



Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
and Benton County
Annual Report

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Edition 1 - 2021

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A Message from the Executive Director

I am proud and excited to provide the first ever, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) year-end County reports. The Council of Governments (COG) impacts many people throughout the Linn/Benton/Lincoln Region by our various services like delivering hot meals and a warm smile to a family in need, providing small business loans to improve the vibrancy and livability of our communities, or orchestrating multi-million dollar transportation initiatives.

In the next few pages, you will see highlights of the work we do and how that has affected your County over this last year. The report is not exhaustive, but merely a snapshot of the great work which is being authorized and championed by 19 cities, 3 Counties, the Siletz Tribe, and the Port of Newport in the Linn/Benton/Lincoln Region.

The work captured in this report is being carried out by approximately 200 staff in every corner of the Region. These dedicated individuals care deeply about the area and everyone living in it. They are committed to making the Region a more livable, safe, and prosperous area for generations to come. As you know, 2021 was extremely challenging in numerous ways and many of our staff have adapted to delivering services from their homes, in an ongoing response to the COVID pandemic. We have adjusted other programs and processes to provide continuous services safely to many of our consumers, where in-person contact was still required.

Here at the COG, we are always looking to improve and better serve the people of our Region. Last year we went beyond our normal practices and explored alternative funding opportunities to enhance and expand services. We have begun participating in regional conversations regarding housing solutions, and are leading an effort to explore a Regional Bias Incident Response system.

I am grateful for the support of our staff, our many community partners, and our active Board of Directors for the support and hard work it takes to provide these services to you.



Ryan Vogt
Executive Director



Senior and Disability Services

The Senior and Disability Services (SDS) department is committed to providing services and supports to keep older adults and people with disabilities independent, safe, secure, and healthy in your communities. SDS staff provide case management, and authorize and coordinate supportive services such as assistance with dressing, bathing, toileting, and grooming.

- Approximately 218 Benton County residents received these vital services in their home on any given day.
- Another 176 residents received these services daily in one of 22 longterm care facilities. These care facilities include: Assisted Living, Memory Care, Adult Foster Homes that serve older adults and people with physical disabilities, and one nursing facility.



Eligibility

Eligibility workers processed 6,957 applications for Food and Medical benefits in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties in 2021.

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) workers within the Senior and Disability Services department investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect of seniors and adults with disabilities.

- APS screeners received 767 calls of concern about the safety and health of these citizens in Benton County. These calls led to:
 - 145 community APS investigations.
 - 173 facility APS investigations.

Aging and Disability Resource Connection

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is a free service that offers the public a single point of entry to access resources, information and assistance on issues affecting older adults and people with disabilities regardless of their income.

- Call center agents answered 246 calls from Benton County residents requesting information and assistance in 2021.



Community Service Programs

OCWCOG's Community Services Program (CSP) Department served Benton County this past year through various programming, including:

Meals On Wheels: Meals on Wheels serves fresh, hot, nutritionally balanced meals to older adults, adults with disabilities, and spouses/life partners who often live alone and have limited resources or ability to care for themselves. Along with a nutritionally balanced lunch, MOW provides a daily well-check and social connection, thereby assisting limited-income, low-mobility clients to remain safe and independent in the home of their own choosing, for as long as possible while avoiding premature placement in a facility.

In 2021 a total of 39,349 meals were served in Benton to include:

- 37,415 home delivered meals, delivered to the porches of our homebound clients;
- 1,165 congregate meals, served “grab and go” style during the COVID-19 pandemic out of the Corvallis Elks meal site; and,
- 769 “blizzard boxes”, which contain 5 emergency shelf stable meals.

Meals on Wheels was awarded a \$13,000 District Grant from the Rotary Club of Corvallis. A multi-club grant, the Rotary Club of Corvallis partnered with Greater Corvallis, Philomath, Albany, and Newport Clubs to obtain matching grant funding from Rotary District 5110. The grant helps support Meals on Wheels in Benton County.



Stand-By-Me (\$BM): Stand By Me-Oregon is a financial empowerment program that replicates \$BM Delaware; a proven coaching model that helps provide financial stability to individuals and families. There are four primary outcomes: budgeting, reducing debt, improving credit ratings, and building savings.

- Coaches in Benton County are housed at Philomath's Strengthening Rural Families, KidCo Head Start, and the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV), with plans to recruit coaches for the Corvallis Community Center in 2022. This program was established from Benton County seed money, and now has a total of 10 trained coaches.
- This program was also the recipient of a 2021 Oregon Community Foundation Grant of \$36,000 to support its Latinx outreach and coaching efforts.

Money Management for Seniors: This program provides free assistance with personal money management tasks through specially trained volunteers. Service is personalized, confidential, and safe; and is offered free of charge to eligible individuals.

- There were 18 Benton County seniors or people with disabilities who were served in 2021.
 - 7 were assisted as Bill Pay clients who receive assistance in budgeting and check writing
 - 11 used the program for Representative Payee services. A Representative Payee is someone appointed by the Federal Benefit payers to manage benefit payments on behalf of an incapable beneficiary.



AmeriCorps Seniors - Foster Grandparent Program: National Service Foster Grandparent volunteers, sponsored by OCWCOG, tutor and mentor local youth ages 3-18 in public schools, after school, and through various literacy programs.

- In Benton County, Foster Grandparent volunteers served 17 total local youth through its mentoring and tutoring Program, chiefly online, due to the pandemic. Students from both Philomath Elementary School and College Hill Alternative High School were supported in person in 2021.

AmeriCorps Seniors – RSVP: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is America’s largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over. RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve. Volunteer community duty station opportunities include food pantry assistance, SHIBA Medicare counseling, money management coaching, meal delivery, reading with youth, tax preparation, gleaners, and more.

The most active RSVP program, The Senior Health Insurance Benefit Assistance Program (SHIBA), is administered by OCWCOG on behalf of the State of Oregon. This Program educates local residents on Medicare benefits elections. SHIBA counselors provide one-on-one free counseling as well as “New to Medicare” Seminar classes. Volunteers are certified by the State and serve both remotely and at the Corvallis Community Center.

- Last year, SHIBA volunteers served 526 Benton County residents.

AmeriCorps Seniors - Senior Companion Program: Senior Companion volunteers provide assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. Through this program, volunteers keep seniors independent longer and provide respite to family caregivers.

- In 2021, 6 volunteers provided 704 rides for local homebound seniors to complete important tasks such as to get to the store or doctor. The rides were provided to seniors residing in Corvallis, Adair Village, Philomath and Monroe. These clients were not eligible for Ride Line, and are screened and referred by in-house Options Counselors.



Oregon Project Independence: Oregon Project Independence (OPI) is a program providing assistance that supports daily activities of living which can be provided by home care workers or in-home care agencies. Examples of in-home assistance includes help with dressing, meal prep, bathing, shopping, and housekeeping. OPI is an alternative to Medicaid and offers up to 20 hours a month of in-home assistance.

- There was approximately 26 Benton County residents that benefited from this program in 2021.

These community-facing programs were provided thanks to braided funding from federal, state and city contracts and grants, as well as supports from Samaritan Health Services Social Accountability Grants, Trust Management Services, Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund, and the Oregon Community Foundation.

Benton County Veterans' Service Office

The Benton County Veterans' Service Office (VSO) assists veterans and veteran families with submitting claims for Veterans' Affairs (VA) benefits, including compensation, pension, survivor's benefits, and VA Healthcare. Our Veterans' Service Officers advocate on behalf of the claimant to ensure all benefits for which the claimant is eligible, are received. A few things that happened in VSO for the year 2021 are:

Our Veterans' Service Officers completed 574 appointments with veterans. These appointments were conducted over the phone, as our office remained closed due to COVID19. These appointments ranged from discussing eligibility, to filing for benefits. Our services include assisting surviving spouses and families in applying for benefits, assisting veterans and dependents with education benefits, applying for VA healthcare, appealing VA decisions, and filing for compensation or pension benefits. Our Officers don't stop there, they also help veterans navigate through the VA Healthcare Community Care program, and through general community resources such as housing assistance, home loans, crisis navigation, financial assistance, and COVID19 resources.



- Our office assisted veterans and surviving spouses file 205 claims in 2021. These claims included applying for the VA Disability Compensation Program and VA Income Based Pension Program. We also assisted surviving spouses with applying for VA Survivors Income Based Pension Program, VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), and VA Burial Benefits. In 2021, our county had 111 claims awarded to veterans and their surviving spouses.. Those claims brought in a total of \$192,242 in new monetary awards for veterans and surviving spouses. Additionally, a total of another \$655,512 was awarded in retroactive funds (money owed to them dating back to their original filing date).



- VSO was awarded a \$4,000 Suicide Prevention grant from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. With these funds, our office is sponsoring courses in Mental Health First Aid for Adults, and Mental Health First Aid for Veterans and Military Families. Our office also organized a Cold Weather Gear handout event in December for unhoused veterans in Benton County.

Community and Economic Development

Transportation Services and Planning

Transportation is the largest program area within Community and Economic Development (CED), and provides an array of services including:

Cascades West Ride Line: The Ride Line program is the region's Non-Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT) for physical, dental, drug and alcohol, and mental health treatment. For the year 2021 Ride Line has made an incredible impact in Benton County by:

- Providing 27,662 rides for 1,303 people.
- These rides put over \$1,026,000 back into Benton County.
- Planning the expansion of Ride Line to Medicare consumers through benefits with the Samaritan Advantage Health Plan. This project will launch in 2022.

Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO): CAMPO's role is to coordinate transportation planning efforts in the Corvallis Urbanized Area and to serve as a forum for cooperative decision-making. CAMPO works closely with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and assists in coordinating regional transit, facilitates public participation in transportation planning, and oversees specialized projects. Some of the 2021 accomplishments for CAMPO were:

- Obtaining stimulus funds awards in the amount of \$1,025,840, which is being passed through to local projects:
 - Benton County Projects:
 - Gas tax shortage/replacement Irish Bend, Fern Road, 53rd/County Club
 - Traffic Impact Assessment 53rd/County Club
 - City of Corvallis/Oregon State University Projects;
 - 35th/Campus Crossing Improvements
 - 11th Street Bikeway
 - Monroe Ave/Kings
 - City of Philomath Projects:
 - 11th Street Bike/Ped Improvements
 - Willow Lane/Cedar Street Multi-use Path
 - Adair Village Projects:
 - Future Trail investment
- Prepared the CAMPO 20-year Regional Transportation Plan for adoption in early 2022. Unique to this RTP is a "corridor analysis" in which planning is focused on regional connections between member communities.
- CAMPO multi-modal count program –Developed reports capturing the number of people walking and riding bikes on the Eric E. Austin multi-use path in south Corvallis.
- Provided in-kind match for both a Corvallis Bikeshare Study, and an e-bike Pilot Program, which is a partnership with Corvallis/Benton County Economic Development.
- Worked on the Adair Village Trails Plan with an anticipated completion in early summer 2022.



Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACTION): provides a forum for local governments to collaborate on local, regional, and State transportation issues in the Region. The CWACTION is chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and provides input, advice, and recommendations to the OTC and ODOT on State transportation plans and policies. In 2021, CWACTION provided input on multiple State funding programs including recommendations for funding priorities in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), reviewed applications for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Discretionary Grant Program, and provided feedback on ODOT's "Leverage" funds that were added to ODOT projects within the region.



