



RESPONSE TO BUSINESS OREGON EMERGENCY BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT FUND RFP

Summary

The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Economic Development District for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties, is applying to Business Oregon's *Emergency Business Assistance Grant Fund* for the proposed MWVCOG Round 2 Emergency Business Assistance grant program (EBA). The EBA comprises a multi-jurisdictional effort between MWVCOG, Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP), Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties and the local governments within the three-county region.

The proposed MWVCOG EBA application extends the reach of existing small business support programs in the region, funded by our local governments, private foundations, and other fund awards. This merged iteration of previous programs streamlines marketing efforts, simplifies the application process, and reduces the cumulative multi-jurisdictional staff time spent administering bespoke programs, in alignment with the guidelines and requirements as established by Business Oregon and the EBA program. It also simplifies available support opportunities for businesses while ensuring an equitable distribution of funds throughout the region based on location, business type, and demographic factors.

Amount of award requested

MWVCOG is requesting \$500,000 in support of a regional, multi-jurisdictional small business emergency support program in Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This request is offered as a 2:1 match from over \$1,092,000 committed in existing programs.

Municipalities and/or counties proposed to be served by the award

In response to COVID-19 and Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-21 on March 27, 2020, Marion and Yamhill Counties each worked to initiate small business emergency support grant programs to help support and sustain businesses voluntarily closed or with reduced operations to address health and economic concerns. Combined, these programs contributed an estimated \$1,092,000 to 842 small businesses, including sole proprietors, with under 25 employees that experienced hardship from COVID-19 or Executive Order 20-12, and were unable to receive support through the PPP, EIDL or other federal programs. Each county's program was successful in supporting small businesses while learning valuable lessons for process, criteria, and marketing providing a foundation to run the proposed MWVCOG Round 2 *Emergency Business Assistance* program.

In response to the demand and unmet need identified in these previous programs, the MWVCOG, WWP and each county (to aid and assist our member governments and unincorporated businesses) propose a regional iteration on the existing programs that builds on the strengths of each program while efficiently leveraging existing and new partnerships to streamline a previously bespoke workflow, while helping our regional business community have a one-stop in applying for support.

The proposed MWVCOG Round 2 *Emergency Business Assistance* program comprises a multi-jurisdictional effort between MWVCOG, WWP, SEDCOR, **Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties and all local governments within the three-county region, including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde**. Because of the practices built by the counties existing programs and their regional partners, the infrastructure for marketing, accepting, reviewing, and distributing grant applications is already established and is able to meet Business Oregon's goal of being operational pending award from Business Oregon. The proposed iteration will merge the intents of previous programs by expanding support to the small business community affected by COVID-19, with Business Oregon's specific distribution criteria.

Marion County's program provided \$842,000 of funding from Oregon Video Lottery Funds to 742 small businesses. Qualified businesses were defined by:

- Being located in Marion County;
- Less than six (6) FTE including sole proprietors and 501c3;
- Experienced hardship from COVID-19 or executive order 20-12; and,
- Unable to receive funding from CARE Act sources at time of application.

Marion County partnered with WWP to manage the grant program, including marketing, and moved from Board Order to application acceptance in nine (9) days. All \$842,000 was distributed through awards of up to \$5,000 to 742 businesses within forty-five days. Equity was a key concern in applicants' access to the program and a broad marketing program was managed by WWP and Marion County for four (4) days which engaged 20 cities, 8 chambers, and four (4) regional economic development organizations to market the program in English and Spanish through email lists, social media and traditional media. Application materials were also provided in English and Spanish.

Yamhill County's program provided \$250,000 from a County General Fund allocation to 100 small businesses. Qualified businesses were defined by:

- Being located in Yamhill County;
- Less than fifteen (15) FTE including sole proprietors and 501c3;
- Experienced hardship from COVID-19 or executive order 20-12; and,
- Unable to receive funding from CARE Act sources at time of application.

Yamhill County partnered with SEDCOR to manage the grant program and moved from Board Order to application acceptance in ten (10) days with all \$250,000 distributed to 100 businesses in forty-five days. Equity was a key concern in applicant's access to the program and a broad marketing program was managed by SEDCOR and Yamhill County for nine days that engaged 10 cities, 3 chambers, 5 downtown associations, 2 tourism groups and 3 regional economic development organizations to market the program in English and Spanish through email lists, social media and traditional media. Application materials were also provided in English and Spanish.

The proposed iteration utilizing Business Oregon Emergency Business Assistance funds would extend the reach of the existing programs to:

- Cover businesses, including sole proprietors with up to 25 employees;
- Being located in participating counties, *including the addition of Polk County and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to the partnership to better align with the MWVCOG, WWP and SEDCOR service areas*; and
- Graduated awards in alignment with Business Oregon’s award allocation model including appropriate allocations for HDP, sole proprietors, and rural communities.

This application is intended to be a cooperative, regional approach to supporting *all* cities, and unincorporated areas within Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde – all served by and members of the MWVCOG and the Economic Development District.

MWVCOG and WWP staff will be available to assist our regional partners and communities in helping market these resources and materials to targeted populations via our established networks and on the local level.

Marketing activities and outreach to encourage participation by historically disadvantaged populations.

Previous grant programs administered by WWP in response to COVID-19 were marketed heavily by a collaboration of regional partners. This group includes SEDCOR, Chemeketa Community College’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Oregon Employment Department, Willamette Workforce Partnership, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, most all Chambers’ of Commerce and the MWV Tourism Association. In addition, as we evolve and respond to Business Oregon and private foundation awards, we have continued to increase and evolve our marketing materials and partners in order to ensure opportunity and partnership by historically disadvantaged populations.

Please see information below on marketing new funds, if awarded, after engagement and feedback from our *Mid-Valley Community Outreach Group*.

Description of plans to market the grant program

Prior grant programs managed by the Willamette Workforce Partnership during this pandemic have assured information and applications are available in other languages, and have been recognized for this work. *All marketing materials will be deployed in advance of the application submission “window” in all languages and formats as provided by Business Oregon. Marketing of the program will occur for at least ten (10) days prior to application acceptance in order to allow sufficient marketing and time for interested parties to prepare and review materials in advance of the application “window”.* Please see marketing activities to HDP groups below for a more comprehensive outline of plans to market the grant program.

Description of local grant/loan announcement and application process

To ensure equity of access, and in alignment with our existing programs, we propose to use a web based digital application process with a 48-hour window under which applications will be accepted, not first come first serve (an additional application “window” can occur if funds were to

remain available). This is intended to improve an applicants' ability to apply despite demands on their time, technology, or language barriers. Applications will consist of required questions for determining award eligibility and geographic location with optional, self-identified demographic questions.

The web based digital application process will sort all qualified applications into "pools" of candidates first by *qualified* and *not qualified* then into pools represented in the fund allocation model below which accounts for HDP, sole proprietors, and geographic locations. Awardees will be chosen by a randomized lottery process from these pools. The program managers will review all grant awardees' applications for validity, prior to announcement of award.

Based on feedback from other grant programs throughout the state, and our own recent experience, we feel a structured lottery process is the most equitable for all applicants. In combination with a thorough marketing approach plus a 48-hour application window this process reduces the time availability and technology disadvantages of a first-come first-serve model. It also eliminates the unknown implicit bias of human application review.

All applicants will be notified as to whether or not they will be receiving an award within 5 (business) days of the application close period. All disbursements will be made in accordance with the guidelines and requirements established by the Business Oregon grant.

Marketing activities, program announcement, application process and equitable distribution to businesses owned by historically disadvantaged population groups (HDP)

Marketing for HDP

Prior grant programs managed by the Willamette Workforce Partnership during this pandemic have assured information and applications are available in other languages, and have been recognized for this work. *All marketing materials will be deployed in advance of the application submission "window" in all languages and formats as provided by Business Oregon. Marketing of the program will occur for at least ten (10) days prior to application acceptance in order to allow sufficient marketing and time for interested parties to prepare and review materials in advance of the application "window".*

To expand the reach of previously established marketing efforts, the region's economic development organizations, listed in the next section, have already convened a group to help communicate with and advocate for historically disadvantaged populations (HDP) during this pandemic and we have been "meeting" weekly.

This new *Mid-Valley Community Outreach Group* is composed of the Latinx community (including Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), a non-profit, 501c4, whose mission is representing Latinx and agricultural communities in our region; the Farmworker Housing Development Corporation; the Oregon Human Development Corporation; and Mano a Mano, a Salem-Keizer based non-profit organization representing the Latino community organization), members and representatives of the Russian Orthodox community, members and representatives of the Vietnamese community, representatives of the Tribe, and others agencies and representatives of HDP groups that are interested in joining the Community Outreach Group. Each participating member has agreed to assist in disseminating information through community specific informal networks which represents the largest demographic populations within the Mid-Valley

Application process for HDP:

Web based digital applications will be accepted for a 48-hour window, not first come first serve, to ensure equity of access. This will improve applicants' ability to apply despite demands on their time, technology, or language barriers. Applications will be available in all forms as provided and committed by Business Oregon. Applications will consist of required questions for determining award eligibility and geographic location with optional self-identified demographic questions.

Based upon feedback from the *Mid-Valley Community Outreach Group*, although the application process is web-based, Willamette Workforce Partnership has confirmed they will make physical paper copies of the application available to those who may have limited access to internet/computers and staff will be available to enter the data on behalf of applicants submitting paper copies. The application also clearly states that WWP staff are available by phone to assist in completing the simple application form.

Award review and distribution for HDP:

A web based digital application process will sort all qualified applications into "pools" of candidates relative to our fund allocation model, in Section 10, which accounts for HDP, sole proprietors, and geographic location. Based on 2017 census data for the three- county region shows 12% of businesses are minority owned and 29% are women owned. Our "pooled" lottery system drawing on self-identified demographic responses will help ensure equitable allocations are made to HDP.

Estimated geographical distribution of awards

To ensure equitable geographic distribution of funds throughout Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, we have established a regional distribution model that groups municipalities into zones. These zones were established using historical approaches for resources such as transit areas. Using a 60/40 rural/urban distribution, the rural allocation will be allocated across twelve (12) geographical zones and the urban allocation will be divided across three (3) zones. The division of funds per zone are based on the population of cities within the zones

Estimated demographic distribution/percent of allocation awarded to sole proprietors

In effort to provide equitable funding to historically underrepresented populations we will also ensure minority and women owned businesses are allocated funds based on optional self-identifying questions in the application. Of the total businesses in the program's region, 12% are minority owned and 29% women owned according to 2017 census data. Our allocation model accounts for those percentages and aims to provide a minimum allocation to those groups.

Estimated percent of awards to sole proprietors

The proposed MWVCOG Round 2 Emergency Business Assistance program will also allocate no less than 50% of program funds to sole proprietors, as required by the Business Oregon program.

Allocation Model (projected):

Matching Funds - MC Grant Program	\$842,000
Matching Funds - YC Grant Program	\$250,000
Total Matching Funds	\$1,092,000
2:1 Matching Request from Business Oregon	\$500,000

ANTICIPATED GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Marion County	Allocation
East County - Detroit, Idanha, Gates, Mill City, Stayton, Sublimity	\$16,189
Central County - Scotts Mills, Gervais, Silverton, Mt. Angel	\$19,109
North County - Woodburn, Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, St. Paul	\$36,862
South County - Turner, Jefferson, Aumsville	\$10,641
Keizer (Urban)	\$32,563
Salem (Urban - Includes West Salem in Polk County)	\$138,041
Unincorporated Marion County	\$72,752
Total Marion County	\$326,157
Polk County	
Dallas & Falls City	\$19,359
Independence & Monmouth	\$22,593
Unincorporated Polk County & Grand Ronde	\$23,968
Total Polk County**	\$65,920
Yamhill County	
North County - Yamhill, Carlton, Lafayette	\$8,209
Central County - Dayton, Newberg, Dundee	\$36,325
West County - Willamina, Amity, Sheridan	\$11,948
McMinnville (Urban)	\$29,396
Unincorporated Yamhill County	\$22,046
Total Yamhill County*	\$107,923
Combined Rural	\$300,000
Combined Urban	\$200,000

***Allocations weighted to 40% urban; 60% rural

**West Salem is included in Marion County totals; Grand Ronde is included in Polk County Totals

* Willamina is included in Yamhill County totals

ANTICIPATED DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

	Total
Minority Owned Businesses (12%)	\$60,000
Woman Owned Businesses (29%)	\$145,000
Sole Proprietors (50%)	\$250,000

***Based on 2017 US census data

Description of executive and team in charge of program.

The executive team will be comprised of:

- Renata Wakeley, Acting Director for Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
The MWVCOG which serves as our local Economic Development District (EDD) and member services organization representing the geographically represented eligible entities. MWVCOG has successfully partnered with SEDCOR and WWP on the distribution of grant and loan funds on behalf of our members governments.

- Kim Parker-Llerenas, Executive Director of Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP)
Over the course of her career, Kim has led a variety of public and nonprofit organizations in the fields of housing, early childhood education, and workforce. She entered the workforce world in 2009 as the Executive Director of the workforce board serving Clackamas County. While in that position, she also served as Executive Director of the Clackamas County Business Alliance. After leaving Clackamas, she lead the Employment Department's Business and Employment Services Division as the Assistant Director. In summer of 2017, she returned to the local, nonprofit world when she was appointed the Executive Director of Willamette Workforce Partnership. Kim holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Willamette University.

- Gary Mueller, Director of Administration and Finance for WWP
After many years in lead financial positions at a variety of private sector industries, Gary moved into the non-profit world as Willamette Workforce Partnership's Director of Finance shortly after its inception in 2007. He took a break from WWP in 2015 to work with Oregon's four newest Workforce Boards setting up fiscal systems, developing policies, and recruiting and training permanent financial leadership. Gary returned to WWP in March of 2017 to assume an expanded role that includes the administrative functions of the organization as well as the financial work. Gary holds a BS in Business Administration/Finance from Colorado State University.

- Dean Craig, Director of Business Services for WWP
Dean grew up in the Mid-Willamette Valley working in agriculture and manufacturing until his mid-thirties. A few years after becoming the Operations Manager for a national manufacturing company's local facility he was recruited to lead the operations of a local staffing agency. Dean spent the next fifteen years building partnerships with businesses all over the area and 14 of those years was a board member, including chair of the Mid-Valley workforce development board. Dean has been an employee of Willamette Workforce Partnership since April 2018.

This grant application supports the Mid-Valley Regional Solutions priorities and Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team efforts.

We are pleased to receive feedback from Business Oregon on additional guidance or direction in marketing and outreach of this program, if awarded funding.