

# WASHINGTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROGRESS REPORT 2021-2023





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# WASHINGTON COUNTY, OREGON

## Overview

With over 600,000 residents, Washington County is the second most populous county in the state of Oregon. The rural population combined with many people living in the urban unincorporated areas (outside of cities) totals over 260,000—the largest population of people in an Oregon county that live outside of a city. There are 13 incorporated cities in Washington County, ranging from some of the largest cities in the state (Hillsboro and Beaverton) to some of the smallest (Gaston).

## Place

The heart of Washington County is the Tualatin Valley, formed by the Tualatin Mountains to the east and north, the Chehalem Mountains to the south, and the Northern Oregon Coast Range to the west. The Tualatin River, located almost entirely within the county, flows through the center of the valley. The northern and western portions of the county are heavily forested, while the remainder of the county includes urban areas, agricultural lands, and wetlands.

## People

The Atafalati band of the Kalapuya tribe have called this region home since time immemorial. Today, Washington County is home to a growing and diverse community. In fact, in recent years the population has grown faster than many other counties in Oregon. At 17 percent of the total population, the county is home to one of the largest Latino/Latinx communities in the state. Nearly 14 percent of population identifies as Asian and almost one in five community members were born outside of the United States.

## Business

Washington County has some of the largest employers in the state of Oregon. Often referred to as “Silicon Forest”, the county is home to Intel and a wide range of other semiconductor and advanced manufacturing companies. The outdoor apparel industry is another prominent traded sector industry with both Nike and Columbia Sportswear headquarters located in the county. Washington County also celebrates a thriving agricultural economy that includes nurseries, berries, and hazelnuts, and vineyards.

### CENTERING EQUITY

An equitable approach to economic development places emphasis not just on growth but the distribution of that growth and seeks to improve upward economic mobility, offer pathways for all communities to build wealth, and generate culturally specific opportunities for underserved and marginalized communities—especially Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/e/x and other communities of color including immigrant and refugees who have faced generations of discrimination and disinvestment that continues today.

**1 in 10**

Community members are food insecure and over nine percent of households receive food assistance.

**47%**

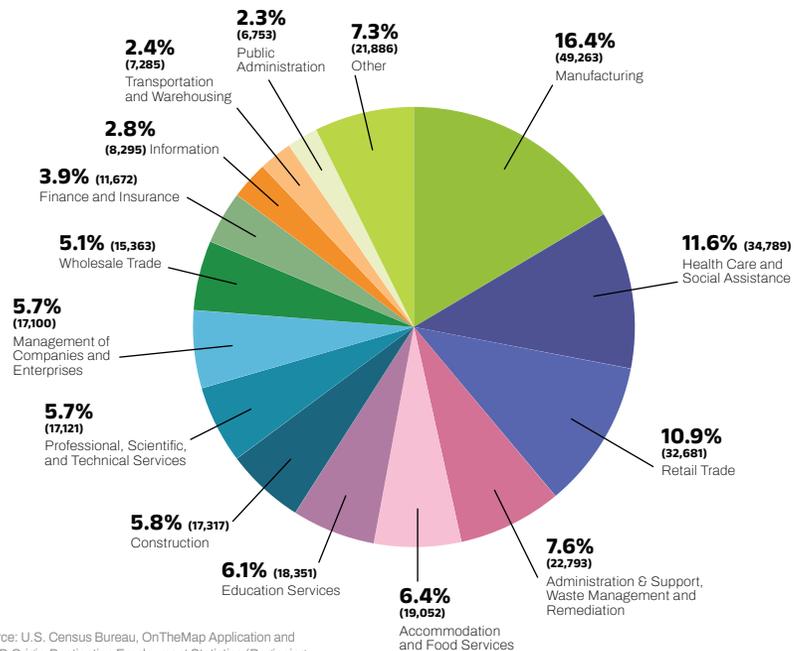
of Washington County renters are “cost burdened,” paying at least 30% or more of their income on housing.

**\$92K**

is the median household income (the highest in the area), however, 1 in 12 individuals live in poverty.

### EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Approximately 300,000 employees in Washington County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2020).

### MANUFACTURING

A cornerstone to Washington County's economy



**700+**  
Manufacturing companies



**50K**  
Approximate number of manufacturing jobs



**1/4**  
Of all Oregon manufacturing jobs are in Washington County



**21,774**  
Small business establishments



**69%**

of small businesses are in large cities. 25% in urban unincorporated areas, 5% in rural, and 2% in small cities.

### SMALL BUSINESS

Washington County is home to thousands of local small businesses. In fact, 90 percent of businesses in the county have 25 or fewer employees. These businesses provide essential services and wealth generating opportunities for the diverse communities across the county.

# PROMOTING EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Washington County's first Economic Development Program was launched in March 2021, one year after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program was developed to promote economic prosperity countywide with special attention to unincorporated areas, small cities, and to communities that have been marginalized, including Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, immigrants and

refugees and other people of color — countywide. In response to the waning of the pandemic and recognition of ongoing economic challenges, the Program's approach has shifted from a focus on economic recovery to fostering long-term equitable economic resiliency. Working closely with community partners, the Economic Development Program has launched new initiatives in workforce development, small business support, and broadband investment exploration.



## PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Washington County's Economic Development Program leans into the County's role as a convener and facilitator of local and regional investments and service delivery. With a core focus on equitable advancement of workers and economic inclusion, the program collaborates with local organizations, regional agencies, and others to promote a healthy, equitable, and prosperous local economy.

The Economic Development Program is structured around the three primary aspects of economic development— people, business, and place—while being grounded in a focused approach and practices that center equity and inclusion.





## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**The role of the Washington County Economic Development Program** to promote equitable and inclusive economic prosperity countywide. We do this work through building local capacity to serve businesses and workers, convening and connecting partners to resources and information, and by initiating and managing programs and initiatives.

### SNAPSHOT OF OUR RECENT WORK

**Growing the Washington County Small Business Support Network** by centering racial equity and community partners in creating shared goals to achieve economic resiliency. Participants active in the Network are community-based and culturally specific organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and other business support organizations which provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

**Investing in the local business support ecosystem to ensure that all area businesses have access to the support and resources that they need to thrive.** Grants to partner business support organizations build capacity to support small businesses across the county with tailored focus on marginalized communities and communities within the county's unincorporated areas. With the County's support, these organizations provide access to capital, technical assistance, education, and networking for local businesses. Specific capacity building grants for business support organizations support program design, data analysis, technology infrastructure, and professional development opportunities to better serve small businesses.

**Supporting workforce development efforts countywide through grants to workforce organizations,** community partners, and educational institutions. Efforts include training opportunities for youth and adults, summer youth programs, hands on internships and pre-apprenticeships, and early career exposure outreach. This work spans across industries with a focus on manufacturing, technology, healthcare, construction, and childcare.

**Organizing and preparing for new investments in the manufacturing industry** by updating the County's incentive policies, engaging with partners, and supporting local city economic incentive programs.

**Completing a countywide assessment on Broadband infrastructure, access, and affordability.** The project resulted in a Broadband Investment Strategy that is focused on preparing the County and local partners for future investments in broadband infrastructure and programming aimed to close the digital divide.



## FUNDING

**Washington County's Economic Development Program is funded in several ways.** Baseline funding is provided via a portion of the County's Lottery Fund. The majority of the Program's current funding comes from an allocation of the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Directed by an act of Congress in 2021, ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are helping state, local, and tribal governments respond to and recover from the negative health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Economic Development Program has used these ARPA funds for staff capacity and to launch numerous economic-recovery-focused initiatives.

To date, the Board of County Commissioners has allocated about \$5.6M of the County's ARPA funds to the Economic Development Program. The Program is complemented by and coordinates with other County programs including efforts that involve the County's ARPA team, the Office of Equity, Inclusion, & Community Engagement, Land Use and Transportation, Housing, and Community Development, as well as countless community partner organizations.

## WORKING DEFINITIONS

**Washington County uses the following working definitions in our approach to equitable economic development.**



### EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development promotes economic well-being and improves quality of life outcomes in communities by creating and retaining jobs, enhancing wealth, and providing a stable tax base. Equitable economic development is achieved when every member of the community is able to share in and benefit from economic growth taking into account historic barriers to access, current conditions, and persistent racial disparities.



### CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building refers to efforts aimed at strengthening an organization's operations, existing expertise, and resources to increase the quality of service and the number of people served.



### ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

A community's ability to foresee, adapt to, and leverage changing economic conditions so that they have the capacity to respond to whatever chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience and emerge stronger, improving the conditions of people's environments over time.

# SUPPORTING A RESILIENT ECOSYSTEM

## WASHINGTON COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT NETWORK

Growing from the COVID Racial Equity Advisory Committee and the early pandemic-era Business Recovery Centers, the Washington County Small Business Support Network centers community partners and racial equity in creating shared goals to achieve economic resiliency. Partners engaged in the Network are community-based and culturally specific organizations including Chambers of Commerce which provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurs including access to capital, technical assistance, networking, and advocacy.

The goal of the Small Business Support Network is to serve a wide range of small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those who face barriers in accessing services. By partnering with local and culturally specific community based organizations who have the needed expertise and strong community connections, the County seeks to expand pathways for small businesses and entrepreneurs to access services across the County’s geography and expand connection points in unincorporated areas.

### Through the Small Business Support Network, Washington County is:



Creating space and connection to strengthen relationships between organizations and government.



Establishing a peer-to-peer learning collaborative and community of practice where technical assistance providers can connect more frequently with each other as well as with local government staff and share best practices.



Partners engaged in the network have prioritized asset mapping, which will be featured in a county-hosted webpage that provides access to and education on business support resources available to them, with an emphasis on culturally responsive services.



Hosted special forums for business support organizations including Access to Capital – bringing together 6 CDFI’s and microlenders with over 50 participants at the event.





### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE

The **Economic Development Roundtable** is a forum for local economic development agency professionals aimed at fostering better collaboration. The group meets quarterly to discuss a wide variety of topics. Recent discussions have centered on how to support the local manufacturing sector and workforce development.



### MEMBERSHIPS /SPONSORSHIPS

Fundamental to supporting a robust ecosystem of business support organizations are sponsorships of partner organization events and activities. The Economic Development Program partners with a wide variety of organizations on events like hiring fairs and trade shows.



Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs Annual Trade Show



Washington County Chamber of Commerce Black Advisory Business Council Juneteenth Event 2023



Latino Built Membership Meeting

### OTHER ENGAGEMENT



### INTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

The Economic Development Program adopts the “One Washington County” approach through ongoing collaboration across departments, supporting the County’s Design the Future Initiative to create a more equitable, responsive, and strategically collaborative work environment to better serve the community now and in the years ahead.

**Land Use and Transportation** – Economic Development Managers/Planning Directors joint meeting

- Facilitated forum on Quality Jobs + Land Use featuring Port of Portland, Metro, and Worksystem’s Inc.

**Office of Equity Inclusion and Community Engagement**

- Collaborated with Supplier Diversity teams from the County and City of Hillsboro on the Westside Open House

# ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS



## SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

### Overview

The goal of our small business programs is to provide support for businesses following the COVID-19 pandemic and to build long term resiliency across our business support ecosystem to ensure that the entire community can have more equitable access to resources.

### Equitable Economic Recovery Grants

County staff has partnered with local business support organizations through Equitable Economic Recovery contracts to provide ongoing support for business support organizations serving marginalized communities through technical assistance including business advising and planning, networking, and sales opportunities, preparing for access to capital, and training. Equitable Economic Recovery efforts include contracts with:



## SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHT



## Equity in Action: Economic Development

Washington County is advancing an equitable pandemic recovery through meaningful partnerships with organizations like Adelante Mujeres in Forest Grove to lift up small businesses and local entrepreneurs.

Washington County's Economic Development Program supports the organization's Casa Qui small business incubator program through the County's Equitable Economic Recovery (EER) grants. Casa Qui participants can access technical assistance and retail space so that Latina/o/x entrepreneurs can continue to reach their goals.

Shown above is Adelante Mujeres Business Coach Gemma Balderas at Casa Qui. To learn more about Casa Qui and hear interviews with two participating businesses – Mona Catalán's Mona Creative Studio and Isabel Hernández's La Tóxica Boutique – please visit [www.casaqui.org](http://www.casaqui.org)

Video link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYH3O2hLRac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYH3O2hLRac)

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Sectors represented:



**Overview**

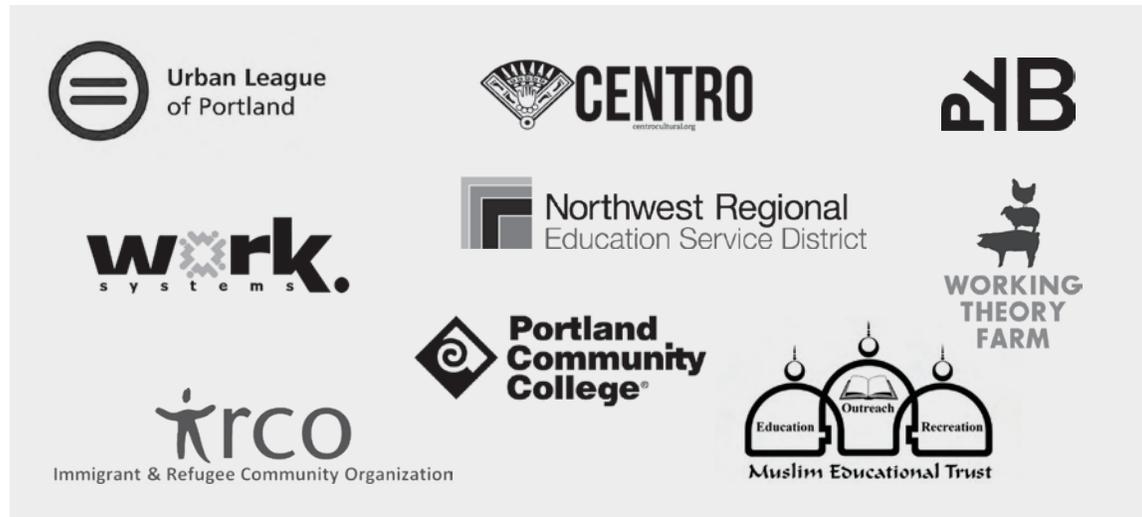
The ARPA-funded Washington County workforce development services are centered on providing employment training, career development and wraparound supports that connect residents to quality jobs for workers displaced by the pandemic and specifically focused on marginalized communities including — Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, immigrants and refugees and other people of color, women, veterans, people with disabilities, low-income, and rural residents.

**Equitable Economic Recovery Grants**

Strategic investments in local workforce partners to build and expand capacity in the local workforce development system creates new opportunities for workers to enter or advance in their careers, through career exploration, career basics classes, retraining or "rapid training" programs, scholarships, etc.

County staff has partnered with nine organizations to advance services, trainings, and educational opportunities for Washington County workers:

A focus is in developing industry-targeted training programs to address worker deficits in local industries that have either been adversely impacted by the pandemic or have dominant local industry clusters.



**SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHT**



Photo courtesy of Working Theory Farm.

**Cultivating Agricultural Opportunities for Justice- Involved, Independent, & Other Youth Seeking Employment**

**In the Workforce Development Program**

Washington County ARPA funding enabled Working Theory Farm to hire a Youth Program Manager, which has boosted their ability to develop curriculum, provide case management support, enable work connections, and expand opportunities outside of only summer months. Collaborating with other cornerstone partners – from Washington County Juvenile Services to HomePlate, a local nonprofit serving youth experiencing homelessness, Working Theory Farm shares:

“We’ve worked with Washington County Harkins House (Juvenile Services) and other partners to increase the amount of direct contact we have with potential youth employees and assess the programmatic fit as part of our application process. We’ve built on our initial partnership with the Hillsboro School District’s Independent Transition Services to host monthly volunteer days throughout the spring where youth visit the farm and get a taste of farm work and we can screen potential youth employees. We’ve coordinated closely with HomePlate throughout the winter and started visiting their Hillsboro drop-in hours to sit alongside one of our youth employees and talk to other youth about farm employment.”

– Working Theory Farm

FEATURED PROGRAMS



Quick Start

Quick Start to Semiconductor launched in October 2022. The two-week program prepares students for careers in the semiconductor industry. It introduces semiconductor manufacturing concepts, processes, and hands-on applications. Topics covered include electrical theory, circuits, schematics, hand tools, safety, cleanroom protocols, model based problem solving, lean manufacturing, vacuum technology, and troubleshooting.

The course was developed in partnership with Worksystems, Intel, PCC, and the City of Hillsboro to attract and prepare women and people of color for careers in the industry.

Students also receive a \$1000 cost of living stipend to help support their living expenses while they complete the program. The stipend has allowed many more students to participate in the program.

To date, over 150 people have completed the program with over 70% of students being women or people of color.

80 students have been hired by Intel and 6 students by other semiconductor manufacturers.

West Side Works

Program matches students in Portland Community College’s Early Childhood Education program with eligible preschools and childcare centers located within the City of Beaverton and covers the student workers’ wages for their first 300 hours on the job. Once this initial period is complete – and if worker and employer are a good fit for one another – businesses have the option to hire their workers permanently.



**Paid workers under the program are eligible to work as preschool aides, preschool floaters, or similar entry-level positions** that are appropriate to their status as Early Childhood Education students at PCC. They are considered to be additional employees and cannot replace a current employee.



**Student workers are eligible to work up to 40 hours per week, or up to 20 hours per week if they’re a full-time student.** They earn \$17 per hour, and bilingual students could be eligible for an additional premium of \$2 per hour.



**After completing their 300 hours in the program, workers receive a \$1,000 completion bonus.**

# ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS

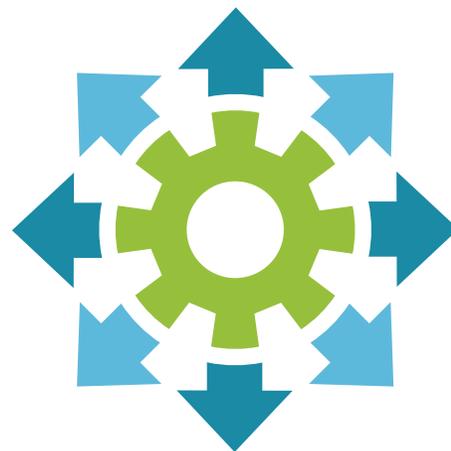
## CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

The capacity of local nonprofit business and workforce support organizations and the strength of the connections between those organizations directly informs the health and stability of the local economy. Building capacity within these organizations promotes long-term economic resiliency.

Ultimately, the purpose of these grants is to strengthen the ecosystem of support for small businesses, entrepreneurs, residents and workers. Capacity building funds can be used for internal planning needs, feasibility studies, program development and/or professional development opportunities for staff, and technology infrastructure that help grow capacity within nonprofit business and workforce support organizations.



## SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHT



### Expanding Service Potential for Indigenous-Owned Businesses

In direct response to community priorities voiced across County engagement processes, and in collaboration with local business support organizations the Economic Development Program invested ARPA funds to address much-needed capacity

improvements (from modernizing data systems to maintaining effective staffing levels) for organizations directly providing direct services. One important community partner funded this year included the NW Native Chamber, whose team shares:

“

This grant has opened up opportunities for intentional reflection and evaluation of our processes in which we collect, manage, and report on data. Data sovereignty is always at the forefront of our organization’s process; this project allows us to further put that core value into action... We are excited for the results of this study to inform the tools/-data we utilize, strategic planning, advocacy efforts, and the stories we can tell.

”

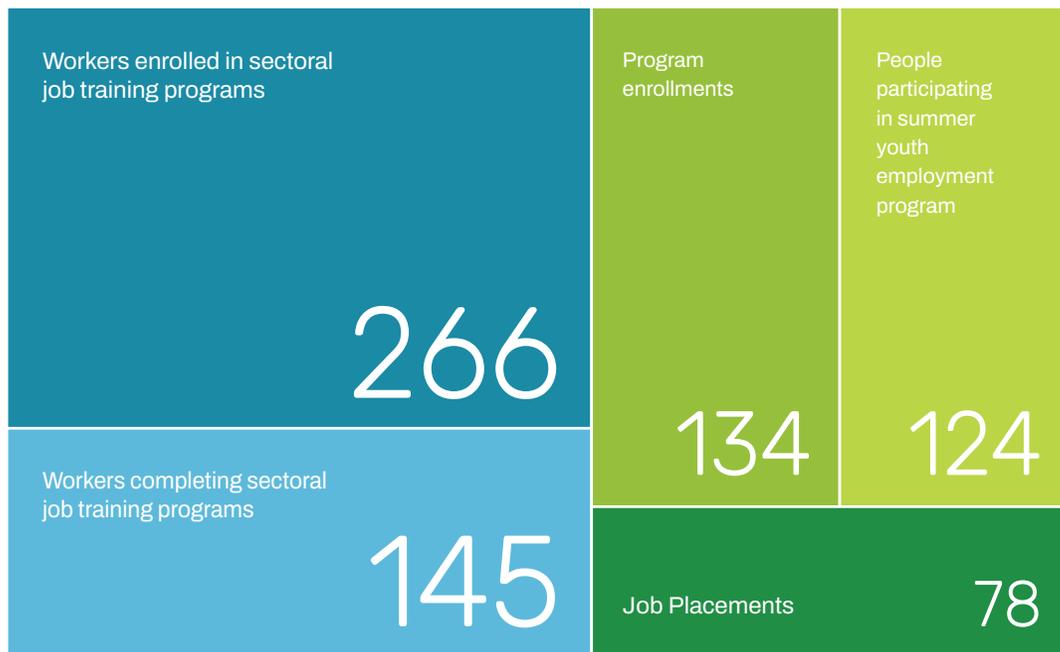
# OUTCOMES OF RECENT AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) INVESTMENTS

Washington County's ARPA investments in workforce development and small business support have yielded substantial benefits to the local economy. This data provides a snapshot of the outcomes of these investments through the third quarter of 2023.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

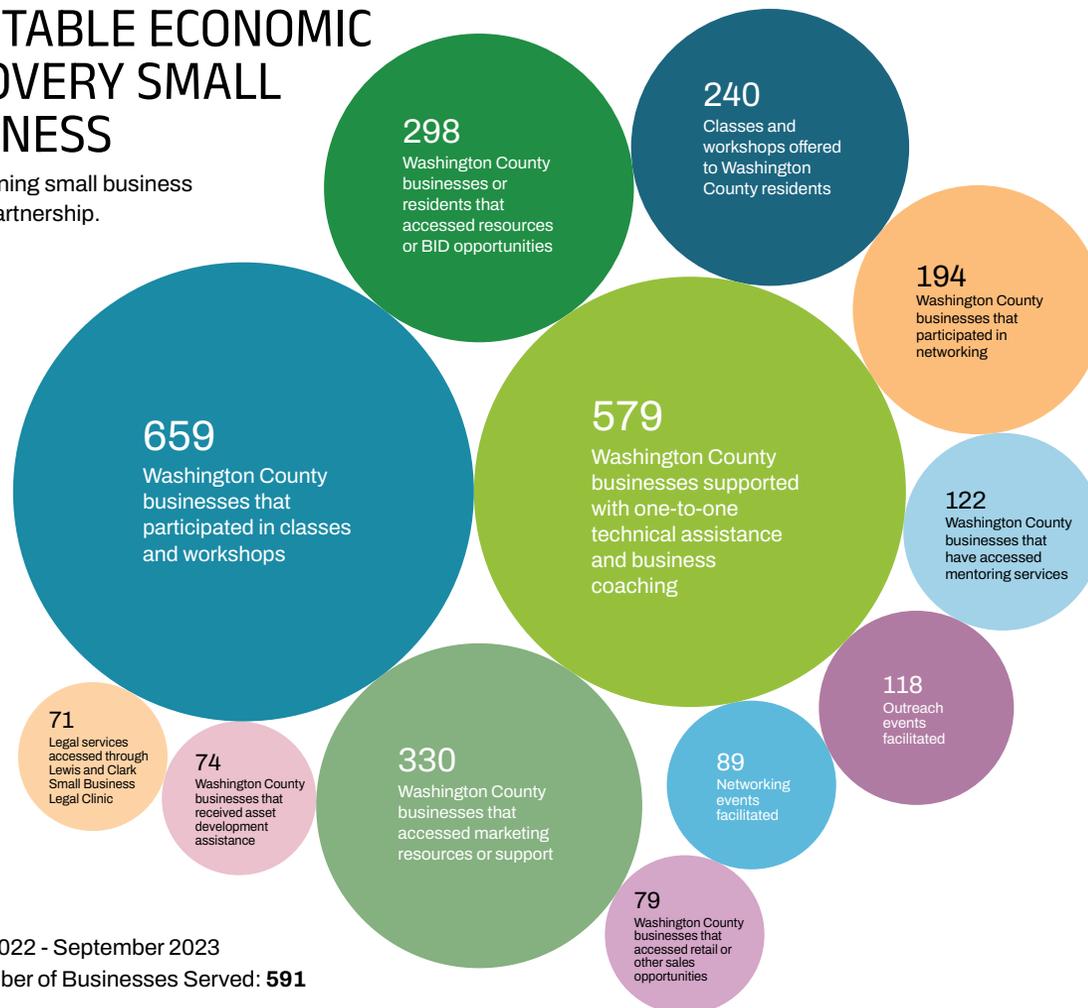
Expanding opportunities for people to thrive in Washington County.

