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Oregon Community Foundation Supports More Resilient Communities Through Better Libraries

OCF distributes nearly \$200,000 in grants for much-needed support

Portland, Ore. – Libraries are critical social infrastructure for Oregon communities, yet they are underfunded and can't reach everyone. The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) has worked for years to alleviate this problem, and today announced that its Oregon Library Innovation Fund (OLIF) has awarded 10 grants since 2015 totaling nearly \$197,000 to support libraries through capital improvements, programming, materials and services.

Oregon's 131 libraries account for 224 branches and the highest circulation per capita in the United States, yet they receive one of the nation's lowest percentages of government funding. In response, OCF assessed the needs and capabilities of libraries in 2015 and found that they provide a wide range of essential community services, ranging from civic and community engagement and early childhood learning to digital inclusion and workforce development. In the two years following this assessment, OCF's donors responded through the Oregon Library Innovation Fund, which awarded nearly \$197,000 to support libraries in one or more of these roles.

The Oregon Library Innovation Fund, made possible through generous Oregonian donors, awarded grants to library organizations that are resourceful in securing ongoing funding and proactive in serving their communities. For example, the Cornelius Public Library is working with local partners to transform the library into a community center in a mixed-use housing project, leveraging its visibility to reach underserved families, improve English and Spanish literacy and serve the community in multiple ways.

"Libraries are not the hushed, staid places of the past; they have become lively neighborhood centers and are key contributors to resilient communities," said Max Williams, CEO and President of The Oregon Community Foundation. "The Oregon Community Foundation is

thrilled to support a community-centric vision for libraries throughout the state of Oregon with programs and initiatives that reflect the dynamically shifting roles of libraries.”

Along with Cornelius Public Library, libraries in Curry and Lane counties received funds to make capital improvements that will foster their ability to serve their communities. These expansions and new constructions support civic and community engagement through larger, improved spaces. Libraries in Linn County also received funds to create a courier service that facilitates resource-sharing and to develop a floating Spanish-language book collection.

For more information on OCF’s Oregon Library Innovation Fund and the improvements it is making to libraries throughout the state, visit oregoncf.org/OLIF.

About The Oregon Community Foundation

The mission of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) is to improve lives for all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. OCF brings together generous Oregonians - individuals, families, businesses and organizations - to put donated money to work in Oregon, supporting community causes and making a positive impact.

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