

## **Testimony: Elena Baez. 4/22/21. 2 min. 2.6 billion in fed funds from American Rescue Plan**

Hi, my name is Elena Ciejek-Baez and I would like to request that Oregon state prioritize spending some of its American Rescue Plan funds on Josephine County's library buildings, specifically supporting the construction of a new Williams branch library. Williams, Oregon is a small rural southern Oregon community, 19 miles south of Grants Pass. The branch library was established in 1977 using a temporary mobile unit at that time. It has only one single room!

I have been a volunteer and substitute branch manager there for the last 5 years. As such, I have witnessed the branch's vital role in disseminating information and services to the surrounding community. Besides borrowing and book reading pursuits, I have observed people using the libraries computers and internet to apply for jobs, update resumes, start businesses, create ideas, supplement their education and even yesterday witnessed someone filling out their US tax return. In addition, this branch serves as an expansion of the local educational system and is a meeting place for many area children. It is an oasis of access to knowledge and information in a remote location. The community has doubled to tripled in size since the mobile unit arrived. The building desperately needs a similar increase in size to continue to provide intellectual support to this community. Thank you for any consideration and funds you can devote to this worthy cause.