July 2022 - September 2023



## EQUITABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY SMALL BUSINESS

Strengthening small business through partnership.



January 2022 - September 2023  
 Total Number of Businesses Served: **591**

# STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS



## COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (CPACE)

In 2022, the Washington County Economic Development Program launched a new program called CPACE. CPACE stands for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy. The CPACE program allows owners of eligible commercial properties to obtain favorable private capital financing for sustainability- focused building improvements. The County has seen several inquiries and is working with a development team on their first CPACE project application.



## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM (SIP)

The Economic Development team also leads County negotiations and initiatives related to Oregon's premier economic investment tool—the Strategic Investment Program (SIP). The SIP is a tax abatement program focused on supporting substantial traded sector investments. There are currently three SIP projects in Washington County.



## BROADBAND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Washington County recognizes the crucial importance of broadband connection for households and businesses. In acknowledging the complex, interconnected social and economic factors that impact broadband access, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners directed staff to conduct a detailed analysis of broadband infrastructure, access, and affordability countywide and to develop a proposed county-wide broadband investment strategy. At the highest level, the purpose of this work is to help the County and its local government partners prepare for potential broadband investments.



## WORKSYSTEMS INC. PARTNERSHIP

Through a multiyear partnership with WorkSystem's Inc., Washington County has been funding targeted workforce development services in the construction sector. These services are tailored to engage women, youth, and communities of color; helping them understand construction career pathways, get hands-on experience, and network with local companies in the construction trades. Services include pre-apprenticeships, a middle school camp, and career coaching. To date, these services have served hundreds of Washington County residents.



# LOOKING AHEAD

The County has an opportunity to continue to build momentum towards a more substantial and inclusive Economic Development Program to best serve the needs of local businesses and workers. At the direction of the Board of County Commissioners, County staff will explore options for where the Economic Development Program will go next potentially starting with an Economic Development Strategy project in 2024.

## GROWING INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Washington County Means Progress

**Washington County's Economic Development Program** seeks to provide capacity and resources for internal County departments and community partners in growing and scaling equity, diversity, and inclusion programs that promote wealth building opportunities for marginalized communities. Internal to the County organization, this work includes a focus on strengthening the County's supplier diversity and internship programs. This effort recognizes that by aligning with regional best practices and scaling successful initiatives, we can collectively achieve more equitable outcomes.

**The goal of Washington County Means Progress** is to expand the successful Portland Means Progress Initiative led by Prosper Portland.



**Interdisciplinary project team** across County departments including Human Resources, Procurement, Office of Equity Inclusion and Community Engagement, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and Economic Development.



Participation in Results for America Good Jobs & Equity Fellowship – **received \$25,000 dollar grant** from Family and Workers Fund to complete supplier diversity assessment.



**Launched partnership with Emerging Leaders Program** hosting two interns who collaborated on creating internal road shows on Supplier Diversity for Project Managers across departments.



**Focus on internship policy development.**

### Metro 2040 Community Engagement Grant

Through a Metro 2040 Community Engagement Grant, Washington County's Economic Development Program will partner with Unite Oregon to continue engagement along the Tualatin Valley (TV) Highway Corridor advancing the work of the TV Highway Equity Coalition (TEC). The goal of the partnership is to foster collaboration across stakeholders in the TV Highway Corridor with a focus on Black Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) small business owners and renters. The intention is to build strong partnerships in advance of new development and investment. In doing so, local partners will be better prepared to reach more equitable outcomes.

The project will build on past and existing community-centered initiatives to ensure equitable development in the Tualatin Valley (TV) Highway Corridor. The project aims to continue engagement around a number of strategic actions envisioned by the TV Highway Equitable Development Strategy (EDS), which was initially convened by Metro as part of planning for transportation and transit improvements along the Corridor.

The project approach involves strategies to promote the TV Highway Equitable Development Strategy (EDS) and create avenues for community feedback and partnerships with local government agencies; seeking to build partnerships across community, private business, and government.