A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to local journalism.

BE IT ENACTED by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The Oregon Department of Administrative Services shall issue grants to the recipients specified in this subsection. Prior to disbursing grant moneys, the department shall execute a grant agreement with the recipients requiring the recipients to carry out the duties set forth in this section. The department shall issue grants to:

(a) The University of Oregon for the Agora Journalism Center; and

(b) The Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism.

(2) The recipients shall convene a work group that, to the greatest extent possible, includes representation of all of the following:

(a) Organizations supporting local journalism or representing local journalistic publications in Oregon;

(b) Academic departments related to journalism;

(c) Nonprofit organizations performing work related to journalism;

(d) The philanthropic sector; and

(e) Civic organizations in Oregon.

(3) The work group shall:

(a) Define and identify the attributes of Oregon’s local journalistic publications;

(b) Research local news and information ecosystems across this state, especially those serving rural, underserved and other hard-to-reach communities, including multilingual, non-English and ethnically specific media ecosystems; and

(c) Identify and amplify community-centered, solutions-oriented journalism within and outside of this state and beyond to serve as models for other communities to replicate.

(4) On or before December 1, 2024, the work group shall prepare and make publicly

NOTE: Matter in boldfaced type in an amended section is new; matter [italic and bracketed] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in boldfaced type.

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available a report on its findings, which may include recommendations for legislation.

(5) The work group shall create a local journalism resource center to provide resources to support local journalism, including:

(a) Connecting publishers with local or nationwide resources for assistance, training, collaborations and philanthropic opportunities;

(b) Providing short-term grants for tools and technology to support sustainability and growth of local journalism; and

(c) Placing journalists to provide local news in communities underserved by local journalism.

(6) The work group shall develop and implement a program to issue subgrants to fund initiatives to meet the local information needs of communities in Oregon. The work group shall develop and publish application procedures and selection criteria for such subgrants. The work group shall fund subgrants out of moneys granted under this section.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this 2023 Act is repealed on January 2, 2026.

SECTION 3. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, out of the General Fund, the amount of $2,900,000 to issue grants under section 1 of this 2023 Act in the following amounts:

(1) $1,210,000 for the University of Oregon for the Agora Journalism Center; and

(2) $1,690,000 for the Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism.