

***COMPENDIUM 2:  
THE FIELD OF PRACTICE IN OREGON***

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Greg Greenway  
Paul Leistner  
Gabrielle Brown  
Max Wedding



*This compendium to our [summary report](#) describes the kinds of support that local governments use to build their capacity for community engagement. It also identifies service providers and resources that are available in Oregon.*

## ***SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESOURCES***

In this section we identify the sources of training and support in Oregon that we discovered through our research. We use the categories of providers described in the summary report to organize the results. Given the time and resources for our project, we have highlighted Oregon providers in most but not all of the categories, concentrating on sources of support that are available to local governments statewide (some of which originate outside the state).

This is not a directory of every provider in Oregon. There are many organizations, consultants, publications, and networks that support local governments. This typology of providers could be the basis for a more complete and dynamic database.

The categories covered in this section:

- Community Engagement Trainers
- Local Government In-House Training
- Local Government Associations
- Councils of Governments and Regional Collaboratives
- Professional Associations
- Municipal Support Organizations
- Consulting Firms
- Academic Institutions
- Community Organizing and Advocacy Groups
- Dialogue and Deliberation Organizations
- Equity Organizations
- Online Tool Providers
- Peer Support Networks
- Foundations and Funding Organizations
- Civic Organizations
- Journals and Other Publications
- Research and Information Clearinghouses
- Federal Government Support
- Oregon State Government Support

In this document, academic institutions are discussed in more detail in Appendix 1, and fee for service consultants and online tool providers are covered in Appendix 2.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRAINERS**

We identified three organizations that are actively providing comprehensive training and support to local governments in Oregon to build their capacity for community engagement:

- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)
- Bleiker Training
- Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership

### **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IAP2)**

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the most well-known source of community engagement training and capacity building for local governments in Oregon.

The organization was founded in 1990 by community engagement practitioners to promote the values and best practices of community engagement.<sup>1</sup> IAP2 quickly expanded its focus to serve not only practitioners but “all people [involved] in public participation.” (<https://www.iap2.org/page/history>)

IAP2 members today “work in industry, civil society organizations, universities, government, and more.” IAP2 members support “clients, colleagues, and citizens” to improve “decision-making and promote best practice through the three IAP2 Pillars—the Core Values, Code of Ethics, and Spectrum of Public Participation. (IAP2 website Membership page: <https://www.iap2.org/page/membership>). Today, IAP2 has chapters in twenty-six countries. The IAP2 Cascade Chapter serves Oregon and southern Washington State and is one of the largest and most active IAP2 chapters in the US.

While individuals can join IAP2, they also have a “government membership” category that allows “cities, counties, regional authorities, school districts, publicly-owned utilities, state and federal agencies” to join as an organization. This membership allows all employees in the organization to access IAP2 member benefits.

IAP2 offers local governments:

- **Training and Professional Development:** Discounts for group training, participation in Skills Symposiums and conferences, and in-house training.
- **Certification:** Two levels of certification: Certified Public Participation Professional (CP3) and Master Certified Public Participation Professional (MCP3)
- **Networking:** Connections with other community engagement professionals through volunteer engagement and local and international conferences and events.

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<sup>1</sup> The IAP2 website “history” section states that “The [IAP2] founding members assembled a Board of Directors, developed bylaws and policies, and organized the first annual conference in Portland, Oregon in 1992. [emphasis added]. (IAP2 Website: <https://www.iap2.org/page/history>.)

- **Recognition and Awards:** Opportunity for jurisdictions and projects to apply for one of the IAP2 Core Values Awards and international awards that recognize outstanding community engagement work.
- **Best Practices Resources and Publications:** Access to community engagement resources, learning webinars, monthly newsletters, research, and semi-annual publication of the Journal of Public Deliberation.
- **Local Events:** Participation in local social networking opportunities, speakers and panels, and other events.
- **Career Center:** The IAP2 Career Center, which provides a way for local governments to post community engagement employment opportunities in their jurisdictions.
- **Leadership:** Opportunities to serve on the boards and committees of the IAP2 Cascade Chapter and IAP2 USA.

(Sources: <https://iap2usa.org/government> ; <https://www.iap2.org/page/about>)

IAP2 offers trainings and webinars. These can be found on the online calendars of the local IAP2 Cascade Chapter and IAP2 USA:

- IAP2 Cascade Chapter Calendar: <https://iap2usa.org/cascade>
- IAP2 USA Calendar: <https://iap2usa.org/calendar>

The flagship IAP2 training in the United States is its five-day “Foundations of Public Participation,” which provides an in-depth review of community engagement values and principles, step-by-step guidance on how to assess the need for community development and develop a community engagement plan, and a review of community engagement tools and techniques. The training includes Planning for Effective Participation (three days) and Techniques for Effective Participation (two days).

In 2019, the City of Milwaukie, Oregon sent five staff members to the IAP2 5-day foundations training as part of the City’s effort to strengthen its in-house community engagement capacity. Jordan Imlah, communications program manager for the City of Milwaukie, currently serves on the IAP2 Cascade Chapter board of directors.

Examples of other training topics on the IAP2 USA calendar in 2021 include:

- Riding the Storm: Bravely Leading in Times of Polarization and Disruption (IAP2 USA’s first online, self-paced training)
- Building a Better Future for Everyone Using Transgenerational Thinking
- Online 2-Day Course: Social Intelligence of Facilitators
- Beyond Inclusion: 8 Principles for Equitable Public Engagement
- Virtual Workshop: IAP2’s Public Participation for Decision Makers
- Strategies for Dealing with Opposition & Outrage in P2

More information about IAP2 Cascade Chapter and IAP2 USA is available at:

- IAP2 Cascade Chapter: <http://iap2usa.org/cascade>

- IAP2 USA: <https://www.iap2usa.org/>

### **BLEIKER TRAINING**

Hans and Anna Marie Bleiker have been training local government leaders and staff in their model of community engagement—Systemic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC)—for over 30 years. Their daughter Jennifer Bleiker now has joined their firm, Bleiker Training.

The Bleikers target their trainings to both public officials and staff who are responsible for “important, but difficult-to-implement projects, programs, regulations, and missions,” especially “engineers, scientists, systems analysts, managers, administrator and other hired professionals in public agencies” because “it’s their professional work—and their careers—that are wasted when their recommendations are torpedoed.” They also target their training to elected and politically appointed decision-makers “who suffer many of the same frustrations as do professionals.”

The Bleikers assert that their SDIC approach focuses on getting community members, even those who initially strongly oppose a project, to support or at least “grudgingly go along” with the project moving forward. They recognize that community members who want to stop a project can have a lot of negative clout and therefore that “public agencies in the US have a much greater need for Consent-Building skills than their counterparts in other countries.” The Bleikers argue that people who become skilled in SDIC ultimately promote informed political decisions by connecting a more informed public to a larger decision-making framework.

The SDIC “Learning Objectives” include:

- Why and how proposals are torpedoed.
- Why technical and scientific professionals responsible for public sector missions are only as effective as they are persuasive.
- The “Technical Fallacy”—Why no amount of scientific analysis can resolve values conflicts.
- How scientific analysis needs to mesh with Systemic Consent-Building if it is to influence political debate and political decisions.
- Why Public Meetings and Advisory Committees used by most public agencies are somewhere between useless and counterproductive.
- Why pleasing everyone is neither possible, necessary, or even ethical.
- Why and how you MUST satisfy this society’s concepts of Fairness, Rights, Freedoms, Liberties, and Responsibilities.

(Source: Bleiker Training website, “SDIC Training”: <https://consentbuilding.com/sdic-training/> )

The standard Bleiker training is a three-day workshop. Other training opportunities include:

- **Introductory Course:** “Dealing with NIMBY using SDIC: Earn the trust of your fiercest opponents using SDIC” (<https://consentbuilding.com/nimby/>)
- **Advanced Training—Four Modules:**
  - Module 1: Strategic—How to Identify Key Issues & Interests
  - Module 2: Tactics—The DOs and DON’Ts of Outreach Tools
  - Module 3: Respect & Legitimacy —A Deep Dive Into Leadership

Module 4: Values —The Role of Values in Your Work

- **Webinar Clinics:** sample topic, “Why opponents are energetic and supporters apathetic”
- **Coaching and Mentoring:** The Bleikers offer coaching and mentoring to or people who have completed the Bleiker’s Consent-Building training to help answer questions and solve problems that come up and to build a team’s skills to handle similar challenges in the future.

More information on Bleiker Training is available on their website: <https://consentbuilding.com/>.

**NOTE:** A long-time community engagement consultant in Oregon reported that some local government leaders and staff who have completed the Bleiker training asked that consultants assigned to their projects also be familiar with the Bleiker method of community engagement. This emphasizes that a common language and overall approach can be valuable when city staff work with consultants.

### **DAVENPORT INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP**

The Davenport Institute, based at Pepperdine University’s School for Public Policy, is a major source of community engagement training and capacity building in California.

Davenport works with “local governments, non-profit organizations, and residents to both promote and support constructive and broad-based civic involvement in decisions that affect people where they live and work.” (<https://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/>). They also provide both “academic and practical support to local government practitioners, public policy students and others as it seeks to promote greater public participation in civic life.” (Davenport Strategic Plan 2019-2024)

The Davenport Institute started as Common Sense California (CSC) in 2005. In 2008, the organization offered its first half-day public engagement training program. In 2010, CSC joined Pepperdine University and became the Davenport Institute. In 2017-18, the organization launched its professional certificate program.

Davenport’s mission is “To help build stronger communities in California by promoting public participation in local governance.” Their vision is “to be a champion of public engagement as a 21st-century leadership skill for local governments and residents to succeed together.”

In early 2020, Davenport began conversations with the Center for Public Service at PSU to explore opportunities to bring their model of community engagement training to Oregon. On June 2, 2021, they hosted a sample half-day training through CPS—Effective Public Engagement Tools and Techniques—for local government elected officials and staff.<sup>2</sup>

Davenport focuses its work in three strategic areas: Thought Leadership, Convening, and Training. Davenport activities in each of these areas are described below.

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<sup>2</sup> As noted in the introduction, the conversation between CPS and DI led to a meeting in February 2020 of PSU staff and partners who study and work on community engagement. Meeting participants agreed that it would be helpful to know more about current efforts in Oregon. One outcome of that meeting is our current project to survey local government community engagement training and capacity building opportunities in the state.

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- **Roadmap for Public Engagement/Formal Recognition:** A local government uses a diagnostic tool and help from a Davenport trainer to assess their jurisdiction's community engagement programs, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop a plan to expand their community engagement work. The jurisdiction then hosts a Davenport training tailored to their jurisdiction's needs and can request further consultation.
- **Information:** Links to articles, webinars, reports and podcasts on community engagement.
- **Technological Tools:** Information on different technological tools and products for "informing residents," "consulting residents," "collaborating with residents," and "building community."
- **Additional Resources:** Links to additional resources.
- **Events:** Keynote speeches, conference sessions and other public events.
- **Research:** Research on public engagement in California, including surveys of local officials and leaders of community-based organizations on opportunities for and obstacles to community engagement.
- **Case Studies:** Case studies on community engagement efforts in different California communities.
- **Attitudes/Civic Health:** Research on attitudes toward community engagement, engagement at the state level in California, civic health and civic life in California, and other policy research.
- **Consultation:** Consultation services for local governments in California on community engagement challenges and efforts provided by DI staff and a diverse network of policy-specific consultants affiliated with DI.
- **Davenport Discussions:** A series of lunchtime events with practitioners, journalists, innovators, and researchers who speak to students at Pepperdine University on a wide range of issues.

## CONVENING

- **ICMA Student Chapter:** DI sponsors the Pepperdine University student chapter of the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA). The chapter helps students network with local government administrators and hosts panel discussions on different topics with local government practitioners.<sup>3</sup>
- **City Manager in Residence Program:** This program, developed by DI with the support of California ICMA, gives students in graduate public policy and public administration programs the opportunity to learn firsthand from some of the best city managers in California.
- **Conferences:** DI hosts conferences that bring together scholars and innovative government practitioners on community engagement, technology in government, place making, and other related fields.

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<sup>3</sup> Portland State University also hosts an active ICMA student chapter.

## **TRAINING AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

Davenport recognizes that engaging community members and “meeting them where they are in relation to their community, history and culture” is an entirely different skill set from the skills local leaders traditionally have used as problem solvers and decision makers. They offer a variety of half-day and full-day training programs to help local government leaders improve their community engagement skills and two professional certification programs.

### ***Training***

Davenport offers half-day training programs that introduce a variety of community engagement topics, including: what community engagement is and why it is valuable; how to use technology to engage the community; how to engage communities that have been marginalized and face obstacles to participation in local decision making. Davenport can also customize its half-day seminars and training workshops, offer full-day trainings that combine any of the half-day options, or develop customized training to meet the needs of a local government. The standard full-day training covers the basics of good community engagement as well as valuable process design and facilitation techniques.

### ***Professional Certificate in Advanced Public Engagement for Local Government***

This certification program prepares mid-career local government professionals to “lead a publicly-engaged organization by gaining a deep understanding of the context, purpose, and best practices for engaging residents in the decisions that affect their lives and communities.” Davenport currently offers the program virtually to cohorts of twenty participants. It consists of five two-and-a-half hour modules held over five afternoons. The five program modules include:

- Public Engagement? What? When? Why? And How?
- Technology and Public Engagement: Lessons from the Pandemic for Future Engagement
- Engaging Marginalized Communities
- How to Have Difficult Conversations
- Innovation and Leadership

The program concludes with a Personal Public Engagement Summit that “allows each participant to workshop an engagement action plan” on an issue related to their current work. Participants are matched with a DI Advisory Council Member or Certificate Alum to talk through their engagement plan.

### ***Professional Certificate in Leading Smart Communities***

Davenport says that from “online public participation platforms to blockchain, technology is fundamentally changing the government-resident relationship. The impact of technology is felt across all departments in municipal governments—from public safety to planning.” The certification program introduces government leaders to emerging technology platforms and how to use them.

Davenport states that the program participants will:

- Understand the context for urban and community change and how it will help you be better prepared for the opportunities and challenges ahead.
- Learn about some of the most cutting-edge developments in smart community innovation.
- Discover why cybersecurity must become a priority for every community and learn about the new information security tools and techniques.



- Explore new digital approaches to public engagement that reflect the growing expectations of communities.
- Unleash the power of government data by understanding the capabilities of emerging tools and best practices.
- Acquire new skills that will help with governance, strategy development, and rapid project deployment.
- Work together with global team members on developing and delivering a project paper over the course of the certificate program.

More information about the Davenport Institute is available at: <https://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/>

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN-HOUSE TRAINING**

It is rare for local governments anywhere to have a comprehensive, fully staffed in-house training program for community engagement. Local governments generally rely on other organizations (community partners or private vendors) to provide formal staff training, while senior staff support and mentor their colleagues. At the same time, we discovered examples of governments in Oregon that provide specific kinds of training related to community engagement for their employees, including the [City of Portland's Equity Training](#) and the [City of Eugene's Workforce Equity & Belonging Training](#).

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

Local government associations are another major source of training and capacity building for local government leaders and staff in Oregon. They provide their members with a wide range of capacity building and support through conferences, workshops, webinars, mentoring, information resources, peer sharing, and award and recognition programs.

While our project team found that none of these associations appears to offer regular community engagement training to their members, we did learn that these organizations sometimes include conference sessions related to community engagement. Most of the associations offer some sort of networking and other opportunities to share best practices with other members. We also heard that local government leaders sometimes raise community engagement issues and challenges and get feedback and support from their peers through these associations.

