



ROGUE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

April 6, 2015

Serving Jackson & Josephine Counties

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Rogue Valley Microdevices
RWP Chair

Gregg Edwards | Chief People Officer
ASANTE Health Systems
RWP Vice-Chair

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Rogue Community College

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Organization of the Forgotten American

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Jim Fong | Executive Director
The Job Council & Rogue Workforce Partnership

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Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.

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-Sierra Pine, Medite Division

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Holloway Human Resources

Nikki Jones | Owner
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Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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Michael Kidwell | Supervisor
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
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Lyndell Smith | Director, Human Resources Administration
ASANTE Health Systems

Tamara Nordin | Vice President, Human Resources
Pacific Retirement Services

Barbara Perkins | Vice President Human Resources & Risk Management – *Lithia Motors*

Scott Perry | Superintendent
Southern Oregon Education Service District

James Pfarrer | Area Manager
Oregon Employment Department

Theresa Sayre | Superintendent
Phoenix-Talen School District

Sue Walsh | Provost
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Representative John Huffman
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Representative Kathleen Taylor
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Senator Chuck Thomsen
900 Court St NE, S-316
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education Members:

We are writing in support of the following requests contained in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Agency budget:

- **Workforce System** - \$31.9M for a workforce package that directly assists youth and adult job/career seekers throughout the state
- **Center for Community Innovation and Community Leverage Fund** –the \$25M for regions supports strong community and systems collaborations focused on improving outcomes for children, youth and families

Workforce System

The Workforce System request supports creative, successful regionally-based solutions that involve a broad array of partners, including local employers, Workforce Boards, Community Colleges, WorkSource Oregon and community-based organizations. These build upon and leverage Federal and local workforce development investments, and provide critical support to help local workers, jobseekers and employers engage and compete in our evolving economy. Specifically, the HECC budget requests will:

1) Expand employment opportunities for youth (\$15 million, POP 201)

Employers consistently express concern about the quality of the incoming workforce. While there are a variety of ways to address this challenge, there is no better way to prepare youth for success at work than an actual job. Locally, the HECC workforce investment will help young people, especially those from low-income, at-risk backgrounds, get their first work experience and an on-ramp to career success. In the Rogue Valley, this investment will perfectly complement our **Southern Oregon Success** and **“College and Career for All”** systems transformation efforts (*described in greater detail below*).

One example of our success to date: we served 23 highly at-risk high school seniors in an intensive pilot partnership project. The results were **100% graduated from high school, 100% with plans to enter postsecondary education**, and just over **\$502,000 in Financial Aid and scholarships** for them. The HECC workforce youth investment will help take these kinds of successful efforts to scale for all K-20 students.

2) Expand industry sector strategies, including incumbent worker training (\$6 million, POP 201) to help grow and support industries that are critical to regional economic success; and training investments through Local Workforce Investment Boards (\$10.9M, pop 201)

Through our local industry **Sector Strategies** work, we have targeted federal, state and local resources to solve workforce challenges in the **Advanced Manufacturing, E-Commerce/Information Technology and Healthcare** industries. Strategies include on-the-job training, college scholarships, career pathways, apprenticeships, industry-defined credentials and incumbent worker training. Thousands of Oregonians have gone back to work and thousands more have advanced in their careers. Working with K-20 education, workforce and economic development partners - sector strategies gives industry a strong leadership voice in designing comprehensive, responsive and systemic solutions to meet workforce needs. These investments are critical to meet the ever-growing demand from employers, students and workers for hands-on, worksite-based skills development. These investments will allow us to scale-up proven strategies that are particularly successful in bringing low-income and underserved populations into these industries. We are building a true public/private partnership, helping workers and business get skills they need to succeed in the global economy.

Center for Community Innovation & Community Leverage Fund

Southern Oregon Success and “**College and Career for All**” are our region’s efforts to implement the major systems transformation initiatives launched by the legislature and governor last biennium in education, healthcare and workforce. This cradle to career **Collective Impact**¹ initiative and partnership includes: early learning, K-12 school districts, higher education, Coordinated Care Organizations and healthcare providers, social service organizations, workforce, economic development and business partners. In addition to early learning and other youth academic and health success measures, and our overarching 40-40-20 goals, we are focused on vastly improving the following outcomes for all K-20 students:

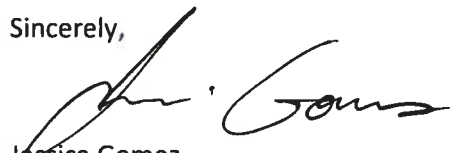
- High School Graduation Rates
- Dual-Credit Attainment
- STEM outcomes
- Career-Technical Education Revitalization
- Career Related Exploration & Learning Experiences
- College or Post-Secondary Training Completion
- Career & Work Readiness

We are aligning academic success improvements with our Sector Strategies and economic development priorities, particularly for high-demand, high-wage career pathways, as well as business entrepreneurship.

Overall, we believe both the Workforce System and Community Innovation / Community Leverage Fund items in the HECC budget are smart, practical investments that will provide both immediate and long term returns for the State. We urge your support for these investments.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Jessica Gomez

Chair, Rogue Workforce Partnership & CEO/Founder, Rogue Valley Microdevices

cc: Senator Richard Devlin, Ways & Means Co-Chair, 900 Court St., NE, H-272, Salem, OR 97301
Representative Peter Buckley, Ways and Means Co-Chair 900 Court St. NE, S-211, Salem, OR 97301

¹ Stanford Social Innovation Review: http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact