

COVID-19 SAFETY NET COORDINATORS

March 2020

The COVID-19 response requires state agencies to coordinate in removing barriers, providing technical assistance and delivering resources to Oregon communities that are needed in each region of the state. Regional Solutions will be tasked with this important work.

Just as critical is that local services at the community level are operating in coordinated action. This requires capacity at the County level to ensure all local parts of the safety net are integrated and focused on the unique challenges and opportunities that exist on the ground.

Counties help provide safety net services through a wide variety of local agencies and organizations; including, but not limited to: Health Departments; Housing-Emergency Shelters; Public Safety; Mental Health; local Justice system; Veterans' Support; Seniors; Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities; Children and Family Services; Workforce and Employment; Economic Stability programs; Transportation Services; and Food Access programs. These County services need to be coordinated, integrated and focused on local challenges and opportunities by County Commissioners. In the majority of counties, the capacity to do this is very limited.

Many local businesses and civic resources will also be needed to address this crisis. These local resources also need to be integrated into our COVID-19 response through coordination. This can only be done at the local level.

An effective response to the COVID-19 crisis requires a state and local partnership. The State needs to coordinate state agencies and services and counties need to coordinate local agencies and services. The partnership between state and local government will only work if there is capacity at the local level to do the on the ground work. It is both inappropriate and ineffective for the State to assume the role of local coordination with local agencies and services.

To do this, the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is requesting emergency funding for one year to give Counties the capacity to provide a local coordinated response and the ability to partner with Regional Solutions and the State in effectively responding to this crisis.