While community engagement has not been a major focus for local government associations in Oregon, these organizations constitute a powerful infrastructure for engaging with and supporting their members. They are in a strong position to spotlight exemplary community engagement in specific jurisdictions, and they can identify the kind of information and support that would be most relevant and useful to their members.

This section describes the following local government associations and their community engagement training and capacity building activities:

- League of Oregon Cities (LOC)
- Oregon City/County Management Association (OCCMA)
- Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)

- Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO)

Each of these organizations is a chapter of larger national bodies (or international, in the case of OCCMA) that provide conferences, training workshops, networking, and information resources as well as additional support and information related to community engagement. This section also describes these national organizations and the resources they offer.

### **LEAGUE OF OREGON CITIES**

The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) provides advocacy, training, and information to support elected officials and staff in Oregon’s 241 cities. LOC was created in 1925 to help local officials network and advocate on issues important to municipal governments. LOC offers some information and training related to community engagement. Additional community engagement training and information is available from the National League of Cities.

### **CONFERENCES**

LOC hosts an annual conference in the fall and a spring conference in April. They describe their conferences as “opportunities for city officials to learn best practices, network with peers and industry leaders, and take back new ideas to enhance their communities.” LOC says that its Annual Conference is “the largest gathering of municipal officials each year in Oregon.” The annual conference programs usually include “30+ breakout sessions, day-long seminars, workshops, tours, a 60+ vendor trade show and plenty of time for networking.” The LOC 96th Annual Conference is scheduled for October 2021 in Bend, Oregon. LOC hosts its spring conferences in different regions of the state each year and tailors the conference program to include topics important to that region.

LOC annual conferences include sessions related to community engagement:

- 2019
  - o “Diversity and Inclusion in Local Government: Why, What & How”
  - o “Accessibility: How to Engage All Community Members”
- 2020
  - o Keynote Speaker Walidah Imarisha, “Have You Ever Wondered Why the Black Population in Oregon is So Small?”
  - o “How to Engage Diverse Leaders in Communities”
  - o “How Small Cities are Approaching Equity and Inclusion”
  - o “Valuing & Utilizing Your Volunteers”
- 2022
  - o Councilors Workshop: Let’s Get Engaged
  - o DEI Workshop
  - o From Protests and Rallies to Employee Speech and Public Comment: The First Amendment’s Impact on Cities
  - o Getting the Most Out of Your Constituent Engagement

LOC describes its Oregon Municipal Handbook as a comprehensive resource that provides “city officials, from elected representatives to essential employees, an understanding of the purpose, structure, authority and nuances of municipal governance in Oregon.” The topics covered in “Chapter 10: Working with the Public” include: public hearings and public comment, advisory groups, board and committees, neighborhood associations, volunteers, public opinion surveys, communication policies and plan, media outlets, social media and city websites, and city publications.

(<https://www.orcities.org/resources/reference/city-handbook/chapter-10-working-public>)

## **TRAINING**

LOC offers training to elected city officials and city staff “on a variety of core and specialized topics.” The LOC website says that training is provided by LOC and outside experts throughout the years and in a variety of locations across the state. Training topics offered by LOC staff include: Budgeting, Contracting, Ethics, Public Meetings, Public Records, Council Roles and Responsibilities, and Land Use. Training topics offered by LOC consultants include: Coaching Great Performance, Community Visioning/Strategic Planning; Communication Strategies, Customer Service, Grant Writing, Land Use, Media Relations/Crisis Communications, and System Development Charges. (<https://www.orcities.org/education/training/training-topics>)

One of these training programs—“Connect with Your Community: Communication Strategies that Work”— appears to include content related to community engagement. The description states that the training provides “knowledge and skills needed to establish a social media presence, build an effective working relationship with local media and encourage community involvement by promoting citizen participation.” (<https://www.orcities.org/education/training/loc-training-calendar/details/connect-with-your-communitycommunication-strategies-that-work>)

LOC also offers five Elected Essentials Training Videos. Topics include roles and responsibilities of municipal officials, public meetings, ethics, public records, legal issues. (<https://www.orcities.org/education/training/elected-essentials>)

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE (LGMC)**

LOC awards its Local Government Management

Certificate to individuals “who complete 140 hours of training in 10 core areas” critical to success in local government management. One of the ten core areas is “Community Relations.” The description of this ten-hour segment says it covers “effective public meetings; community surveys; citizen involvement; and customer service.” (<https://www.orcities.org/education/lgmc>)

## **PEER SHARING AND NETWORKING**

In addition to annual and spring conferences, LOC has been hosting a weekly phone call for city officials during the COVID-19 pandemic to share and discuss issues and challenges. LOC also offers networking through its Small Cities Program and its quarterly district meetings. Although these meetings were suspended for a time during COVID, the LOC calendar shows that they are being held again now. LOC created the Small Cities Program in the early 2000’s to provide officials from smaller cities an opportunity to meet over lunch, network, and discuss issues and solutions that work for small cities in 12 regions across Oregon.

LOC notes that small cities represent more than 70 percent of all Oregon cities. Today, the program encourages elected and appointed officials from cities with populations of 7,500 or less to attend

quarterly meetings in their region. These two-hour meetings include a presentation, lunch, and a roundtable discussion. All city officials in a district—even those from larger cities—are welcome to attend, as are guests from state agencies, regional and county governments, nonprofits and consulting firms. Dr. Phillip Cooper, with the Local Government Program at the Hatfield School of Government at PSU, said that these district meetings are a great way to learn about what is going on within a region and how cities are responding to the challenges they face.

<https://www.orcities.org/education/small-cities-program>

### **LOC AWARDS PROGRAM**

The LOC Awards Program recognizes leaders who have made outstanding contributions to their cities, and progressive and innovative city programs and projects. The Helen and Alan Berg Good Governance award honors city programs that connect community members to their governments. The LOC Civic Education Award recognizes individuals who have promoted local government education in Oregon schools. LOC awards are a good source of successful city community engagement efforts. Some examples include:

- City of Milwaukie, “All Aboard, community visioning project.” (2018)
- City of Independence, “Revitalization Project (2018)
- City of John Day, “Innovation Gateway and Riverfront Recreation Area”(2019)
- City of Cornelius, “Reach Out, Invite People In and Create a Real Community” (2019)

<https://www.orcities.org/education/conferences/annual-conference/2021-loc-awards>

### **AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS**

LOC recognizes and works with ten affiliate organizations of local officials. The LOC website reports that several of these affiliate organizations including the Oregon Mayors Association and the Oregon City/County Management Association host conferences throughout the year that attract many LOC members. LOC provides direct staffing to:

- Oregon Mayors Association (OMA)
- Oregon City/County Managers Association (OCCMA)
- Oregon City Attorney’s Association (OCA)
- Oregon City Planning Directors Association (OCPDA)

LOC also recognizes the Oregon Association of Municipal Recordors (OAMR), Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA), Oregon Government Finance Officers Association (OGFOA), Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP), and the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA). <https://www.orcities.org/about/who-we-are/affiliate-organizations>

### **NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**

The National League of Cities (NLC) provides information, training, and networking for local government officials in Oregon. The NLC Resource Library offers articles, case studies, and publications related to community engagement. Some examples include:

- “The Value of Civic Engagement”
- “The Future of Civic Engagement”

- “Leaders of Today on Youth Civic Engagement”
- “Three Things Small Cities Teach Us About Civic Engagement”
- “From the Event: Complete Count to Community Investment: Establishing Permanent Civic Engagement”

### **A NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON OREGON**

A May 2021 NLC article — “The Art of Engagement is a Journey” — highlights effective community engagement by the City of Woodburn and Portland General Electric (PGE). The City and PGE had spent years building relationships with diverse communities, using an equity lens to guide their decision making. These relationships were extremely valuable in working with community groups to respond to damage from a severe ice storm in 2021 which downed millions of trees and cut power to thousands of people.

(<https://www.nlc.org/article/2021/05/06/the-art-of-engagement-is-a-journey/>)

NLC has partnered in the past with Matt Leighninger to create documents that support local government community engagement, including Planning for Stronger Local Democracy: A Field Guide for Local Officials. This document provides guidance and examples for local officials on how to effectively engage their communities. In the past, NLC has also established a City Futures Panel on Democratic Governance, producing the document, “Changing the Way We Govern: Building Democratic Governance in Your Community.”

NLC University (NLCU) offers courses related to local governance, including content focused on community engagement. NLC offers a [certificate program](#) that recognizes NLCU attendees for their participation in individual courses and accumulated credits. Their conferences and meetings allow local government representatives in Oregon to learn from communities across the nation.

### **OREGON CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

The Oregon City/County Management Association (OCCMA) membership includes individuals who are “county managers, chief administrators, assistants to city and county managers and administrators, and other consultants and academics professionally interested in local government in Oregon.” The OCCMA supports local government professional development, sharing of ideas and information, and the personal and professional development of its members. The OCCMA is a chapter of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which offers additional information, training, and support to local government officials in Oregon. (<https://www.occma.org/About-OCCMA>)

OCCMA holds conferences, shares information, and offers coaching and mentoring through its Senior Advisor program. The OCCMA receives staff support from the Oregon League of Cities.

### **CONFERENCES**

OCCMA holds conferences in the fall (often in collaboration with the LOC) and in the summer. OCCMA sometimes offers sessions at conferences that relate to community engagement. Recent examples include:

- “Preparing the Next Generation of Civic Leaders” (Spring 2019): A review of the innovative citizen academy model for training new community civic leaders used by the City of Hillsboro and the City of Wilsonville. The organization has since developed its [Next Generation Initiatives](#) “to

attract and develop a wide and diverse group of people into the local government management profession.”

- [“Reimagining Community Engagement”](#) (Summer 2021): An examination of how community engagement may move forward after COVID stopped many traditional community engagement activities and forced local governments to “embrace new technology and ways to connect.” A panel of Oregon practitioners discussed strategies for connecting with people who might not engage through traditional methods. The session covered “the role of elected officials and changing community expectation in engagement efforts,” “ways to prioritize engagement tools on limited budgets while still adhering to the values of making engagement inclusive and accessible.” The goal of the session was to provide participants with new tools and ways of thinking about how to approach engagement in your community and strategies for addressing some of the engagement challenges.”

### **TRAINING**

OCCMA does not offer a general training program with regularly available courses. OCCMA members can access training opportunities through ICMA.

OCCMA supports the Northwest Women’s Leadership Academy (NWWLA), which offers a nine-month professional development program for emerging government leaders in Oregon and Washington. According to the OCCMA website, the program “provides opportunities to enhance skills and competencies, build confidence, network, and expand professional connections through career mentoring and moral support to women in local government.” In 2021, session topics include: leading during a crisis; diversity, equity and inclusion; understanding your personal leadership strengths; working with a governing board; interviewing and negotiation; and process improvement.

(<https://www.occma.org/nwwla>).

### **SENIOR ADVISOR PROGRAM**

OCCMA supports its members through the Senior Advisor Program (formerly called the “Range Rider” program). It offers members “the experience, advice and support of respected, retired managers of the profession.” The Senior Advisor Program is a joint activity of the ICMA and OCCMA. Currently eight senior advisors are assigned to districts across Oregon and are available to provide advice on a wide range of issues. The senior advisors regularly reach out to the city managers in their districts. We spoke with Dave Waffle, one of the OCCMA senior advisors. Waffle said senior advisors act as counselors and mentors primarily to city managers and assistant city managers. He said they usually do not offer formal training to local governments, facilitate strategic planning processes, or provide formal consulting services. Advisors help city managers find the support they need, help them through tough times, problem solve, point them to training opportunities, help them find facilitators, and provide professional and personal guidance.

Waffle said that community engagement is just another arrow in the quiver of possible support that advisors can provide. He reported that advisors might provide information about community engagement if a city manager requests this kind of support. As an advisor, he starts by providing generic information about community engagement and what a process might look like. He asks the city manager to describe the problem and brainstorms with them on potential solutions and who their stakeholders are. Waffle said that he draws on his own experiences, networks, and situational knowledge.

### **PEER SHARING**

Peer sharing occurs at the OCCMA conferences. In some counties, city managers meet regularly to discuss local issues and challenges and share successful strategies. Scott Lazenby, former city manager of the City of Lake Oswego, told us that city managers in Clackamas County get together every couple of months. We heard that city managers in Washington County also meet regularly to share ideas and support each other.

### **INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (ICMA)**

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) website states that ICMA supports local government professionals throughout the world. The ICMA “offers membership, professional development programs, research, publications, data and information, technical assistance, and training to thousands of city, town, and county chief administrative officers, their staffs, and other organizations....” (<https://icma.org/about-icma>)

ICMA offers more community engagement resources to local government leaders and staff than any of the other local government associations.

### **CONFERENCES**

ICMA conferences are a vehicle for training, information sharing, and peer networking. ICMA holds an annual conference and regional conferences throughout the year that present sessions on a wide range of topics. The theme of the 2021 ICMA Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon is “Let’s Restart & Begin to Reimagine.” The ICMA West Coast Regional Conference in March 2021 included some community engagement and DEI sessions: “Community Engagement Tools in a Virtual World,” “Strategies to Advance Racial Equity and Reconciliation,” and “Advancing Digital Equity and Inclusion.”

### **TRAINING**

ICMA University offers training to local government leaders and managers focused on their “Practices for Effective Local Government Leadership.” Workshops and programs draw on research about fourteen “core competencies,” two of which are:

- *COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT* Ensuring and managing community involvement in local government to support good decision making
- *EQUITY AND INCLUSION* Creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection of diverse ideas, backgrounds, and talent throughout the organization and the community (<https://icma.org/icma-university-skill-building-workshops>)

### **COACHING PROGRAM**

OCCMA partners with ICMA to give Oregon local government officials access to the benefits of the ICMA Coaching Program. ICMA coaches can help with challenging personnel issues, mentor emerging leaders, help local officials continue their professional development, and allow successful local government managers to share their expertise. The Coaching Program includes: six live webinars per year; online coaching resources (videos, presentation materials, information sessions); one-on-one coaching; and articles that address career issues. (<https://icma.org/icma-coaching-program>) One 2021 webinar topic is “Leading Your Community in an Era of Anxiety: How Do You Make Sure You Hear Them and They Hear You.” The webinar covers how to “build effective two-way communication and develop relationships” in the community “during good times” to be “better prepared to handle a crisis.” (<https://icma.org/icma-coaching-program-webinars>)

## **PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES**

ICMA has the most extensive selection of online community engagement publications among the national support organizations for local governments that we examined. ICMA resources include blog posts, e-newsletters, books, research reports, and articles in Public Management (PM) Magazine. ICMA publications include information about successful community engagement and DEI practices. For instance, they recently posted a PM Magazine article—“Engaging Our Community for an Equitable Future”—that described the deep and effective community engagement and equity work by the City of Renton, Washington. ([https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/engaging-our-community-equitablefuture?\\_zs=f0dsb1&\\_zl=fxrc7](https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/engaging-our-community-equitablefuture?_zs=f0dsb1&_zl=fxrc7))

Resources available ICMA website include:

- “Getting Everyone Aboard the Equity Train”
- “Why Diverse, Active Citizen Commissions are Important”
- “Keep Moving Forward: Shaping a More Inclusive Community”
- “Engaging Our Community for an Equitable Future” • “Difficult Conversations Lead to Stronger Communities:
- “Volunteerism in the Time of COVID-19 and Beyond”
- “How to Facilitate Inclusive Community Outreach and Engagement”
- “The Art of Community Engagement”
- “Managing Hostility in Public Discourse”

## **AWARDS**

ICMA recognizes local government leadership through its Local Government Excellence Awards Program. Under the category for Outstanding Local Government Programs, there is an award for Community Equity and Inclusion that recognizes communities that build and celebrate diversity and inclusiveness. (<https://icma.org/2021-local-government-excellence-awards#EQUITY>)

## **ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES**

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) advocates on behalf of Oregon’s thirty-six counties with the state legislature, state agencies, Congress, and federal agencies. AOC provides information to counties on current trends, issues, and challenges, and provides county officials in Oregon with the opportunity to engage with each other through annual conferences and regional meetings. AOC also provides education and training to elected and appointed county officials. AOC was created in 1906 to serve as a forum for counties to share information and build consensus.

(<https://oregoncounties.org/about/history/>)

Our project team spoke with McKenzie Farrell, AOC operations manager, and Kristen Paul, public affairs associate for member services and education. Paul leads AOC’s education programming development. Farrell shared that AOC’s education efforts focus primarily on policy issues.

Farrell and Paul said that county commissioners’ interest in and opinions of community engagement vary across counties and individuals. Some commissioners are concerned that community engagement



can be challenging and hard to manage. Others are more comfortable seeking out community input. Farrell said funding is a big issue for counties, and county commissioners are often interested in engaging the community to help pass bond measures and levies.

Farrell noted that more seasoned county commissioners are more likely to want to engage the community to help residents understand what counties do. For example, Deschutes County has developed a County College training program for residents to help them learn about county services and how they affect their lives. (<https://www.deschutes.org/administration/page/deschutes-county-college>)

The annual AOC conferences are major venues for training, capacity building, and networking for county commissioners. A review of the agendas for the AOC annual conferences in 2018, 2019, and 2020 identified one session, in 2020, that appeared to be related to community engagement: “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”

Farrell noted that a high number of county commissioner positions have turned over recently. In response, AOC has focused its training efforts for new commissioners on fundamental issues: What is a county? Why is it important? What do counties do?

### ***COUNTY COLLEGE***

“County College” was created by AOC in 2006 in partnership with the Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service. AOC now offers County College every two years. The program is designed for new county commissioners and high-level county staff. The program provides a comprehensive overview of county responsibilities and the authorities of county commissioners and judges. Topics include the history and structure of county government, ethics, risk management, legal provisions, public meetings and public records, higher education programs and partnerships, AOC, the legislative process, county finance, natural resources, community development, public safety, health and human services, veterans, transportation, managing people, and leadership. At this time, community engagement is not one of the topics included in the County College curriculum. (<https://oregoncounties.org/education/county-college/>)

### ***COUNTY SOLUTIONS***

County Solutions helps county leaders convene and participate in collaborative problem-solving efforts in their communities and regions. A goal of the program is to help elected officials and staff respond to issues or opportunities as they arise. Farrell said the program is patterned after the Oregon Solutions and Regional Solutions programs. She said the scope of these projects can vary from single county issues—like a water issue in Polk County—to more complex regional issues like completion of the Oregon Coast Trail, which involves multiple counties and stakeholders. AOC staff member Andy Smith directs the program. More information on County Solutions is available at: <https://oregoncounties.org/solutions/>

### ***PEER NETWORKS***

Farrell and Paul noted that many conversations about best practices and problem solving happens through peer networks, such as AOC gatherings and committee meetings. AOC also works with some affiliate/associate groups of county officials, such as district attorneys, public works directors, etc. She noted that some groups are informal while others are structured. (The National Association of Counties partners with a long list of affiliate organizations as noted below.) For more information about AOC, go to: <https://oregoncounties.org/>.

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) provides information, convening, training, and capacity building to Oregon county leaders and staff. In addition to holding annual conferences, NACo offers county officials access to the NACo Knowledge Network which allows county officials to connect with other government partners and exchange information on a wide range of issues important to counties.

The NACo “Reports and Toolkits” section includes some materials under the heading “Civic Engagement.” One of these is “How to Gain Citizen Buy In,” which examines how counties can use messaging, social media, and other outreach strategies to engage community members on “bond proposals, budgets, and other key initiatives.”

NACo recognizes the important role counties play in building vibrant communities for all individuals, and it supports county efforts to integrate DEI objectives and initiatives into county operations. The NACo website shares examples of county DEI declarations and resolutions and county DEI committees and initiatives. No declarations or resolutions were listed from Oregon at the time of writing, but three of eleven examples of county committees are from the state:

- Clackamas County’s 2012 “Resolution Valuing, Equity and Inclusion, and the county’s support for several advisory councils including the employee-led “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC).
- Multnomah County’s “Office of Diversity and Equity” (ODE), which focuses on ensuring “access, equity, and inclusion in Multnomah County’s services policies, practices, and procedures;”
- Washington County’s convening in 2018 of a “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) ‘Think Tank’ tasked with providing direction for the county’s DEI priorities and strategies related to human resources and procurement” and the County’s subsequent launch of a “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative focused on operationalizing racial equity across the County.” In 2020, Washington County commissioners created an Office of Equity, Inclusion and Community Engagement in the County Administrative Office and a Chief Equity Office position to support the County’s efforts to “foster equity and inclusion in the county’s programs, practices and policies.” (<https://www.naco.org/county-resources-diversity-equity-and-inclusion#committee-initiatives>)

NACo also has formal relationships with many organizations with different roles in county governance. NACo lists seven “affiliated organizations” that offer additional opportunities for local elected officials to find peer support, including national associations for Black, Hispanic, Republican, Democratic, Women county officials and LGBT leaders and allies. NACo also recognizes twenty-five “Affiliate organizations” that are aligned with county departments. These include national associations for county administrators, health officials, park and recreation officials, planners, information officers, sheriffs, engineers, and more. Some of these organizations may offer additional opportunities to develop tailored community engagement training for their members. Our project did not explore what role these national organizations might play in Oregon or what information or training they may provide to their members related to community engagement. (<https://www.naco.org/about/committees-state-associations-and-affiliates>) For more information on NACo, go to: (<https://www.naco.org/>).

## **SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION OF OREGON**

Special districts are another important form of local government in Oregon. About 1,000 special districts provide a wide range of services to local communities across the state and to nearly every Oregonian. Of

these, 920 are members of the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO). SDAO provides a wide range of training and support to its member districts.

The SDAO was formed in 1979 to “give special districts a stronger and united voice” with the Oregon Legislature. SDAO advocates with state agencies and other levels of government and provides training, information sources, and other support services to its members. (<https://www.sdao.com/about-specialdistricts-association-of-oregon>)

Special districts come in all sizes. Frank Stratton, SDAO executive director, noted that special districts can range from a small road district that serves 20 people to a large organization with significant staff and resources. He estimated that about thirty special districts in Oregon have budgets of over \$10 million, a couple hundred have budgets over \$1 million, and about 450 have little or no staff and budgets under \$100,000. SDAO reports that special districts in Oregon are led by more than 4,350 locally elected or volunteer board members.

In many parts of Oregon, special districts provide critical public services to residents. Stratton gave the example of Curry County, which has three small cities, but where everyone else in the county gets their services from almost sixty special districts.

***Thirty-Three Types of Special Districts in Oregon***

Airport, Cemetery Maintenance, County Service, Diking, Domestic Water Supply, Drainage, Emergency Communication, Fire Protection, Geothermal Heating, Health, Heritage, Highway Lighting, Irrigation, Library, Mass Transit, Metropolitan Service, Park and Recreation, People’s Utility, Ports, Predator Control, Radio and Data, 9-1-1 Communications, Road Assessment, Sand Removal, Sanitary, Soil and Water Conservation, Special Road, Transportation, Vector Control, Water Control, Water Improvement, Weather Modification, Weed Control.

SDAO supports special districts with training, information, and other support programs. SDAO’s training and capacity building activities include annual conferences and regional gatherings, training on risk management and personnel management, and general consulting support from SDAO staff.

**TRAINING**

The SDAO “Trainings Guide” lists the many different training opportunities available to special district boards on request. Most topics focus on risk management, including employment practices, health and safety, buildings and property, and transportation. SDAO also offers training on human resources and legal issues. Stratton noted that many individuals elected to special district boards may not be familiar with their new leadership role and responsibilities. SDAO Board Training topics include “The Board as ‘Supervisor,” “Board Duties, Responsibilities, and Liabilities,”

“Making Executive Director Performance Evaluation Meaningful,” and “Confidence in the Face of Confusion.” SDAO also offers monthly “First Thursday Webinars” to its members.

(<https://www.sdao.com/files/2de44b78b/18-trainings.pdf>)

Stratton shared that SDAO staff currently do not have specific expertise in community engagement and do not provide training or consulting support for special districts on community engagement. He noted that greater support for special districts on how to engage their communities would be valuable.

Unlike cities and counties, which may provide many different public services, special districts usually provide a single service, often of a technical nature. Stratton noted that an individual’s interest in a

special district is generally related to accessing the service the district provides, the cost of the service for that person, interest in supporting the service or volunteering, and sometimes running for the board.

### ***REASONS SPECIAL DISTRICTS ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY***

Special districts generally are not required to engage their communities beyond the formal requirements for public meetings. Stratton said that a major reason special district board members engage their communities is to assess and then build community support to pass a bond measure to fund the district's work. Another major challenge is getting people to run for and serve on special district boards. Stratton observed that many special districts operate in rural areas where some boards are largely made up of older white men. He suggested that many boards would benefit from learning how to effectively broaden their outreach to attract a greater diversity of board membership, especially by age and gender, and often from the local Latino community.

Stratton noted that special districts need to raise basic awareness in their communities about the district's existence, purpose, and the value it brings to the community. He said this greater community awareness can help districts when they seek support to pass a bond measure, when a crisis occurs, or to encourage people to run for the board. He emphasized that special districts also need to raise awareness among government leaders at the state and federal levels about what they do and why they need funding.

Some special districts have strong community outreach programs focused on informing their residents and getting them to change their behavior (for example, to promote fire prevention and water conservation, or what not to flush down your toilet).

Stratton echoed a theme we heard from many others we interviewed—the importance of local government leaders and staff developing relationships in the community before a crisis breaks out. Stratton noted that the amount of community engagement a special district does often depends on available resources and capacity. He said that special districts with larger staff and budgets tend to do more community engagement. He suggested examples of districts to look at that are doing good community engagement that include:

- Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation (<http://www.thprd.org/>)
- Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (<https://www.tvfr.com/>)
- Tualatin Valley Water District (<https://www.tvwd.org/>)
- Rogue Valley Sewer Services (<https://www.rvss.us/pilot.asp>)
- Port of Tillamook (<https://potb.org/#>)

### ***CONSULTANTS TO SPECIAL DISTRICTS***

Consultants can be an important source of community engagement support for special districts. Stratton said SDAO staff currently do not have the expertise to provide community engagement advice and guidance to its member districts. Stratton said SDAO is developing a “Consulting Connections” website to help special districts find consultants to work with. To be listed on the website, consultants would have to show letters of support from local governments they had worked with successfully in the past and offer some type of discount or benefit to SDAO members to be included on the list. Stratton said SDAO's tax-exempt status does not allow the organization to formally endorse individual consultants.

Stratton also shared that SDAO is exploring creating an on-call list of consultants that do public relations work. SDAO could enter into a sponsorship agreement so that special districts could access those companies for consulting advice on outreach and especially providing information to their communities and strategies, including social media, for building support for local bond measure campaigns. Stratton referenced the firm, Winning Mark, as an example of a public relations firm that does this kind of work.

### **PEER SHARING**

Peer sharing is another source of information and sharing of best practices for special districts. Stratton said that SDAO works with formal and informal peer groups of special district professionals. For instance, SDAO supports networks for human relations managers, special district attorneys, and water and sanitary professionals. SDAO also directly manages a peer group for port directors. He said no such group exists for special district public relations staff.

### **BEYOND OREGON**

Unlike for cities, counties, and city/county managers, no national association of special districts exists to provide another layer of support to these agencies in Oregon. Stratton shared that a few years ago SDAO joined with statewide special district associations in California, Utah, Colorado, and Florida to create the National Special Districts Coalition to share experiences and increase the visibility and clout of special districts in Congress. As other states join the coalition it could become a source of community engagement information, training, and support for special districts in the future. (National Special Districts Coalition, <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/home>)

Further exploration of the kind of community engagement training that would be most helpful to special districts would be valuable. This could include the development of case studies and best practices relevant to the specific work of special districts and guidance on how to access and work with consulting firms to engage community members. SDAO's annual conferences and regional meetings also offer an opportunity to provide community engagement information and training to SDAO members. For more information on SDAO, go to: <https://www.sdao.com/>

### **COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIVES**

We did not research the community engagement activities and capacity of all these organizations, but we recommend that any further efforts to catalog community engagement activities and capacity in Oregon consider them as well.

### **COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS**

Oregon is home to seven regional councils of governments (COGs). It is also home to Metro, the regional government covering the Portland metropolitan area.<sup>4</sup> COGs are multi-jurisdictional and multipurpose organizations. They are voluntary associations of local governments that work together on issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. COGs provide a variety of services and support to their jurisdictional members and direct services to residents in the communities they serve.

Our project did not explore community engagement training and capacity building by COGs, but we recognize their significance in promoting collaborative governance. Dr. Phillip Cooper noted that the

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<sup>4</sup> Metro is the only directly elected regional government and MPO in the United States.

PSU Local Government Program's Civic Gaps Project is working with COGs and local governments to identify needs and available services.

(We saw a reference to an organization called Oregon Regional Councils Association, which apparently was created in 1984 by ORS Chapter 190, but we were not able to find any information about this organization or its activities.)

Oregon's seven COGs include:

### **CENTRAL OREGON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL (COIC)**

The COIC was designated as a COG in 1972. The COIC website says that the organization provides services to "counties of Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson, the cities of Bend, Culver, La Pine, Madras, Metolius, Prineville, Redmond and Sisters, as well as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs." The COIC has more than 100 employees and provides services that include: "employment and training, alternative high school education, business loans, transportation, and community and economic development."

### **LANE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (LCOG)**

LCOG was first organized in 1945 and is one of the oldest councils of governments in the nation. The organization became a formal COG in 1971. LCOG's member organizations include "Lane County, twelve cities, six school districts, one education district, one college, two parks and recreation organizations, three library districts, three utilities, a transit district, two fire districts, an ambulance district, and a port." LCOG serves as a regional forum to support "regional planning, coordination, program development and service delivery organizations in local communities across Lane County."

LCOG services include Senior and Disability Services, Planning and Development Services, Administrative Services, GIS and Data Services, Local Government Personnel Services, Regional Technology Services, Transportation, Metropolitan Planning, Business Loans, Community Safety and Metro Television. LCOG also recently became the host for the Local Government Personnel Institute (LGPI), which provides personnel and labor relations support services to local governments across Oregon.

### **MID-WILLAMETTE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (MWVCOG)**

According to the MWVCOG website, intergovernmental cooperation in the mid-Willamette Valley began in 1957. MWVCOG was formally established in 1971. Their mission is to "expand interaction and improve dialogue among local units of government," "enhance collective awareness of major regional issues through seminars and workshops," "coordinate regional planning and development activities," and "provide technical assistance and local services tailored to individual needs of member governments."

In 2021, MWVCOG members include thirty-three cities, three counties, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, and seven special districts. MWVCOG supports its members in community development and planning, transportation planning, economic development, housing rehabilitation, small business financing, Census services, and GIS services.

