

Community-Initiated Projects for Oregon Included in the Fiscal Year 2026 Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Bill

1. **\$2.98 million for the University of Oregon to create a bachelor's level program within the Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health to address critical shortages in the pediatric behavioral health workforce.** Students in this innovative training program based in Portland will be integrated into pediatric primary care settings to deliver evidence-based services.
 - "We are grateful for Senators Merkley and Wyden's steadfast commitment to supporting the wellbeing of Oregon's youth and their continued advocacy for the Ballmer Institute's efforts to expand the child behavioral health workforce," **said Katie McLaughlin, Executive Director, The Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health, University of Oregon.** "This funding will make it easier for Oregon families to access high-quality child behavioral health care directly from their pediatrician's office."
2. **\$2.5 million to Clackamas County for the construction of the Center for Treatment and Recovery, a substance abuse recovery center.** The center will help ensure individuals struggling with substance use disorder receive timely person-centered support, treatment, and resources.
 - "Clackamas County is focused on radical compassion for individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. This Recovery Campus will be integral in making treatment and recovery services available in our community. We are very appreciative of the Senators' partnership in prioritizing care for our neighbors," **said Ben West, Clackamas County Commissioner.**
3. **\$2 million to Wasco County for the Columbia Gorge Resolution Center, a comprehensive behavioral health campus in Wasco County,** to address mental health service gaps in rural communities.
 - "Wasco County is immensely grateful for the hard work of Senator Jeff Merkley and Senator Ron Wyden to help secure funding for the Columbia Gorge Crisis Resolution Center. This critical investment will significantly enhance our community's ability to address mental health needs, provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals in crisis, and will reduce strain on our regional emergency rooms and law enforcement agencies," **said Tyler Stone, Wasco County Administrator.**
4. **\$1.7 million to the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) for their Mobile Dental Clinic project.** The funding will allow OIT in Klamath Falls to purchase two mobile dental clinics to provide dental care to underserved and at-risk residents in rural Southern Oregon.
 - "I want to express my sincere gratitude to Senators Merkley and Wyden for their unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of rural Oregonians," **said Oregon Tech President Nagi Naganathan.** "Their support of our Mobile Dental Clinics project will help us advance equitable access to oral healthcare in Klamath and Lake Counties. Once enacted into law, this initiative will allow Oregon Tech to roll out two mobile clinics that will deliver vital services, including oral cancer

screenings, preventive treatments, dental cleanings, x-rays, and health education, directly to the communities that need them most. This is not just about expanding dental care. It is about bringing purpose-driven innovation to the frontlines of rural health and giving our students the opportunity to learn through meaningful impact, while simultaneously improving the quality of life of Oregonians across our great state.”

5. **\$1.611 million for Lines for Life to hire additional staff and conduct youth workforce and volunteer training to expand the reach of YouthLine**, their statewide youth suicide prevention program. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death of young people in Oregon.
 - “Young people across the country are reaching out for help and support on the YouthLine – and thanks to Senators Merkley and Wyden, volunteers at the YouthLine are there to answer the call,” **said Dwight Holton, CEO of Lines for Life**. “This federal support is helping us build national capacity to support mental wellness, based right here in Oregon – with more YouthLine volunteers answering calls, texts and chats, broader community engagement, and youth development that is helping us build a behavioral health workforce for tomorrow.”
6. **\$1.6 million for Lane Community College to purchase equipment for their new Industry and Trades Education Center**. This project addresses a critical workforce gap in skilled labor by establishing a center that focuses on apprenticeship training, construction technology, manufacturing technology, and other skilled labor sectors.
 - “We are immensely thankful to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for their advocacy and support. This funding will enable Lane Community College to develop cutting-edge curricula and acquire essential equipment for training the next generation of skilled workers in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity. Our collaboration with industry leaders, bolstered by this funding, will help us meet the evolving needs of the workforce, driving economic vitality and success for our graduates and our region,” **said LCC President Stephanie Bulger**.
7. **\$1.5 million for Valley Family Health Care, Inc. to construct a modern facility in Nyssa that will integrate medical, behavioral, and dental care** in this medically underserved area of rural Eastern Oregon. This will replace the current facilities in Nyssa, which are aging and spread out across the city. By combining services under one roof, this Federally Qualified Health Center will increase use of health care services.
 - “Valley Family is so grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for their support over the years. Their dedication to the healthcare needs of Eastern Oregonians is apparent in their leadership in including \$1.5 million in their list of priorities for funding as a U.S. Senate Community Initiated Project,” **said Ken Hart, CEO, Valley Family Health Care**. “These funds would help Valley Family combine its medical and dental clinics in Nyssa into a new integrated clinic. The new clinic would allow for additional capacity for medical and dental services as well as allow us to better integrate behavioral health services for the community as well. Last year Valley Family doctors, dentists and behavioral health specialists served over 2,000 patients with 6,000 visits to our two Nyssa locations. Providing these

needed healthcare services in Nyssa helps those that have difficulties traveling to get services as well as supporting the economic development needs of the area by keeping these well-paying jobs in the community.”

8. **\$1.5 million for the City of Portland to expand Portland Fire & Rescue’s successful Mobile Medication for Opioid Use Disorder pilot program.** This program enables them to quickly respond to and treat opioid overdose in the community, saving many lives.
 - “Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of our community with their support for Portland Fire & Rescue’s Community Health Overdose Response Program,” **said Mayor Keith Wilson.** “Securing this funding will help save lives by improving emergency response times and expanding access to healthcare for individuals and communities in need.”
9. **\$1.4 million for the Addictions Recovery Center to complete the final phase of construction for a 24-bed treatment facility for addiction recovery in Jackson County.** This project will allow for an increase of at least 100 individuals to its treatment program annually and allow for greater access and significantly reduced wait times for patients in Southern Oregon.
 - “Thanks to the steadfast leadership of Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden, the vision of a new residential treatment facility in our community will become a reality. Their advocacy isn’t just about policy – it’s about saving lives and restoring hope for individuals and families in Southern Oregon,” **said Eric Guyer, CEO, Addictions Recovery Center.**
10. **\$1.369 million for Vision to Learn to purchase and equip a mobile vision clinic van** to expand their free, exam-to-glasses services to students, primarily in rural Willamette Valley and Central Oregon public schools.
 - “More than 3 million children across the country go to school every day without the glasses they need,” **said Vision To Learn Founder Austin Beutner.** “Every child in every school, everywhere in the country, should have the glasses they need to succeed in school and in life. Senators Merkley and Wyden’s support is helping ensure many more children in Oregon get the vision care they need.”
11. **\$1.356 for Grande Ronde Hospital to purchase a new nuclear medicine machine.** As the only hospital in rural Union County, their current machine is operating past its intended lifespan. This new diagnostic machine will enable treatment for a variety of diseases, including many types of cancers and heart disease.
 - “We are incredibly grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for their continued advocacy on behalf of rural communities. This funding will allow us to upgrade our nuclear medicine equipment with advanced imaging technology, supporting earlier diagnoses, faster treatment decisions, and better outcomes for our patients. It’s an investment that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we serve,” **said Jeremy Davis, President/CEO, Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics.**
12. **\$1.304 million to Deschutes County to equip a 15 bed sub-acute child psychiatric facility in Central Oregon.** The funding will be used to purchase furniture, fixtures, and equipment for what will be the first facility of its kind east of the I-5 corridor.

- “I am so grateful that Senators Merkley and Wyden appreciate the importance of addressing acute mental health needs early in a person’s life and have made funding for this youth psychiatric facility a federal priority. There are no facilities like this east of the I-5 corridor, so this represents an opportunity to serve families both in Central Oregon and the entire eastern two thirds of the state,” **said Commissioner Phil Chang, Deschutes County.**

13. \$1.3 million to the Lomakatsi Restoration Project for their Inter-Tribal Ecological Forestry Training Program.

Funds will be used to train young adults in a year-long program, where they will gain experience in forest health and fuels reduction while performing critical wildfire prevention work in high wildfire risk areas.

- “We are very grateful for Senator Merkley's and Senator Wyden's ongoing support for ecological fuels reduction and tribal workforce development and training in rural Klamath and Harney Counties,” **said Marko Bey, Lomakatsi Executive Director.** “This funding will allow us to employ 12 inter-tribal young adults (ages 18-30, and veterans up to age 35) in a year-long training program to accomplish strategic forest health and fuels reduction work on Tribal Trust and Forest Service lands in areas at high risk of wildfire, while providing a pathway to natural resource careers through professional certification and hands-on experience.”

14. \$1.25 million for Harney District Hospital for Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment.

This frontier Critical Access Hospital’s HVAC system is nearing the end of its life, and the closest larger hospital is located 130 miles away. Ensuring the hospital has a reliable heating and cooling system is essential for local community members and people traveling through this extremely rural area.

- “This funding will allow Harney County Health District to make critical upgrades to our Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system, which are currently starting to fail, to ensure we are able to continue serving our community with high-quality health care. These upgrades will also mean increased energy efficiency and financial savings to the District for many years to come. We are grateful to Sens. Merkley and Wyden for their advocacy on our behalf,” **said Bob Gomes, CEO, Harney County Health District.**

15. \$1.03 million to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) to expand behavioral health services for the local community and Tribal members.

The funding will go toward renovation and expansion of an existing building owned by CTCLUSI in Florence, with the aim of increasing access to behavioral health services and to reduce waitlists for patient care.

16. \$1.023 million to the Amani Center to construct a permanent facility for child abuse intervention and assessments in Columbia County.

This will enable the Amani Center to better serve victims of child abuse and their families by doubling the center’s forensic medical service capacity, ensuring quality evidence collection for legal proceedings, and increasing privacy and safety at the Center.

- We are so grateful that Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden care so deeply about the health and safety of children in our community and are supporting this project,” **said Amelia Kercher, Amani Center Executive Director.** “The Amani

Center provides Forensic Interviews and Medical Assessments for child victims of abuse/crime and provide support and services for their families and caregivers. This new facility will allow us to serve twice as many children, create space to house a much-needed mental health program and create a trauma-informed place where healing can begin. This project was started with the generous gift to the organization of a piece of property from long-time donors Eric and Christine Dahlgren. Eric tragically passed away during the planning phase of the project, but I know he would be incredibly proud today to know that Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden are supporting this project and are helping to ensure that children in our rural county are able to access the care that they need long into the future, by helping us build this permanent home for our center.”

17. \$800,000 to Central Oregon Community College (COCC) for their Fire Science program.

The funding will expand and improve workforce training programs for structural and wildland firefighters.

- “We’re deeply grateful to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for their support, which will allow COCC to strengthen and expand our firefighter training programs,” **said Greg Pereira, President, Central Oregon Community College.** “In a region like Central Oregon, where wildfire risk is an ever-present challenge, this funding represents a critical investment in community safety and preparedness. By equipping both structural and wildland firefighters with the skills and tools they need, we’re helping to protect our communities and natural landscapes for generations to come.”

18. \$750,000 for Mental Health and Addiction Advocates of Oregon to complete the renovation of their Recovery Campus—the first peer-run, no-barrier behavioral health center in East Portland. The Campus will provide mental health and addiction recovery services throughout the Portland Metro region.

- "Today marks a pivotal moment for mental health and addiction recovery in Oregon. We at the Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon (MHA AO) are profoundly grateful for the passage of the Senate Bill, which has secured essential funding for the MHA AO Recovery Campus,” **said Janie Gullickson, Executive Director & Tara McCarthy, Development Director, MHA AO.** “This vital support will allow us to provide peer recovery services to thousands of individuals each year. This funding stands as a testament to our collective commitment to ensure that hope, healing and recovery are accessible and available throughout Oregon and beyond. "

19. \$652,000 to the Morrow County Health District to purchase a new Computed Tomography (CT) machine at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, a Critical Access Hospital in rural Heppner. The hospital’s current CT equipment is nearing the end of its life and can no longer be upgraded. The new machine will provide a number of benefits, including an 80 percent reduction of radiation to patients and employees and a significant reduction in wait times for results on critically ill and trauma patients.

- “Morrow County Health District is very pleased to hear this news. The CT Scanner plays a very important role in assisting providers in diagnosing and making treatment decisions quickly. Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden understand

rural healthcare financial challenges and the need for replacement of vital patient care equipment. Their support of this funding request will help the hospital to continue saving lives,” **said Bob Houser, Interim CEO, Morrow County Health District.**

20. \$400,000 for Eastern Oregon University to support its Early College Initiatives program.

This program works with students in grades 6–11 in rural areas to transition to higher education and into the workforce through hands-on learning, personalized guidance, and partnerships.

- “We are excited to learn about the support of our Early College Initiatives program. These resources will enable junior and senior high school students to learn about their incredible opportunities after graduation and help strengthen rural communities across the state. I greatly appreciate Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and their teams for supporting and advocating for EOU and our work,” **said Kelly Ryan, President of Eastern Oregon University.**

21. \$163,000 for the Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center (NEOAHEC) to purchase an Advanced Maternal and Neonatal Simulation System. Much of Eastern Oregon lacks access to this critical equipment, and the region faces many challenges when it comes to providing care for expecting mothers. This project will allow NEOAHEC to deploy obstetric and maternal health training which is needed to keep health care professionals practice ready in rural Eastern Oregon.

- “Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden understand the healthcare challenges that residents, hospitals, and clinics face throughout rural eastern Oregon. Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center (NEOAHEC) is thrilled with the investment made by the Senators. The purchase of an advanced obstetric and neonatal patient simulator will allow the regional center to provide hands-on, high-fidelity education critically needed to keep healthcare professionals in a practice ready state to safely care for expectant mothers and new babies,” **said Meredith Lair, Executive Director of NEOAHEC.**