State Library *of* **Oregon**
Library Support and Development Services

OREGON LIBRARIES SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

State Library ARPA Spending, June 2021 - March 2023

THE FUNDING

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed by Congress in March of 2021 to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. The State Library of Oregon received $2,924,165 as part of the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Grants to States program. The State Library awarded 163 grants to libraries and museums and administered statewide projects to help communities respond to the pandemic and to address related economic and community needs through equitable approaches.

THE RESULT

With the ARPA funding, Oregon libraries and museums:

- [Fostered digital equity and inclusion](#)
- [Increased access to services](#)
- [Responded to community needs](#)
- [Supported student success](#)
- [Strengthened the workforce](#)

Together these activities provided vital support to communities during the pandemic and recovery.

FOSTERING DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

21
GRANTEES
used funds to foster digital equity and inclusion

176
DEVICES
(hotspots, computers, etc.) acquired

491
PEOPLE
attended technology classes / appointments

"Tech to Go" kits at Harney County Library.

Libraries and museums lent hotspots and devices, boosted wi-fi, upgraded public computers, and reconfigured spaces to optimize connectivity in their communities.

"Our charging station project has been very well received by everyone in the community. The stations have been a lifeline for our unhoused neighbors, tourists, local patrons, and people just passing through town who find they need a charge." – Port Orford Public Library

Libraries organized computer classes and tutoring sessions for those struggling to use newer technologies and online resources.

"Hearing the tutor work with the patron and bringing them to understanding of their current digital obstacle was heartwarming. The excitement and joy they expressed at each step further into enriched digital literacy was proof this program was needed and working." – Fossil Public Library

*Multnomah County Library staff leading a technology class.*

Library staff participated in a learning cohort to learn about digital equity and discover ways to bridge the digital divide in their communities.

"Hearing from other libraries has given us new ideas for addressing disparity in devices and digital access."
– Digital Equity Cohort participant

Libraries piloted a set of online, self-paced digital literacy assessments and tutorials that help users build the basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online in daily life, employment, and school.

"CCC had no digital literacy support structures in place. [...] The impact of [the tutorials] on learners' digital literacy skills is positive." - Clackamas Community College
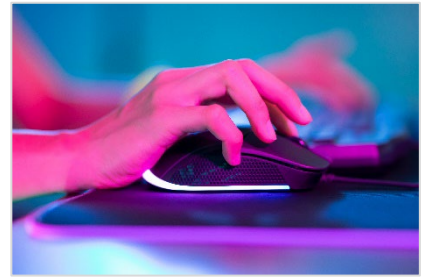
Spotlight on Elkton Community Education Center (ECEC)

Elkton is a small town of 200 people in northern Douglas County, with 2,000 living in the surrounding unincorporated area. Nearly half of the residents live at or below poverty level; 61% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The Office of Rural Health considers Elkton a Medically Underserved Area because of the lack of access to preventative care.

The Elkton Community Education Center – which serves as a library, gathering place, and informal visitors center – used ARPA funds to bolster Wi-Fi, add meeting room technology, install a generator, and lay groundwork for a new telehealth initiative. These activities expanded rural health care options and created an accessible space with power and connectivity that can be modified to meet a range of needs.

"Our project is an investment in the self-reliance and sustainability of our rural community. [...] The space and equipment funded by this grant will provide benefits for our rural area for years to come." – ECEC Executive Director

INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

24
GRANTEES
used funds to increase access in communities

6
VEHICLES
purchased to extend services into communities

8,882
BOOKS
added to collections created for outreach

Bilingual wayfinding map at Crook County Library.

Libraries and museums enhanced collections, programs, signage, and more for Spanish speakers.

"We significantly increased our Spanish collection and drastically improved access to current information and titles in Spanish. It has been exciting to see these new items circulate as they are being added to the collection. Patrons have been appreciative of the availability of new books and translated materials." – Stayton Public Library

Libraries and museums made resources and services more accessible for persons with disabilities.

"[The new adaptable public computer stations] provide equal access for all, and frankly you never know who can benefit from any of these resources - people with limited vision, limited mobility, an injury in which sitting is not comfortable, people of different heights, wrist/arm mobility issues, etc. [...] We are working to remove barriers and obstacles and provide options at our library and this is one more step in that direction." – Monmouth Public Library

Assistive Listening System at Roseburg Public Library.

One of Lower Umpqua Library District's neighborhood libraries is located at a local fire station.

Libraries created collections in community spaces where people faced challenges getting to the library.

"[We received] positive feedback from the Community Corrections Center: 'I have had a lot of positive feedback from HR, coworkers, and residents. Just the fact that we are diversifying our library this year has been a huge improvement. [...] We still are in full COVID mode here, no one goes in and out, so having these books has been very helpful. The more options we have to keep people entertained, the safer the environment.'" – Washington County Cooperative Library Services

Libraries took services out into their communities.

"[At a cultural summer festival] we were able to distribute resources and library information to a post-COVID emerging community, at a time when many community members were still finding their footing." - Tualatin Public Library

Willamina Public Library's Book Bike.

Spotlight on Estacada Public Library

Estacada Public Library's service area stretches approximately 750 square miles into rural Oregon. During the pandemic they saw an urgent need to go to remote areas to offer services, including Internet access and borrowing of materials.

Using ARPA funds to purchase and outfit an outreach van, they began going out into the community to sign up children for summer reading, lend books and movies, host activities and storytimes, and more. Library staff estimate that within three months they interacted with around 4,500 people.

The Estacada Public Library bookmobile.

"By attending events around town we have raised the profile of the library considerably. People who may not have been aware of the library or of what we are doing are now informed that we have a mobile library, and are more aware of what services we offer in our physical library. We have heard so many stories from people about bookmobiles in their childhoods and how important that was to them. People love the artwork on our van and we have heard many comments on how proud they are that Estacada has such an amazing vehicle." ~ Library Director

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

20
GRANTEES
used funds to respond to needs in their communities

687
PEOPLE
interacted with social services and legal experts at libraries

500
ATTENDEES
participated in activities and events focused on building community

A health worker leading a Cottage Grove Public Library program on child nutrition at the local farmer's market.

Libraries engaged social service workers to help people access housing, food, employment, benefits, healthcare, and other needed resources and services.

"You could actually see the relief on the faces and in the bodies of the family members when they found out someone was here to help explain the process [of signing up for vaccine clinics] to them." - North Bend Public Library

Libraries increased public access to legal information and worked with partners to assist renters facing housing instability.

"We had to shut our doors periodically and while we were open, we had time limitations on visits. eBooks allowed us to help patrons more efficiently utilize our services by doing some of the initial research prior to arrival, and sometimes completing what they needed without having to physically visit our location." – Washington County Law Library

Sign announcing services at Linn County Law Library.
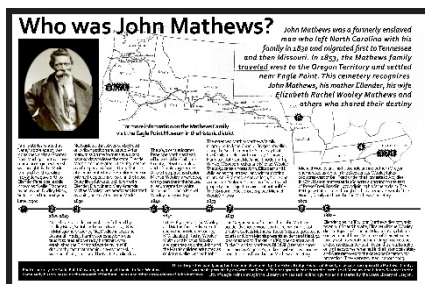
An Eagle Point Museum sign detailing the journey and life of John Mathews, a freed slave and early settler.

Museums enhanced their exhibits to be more representative and celebrate collective heritage.

"The new exhibit topics educate and build communication around non-European immigrants and the struggles they have faced throughout history. [...] This effort will work towards showing the community the importance of being welcoming and offering diverse options." – Albany Regional Museum

Libraries and museums administered inclusive programs to connect communities.

"Engaging people in a culturally relevant activity and hosting events that are conducted in Spanish was a fantastic way to bring people new to the library into the building in a way that made them feel welcomed and engaged." – Salem Public Library

People at a bilingual interactive exhibit created for rural Oregon libraries by the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History.

Spotlight on Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center

The Wallowa Band Nez Perce Interpretive Center preserves and celebrates the rich history of Nez Perce in the Wallowa area from time immemorial. They host the Tamkaliks Celebration, an opportunity for Wallowa Band Nez Perce to reconnect to the homeland from which they were forcefully ejected. The event includes three days of song and dance, ending in a Walasit service and Friendship Feast. Unfortunately, the event was canceled in 2020 and 2021 to protect the health of tribal and local community members.

To help share and preserve tradition and culture, the Center set out to create a documentary film about the history of the Tamkaliks Celebration. With the support of ARPA funds they interviewed key people including founding members of the Tamkaliks Celebration and different generations of people involved with the organization.

Image still from the film.

They also created a publicly available digital archive with over 1,000 items documenting Nez Perce contemporary history in Wallowa and Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland/Tamkaliks history (see wallowanezpercearchive.org).

"After 3 years apart, we finally hosted the Tamkaliks Celebration this July. It was the first big reunion for our communities since COVID started. [...] This return to Tamkaliks, to Wallowa, to each other, represents healing. Through our film, that healing will be preserved, shared, and will continue to grow." - Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland staff

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

66
GRANTEES
used funds to support
student success

13,049
ITEMS
added to school
and library collections

2,037
STUDENTS
attended educational
programs and events

New books at Linn-Benton Community College Library.

Libraries worked to counter learning loss by developing collections that foster a love of reading, support curricular demands, and meet student needs.

"With such a big influx of new books we have seen students' reading engagement increase dramatically. During reading time all students want to go to the library and check out new books." - Black Butte School District

Libraries organized educational programming to bring students back to the library and to bolster literacy engagement.

"This project provided an opportunity for students and families to meet [author] Matt de la Peña [...] and ask Matt questions about his book that they were reading in Spanish. For some students, they said this was the first book they had finished in years, and for some, the first novel they had ever read in Spanish." - Newberg School District

Kids engaging in Family Tech Night at a Hillsboro School District library.

Lockers at Rogue Community College used to pick up books, course reserves, and laptops when the library is closed.

Libraries improved their spaces to enhance student learning and access to resources.

"We appreciate having the extra funds to help us meet the needs of our students in our libraries. Having new furniture that can be easily cleaned and kept up, that is also inviting and holds several purposes in each of our libraries." - Vale School District

Libraries helped bridge the digital divide by lending hotspots and laptops and upgrading access to technology to support hybrid meetings and student learning communities.

"The laptops directly support underserved, geographically dispersed students, and provide much-improved access to specialized software. We learned that providing appropriate technology and accessible workstations positively and dramatically impacts students' ability to persist and thrive in the college environment." - Clatsop Community College Library

Two meeting cameras facilitate a hybrid group meeting at Western Oregon University Library.

Spotlight on Oregon Historical Society

During the pandemic, teachers, students, and lifelong learners began seeking reliable online sources in record numbers. One of the most popular was a suite of historical sites maintained by the Oregon Historical Society (OHS): the Oregon Encyclopedia, the Oregon History Project, the Oregon History Wayfinder, and the Oregon TimeWeb.

Unfortunately, three of the four OHS four sites were outdated, content accessibility was inconsistent, and the TimeWeb was offline. OHS used ARPA funds to create better access to and interaction among these valuable resources by updating the sites' design, organization, and performance.

"The content on the OHS digital history projects benefits from the research efforts of hundreds of regional historians, scholars, and other experts. As a result, the sites reflect a broad and diverse approach to the history of Oregon." – OHS staff member
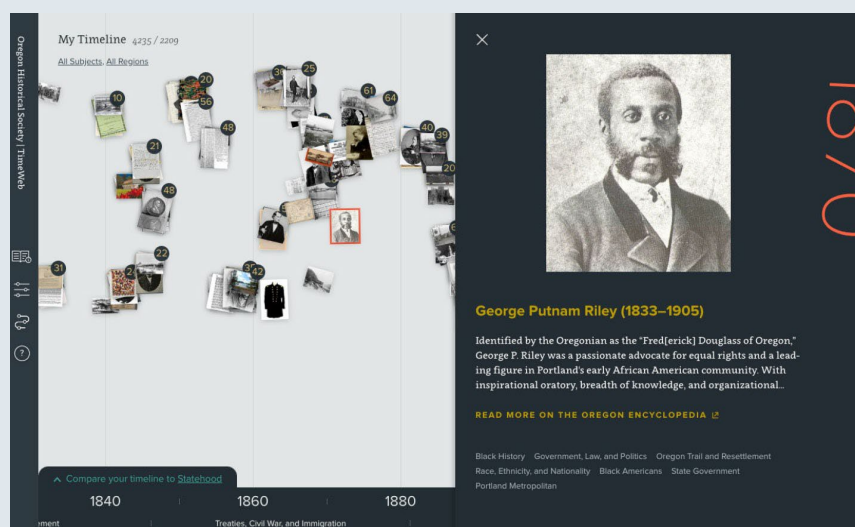
The TimeWeb now animates historical materials plotted on its timelines.

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE

32
GRANTEES
used funds to strengthen the workforce

3,316
HOURS
worked by teen interns in libraries

683
USERS
registered for a language learning database account

A free-standing soundproof booth at Curry Public Library for attending virtual meetings and training.

Libraries collaborated with local WorkSource offices to establish designated workspaces for job seekers, set up areas for attending virtual meetings, and host skills-based trainings.