Transportation Options Program: This program provides outreach, education, and carpool/vanpool matching services for commuters living or working in the Region. The program connects commuters within the Region and beyond, to major cities such as Eugene, Salem, and Portland. Our program administered a challenge for bike month in May with 42 participants across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties traveling over 2,400 miles, saving over 2,000 lbs of CO2, and burning 200,000 calories! 33 participants received safety related prizes. Staff participated at in-person tabling events at the OSU Beaver Fair and Linn Benton Community College Welcome Day engaging over 100 people. The annual Get There Challenge in October had statewide participation of over 1,400 participants and 13 prize winners from our region.

Corvallis Bikeshare Plan: You may know this program as *Pedal Corvallis*. This project is in the system design phase after a pilot project was launched in 2016 producing an average of 400 trips a month over a four year period. The project was awarded a \$25,000 Transportation Options Innovation grant to conduct the Corvallis Bikeshare study.

Other grants received from STIF to assist in transportation improvement efforts in Benton County are:

- \$280,000 to do the Mobility Hub design work for LBCC and OSU Hubs.
- \$150,000 to update the Human Services Coordinated Plans for Linn/Benton/Lincoln Counties.
- \$64,280 to build the Regional Transit Access Plan.

Other transportation related projects that impact Benton County are:

- Completion of the Seamless Transportation Project connecting bus service to all three Counties, with real-time bus information and online ticketing.
- Completion of the Highway 99W feasibility study, which evaluated the possibility of providing bus service between Junction City and McMinnville.
- Started the Adair Village Trails Plan.

Community Development

The Community Development program seeks to improve the quality of life for residents in Benton County. OCWCOG has professional staff to assist communities, especially smaller communities, with specialized tasks. Here are some of the projects Community Development has worked on in Benton County:

- Providing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services to Philomath.
- Providing staffing to the Cascades West Regional Consortium and helped secure a \$130,000 grant from Business Oregon to fund a wetlands mitigation bank feasibility study.
- Secured technical assistance from Department of Land Conservation and Development to develop a Regional Housing Toolkit, working with Philomath on their housing development planning goals.

Economic Development

OCWCOG provides staffing for the Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD), which creates, adopts and works to implement the priorities of the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDSD). OCWCOG supports local economic development initiatives through research, grant writing, convening, project development and management, and technical assistance.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Grants: CARES funding is designed to assist partners with responding to the specific recovery needs in the unique communities across the district. Eligible applicants included City and County governments in the Region to support economic resiliency and recovery. In Benton County three CARES micro-grants were awarded:

- \$10,000 was awarded to the City of Monroe for an Economic Development Plan. This grant will cover costs related to hiring a consultant to assist in the creation, decision-making, and implementation of Monroe's first ever strategic 5-year Economic Development Plan.
- \$4,270 was awarded to the City of Corvallis for a County Business Portal. This comprehensive portal will be available in both English and Spanish providing tools and information relevant to industry and city. It will provide business start-up information as well as links to resources for disaster preparedness, hiring employees and obtaining capital.. In addition, the site will devote a section to listing available commercial property and buildable lands inventories.
- \$7,450 was awarded to City of Corvallis to upgrade the Corvallis Chamber conference room. Improvements were made to the Chamber's conference room in order to provide necessary accommodations for the local business community.



Cascade West Business Lending: Cascades West Business Lending (CWBL) efforts aim to encourage new employment opportunities, and promote a stable and diversified economy in the tri-County Region. CWBL delivers expert commercial loan packaging, closing, servicing, and collection services through various direct and indirect loan programs. Our team provides administrative services, technical assistance, and professional lending services through contractual partnerships to local government and non-profit organizations, who offer economic development oriented commercial loans. Our Small Business Lending program currently has over \$3.45 million in loans throughout our tri-county region

- In Benton County we funded a \$576,000 loan to a veterinary clinic in Corvallis.

Technology Service Contracts

OCWCOG Business Services provides Information Technology (IT) services and supports to member agencies. In Benton County, we have agreements to provide support to:

- Philomath Fire & Rescue
- Adair Village