### **NORTHWEST SENIOR AND DISABILITY SERVICES (NWSDS)**

NWSDS was created in 1982 and delivers services to seniors and adults with physical disabilities. NWSDS serves seniors and people with disabilities in Clatsop County, Marion County, Polk County, Tillamook County and Yamhill County.

## **OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

OCWCOG serves Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties and cities within those counties, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, and the Port of Newport. OCWCOG services include a variety of programs in the areas of senior and disability services, community services, business services and community development, economic development, and transportation.

## **ROGUE VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

RVCOG was established in 1968 to serve local jurisdictions in Jackson and Josephine Counties. Today, RVCOG members include Jackson and Josephine Counties, thirteen cities—Ashland, Butte Falls, Cave Junction, Central Point, Eagle Point, Gold Hill, Grants Pass, Jackson, Medford, Phoenix, Rogue River, Shady Grove, and Talent, and eight special districts and educational entities—Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO 911), Jackson County Library Services, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Rogue Community College, Rogue Valley Sewer Services (RVSS), Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc (SOREDI) and Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD). RVCOG provides programs and direct services in the areas of senior and disability services, transportation planning, land use planning, community development and natural resources and provides a variety of administrative support services to its member jurisdictions.

## ***REGIONAL COLLABORATIVES***

Oregon has a rich history of local communities and jurisdictions joining together to solve regional problems. These regional collaboratives are another form of public action and decision making that can showcase innovative and effective community engagement practices that could be useful to local government leaders and staff in Oregon.

Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) define “collaborative governance” as “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.” (Oregon Atlas of Collaboration, p. 2)

In our interviews, we heard about a particular example of good collaboration and community engagement—the Central Oregon Health Council. We also discovered the Oregon Atlas of Collaboration, which describes 236 different collaboratives in Oregon.

## ***CENTRAL OREGON HEALTH COUNCIL***

Matt Leighninger pointed us to the work of the Oregon Health Council. Leighninger said his national organization, Public Agenda, had worked with the Council and that it is a good example of how collaborative and community-focused work can be done in smaller, rural communities.

The Central Oregon Health Council (COHC) was created in 2009 to allow Crook, Jefferson, and Deschutes counties to partner on transforming their local health care delivery systems. The COHC website states that the organization’s purpose is to “improve health care by bringing down costs and raising both quality and satisfaction.” The organization seeks to “create a space for the health partners in the region to work together.” In addition to working with doctors, dentists and hospitals the organization states that it works with “school districts, public transportation, housing groups, politicians, and many more.” COHC says that they “bring patients, providers, and leaders together to solve problems. Our 200 volunteers have made our mission a success. Together we are making a healthier Central Oregon.”

COHC’s Community Advisory Committee includes representation from Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members and other representatives of Community, Tribal, and County governments.

**THE ATLAS OF COLLABORATION, OREGON VERSION 1.0**

The Oregon Atlas of Collaboration provides information about 236 collaborative efforts throughout the state. The Atlas is a joint project of the National Policy Consensus Center at PSU and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration at Syracuse University.

About half the collaborations in the Atlas were initiated by local communities and coalitions and about half were formed as a result of state government incentives or mandates. About 66 percent of the collaboratives focus on delivering public services, while 34 percent were formed to resolve some form of conflict. The Atlas reports that more “than 2,500 people and 2,000 organizations participate in these collaboratives.”

The Atlas describes collaboratives that span five policy areas: natural resources, economic development, public safety, education, and human health. The following table from the Atlas lists different types of collaborative organizations within each policy area.

POLICY AREA COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM	NUMBER OF COLLABORATIVES	SUPPORTING AGENCY (IES)
<b>HEALTH</b>		
Coordinated Care Organizations	15	OR Health Authority
Regional Health Equity Coalitions	4	OR Health Authority
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>		
Watershed Councils	66	OR Watershed Enhancement Board
Forest Collaboratives	25	OR Department of Forestry & OR Watershed Enhancement Board
Focused Investment Partnerships	18	OR Watershed Enhancement Board
Resource Advisory Councils	6	US Bureau of Land Management
Place-based Water Planning	4	OR Water Resources Department
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Regional Achievement Collaboratives	13	OR Chief Education Office
Early Learning Hubs	16	OR Department of Education
STEM Hubs	13	OR Chief Education Office
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Regional Solutions Committees	11	OR Governor’s Office
Local Workforce Development Boards	9	OR Workforce and Talent Development Board
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>		
Local Public Safety Coordinating Councils	36	OR Criminal Justice Commission
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	

(Source: Oregon Atlas of Collaboration, p. 3)



The Atlas is a valuable source of possible case studies on effective community engagement by collaboratives in Oregon. The authors of the Atlas recommend that the next version be expanded to include the many collaborations in Oregon supported by Oregon Solutions and Oregon Consensus.

## **TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS**

Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes can be important partners for local governments and government collaboratives in Oregon. The federally recognized tribes in Oregon include: Burns Paiute of Harney County; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umqua and Siuslaw Indians; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz; Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Reservation; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Cow Creek Band of Umqua Indians; Coquille Indian Tribe; and Klamath Tribes.

While it was beyond the scope of our project to study local government engagement with tribal governments, we did identify some resources for local governments, including:

- **PSU Institute for Tribal Government/Certificate Program:** The Institute for Tribal Government is a program of the Center for Public Service at Portland State University. The Institute's mission is to "support Tribes and Indigenous communities as well as assisting government, industry, non-profit, and academic partners whose work impacts Indian Country through customized trainings and technical assistance." The Institute's Professional Certificate in Tribal Relations offers participants, including local government leaders and staff, the opportunity to build their capacity to work effectively with Tribal governments and communities. For more information on the Institute and the Certificate Program go to: <https://www.pdx.edu/tribal-government/>
- **City of Portland Annual Tribal Relations Program/Annual Summit:** In 2017, the City of Portland hired its first full-time tribal liaison, Laura John. John helped create the City's Tribal Relations Program to promote "culturally grounded, long-term, positive relationships and decision-making processes through government-to-government engagement with Tribal governments and the urban American Indian/Alaska Native community." The program "advises City bureaus and Council offices on outreach to, and interactions with, Tribal governments and the urban Indian community" and "fields requests and inquiries from Tribes and community members about engagement with the city." (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/ogr/79304>) In 2018, the program hosted the first annual Tribal Nations Summit. The summit brought together Tribal and City elected leaders and provided a day-long training for more than 100 City employees.

We recommend future work to identify and document examples of how local governments are working with Tribal governments to engage their communities in decisions that affect them.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

These groups support specific groups of local government professionals: public works directors, land use planners, transportation planners, utility engineers, local health professionals, emerging leaders, and others. These associations offer conferences, workshops, events, continuing education, certification programs, peer networking, mentoring, regular communications, legislative and policy tracking, career support, and recognition and awards for exceptional work.

These organizations are powerful vehicles for sharing community engagement training and capacity building with their members. We did not examine the full range of local government professional associations in Oregon, focusing on these within the state:

- Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)
- The American Planning Association (APA) and its Oregon Chapter (OAPA)

### **ENGAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS (ELGL)**

Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) describes itself as an “accidental professional association” founded in Portland, Oregon in 2012.<sup>5</sup> ELGL has grown to “over 4800 members from all 50 states plus Canada, UK, Israel, and Australia.” It focuses on “all levels of local government (from analysts to mayors, librarians to planners, and everyone in between). ELGL seeks to “engage the brightest minds in local government by providing timely and relevant content through podcasts, blogs, webinars, social media, learning cohorts and conference gatherings” to foster “authentic and meaningful connections that are grounded in practices of equity and inclusion.”

ELGL offers information and resources on many aspects of local government work. They post on many topics related to community engagement, including open government programs and strategies, accessibility during COVID, and social media strategies.

ELGL highlights its partnership with the Davenport Institute. In 2021, ELGL and Davenport partnered on a five-part webinar series that explored how “local leaders have maintained connection over the past year and what lessons can be applied moving forward.” (<https://elgl.org/webinar-rewind-meeting-publicaccess-obligations/>)

Examples of ELGL webinars related to community engagement:

- **Making Creative Resident Engagement “Business as Usual” (September 2019)**: This webinar, hosted by the Davenport Institute, looked at “different strategic approaches three communities [Camarillo, Morgan Hill, Riverside] are taking to build public engagement into their business as usual.”
- **Building Community and Rebuilding Connections (May 2021)**: This webinar recognized that “even at the best of times, authentic, inclusive, and effective public engagement looks very different from traditional, 3-minutes-at-a-microphone, public comment.” It explored “creative ways local leaders are investing in building community in the midst of this crisis so that their communities can come out stronger than ever on the other side.”
- **The Future of Public Engagement in a Hybrid World (July 2021)**: The webinar, organized in collaboration with the Davenport Institute, IAP2, ILG, and Cal-ICMA, is “an open dialogue for anyone leading, managing, or facilitating public participation process and input in this transition from a pandemic to post COVID-19 reality.” (<https://elgl.org/event/webinar-the-future-of-public-engagementin-a-hybrid-world/>)

For more information on ELGL go to: <https://elgl.org/>.

### **OREGON CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION**

Community engagement plays a strong role in land use planning in Oregon. As described in more detail below, Oregon State Planning Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement) requires cities and counties to involve community members in the development of their state-mandated comprehensive plans.

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<sup>5</sup> ELGL’s original name was “Oregon Emerging Local Government Leaders Network.”

The [Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association](#) (OAPA) offers resources to local government planners, including conferences, webinars, training, networking opportunities, awards, and recognition. Our project team talked with Aaron Ray, OAPA president, and Susan Millhauser, OAPA program and policy coordinator.

Ray emphasized that good community engagement is a core tenet of the planning profession and part of the AICP Code of Ethics. He noted that it can be challenging for planners and elected officials to work together to implement the Code, and that planners would benefit from training about how to do this effectively.

He suggested that formal obligations to engage the community in planning should be strengthened in Oregon. The OAPA is on record [supporting revisions](#) to State Planning Goal 1, advocating outcome-based standards similar to other statewide planning goals as part of the Oregon Administration Regulations (OARs).

Ray said that “imitation is the highest form of planning” and stressed the value of planners learning from each other’s successes and failures. Sharing examples is vital to improving practice in this field.

Ray and Millhauser emphasized the importance of using demographic data to determine who is in the community and how to reach community members. Many local governments appreciate the value of community relationships and partnerships, but this is clearly an area of opportunity for training targeted to planners.

OAPA activities that support community engagement include:

### **CONFERENCES**

OAPA holds annual conferences that often feature sessions related to community engagement and DEI. In 2020, OAPA partnered with APA Washington to hold a virtual conference attended by over 450 planning practitioners from around the country. It included several sessions and a keynote panel related to community engagement. They included:

- [Racial Equity in Urban Placemaking](#): Learn how racism manifests itself in urban planning and begin to understand how to embed racial equity in the practice of placemaking.
- [Telling the Story - Engaging Community Online](#): Hear how City of Eugene transportation planners have been getting creative with Facebook Live, hosting speakers and events during May Bike Month to keep the positive energy flowing as much as possible.
- [From Healthy Places to Inclusive Communities](#): This session delves into planning, engagement, and implementation strategies and how a focus on people and holistic interventions can improve outcomes for marginalized groups and entire communities.
- [Leading with Equity in Climate Planning](#): This session aims to share the innovative participatory planning approach utilized for the 2020 SCAP, discussing how and why frontline and BIPOC communities should have a leadership role in climate planning processes.
- [Inclusive Engagement - Crossing the Digital Divide](#): Hear insights on best practices when engaging the public in socially distant ways.
- [Shaping the Public Realm in Oregon’s Small Towns](#): Learn how the cities of Lowell, Wilsonville, and Coburg worked with their communities to plan for a public realm that would achieve the triple bottom line using three different methods.

- [Cake Day and Crowdsourcing - Innovative outreach approaches to overcome place-based challenges](#): This interactive moderated panel presents three speakers, working as one team across three different geographies, with brief case studies of innovative public outreach approaches that were used to overcome place-based challenges.
- [Closing Keynote Panel](#): Keynote speakers Professor Angela Addae, J.D., Ph.D. and Secretary Roger Millar FAICP, FASCE, facilitated by Anita Yap (Multicultural Collaborative). Conversation will touch on conference highlights and delve into themes such as the new world of planning, community development and engagement in light of the pandemic; reflections on finding climate justice; and equitable and resilient community rebuilding in the wake of the recent wildfires.

## **WEBINARS**

Ray said the OAPA organizes and hosts webinars throughout the year, some of which relate to community engagement. OAPA is a member of the Planning Webcast Consortium which hosts 90-minute webinars nearly every week produced by various APA divisions and chapters around the country. Some webinars related to community engagement include:

- **“Opening Doors and Minds: Planning and Running Virtual Open Houses”** (OAPA, April 2021)
- **“Harnessing the Power of Community Feedback with a Qualitative Methodology”** (APA Massachusetts, January 2021)
- **“Anti-racist Planning Practice: An Indigenous Perspective”** (OAPA, December 2020)

## **OAPA NEWS BLOG AND DEI LIBRARY**

The OAPA News Blog includes articles written by practicing planners and academic researchers. Ray and Millhauser shared that OAPA is creating a “DEI Library” for planners and local officials.

## **PLANNERS NETWORK MEETINGS**

Ray noted that OAPA and the Oregon State Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) coordinate meetings of the [Planners Network Meetings Program](#). The program offers locally focused, one or two-day events around the state. According to the OAPA website, “Meetings offer professional development, including CM credits, for professional planners as well as networking opportunities.” The website adds that, “Many meetings include training specifically designed for Planning Commissioners and community members seeking to learn more about Oregon’s planning program, and planning issues more generally.”

Ray and Millhauser said some of these meetings touch on community engagement. For instance, a Planner Network meeting in Fall 2020 was hosted by the City of Cornelius. Then Planning Director Ryan Wells showcased the City’s award-winning Cornelius Town Center Plan and the community engagement for the plan, which included outreach to the Spanish-speaking community, local non-profits, and trusted community leaders. Community members served as panelists at the meeting and talked about their work with the City to engage their communities,

## **PLANNING COMMISSIONER SUPPORT**

Ray and Millhauser shared that OAPA and DLCD collaborate to train and support local government planning commissioners. This support includes planning commissioner trainings at Planners Network meetings around the state each year. OAPA and DLCD also updated the Planning Commissioner Handbook in 2015. The handbook has descriptions of planning values and principles, planning processes,

roles and responsibilities, and how to engage the community in decision making.

(<https://oregon.planning.org/knowledge/planningcommissioner/>)

### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING PROGRAM**

OAPA's Community Assistance Planning Program (CAPP) brings the planning expertise of volunteer planners to communities that otherwise would not be able to access these services. The volunteer planners hold workshops to help communities face planning challenges and develop practical recommendations. The program is designed to "strengthen the ability of community members to influence or determine decisions that affect their quality of life." OAPA states that "CAPP workshops seek to foster community education and civic engagement." Ray and Millhauser said that Deb Meihoff, principal with the planning and community engagement firm Communitas LLC, leads the CAPP program for OAPA.

### **OREGON PLANNERS NETWORK LISTSERV**

The Oregon Planners Network (OPN) Listserv allows planners throughout Oregon to ask questions and share information on planning topics. OAPA does not manage this listserv (it is hosted by the University of Oregon), but they consider it a valuable resource for planners in Oregon.