"Setting up the grant, I spoke with local WorkSource folks which was so beneficial for my understanding of what services they have to offer our patrons and how we can collaborate in the future. We have been able to refer so many patrons to them directly for things like work boot reimbursement and help with food handlers cards that previously I wouldn't have known was a service provided!"
- Clatskanie Library District

Libraries supported students in career programs.

"Klamath County currently has the highest unemployment rate of the thirty-six counties in Oregon. The grant allowed us to provide direct support for our new apprenticeship center programs. The library and programs support our students in their efforts to acquire the training necessary to gain employment." – Klamath Community College Library

Anatomy & Physiology students at Eastern Oregon University can use the library's mobile virtual reality lab for simulation assignments.

An intern at Newberg Public Library assembled first aid kits to distribute at local safety events.

Libraries engaged teen interns to increase work skills and create connected learning projects in their communities.

"With a supportive, compassionate, and understanding workplace and mentor I have been able to grow professionally and develop new skills for my future endeavors." – Teen intern

Library staff were able to attend the 2021 REFORMA National Conference VII.

Originally slated to be held in-person in Portland, the conference transitioned to a virtual event with support from the State Library. This allowed library staff to safely attend this national training and networking event for those interested in library services to Latinos and Spanish speaking communities.
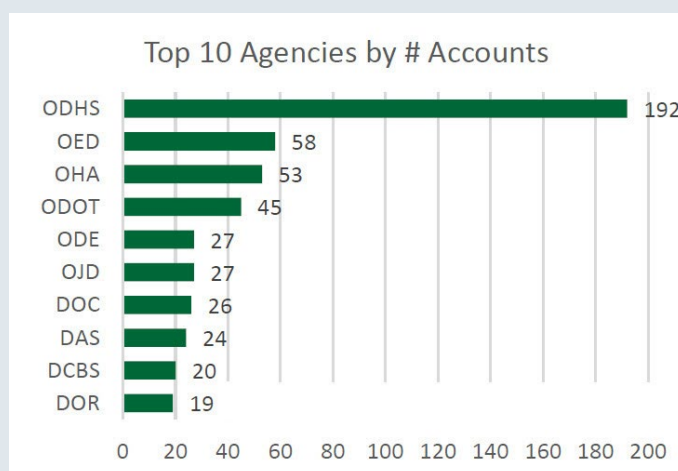
Spotlight on Government Information & Library Services at the State Library of Oregon

The Government Services division at the State Library serves the information needs of employees and officials of the State of Oregon. They also ensure public access to government publications and maintain collections of state and federal government publications, government research, and Oregon history.

Using ARPA funds, Government Services purchased a language-learning database with over 160 learning languages and 140 home languages to support state employees' language learning needs for work with people in Oregon who speak languages other than English.

Survey responses and usage analytics showed high activity from agencies that support and partner directly with the public. Language support helped these agencies achieve their diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.

Top 10 Agencies by # Accounts

Agency	Accounts
ODHS	192
OED	58
OHA	53
ODOT	45
ODE	27
OJD	27
DOC	26
DAS	24
DCBS	20
DOR	19

This chart shows state agencies with accounts. In the top five are Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Department of Transportation, and Oregon Department of Education.
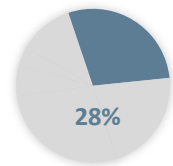
"I love the embrace of diversity and availability for broaden[ing] the skills of employees to help the wide cultural makeup of Oregonians." – State employee user
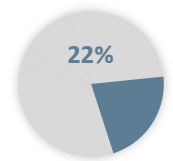
SUMMARY OF SPENDING
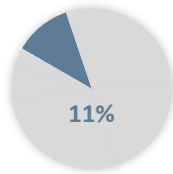
Fostering Digital Equity and Inclusion: **$336,032**
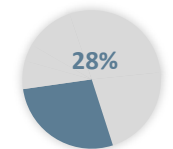- 26 projects by 21 libraries and museums

Increasing Access to Library Services: **$834,694**
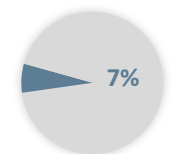- 29 projects by 24 libraries and museums

Responding to Community Needs: **$633,630**
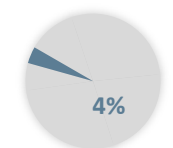- 26 projects by 20 libraries and museums

Supporting Student Success: **$810,411**
- 86 projects by 66 libraries and museums

Strengthening the Workforce: **$192,550**
- 35 projects by 32 libraries and museums

Administration: **$116,848**
- State Library staff and grant-making tools

Total Amount Spent: $2,924,165

Questions about this report?
Contact library.support@slo.oregon.gov