



Central Oregon School Age Child Care Initiative Funding Request

Request to Oregon Emergency Board

January 6, 2021

Executive Summary:

As the leader of a coalition of school age providers across Central Oregon, Better Together seeks emergency funding for continued full-day childcare for our K-5 school age children in Deschutes County, to aid children and families by giving kids a safe, supported place to learn until all children in K-5 can return to school full time. During comprehensive distance learning for K-5, and while schools begin phased K-3 and 4-5 reopening, K-5 childcare gives kids the continuity of a supported learning environment and regular nutrition, while helping working parents keep needed jobs so that they can afford basic needs: rent, utilities, food, all critical for resilience and recovery.

This initiative will sustain full-day school age childcare in 26 sites for up to 1000 children ages 5-10 through partners across Deschutes County. **Better Together requests \$250,000 of the projected \$700K cost for partners to continue providing full-day (8-9 hour, 5 day) childcare for 350-400 high need students in 26 sites in Sisters, La Pine, Redmond, and Bend, from January-March, 2021 at a cost of \$150-\$175/student/week.** A regional c(3) education leader, Better Together will continue supporting ongoing programs launched this fall, administering eBoard dollars to directly support vulnerable children and families impacted by COVID. During this ongoing crisis, these critical funds will sustain Central Oregon's essential workforce by giving working families engaging care and academic support for their children while they are at work.

Ongoing Need

With 12,000 children in K-5 across Deschutes County and roughly 45% whose families qualify for free/reduced lunch, thousands of children and families need help. This program focuses on highest-need families: those whose jobs do not permit work from home or flexible hours; who have limited disposable income; and who may have limited access to internet at home. Programs are serving children in foster care and insecure housing situations; where Spanish is the primary language spoken at home; and where students bring specific learning needs.

Childcare is an essential service. Ample research supports the need to help children form strong, safe attachments in support of resilience, preventing the adverse childhood experiences (ACES) which lead to later health impacts ranging from stroke and heart attack, to mental health struggles and addiction (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>). During this COVID-19 crisis, families need childcare, and children need safe places to learn, play, and be with caring adults. Programs also give students extra learning assistance and technology access for distance learning, especially vital for high-need families and our most rural residents.

Immediate, Substantial Impact

The requested funding will be used immediately to support established, fully staffed and open

programs running since September and serving up to 1000 children. These type of support programs are needed well into the spring to augment the rolling start reopening of elementary schools: even when/if K-3 are able to return in person, 4th and 5th graders- still unable to be left home alone- will need support during hybrid learning where they are in school only 2 days a week.

A Coalition of Partners

Each dollar granted by the Oregon Emergency Board will be matched more than 2:1 in funds, paid services, program administration costs, and fees raised by each partner to run a strong and successful program. Redmond, Sisters and Bend-La Pine Schools are providing services including access to school facilities, janitorial, and access for students to as-needed support staff in adjacent Limited In Person programs. Better Together raised and invested more than \$900,000 for programs in 2020, from diverse sources including Deschutes County/City of Bend CRF/CARES dollars (\$750K), United Way, OCF, and private donors. Provider partners include: Boys and Girls Clubs of Bend, Bend Parks and Rec, Camp Fire, Champions, Circle of Friends, High Desert Museum, La Pine Parks, and Sisters Parks.

Why Better Together?

A regional c(3), Better Together is deeply engaged with high-need and vulnerable communities across Central Oregon. Since the COVID-19 crisis began, Better Together has worked with communities to quickly and deeply understand family and community need, with a clear focus on our most vulnerable children and families. In this rapid-action situation, Better Together was tapped by K-12, business and civic leaders to facilitate expanded childcare for school age children.


We, the undersigned, strongly request Emergency Board support to our Central Oregon families and children in need- for the sake of our kids' safety and learning, their parents' ability to continue work, and our community's investment in its long-term recovery. We are proud to partner with Better Together in this effort during these remarkable times.

Sincerely,


Stephanie Beamer (Jan 7, 2021 09:48 PST)

Stephanie Beamer
Executive Director, Better Together

DocuSigned by:


Sally Russell
Sally Russell
Mayor, City of Bend


Lora Nordquist (Jan 7, 2021 09:11 PST)

Lora Norquist
Interim Superintendent, Bend-La Pine Schools


Curtiss Scholl (Jan 7, 2021 14:43 PST)

Curtiss Scholl
Superintendent, Sisters School District


Paul Andrews (Jan 7, 2021 09:09 PST)

Paul Andrews
Superintendent, High Desert ESD


Katy Brooks (Jan 7, 2021 09:07 PST)

Katy Brooks
President/CEO, Bend Chamber of Commerce


Charan Cline (Jan 7, 2021 09:58 PST)

Charan Cline
Superintendent, Redmond School District