### **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

Each year, OAPA honors outstanding planning work and leaders through its award program. One category is the "Public Involvement and Participation" award, which "recognizes projects, programs, practices or tools that go the extra distance to innovate and cultivate meaningful discourse and positively impact community quality of life, with a focus on reaching communities that have traditionally been underrepresented." Recent awards for excellence in community engagement include:

- City of Cornelius: Town Center Plan (2019)
- City of Wilsonville: Town Center Vision Process (2018)
- City of Milwaukie and Cogan Owens Green: Milwaukie All Aboard! Community Vision (2017)
- City of Astoria Parks and Recreation: Comprehensive Master Plan (2016)
- City of West Linn: Arch Bridge-Bolton Concept Plan (2015)

(<https://oregon.planning.org/community/awards/history/>)

### **AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION**

The [American Planning Association \(APA\)](#) offers resources related to community engagement that are available to government leaders and staff in Oregon.

### **CONFERENCES**

The APA holds annual conferences. The 2020 virtual annual conference included some sessions related to community engagement, including:

- "Inclusive Engagement Strategies"
- "Applying Inclusive Engagement Techniques Beyond Translated Communications"
- "From Community Trauma to Ferguson's Comprehensive Plan"
- "Engagement for Everyone: Accessible Virtual Strategies"

## **TRAINING**

APA offers an extensive catalog of online courses taught by planning experts through its APA Learn program. Some of these courses focus on community engagement and DEI. (<https://learn.planning.org/catalog/>) Examples include:

- “Equity-Driven Planning in Three Cities”
- “Inclusive Engagement: Innovative City Approaches”
- “On the Front Lines of Equitable Placemaking”
- “Addressing Cultural Divides”
- “Diversity and Inclusion Training Series”
- “Engagement Techniques for Latino Communities”

## **AWARDS**

In recent years, some Oregon community planning efforts have won national APA awards for outstanding work in planning:

- ***Umatilla Together: Framework Plan (2018)***: A team of PSU students worked with the City of Umatilla to develop a community vision to connect and enhance Umatilla’s existing assets around the downtown corridor. “The team engaged Umatilla residents by holding a kick-off event, interviewing community leaders, hosting a business mixer, forming a stakeholder advisory committee, organizing a Latino focus group, and surveying Umatilla’s youth to see what kinds of activities they want in their community.” The students and their PSU faculty advisors were recognized at the 2018 National Planning Conference in New Orleans. (<https://www.pdx.edu/news/psu-student-team-wins-nationalplanning-award-umatilla-together-framework-plan>)
- ***City of Lake Oswego: “We Love Lake Oswego” video (2013)***: City planners created this video to help community members see the value of planning and the City’s comprehensive plan. ([https://www.oregonlive.com/lake-oswego/2013/01/we\\_love\\_lake\\_oswego\\_video\\_wins.html](https://www.oregonlive.com/lake-oswego/2013/01/we_love_lake_oswego_video_wins.html))
- ***City of Newberg: Design Star Program (2013)***: The City of Newberg Design Star Program won an APA National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach for its Design Star Program in 2013. The program “prompts sixth grade students to think critically about community planning.” The program was created by city planners in response to an APA initiative that asked local planners to engage young people. (<https://www.newberg.k12.or.us/district/news-design-start-wins-national-planningaward>)

## **MUNICIPAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

Municipal services and research organizations in some states offer important information, training, and support to local governments. Washington and California both have organizations that play this role. While these organizations provide support in many different policy areas, they also provide resources related to equity and community engagement on their websites. Local governments in Oregon can access and download much of this information without being members of these organizations.

Currently, Oregon does not have a full-service local government support organization like those in Washington and California. Oregon does have the Local Government Personnel Institute, housed at the

Lane Council of Governments, which provides human resources and labor relations support to cities, counties, and special districts in Oregon. Dr. Phillip Cooper, head of the Local Government Program at the Hatfield School of Government at PSU, shared with us that he is working with local government leaders to advocate for the creation of a full-service local government support organization in Oregon. If this organization were created, it could become a valuable source of community engagement information, resources, and support that is tailored to the needs and experiences of local communities in Oregon.

This section describes:

- Municipal Research and Services Center (Washington)
- Institute for Local Government (California)
- Local Government Personnel Institute (Oregon)
- Efforts to create a local government support organization in Oregon

### ***MUNICIPAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES CENTER (WASHINGTON)***

The [Municipal Research and Services Center](#) (MRSC) provides legal advice and policy guidance to local governments across Washington State. MRSC serves all 281 cities and towns in Washington, all 39 counties, and hundreds of special purpose districts, state agencies, and other government partners.

The MRSC originally was created in 1934 as the University of Washington Bureau of Governmental Research. MRSC became a private non-profit organization in 1969. MRSC reports that its staff attorneys, policy consultants and financial experts help local government “staff and elected officials research policies, comply with state and federal laws, and improve day-to-day operations.”

MRSC provides support on a very wide selection of policy areas. The MRSC website identifies the most popular topics as: Coronavirus, Public Records Act, Open Public Meetings Act, Purchasing and Contracting, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Overtime and Comp Time. The MRSC also provides guidance and support on: Economic Development, Environment, Finance, Governance, Legal, Management, Parks and Recreation, Personnel, Planning, Public Safety, Public Works and Utilities, and Transportation.

MRSC’s resources related to community engagement appear under the heading “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments.” MRSC presents its support for community engagement in the context of local governments efforts to advance equity and building inclusive communities.

MRSC equity and community engagement resources include:

### ***DEAI TRAINING AND SUPPORT***

Resources to support local governments access training and support for facilitated conversations for staff and elected officials to help build a common language and understanding of race equity concepts across their organizations.

### ***CULTURES CONNECTING***

DEI Facilitator and Consultant Directory provides contact information for trainers and consultants in the following areas: Facilitators/Consultants, Coaching/Consultants, Organization Consultants, Out-of-State Facilitators/Consultants, and Civil Rights Attorneys Specializing in Discrimination.

(<https://mrsc.org/getmedia/dce11774671a-4e9a-8db0-674e791ab3a2/Facilitator-Consultant-Directory.aspx>)

### ***INCLUSION STATEMENTS***

Examples of official statements from different local governments in Washington that reinforce the jurisdiction’s commitment to “acceptance, equal treatment, and safety for everyone.”

### ***DEI-RELATED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS***

Examples of local government assessments that identify successful DEI practices, and ensure local governments are making data-informed decisions to improve access to opportunity for all community members.

### ***COMMUNITY-BASED ADVISORY COMMITTEES***

Examples of local government advisory committees, commissions, and task forces focused on building bridges with local communities.

### ***INCLUSIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES***

Examples of local government programs and plans to increase community outreach and engagement. Examples include outreach strategies, plans, and policies.

### ***INCLUSIVE HIRING AND CONTRACTING POLICIES***

Examples of local government plans to address long-term structural issues that disenfranchise people based on race, ethnicity, ability, or sexual orientation.

### ***STRATEGIC PLANS***

Examples of local government strategic plans to advance human resources goals, service delivery, and development projects.

### ***EQUITY TOOLS***

Examples of local government equity tools.

### ***ADDITIONAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES***

Additional examples of DEI-related local government policies and program evaluations.

For more information about MSRC, go to: <https://mrsc.org/>

### ***INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CALIFORNIA)***

The [Institute for Local Government](#) (ILG) was founded in 1955 to promote inter-jurisdictional cooperation among local jurisdictions in California. ILG parent organizations include the California State Association of Counties, the League of California Cities, and the California Special Districts Association.

ILG serves local governments by convening people through meetings and conferences, providing a variety of training programs and workshops, and through research projects and publication of reports, toolkits, and informational materials on a wide range of public policy issues facing local governments.



ILG current areas of focus include: Ballot Measures and Campaigns, Budgeting and Financial Management, Climate Action, Economic Development, Effective Meetings, Ethics and Transparency, Land Use and Planning, Homelessness, Housing, Inclusive Public Engagement, Leadership and Governance, Introduction to Public Service, Recycling, Technology, and Public Sector Workforce Development and Civics Education.

ILG's Inclusive Public Engagement program offers a very wide array of reports, toolkits and tip sheets related to different aspects of effective public engagement. These materials are a valuable resource and are available on the ILG website. These resources include:

***GETTING STARTED:***

- What is Public Engagement and Why Should I Do It?
- Effective Public Engagement Through Strategic Communication
- Three Orientations of Local Government Public Engagement: Passive—Active—Sustaining
- Principles of Local Government Public Engagement
- Working Effectively with Public Engagement Consultants: Tips for Local Officials
- Planning Public Engagement: Key Questions for Local Officials
- Increasing Access to Public Meetings and Events for People with Disabilities

***DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:***

- Beyond the Usuals: Ideas to Encourage Broader Public Involvement in Your Community
- Dealing with Deeply Held Concerns and Other Challenges to Public Engagement Processes
- Dealing with Emotional Audiences
- Free Speech vs. Hate Speech
- Dealing with a Grandstander

***TIERS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK:*** ILG has developed a five-pillar framework to help local governments plan and execute public engagement efforts. The pillars include:

- THINK: Self-Assessment; Consider Public Engagement Approach; Contemplate Community Landscape
- INITIATE: Draft Public Engagement Approach; Develop Outreach Plan; 'Reality Check'
- ENGAGE: Implement Outreach Plan; Implement Public Engagement Approach; 'Reality Check'
- REVIEW: Evaluate Public Engagement Approach; Evaluate Outreach Plan; What Barriers Did You Overcome?
- SHIFT: Internal Organizational Shifts; Shifts in External Relations; Policy Change.

***TIERS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEARNING LAB:*** The TIERS Public Engagement Learning Lab is an interactive, results-oriented 6-month program led by ILG that provides participants in California local government with hands-on instructions, exclusive TIERS public engagement tools, individualized support of their public engagement projects, follow up private consulting, and peer-to-peer learning.

**INCREASING COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** Tip sheet: “Expand Your Agency’s Community Connections” and case studies of successful community engagement in California communities.

**IMMIGRANT ENGAGEMENT AND INTEGRATION:** Guides, case studies, videos and conference reports on how to effectively engage immigrant communities. Some resources offered include:

- Language Access Laws and Legal Issues: A Local Official’s Guide
- Immigrants, the Economy and Civic Engagement
- Ten Ideas to Encourage Immigrant Engagement
- Local Governments Engaging Immigrants—Strategies That Work
- A Local Official’s Guide to Immigrant Civic Engagement
- Providing Language Access
- Ethnic Media
- Immigrant Engagement Stories

**PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:** Video case studies and publications including:

- Expand Your Agency’s Community Connections
- Partnering with Community-Based Organizations for More Broad-Based Public Engagement
- Public Participation in Local Government Decision Making
- Using a Collective Impact Framework for Community Partnerships

**ENGAGING CLERGY AND CONGREGATIONS:** Case studies, videos and publications including:

- A Local Official’s Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations

**MEASURING SUCCESS AND SUSTAINING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:** Case studies and publications including:

- Measuring the Success of Local Public Engagement
- Assessing Public Engagement Effectiveness: Rapid Review Worksheets
- A New Strategy for Sustaining Public Engagement
- Sustaining Public Engagement—Best Practices and Resources

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL INSTITUTE/LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL SERVICES**

In 1971, the League of Oregon Cities and the Association of Oregon Counties jointly created the [Local Government Personnel Institute](#) (LGPI) to offer human resources and labor relations assistance to Oregon cities, counties, and special districts. In 2020, the LGPI moved from the League of Oregon Cities to the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) and took a new name, Local Government Personnel Services (LGPS).

LGPS offers local governments “no-cost technical assistance, and a discounted rate on LGPS consulting services, including Labor Relations representation, HR Assistance, pre-employment background checks,

training” and other services. The LGPS website states that “Cities, counties, special districts, councils of governments, community colleges and other local governments” benefit from LGPS services.

While LGPS does not provide community engagement training and support, the LGPS model of providing support and services to local governments across the state—in this case housed at a local council of governments—is somewhat similar to the broader service model of MRSC and ILG and offers another possible vehicle that could be expanded to deliver community engagement support to local governments in Oregon.

### ***EFFORTS TO CREATE AN OREGON MRSC/CIVIC GAPS PROJECT***

Dr. Phillip Cooper at PSU noted that there has been interest in Oregon in creating a statewide version of MRSC to provide a range of services and support to local governments like what is available in Washington and California.<sup>6</sup> He is exploring opportunities to move this project forward. He reported that he is working with PSU’s Local Government Advisory Committee on a “Civic Gaps Project” to document the services and support currently available to Oregon local governments.

### ***CONSULTING FIRMS***

Consulting firms are a major resource for local governments. They supplement the in-house expertise of local governments. Working with a consulting firm can give elected leaders and staff an opportunity to learn important community engagement skills and strategies by observing and working with consultants to engage their communities. Consultants provide a wide range of services in Oregon. Following is a brief description of some of these services. A sampling of Oregon providers is included in Appendix 2.

#### ***COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANTS***

Private firms that offer a broad range of services to help local governments design and implement community engagement plans and processes for a wide variety of policy, program, and project activities.

#### ***DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION CONSULTANTS***

Consultants who work with local governments to build their capacity to engage communities of color and other historically underrepresented communities, and to build the capacity of these communities to have a voice in local decision-making.

#### ***PLANNING, ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS***

Some consulting firms have created in-house community engagement teams that can provide community engagement services to local governments as part of larger engineering, environmental, housing, transportation, or economic development projects.

#### ***PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS***

Some local governments consult with public relations firms to assist them in engaging the community and other stakeholders around basic communications, project or policy advocacy, and crisis management.

#### ***OTHER TYPES OF CONSULTANTS***

There are many consultants who offer services to help local governments build their capacity and effectively engage with their communities through processes like community visioning, strategic

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<sup>6</sup> In fall 2020, Dr. Cooper surveyed city managers throughout the state to gauge their interest in various kinds of training and support. “Development of an organization-wide citizen engagement plan” ranked third of twenty-one options for “Interactive Training Sessions” and second of sixteen options for “Customized Work for a Local Government.”

planning, and recruitment. We did not attempt to create an exhaustive list of community engagement consultants available to local governments in Oregon. See Appendix 2 for some examples of each type of consultant. This is not an exhaustive list and we do not endorse any specific fee-for-service provider.

Future work to develop a list of community engagement consultants and guidance for local governments on how to work most effectively with consultants would be useful. One person we interviewed asked that in addition to the more well-known community engagement consulting firms, “Who’s out there doing great work at reasonable prices for smaller communities?” Others said that tips on how to select a good consultant and a template for a good consultant service agreement or contract would be helpful. We also heard about the value to local governments of developing long-term partnerships with skilled consultants who can work on different projects over time.

## **ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS**

Oregon’s higher education institutions are another important source of community engagement learning, training, capacity building, and support for local governments. Some public colleges and universities offer coursework, degree programs, or certifications, and some are home to centers and institutes that help local government leaders engage their communities.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COURSES AND DEGREE/CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

University courses and programs can build local government capacity for community engagement in at least three ways: (1) working professionals can take courses that enhance their skills and knowledge, (2) students who receive degrees in public administration or public policy may go on to work for local government, and (3) universities collaborate with local governments on publicly funded projects through student internships, fieldwork, and degree programs. Some subject area programs offer individual courses on community engagement tailored to specific fields (e.g., public administration, public policy, land use planning, social work, health care, education, criminal justice).

Our project team completed a detailed survey of courses and degree programs at Oregon public universities. We identified 61 courses related to some aspect of community engagement (36 of which are offered at Portland State University). A more detailed report on our review of university academic courses and programs is available in Appendix 1. In the future, a similar review of courses and programs available at Oregon community colleges would be helpful.

