sold/transferred for the first time on a pro-rata basis or at loan maturity.

# Industrial Land Certification Loan Program

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Private land owners may apply for a loan to complete certification or recertify industrial land development readiness documentation using Oregon Certified Shovel Ready Industrial Lands guidelines.

- Loan up to \$50,000.
- Terms are interest at 1% payable upon the sooner of: first sale of the certified property; when construction financing rolls to permanent; or 6 years from loan disbursement.
- Upon receipt of site certification, funds will be released to the landowner.
- Applications will be accepted on a semi-annual basis pending funding availability.

# Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

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Homeowners within the urban growth boundaries and/or city limits can receive a loan, not to exceed \$15,000, to improve exterior aesthetics of their home.

- Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, fences, painting, window repair/replacement, landscaping and façade improvements. Activities are limited to external improvements only.
- Applicants must submit a budget, improvement plans, and/or contractors bids to ensure project can be completed.
- Terms are 0% with a 5-year maturity. Payments will begin 90 days after loan closing.

# 2022 Appropriation

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- \$6 million new money to Border Fund!
- Board is in the process of reviewing its programs and considering new programs to continue its good work in the region

# Border Board Information

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Please visit our website at:  
[www.eoborderboard.org](http://www.eoborderboard.org)