In addition to individual courses, we found university degree or certificate programs that focus in some way on civic engagement. Examples include:

### **EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABLE RURAL SYSTEMS DEGREE PROGRAM**

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) offers an undergraduate Sustainable Rural Systems degree program. Students take courses “designed for group-based learning” that “take on real-life challenges alongside community and industry partners. Students build distinct skill-sets to address environmental remediation or restoration, public policy, rural development and other community-building projects.” Students “study all aspects of a rural community” and engage with local community leaders and organizations and community members on “authentic projects that improve the quality of life in our rural communities.” Our project team spoke with Dr. Shannon Donovan, who leads this program. The EOU program model, if expanded and replicated at other universities, could provide valuable assistance and capacity to local governments in smaller communities and in rural parts of Oregon.

### ***OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HISTORY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT GRADUATE OPTION***

Oregon State University (OSU) offers this option as part of the university's Master of Arts or Master of Science in History degree, which is designed to "empower students, as community members and citizens, with a deeper knowledge base and communications skills to engage in broad public debate and enrich public discourse."

### ***SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CONCENTRATION***

Southern Oregon University (SOU) offers this concentration which the university states "prepares students to become engaged in many aspects of civic life, enabling them to be advocates and responsible participants in public discourse and debate."

### ***PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY CIVIC LEADERSHIP MINOR***

Portland State University offers an undergraduate Civic Leadership Minor. The program states that it "provides students with theoretical understanding and practical experience associated with civic leadership and prepares students to be responsibly engaged, social-justice oriented citizens, and community leaders." In addition to course work, students are required to complete a civic-leadership practicum project or other independent community-based learning experience.

### ***PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM***

PSU's Conflict Resolution Program offers an undergraduate major and minor in conflict resolution and graduate certificates in conflict resolution and applied conflict resolution as well as a master's degree in conflict resolution.

### ***PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ONLINE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE***

The National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) in the Hatfield School of Government at PSU offers this certificate program to help "government officials, nonprofit employees, business leaders, legal and mediation practitioners, and PSU graduate degree students" "build their careers by meeting the growing demand for people who can help diverse stakeholders collaborate on solutions to public issues...."

### ***PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY SERVICE-LEARNING AND COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING CERTIFICATE***

The PSU College of Education offers this program which provides students with "historical, philosophical, and theoretical foundations of civic engagement as a form of learning and engaged democratic citizenship," reviews relevant research and techniques, and engages students in "active community service, learning, teaching, programming, and assessment as a form of professional knowledge and skill development."

### ***PROGRAMS, CENTERS, AND INSTITUTES***

Some higher education institutions are home to programs, centers, and institutes that offer community engagement research, consulting services, and training workshops. These entities often consult with local governments leaders and staff on how to respond to community engagement opportunities and challenges and help them design and implement community engagement processes. Some examples of local government focused programs and centers at PSU:

### ***PSU HATFIELD SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM***

The Local Government Program in the Hatfield School of Government Public Administration Program is led by Dr. Phillip Cooper. Dr. Cooper told our project team that the program’s focus is not just to prepare students for a career in local government public administration, but also to serve the profession. The program is supported by a Local Government Advisory Committee of practitioners who helped develop the program and provide ongoing input and support. Dr. Cooper works closely with local government officials and local government associations like the OCCMA to provide them with practical research and support. Dr. Cooper is currently is working on a “Civics Gap Project” to identify the resources that are available to local governments in Oregon and gaps where more support is needed.<sup>7</sup>

### ***PSU NATIONAL POLICY CONSENSUS CENTER***

The National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) and its collaborative governance programs are a major resource for local governments in Oregon. NPCC is housed in the Hatfield School of Government. NPCC’s major programs — Oregon Solutions, Oregon’s Kitchen Table, and Oregon Consensus — are described later in the section on dialogue and deliberation process providers. Our project team spoke with NPCC’s Laurel Singer, Wendy Willis, and Kristen Wright. They shared that NPCC works with local governments across Oregon, usually through individual projects with specific communities and workshops at local governments association conferences, including LOC and AOC. NPCC’s point of entry for its work is often through mayors or city administrators who are familiar with NPCC and who request consultation on a particular issue or project. In addition to working with cities, NPCC also works with counties and regional government collaboratives. NPCC stressed that their approach to capacity building includes helping local governments think about the preconditions for effective community engagement, such as building relationships in the community before a crisis occurs.

NPCC offers an Online Collaborative Governance Graduate Certificate and publishes research on collaborative governance. Some examples include:

- Collaborative Governance Principles, Processes, and Practical Tools (2021): “A new NPCC collaborative governance textbook, by Greenwood, Willis, and Singer, is situated in the practical—the place where students and practitioners and public managers might apply theory, and especially lessons learned, to the real-life issues they encounter in communities.”
- “Oregon Atlas of Collaboration” (described in this report in the section on COGs and Regional Collaboratives)
- “Building a Collaborative Governance Framework: A Five-Step Process”
- “A Practical Guide to Intergovernmental Entities in Oregon”

### ***PSU CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE***

The Center for Public Service (CPS) “provides individuals and public sector and non-profit organizations access to the intellectual resources and practical experience of the Hatfield School of Government in

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Cooper referred us to his recent book, *Local Government Administration: Governance in Communities* (2019) and the chapter he wrote on local government community engagement, “Chapter 7: Governing in Communities: The Local Government Organization and Its Engagement with the Community.”

order to improve governance, civic capacity and public management locally, regionally, nationally and around the globe.”

CPS’s mission is to “help connect academic professionals, practitioners, consultants, trainers, and students who have expertise in consulting, research, and professional development, with practitioners in the public service sector who share our interest in public service leadership and organizational capacity building.”

CPS offers “a wide range of on-demand services and resources for Oregon’s local governments,” including “interactive training or custom consulting” in the following areas: community-building and community engagement, governing board effectiveness, managing the organization, human resources, budget and finance, and environment.” The Center’s assistance in community-building and community engagement includes: “techniques for community-building sessions to deal with difficult challenges,” “establishment of citizen involvement plans,” “encouraging input and involvement by hard-to-reach communities,” “developing a Citizens Academy,” and “getting things done through collaboration and partnerships.” The CPS Senior Fellows Program involves local government practitioners and researchers who have considerable experience on the front lines and work on projects to advance the field. CPS fellowship programs place skilled graduate level students with local governments looking to increase their capacity.

CPS staff, faculty, and senior fellows offer training and research to local governments to help them build their capacity. Recent examples of training workshops include the “Newly Elected Officials Leadership Academy” and “Effective Public Engagement: Tools & Techniques” hosted by CPS and presented by the Davenport Institute. In 2020, the City of Milwaukie contracted with CPS to review the City’s extensive community engagement efforts. Another example is this research project to survey community engagement capacity building opportunities for local governments in Oregon.

## ***COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY GROUPS***

Community organizations that support and advocate for shared-identity have been growing in number and capacity in recent years across Oregon. They can be valuable partners to local governments seeking to engage with these communities. It is important to recognize that the mission of these groups is not to help local government do their work, and local governments should be prepared to compensate these organizations for their assistance. Developing long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships between local government and community organizations can advance equitable engagement and help local leaders and staff improve their cultural awareness and culturally appropriate skill sets. Some of these organizations also have partnered with local governments to develop leadership training programs for their communities as a strategy to increase the effectiveness of their advocacy work.

People we interviewed mentioned a variety of community-based organizations that have helped local governments engage authentically and effectively with the communities these organizations serve and support. It was beyond the scope of our project to look more deeply into these organizations, but we wanted to share what we learned from their websites. This is by no means an exhaustive list of these types of organizations in Oregon. Additional research to identify more cases of local organizations working with governments to help build community engagement capacity would be valuable.

## **ADELANTE MUJERES**

[Adelante Mujeres](#) is “working to build a more just society by empowering Latinas to lead.” Adelante Mujeres “offers Latina women and their families holistic programs and the tools to achieve self determination in the areas of: education, leadership training, and enterprise.” The organization’s Washington County Civic Leaders Project works with “participants from communities of color to conduct specific, hands-on leadership training to better equip them to engage in county government decision making and to actively participate in civic life in the community.”

## **ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NETWORK OF OREGON**

[APANO](#) was founded in 1996 with support from the Immigrant and Refugee Organization (IRCO) in Multnomah County. APANO’s mission is to unite “Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work.” APANO describes its primary areas of work as:

- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING:** “The core of APANO’s work is building a powerful base of members who cocreate and co-lead campaigns that address real issues in their community. Our community organizing results in concrete change through policy, public investments, political influence, and greater solidarity with other communities of color and allies.”
- **CULTURAL WORK:** “By elevating members’ stories and connecting them to issues, APANO aims to advance a long-term cultural strategy to impact beliefs, actions and policies through centering the voices of those most impacted and silenced, resisting and shifting harmful narratives and ideas, and moving beyond defensive strategies to envisioning alternatives.”
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** “APANO offers year-round opportunities to cultivate the skills and confidence of our members to analyze community needs and solutions, act strategically and take on increased leadership roles at APANO and in the community.”
- **POLITICAL ADVOCACY:** “APANO’s political advocacy and civic engagement work elevates issues through community engagement and research, connects with and mobilizes voters, and coordinates grassroots advocacy actions through member-led campaigns, in order to build power, win concrete changes and ensure all API’s have a voice in the policies and decisions that affect their lives.”
- **JADE DISTRICT & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** The Jade District in southeast Portland “is APANO’s first venture into place-based organizing by partnering with neighborhood associations and local businesses in order to meet the economic needs of residents.”

## **CENTRO CULTURAL**

“At [Centro Cultural](#), our foundation is equity and belonging. Our team is deeply connected to and invested in our Washington County community. This is our familia, and we feel a responsibility to make sure everyone has the opportunity to thrive—not just survive. Our programs and services continue to evolve to meet the needs of our communities, removing barriers to health, well-being and economic mobility.” Centro Cultural’s programs include:

- “Empower people to find living wage jobs, advance their careers, and build a strong foundation for themselves and their families;”



- “Connect our community and provide resources so people can lead a healthy thriving life;”
- “Promote advocacy and build civic leadership skills within our community to change systemic inequalities and fight for affordable housing, transportation improvements, climate justice and more; and”
- “Hold education programs and workforce development opportunities for young people to gain real world application for science, technology, engineering, art and math.”

### **COALITION OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

The [CCC](#) was formed in 2001 and is “an alliance of culturally-specific community-based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African-American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic.”

The CCC’s mission is to “address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.” The organization “supports a collective racial justice effort to improve outcomes for communities of color through policy analysis and advocacy, environmental justice, culturally-appropriate data and research, and leadership development in communities of color.”

CCC also has produced influential research studies that profile different communities of color and publications that call for action on racial equity and justice in a number of different policy areas.

CCC programs include:

- **RESEARCH AND DATA JUSTICE:** The Research Justice Institute (RJI) at CCC conducts research that “defers to BIPOC communities, elevates the everyday knowledge and strategies of BIPOC communities as data, and bridges the divide between community and dominant institutions through power and the use of BIPOC data.” The RJI “conducts various community-led research projects, provides expert consultation to public and private institutions, and builds the research and data capacity of member and non-member organizations.”
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** The CCC created the “Bridges” leadership initiative for Oregon’s communities of color to “significantly expand the capacity of our communities to self-organize, network, build culturally-specific social capital, and provide leadership within and outside communities of color. The program “houses six culturally-specific leadership development programs led by CCC member organizations and provides ongoing support through leadership placements, mentorship and community networks. The six leadership programs include: African American Leadership Academy, Slavic Leadership Development Project, LEAD for Oregon’s Native Communities, UNIDOS for Oregon Latino Leadership, Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute, and African Leadership Development Institute.
- **COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY:** CCC’s advocacy work seeks to advance “policies in Oregon that have the best potential to improve outcomes for communities of color.” CCC pursues this goal by:
  - o “Building the capacity of communities and organizations of color to successfully advance policy agendas;”

- o “Reforming policy practices to ensure authentic community engagement of the communities most directly impacted by policy change;”
  - o “Shifting discourses to centralize the voices of communities of color in policy conversations; and”
  - o “Building partnerships and coalitions with allied individuals and organizations.”
- **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:** CCC’s environmental justice work seeks to broaden “Oregon’s environmental and climate movements so that they proactively advance solutions that provide environmental benefits and expand opportunities for communities of color and low-income communities.”

### **LATINO NETWORK**

Latino Network “was founded in 1996 by community leaders who grew concerned about the lack of adequate resources to meet the needs of the growing Latino community. Since that time, we have evolved to become an organization that also encompasses transformational programs aimed at educating and empowering Multnomah County Latinos. Low achievement scores, youth violence and high drop out rates undermine the Latino community’s potential. We address these issues by promoting early literacy, encouraging parent involvement, working with gang-involved and adjudicated youth and families, and providing academic support and activities to high school aged youth. We also build leadership capacity for youth and adults.” “We are a Latino-led education organization, grounded in culturally-specific practices and services, that lifts up youth and families to reach their full potential. Our work springs from the core belief in Latino community self-determination—that is, the ability of community members to participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their families.”

### **MADRES DE CORAZON**

Madres de Corazón was founded at Whitcom Elementary School in Milwaukie, Oregon about nine years ago. The group was started to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking mothers who walk their children to school (often with their younger, pre-school siblings) and wanted to be able to spend time together to get connected with each other and the school. The group meets every Monday. When the school was rebuilt, the North Clackamas School District created a meeting space for the Madres group in the new school building. The group has helped mothers develop a strong relationship with the school. They are also a valuable partner for the North Clackamas School District and help provide input and involvement from the local Latino community.

### **MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

MET was founded in 1993 “with the dream to help create an open, empowering, and collaborative atmosphere within the Muslim community in the great Portland area. Over the years, MET has made significant strides in the development of Portland’s Islamic-based education. MET’s focus on education through positive interaction with Muslims and non-Muslims and honest communication with the media and public officials has positive impacted not only the people of Portland, but well beyond our local area.” The organization conducts the following activities:

- Presents public lectures about Islam to educate both Muslims and Non-Muslims.
- Establishes interfaith dialogue to open channels of communication with people of different faiths.
- Operates an informal speakers bureau.
- Educates local news organizations for non-biased news coverage.

- Publishes a quarterly newsletter, Al-Hewar.
- Coordinates communications between Muslim organizations, Islamic Centers, and the community.
- Operates a full-time licensed and accredited Islamic School.
- Is a co-founding member of several Interfaith Organizations: Institute for Christian Muslim Understanding (ICMU), Arab-Jewish-Muslim Dialogue, Interfaith Council of Great Portland (ICGP) and Between Women Interfaith Group.

### **NATIVE AMERICA YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTER**

NAYA was “founded by the community, for the community, NAYA is a family of numerous tribes and voices who are rooted in sustaining tradition and building cultural wealth. We provide culturally-specific programs and services that guide our people in the direction of personal success and balance through cultural empowerment. Our continuum of lifetime services create a wraparound, holistic healthy environment that is Youth Centered, Family Driven, Elder Guided.” The organization’s focus on community engagement is based on a belief “that cultural engagement is civic engagement. A strong sense of cultural identity naturally leads to a desire to participate in civic life. Native peoples are often underrepresented in Census figures and in political determinations. Making our strengths known and voices heard as a community is an important part of the work we do at NAYA.” NAYA also participates in the Oregon LEAD Program housed with the Coalition of Communities of Color Bridges Initiative. The program builds “leadership capacity across Native communities throughout Oregon” to “help participants see themselves as leaders and access the leadership skills that they possess as well as building new skills to be support their work and community.”

### **UNITE OREGON**

The mission: “Led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice.” The organization has four main program areas:

- **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** “United Oregon’s civic engagement programs provide pathways for community members to participate in democratic processes, serve as leaders on boards and commissions, and engage in the issues that matter most to them.”
- **POLICY ADVOCACY:** “Unite Oregon advocates for policy changes at the local, state, and national levels that increase equity and reduce disparities experienced by immigrants, refugees, people of color, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty.
- **INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** “Unite Oregon develops new leaders through signature leadership development programs, through strategic trainings, and through on-the-ground leadership positions within our issue campaigns.”
- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING:** “Unite Oregon assists our members in building the organizing skills necessary to impact policies that affect them and to work collaboratively, mobilizing diverse constituencies.” (<https://www.uniteoregon.org/>)

### **VIRGINIA GARCIA MEMORIAL HEALTH CENTER**

Virginia Garcia was founded in the 1970s, and today “provides healthcare services to 52,000 patients a year in Washington and Yamhill counties at five primary care clinics and pharmacies, six dental clinics, a Women’s Clinic, and five school-based health centers.” The organization also provides “outreach to

schools, community health fairs and to migrant and seasonal farmworkers at local camps and commercial nurseries” through a mobile clinic. Virginia Garcia seeks out “strategic partnerships as an approach to improving the health of our community.”

Virginia Garcia sees its role as providing “whole care” and “being part of the communities we serve.” The organization achieves its mission through advocacy, outreach “to those living around us to offer services,” wellness classes and activities, and uses a patient-centered approach that provides “a team of providers for every patient that calls Virginia Garcia their health care home.”

## **DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION ORGANIZATIONS**

Dialogue and deliberation are powerful ways to engage community members in local government decision making. This section describes dialogue and deliberation trainers and process providers in Oregon and nationally. Dialogue and deliberation trainers and process providers offer training, consultation, design, and facilitation of deliberative processes to help community members address complex and challenging issues. Some of the best service providers can be found in Oregon. Several national organizations also promote the use of dialogue and deliberation, act as clearinghouses for news and resources, and bring together networks of practitioners, public administrators, community activists, and researchers. Dialogue and deliberation organizations in Oregon include:

### **OREGON’S KITCHEN TABLE**

[Oregon’s Kitchen Table](#) (OKT) works with local governments across Oregon to design and support processes to help community members “share their ideas, opinions, beliefs and resources in improving Oregon and our communities.” OKT is a program of the National Policy Census Center at PSU. OKT strives to:

- “Create simple, easy-to-use platforms (online and in person) for statewide public engagement.
- Promote in-depth public engagement with the tough trade-offs and challenges decision makers confront in governing our state.
- Provide leaders with high-quality feedback on issues that matter to Oregonians.
- Increase Oregonians’ interest in participating in local, regional, and statewide decision making.
- Empower citizens and decision-makers to communicate and work together in a fact-based, civil, and creative ways.”

### **OREGON SOLUTIONS**

[Oregon Solutions](#) has worked with hundreds of communities across Oregon to solve challenging problems using a system and process they call “collaborative governance.” Collaborative governance “is a process whereby community leaders join forces to define a problem, agree on a solution, and collaborative towards a resolution.” Oregon Solutions brings “the business, nonprofit, and civic sector to the table to make commitments, take on specific roles and responsibilities, leverage and pool resources, and ultimately, solve the problem.” Oregon Solutions is housed in the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University.

Oregon Solutions states that the idea for a project “might start with a nonprofit association leader, a business leader, or a local official.” The formal Oregon Solutions process involves the following steps:

- “A community in Oregon defines a problem they want to solve.”

- “The governor designates an impartial convener to bring people together.”
- “The convener forms a multi-disciplinary team” of interested and affected parties.
- “The team collaborates to develop an integrated solution” using “negotiations and problem-solving... through facilitated meetings...until consensus is reached” typically over six to eight months.
- The participants sign a “Declaration of Cooperation” that identifies “the specific contributions, roles and responsibilities for each party moving forward.”
- Implementation begins with agreements made and the participants playing their specific agreed to roles.
- Oregon Solutions hosts a “re-convening’ meeting after six months to check in on progress and report back to the governor.”

### **REGIONAL SOLUTIONS**

[Regional Solutions](#) uses a similar approach to Oregon Solutions. Regional Solutions “recognizes the unique needs of each Oregon region, and the importance of working locally to identify priorities, solve problems, and seize opportunities to get projects done.” Regional Solutions Centers are located across Oregon. Each center starts “at the local level to identify priorities” and “works from the bottom up to solve problems and complete projects.” Regional Solutions Centers integrate state agency work and funding to ensure that projects are finished as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.”

### **COUNTY SOLUTIONS**

[County Solutions](#) supports county leaders and helps them convene and participate in collaborative problem-solving efforts in their communities and regions. A goal of the program is to help county leaders and staff build the capacity to respond when issues or opportunities arise. The County Solutions program is patterned after the Oregon Solutions and Regional Solutions programs. The scope of the projects can vary from single-county issues—like a water issue in Polk County—to more complex regional issues like completion of the Oregon Coast Trail, which involves multiple counties and stakeholders. AOC staff member Andy Smith directs this program.

### **HEALTHY DEMOCRACY**

[Healthy Democracy](#) describes itself as a “nonprofit that designs and coordinates innovative deliberative democracy programs.” Some of Healthy Democracy’s programs that can support local government leaders and staff include:

- **Citizens’ Initiative Review:** Healthy Democracy created the Citizens’ Initiative Review process that brings together “randomly selected and representative panels” of Oregon voters to provide voters with “clear, comprehensive, and accurate information, removed from campaign messaging and financial influence” The panels interview measure advocates and topic experts, “evaluate the most important facts for voters to know,” and “write a report that is distributed through official voters’ guides” and other means.
- **Municipal Citizens Juries:** Healthy Democracy works with local government officials to convene panels of “randomly selected and representative” community members to help local leaders “tackle tough policy questions. Jury members meet over four days and “conduct research,

interview experts and staff,” deliberate on policy alternatives, and recommend “a course of action to decision-makers.”<sup>8</sup>

- **Citizen Assemblies:** Citizen Assemblies use a similar process to Citizen Juries to research and provide recommendations on a public policy question but involve 50 to 150 community members.
- **Community Oregon:** Community Oregon is a “statewide program that brings rural and urban Oregonians together to build trust and mutual understanding through dialogue and local community immersion.” (<https://healthydemocracy.org/>)

### **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING OREGON**

[Participatory Budgeting Oregon](#) (PBO) describes participatory budgeting as “a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend a part of a public budget.” PBO states that “It gives real people real power over real money.” Local government officials can use participatory budgeting to set aside a pot of money and engage the community in determining how it will be spent. Community representatives “define objectives and set rules of engagement for projects,” brainstorm project ideas, transform proposal ideas into feasible projects, and vote on the projects they want funded.” Local government leaders then fund the winning projects. Participatory Budgeting processes have been used in communities all over the world.

Examples of national dialogue and deliberation organizations include:

### **CENTER FOR PUBLIC DELIBERATION**

The [Center for Public Deliberation](#) (CPD) at Colorado State University states that it is dedicated to “enhancing local democracy through improved public communication and community problem-solving.” CPD’s aim is to “improve the way our community is able to talk through complex issues so that we can arrive at better decisions.” CPD states that deliberation “requires open spaces for citizens to come together, good and fair information to help structure the conversation and skilled facilitators to guide the process.” CPD works to provide all three of these key ingredients. Martin Carcasson, CPD founder and director, is a national leader in the field of dialogue and deliberation and serves on the NCDD board and works in partnership with the Kettering Foundation. Some CPD resources include:

- **OVERVIEW VIDEO:** Carcasson provides a very helpful overview of public deliberation in his video “[CivEd Talks—Doing Civic Engagement through a Wicked Problems Lens: The Case for Passionate Impartiality](#)”
- **ONLINE TRAINING:** CPD offers training modules on its website for conversations on challenging issues. Topics include: “Centering Equity,” “Mapping your Networks,” “Deliberative Interviewing,” “Active Listening,” and “Offering Social Support.”
- **IN-PERSON TRAINING:** Our project team discovered through our survey of the Regional Area Neighborhood Coordinators (RANC) group that the City of Renton, Washington brought Carcasson to their community to do a training that provided an overview of the “deliberative engagement” model for community engagement.
- **COMMUNITY PROJECT GUIDES AND REPORTS:** Deliberative process guides and project reports.

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<sup>8</sup> In 2019, the City of Milwaukie, Oregon, with support from Healthy Democracy, became the first city in Oregon to use a citizens jury to answer a policy question. The question was, “Should Milwaukie City Council members be paid more than their current volunteer stipend? If so, how much should Council members be compensated?”

## **NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS INSTITUTE**

The [National Issues Forums Institute](https://www.nifi.org/) (NIFI) is a partner of the Kettering Foundation. NIFI states that National Issues Forums are organized by “a variety of organizations, groups and individuals” to “offer citizen the opportunity to join together to deliberate, to make choices with others about ways to approach difficult issues and to work toward creating reasoned public judgment. Forums range from small or large group gathering similar to town hall meetings, to study circles held in public places or in people’s homes on an ongoing basis.” They allow “people of diverse views and experiences to seek a shared understanding of the problem and to search for common ground for action.” NIFI offers many resources on its website, including a list of affiliates in every state. (<https://www.nifi.org/>)

## **NATIONAL COALITION FOR DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION**

The [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](https://www.ncdd.org/) (NCDD) describes itself as “a network of innovators who bring people together across divides to discuss, decide, and take action together effectively on today’s toughest issues. NCDD serves as a gathering place, a resource center, a news source, and a facilitative leader for this vital community of practice.” NCDD resources include:

- **RESOURCE AND NEWS CLEARINGHOUSE:** The NCDD Resource Center offers over 3,000 “discussion guides, methods, evaluation tools, articles, books, videos” and more. The NCDD Community News blog includes posts about “funding and job opportunities, events and trainings, news articles and tools” and more.
- **EDUCATION RESOURCES:** NCDD education resources are valuable tools for people who are new to dialogue and deliberation processes, including a Resource Guide on Public Engagement, a Quick Reference Glossary to over one hundred terms, Core Principles for Public Engagement, an Engagement Streams Framework, and a Beginners Guide. (<https://www.ncdd.org/>)

## **PUBLIC AGENDA**

Public Agenda describes itself as a “national, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and public engagement organization” that strives to “strengthen democracy and expand opportunity for all Americans. Public Agenda asserts that the organization brings to its work a “deep understanding, based on decades of research” of how the “public comes to terms with complex issues” and “how people engage with their communities in problem solving” and “the things that help them do so.” Public Agenda uses this knowledge to:

- “provide leaders with rich insight into the public’s thinking on important issues, with an emphasis on current and potential common ground on solutions;”
- “help citizens become more informed and thoughtful as they vote, advocate, volunteer or otherwise work for progress; and”
- “support communities, cities and states in developing richer opportunities and pathways for civic engagement and problem solving.”

Public Agenda’s approach to public engagement seeks to help “people make public decisions, solve public problems, and build community, all of which are important and essential” to build and sustain “healthy communities and democracies.” Public Agenda “helps communities build sustainable solutions” that: “Listen to and collaborate with the public,” “Make engagement equitable and inclusive,” “Conduct meaningful outreach and organizing,” “Create unique engagement strategies,” “Make engagement fun,”

and “Measure the impact of engagement.” (<https://www.ncdd.org/>) Public Agenda offers a wide range of resources, including:

- **Keeping People Connected: A nuts-and-bolts toolkit for engaging residents, businesses, and property owners in problem-solving, decision-making and community-building**: “Toolkit featuring real examples for community members at various levels to learn how to sustain engagement.”
- **Strengthening and Sustaining Public Engagement: A Planning Guide for Communities**: “Guide to help community members determine which kind of engagement is the right fit and how to sustain that engagement.”
- **Taking the Conversation Virtual**: “A premier guide for managing and participating in digital meetings and discussions.”
- **Engagement Scorecard**: “Blog post featuring Public Agenda’s own engagement measurement tool for community members to rate their experiences with public engagement activities.”
- **Digital Tools for Engagement**: “Blog post featuring many of the engagement tools used by Public Agenda” in their own practice and work.
- **Text, Talk, Engage (TTE)**: “Accessible and customizable SMS tool that combines texting with face-to-face discussion to inform public policy, stimulate volunteerism and organize new initiatives.”

### **EVERYDAY DEMOCRACY**

[Everyday Democracy](#) works with communities to design and implement community dialogues through their “Dialogue to Change” process. See more about their work in the section on “Equity Organizations.”

### **MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ORGANIZATIONS**

Many states have organizations that support the use of mediation and collaborative conflict resolution processes to help community members talk about difficult issues. They provide networking opportunities for mediators, help the community access skilled mediators and facilitators, and support training and volunteer mediation programs. Some cities also have neighborhood mediation programs or partnerships with community service providers.

### **OREGON CONSENSUS**

[Oregon Consensus](#) was established by the Oregon legislature in 1989 to professionalize community dispute mediation, and today acts as a forum that conducts multi-party dispute resolution on public policy questions throughout the state. Oregon Consensus works with “government entities, nongovernmental organizations, decision makers, community members and others to address public policy issues collaboratively.” Oregon Consensus helps people “examine and weigh diverse viewpoints and interests and find commonalities” to “combine their efforts” and “build solutions they all can support.” Oregon Consensus is housed in the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University. Oregon Consensus mediators and facilitators:

- “Assess situations and bring the right people to the table to discuss them.”
- “Design and facilitate meetings to make sure all viewpoints are considered.”
- “Help groups sort through information to support sound decisions.”



- “Help groups convey their recommendations or agreements in writing.”

### **OREGON MEDIATION ASSOCIATION**

The [Oregon Mediation Association](#) (OMA) was founded in 1986 to support the development of and support and advocate for the use of mediation as a useful conflict management tool and an alternative to traditional adversarial approaches to conflict. OMA “provides opportunities for mediators to work together to elevate the quality and expand the availability of mediation programs and services in Oregon.” OMA also provides information about:

- **Finding a Mediator:** OMA maintains a directory of mediators who are OMA members. These mediators are “committed to the OMA Core Standards of Practice and the OMA Mediator Complaint Process.
- **Community Dispute Resolution Centers:** “Neighborhood Mediation or Dispute Resolution Centers offer services in many Oregon counties.” The centers often have paid staff but the majority of their mediation work is conducted by volunteer mediators who receive training and supervision from the centers. The Oregon Office of Community Dispute Resolutions “maintains a current list of all such community mediation programs in Oregon.

### **RESOLUTIONS NW**

[Resolutions NW](#) (RNW) provides consultation, training, and direct services, including mediation and facilitation, restorative justice professional development, coaching and consultation. They also offer racial equity leadership development, coaching, and organizational assessment. RNW trains volunteers in mediation and facilitation, and they offer online training programs and custom workshops for groups of all sizes. The City of Portland has contracted with RNW to provide free neighbor-to-neighbor mediation services to help resolve disputes in the community.

### **EQUITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Equity organizations can partner with local governments that are working to transform their own institutions and to advance equity in various ways. They offer models of how to work together effectively, and they can share best practices, tools, and resources.

### **NW PUBLIC EMPLOYEES DIVERSITY CONFERENCE**

Twenty-eight years ago, Multnomah County, soon joined by the City of Portland, began sponsoring an annual conference to support diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Since then, other public employers in the Pacific Northwest have joined in sponsoring this annual event to promote “diversity values of inclusiveness, respectful work environments, equal opportunity for all, and culturally responsive service.” Conference workshops focus on a wide variety of topics related to racism, equity, inclusion, and cultural awareness. (<https://www.nwpedc.org/>)

### **CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The [Center for Diversity & the Environment](#) (CDE) states that it “harnesses the power of racial and ethnic diversity to transform the U.S. environmental movement by developing leaders, catalyzing change within institutions & building alliances.” CDE brings “a sophisticated understanding of power and privilege,” and understanding of “how to assess equity in outcomes,” and “must skillfully create safe spaces and build trust in order to support an opening to vulnerability and courage so that participants

can dig deep into learning and engage their hearts in the process of radical change.” CDE seeks change at three levels:

- **Individual:** CDE’s “transformational leadership opportunities speak to individuals who wish to become effective change agents in their communities.”
- **Organizational:** CDE supports organizational change through “retreats, trainings, and coaching & consulting services that ensure ongoing institutional evolution.”
- **Movement-wide:** CDE coordinates a national coalition “to bridge the historical divide between the environmental community and communities of color.”

### **GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE AND EQUITY**

[GARE](#) describes itself as a “national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.” GARE is a joint project of Race Forward and the Other and Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley. GARE recognizes the growing field of practice in local and regional governments to advance racial equity, eliminate inequities and increase “success for all.” GARE tools and resources include:

- **Monthly online information sessions** about GARE membership benefits.
- **Event Materials** from “national and regional convenings and webinars.”
- **Issue Papers** that “describe topics and approaches that have impact, as well as examples from cities and counties that provide the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others.”
- **Racial Equity Tools** including “a Racial Equity Tool from the Alliance that captures an overall approach to integrating racial equity into routine decision-making, as well as examples from our cohort of jurisdictions at the forefront of racial equity.”
- **Videos** that tell the stories of GARE’s work.

### **RACE FORWARD**

[Race Forward](#) describes its “Building Racial Equity” series as “a collection of interactive trainings for those who wish to sharpen their skills and strategies to address structural racism and advance racial equity.” Race Forward states that these trainings “emphasize how to challenge and change institutional racial inequities,” as differentiated from “diversity trainings” that “primarily focus on interpersonal relations and understanding.” The foundational Building Racial Equity trainings include:

- **Building Racial Equity (Level 1)—Foundation:** Participants “build a clear understanding of key concepts such as racial equity and structural racism;” “learn to talk about race constructively within their organizations and with their constituents;” “gain tools and practices for counteracting racial bias in their work and practices;” and “identify opportunities and next steps for applying concepts and strategies to advance racial equity.”
- **Organizing Racial Equity (Level 2)—Shifting Power:** Participants “build on and strengthen racial equity practices for themselves and their organizations and networks” and strengthen their “collective analysis of power” and gain “useful tools and framework to shift power within groups, institutions and other formations seeking to advance racial justice in this time.”

Amanda Garcia-Snell, community engagement program manager with Washington County, told our project team that Washington County encourages employees to take both the foundational IAP2 trainings and the GARE/Race Forward foundational equity trainings. Garcia-Snell shared that Washington County’s GARE membership gives them five slots per quarter that employees can use to take GARE and Race Forward trainings, and that these trainings are available to both employees and elected officials.

### **EVERYDAY DEMOCRACY**

[Everyday Democracy](#) “supports organizing across the country by bringing diverse groups of people together, helping them structure and facilitate community dialogue on pressing issues, and training them to use a racial equity lens to understand longstanding problems and possible solutions.” Their approach includes the multiple elements: organizing, facilitation, dialogue, action, evaluation, and sustaining progress. They offer tools, including an Intergenerational Equity Framework, Ground Rules for Virtual Meetings and Conversations, and a framework and mapping tool for evaluating community engagement.

### **POLICYLINK**

[PolicyLink](#) describes itself as “a national research and action institute advancing racial and economic equity by Lifting Up What Works®.” PolicyLink advances equity by advocating for “groundbreaking policy changes that enable everyone, especially people of color, to be economically secure, live in healthy communities of opportunity, and benefit from a just society.” PolicyLink states that it is “guided by the belief that the solutions to the nation’s challenges lie with those closest to these challenges: when the wisdom, voice, and experience of those traditionally absent from policy making drive the process, profound policy transformations emerge.” PolicyLink offers “featured publications, webinars, news, and tools” to assist organizations to advocate for “public investments to create economic opportunity and healthy communities; integrating data into policy initiatives and advancing policies and strategies to build an economy in which everyone can participate and prosper.”

### **ONLINE TOOL PROVIDERS**

Some local governments contract with companies that offer customized online tools for communication and community engagement. These providers typically collect data about digital communication and online participation for their clients, and they may moderate online forums themselves and/or train government staff on how to use the tools.

Future work to develop a more complete list of online engagement tools and providers, pros and cons of different products, and strategies and tips on when and how to use them would be very helpful, along with case studies of local governments in Oregon that rely on them.

In addition to ubiquitous social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and widely used online survey tools (SurveyMonkey, Google Forms), there are service providers who offer sophisticated suites of online tools. Because these are for-profit private companies and we endorse none of them individually, we have included some examples in Appendix 2.

### **PEER SUPPORT NETWORKS**

Professional peer groups provide valuable support and information to local government leaders and staff, especially those responsible for community engagement. They provide the kind of information,

tools, shared experiences, and case studies that are most useful to support the work of their members. This section provides examples of different kinds of peer groups in Oregon, some within a single jurisdiction, some across jurisdictions, and some entirely informal.

### **PEER GROUPS WITHIN A SINGLE JURISDICTION**

When community engagement staff meet and work together, they can help overcome fragmentation and increase the quality and consistency of community engagement across different departments. They can also share valuable information about the community, potential community partners, and effective strategies and techniques.

- **CITY OF MILWAUKIE:** City of Milwaukie staff from different city departments who support community engagement meet regularly to share information and best practices. They identify best practices to increase the quality and consistency of community engagement across city government. Five staff members participated together in the five-day IAP2 Foundations training.
- **CITY OF PORTLAND, CITYWIDE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (CPIN):** For many years, the City of Portland supported regular meetings of community engagement staff from different city agencies. Participants shared challenges and best practices and heard presentations from community representatives on how to engage effectively.
- **CITY OF PORTLAND, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PIAC):** Portland’s PIAC provides peer networking opportunities for city staff (along with community volunteers) in a more formally established setting. PIAC is discussed below among the examples of community engagement by local jurisdictions in Oregon.

### **PEER GROUPS ACROSS JURISDICTIONS**

When local government leaders and staff from different jurisdictions meet with their peers, they can share valuable resources and lessons to help establish expectations for good practice in the field.

- **METRO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (PERC):** Metro’s PERC is established in the agency’s charter to review and make recommendations “on Metro’s engagement strategies and practices at the project and program level,” review “the annual public engagement report,” and make recommendations to the Metro Council about engagement priorities.” The membership of PERC includes public involvement staff from [Clackamas](#), [Multnomah](#) and [Washington](#) counties, staff or board members from local community organizations, and at-large community members. In addition to its advisory role at Metro, it offers networking and peer support opportunities for staff (and community members) from different neighboring jurisdictions.
- **REGIONAL AREA NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATORS:** The RANC group includes neighborhood and community engagement program managers from local governments from [Bellingham](#) to [Eugene](#) and east to [Wentachee](#) and [Bend](#). Group members schedule gatherings a few times a year and use their email list to ask each other for information and support on a wide variety of community engagement issues and challenges. With the help of Rene Kane of the City of Eugene, we surveyed RANC members to ask about their participation in training related to community engagement, the value it provided, and the kind of additional training they would like to receive.

### **INFORMAL PEER GROUPS**

Sometimes peer groups evolve organically when a few people who do similar work decide to create an ad hoc group and share their knowledge and experiences. Amanda Garcia-Snell, community engagement program manager with Washington County, shared two examples of informal peer support groups of which she is a member. One is a group of individuals who support different community leadership training programs or academies, such as those offered by [Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center](#), [City of Hillsboro](#) and other community organizations and local governments. The group's members share information and help people in their communities learn about different opportunities to develop leadership skills. The other informal group includes community engagement program managers who get together for happy-hour gatherings, share information, and help each other work through challenges. Garcia-Snell said the group includes representatives from [City of Gresham](#), [Clackamas County](#), [Metro](#), [City of Portland](#), [Multnomah County](#), [City of Beaverton](#), and others.

### **GENERAL PURPOSE PEER GROUPS**

Some local government general-purpose peer support groups in Oregon may discuss community engagement along with other local governance issues. Some examples we heard about include groups of the city managers in Washington County and Clackamas County, and the [Oregon Planners Network](#).

### **PEER NETWORKING IN STATE GOVERNMENT**

We were not able to find evidence of any community engagement peer support groups in Oregon State government. Sadie Carney, the DLCDC community engagement lead, said she was unaware of any formal or informal networks of state agency community engagement staff. She noted that such networks could be a valuable resource for state staff who support local governments in their community engagement efforts. We see this as a potential opportunity.

### **FOUNDATIONS AND FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS**

Certain philanthropic foundations have identified community engagement, participatory democracy, and community organizing as primary focuses for their research, funding, and support. They often act as convenors to help people doing community engagement work around the country connect with each other. They also fund and shape broad thinking about community engagement, and support research and innovative projects and programs nationwide.

This section describes three national organizations—Kettering Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)—and one organization based in Oregon, North Star Civic Foundation. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of community engagement focused foundations, but only to give some examples of foundations that can help local government leaders and staff find support and networks to build their community engagement capacity.

#### **KETTERING FOUNDATION**

The [Kettering Foundation](#) is the most active foundation in the United States that supports research on civic engagement. Kettering convenes people from all aspects of civic engagement work, including local officials, researchers and academics, non-profit organizations, government agencies, community engagement practitioners, and community activists. Kettering also is a major funder of research projects that explore and document innovative practices and projects around the world.

The foundation describes itself as being “rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering’s primary research question is, what does it take to make democracy work as it should? Kettering’s research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation.”

Kettering’s approach to research is “learning with, not experimenting on, real citizens, communities and institutions.” They work “primarily through learning exchanges and other collaborative research with civic organizations, communities, and institutions that are experimenting with ways to strengthen democracy. Those involved in these exchanges trade their experiences for insights that Kettering has collected from past exchanges with a wide range of groups from around the world.” Kettering often will fund small research projects to capture the ideas and experiences of “people and organizations who are trying to do something in their own communities....” The foundation offers its own “insights and arresting questions in exchange for what our partners are observing and learning in public life.” Kettering supports this jointlearning most often by “convening research exchanges at the foundation, where we bring together our staff and those we’re learning with to trade their experiences for insights that Kettering has collected from past exchanges with a wide range of people and groups from around the world.”

Kettering offers a wealth of resources related to civic and community engagement. The online Kettering Library has links to reports and publications that document previous Kettering research and partnerships around the world. The Kettering Review is “a journal of ideas and activities dedicated to improving the quality of public life in American Democracy.” The library also features the foundation’s annual journal, which summarizes their work around an annual theme.

For example:

- 2020: The Work of Democratic Citizenship
- 2019: Exploring the Relationship Between the Public and Government
- 2018: Experiments in Organizational Innovation
- 2017: Experiments in Democratic Citizenship

We spoke with Valerie Lemmie, Director of Exploratory Research. Lemmie leads the Kettering Foundation’s work and projects focusing on “government work” and interactions between community members and government. She provided an overview of the major actors and trends in local government community engagement thinking, and examples of innovative work around the country.

Kettering is always looking for local efforts to improve democratic practice and encourage civic engagement. Government leaders and staff who are interested in exploring a partnership with Kettering to document a local community engagement program are project can start [here](#).

### **W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION**

The [W. K. Kellogg Foundation](#), founded in 1930, is one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the country. The foundation’s mission is to support “children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.”

In a letter on the Kellogg Foundation website, President and CEO La June Montgomery Tabron asserted that in these challenging times, “Thriving children, working families, equitable communities—those remain our priorities. Community engagement, developing leadership, racial equity and racial healing are fundamental and embedded in every layer of our work.”

Over the years, Kellogg has funded projects that explore or support community engagement in local communities across the country.

### **PHILANTHROPY FOR ACTIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

[Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement \(PACE\)](#) is an organization of funders that seek “to maximize their impact on democracy and civic life in the United States.” PACE states that its members “share a belief that America will be healthier and more successful, resilient, and productive, if democracy is strong and the office of citizen is treated as central to how it functions,” and that “American democracy will thrive when all of its people are informed and engaged in the process of creating it.”

PACE’s long list of member foundations represents organizations from around the country. The list features some familiar names including the Kettering Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Oregon Humanities.

PACE’s programmatic work focuses on increasing capacity in the funding community. PACE supports relationship building among funders, provides on-site learning experiences that helps funders “collectively wrestle with and learn from civic engagement models,” coordinates efforts to pool funding or support collective work, shares learning from these experiments, supports research on the “state of civic philanthropy in America,” and seeks to “seed conversations, learning and action among anyone who has an interest in civic engagement and democracy in the United States.”

PACE has a Civic Engagement Primer that walks other foundations through questions that include: What is civic engagement? How is it defined and what does it look like? How might civic engagement relate to my work? How do I get started? Who might I learn from about how to do this work?

PACE’s website includes links to its many webinars on topics related to civic engagement, including:

- Health Equity & Community Safety: How Funders Can Embrace the Power of Youth Civic Engagement
- Democracy and Dialogue: Building Public Trust and Meaningful Online Discourse
- Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity & Opportunity
- Philanthropy’s Role in Strengthening America’s Democracy

### **NORTH STAR CIVIC FOUNDATION**

[North Star](#)’s vision and strategy are “to create dynamic and collaborative spaces where civic leaders can develop visionary solutions to complex public interest problems.” North Star is located in Portland, Oregon. Our project team spoke with Caitlin Baggott Davis, North Star CEO.

**PROJECTS:** North Star states that its projects are “built on partnerships that bring together expertise across multiple communities and disciplines” and that the organization’s “collaborative approach helps us see big challenges in new ways and to develop innovative solutions. Backed by impartial research and cross-partisan collaborations, our projects help communities build positive change.”

**VIBRANT COMMUNITIES FUND:** North Star’s “Vibrant Communities Fund” “directs timely support to values-centered community engagement.” North Star states that “We are proud to support local leaders who educate communities about issues on the ballot, build community organizing power, drive voter turnout and participation, and provide election protections and support for absentee voters.” North Star selects “organizations with a track record of effective and innovative community engagement.”

**DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC HEALTH ECOSYSTEM:** North Star is thinking beyond just improving community engagement and developing collaborative governance skills in government leaders. They have developed a broad vision of the full range of work needed to build “civic health” in communities. North Star has identified an “ecosystem” of different organizations and activities they believe is needed to support and drive civic health. Baggott Davis shared a graphic that identifies and defines the six elements of this ecosystem:

## Democracy and Civic Health Ecosystem

What ecosystem of organizations and activities supports and drives civic health?



North Star Civic Foundation, 2021

Baggot Davis described the context for North Star’s creation of this ecosystem as follows:

Following a year of systemic threats to democracy in the United States, North Star Civic Foundation spent the winter of 2020 evaluating the broader ecosystem of activities and organizations that serve to support a healthy, inclusive, and resilient democracy. We built this model to guide our investments and help us think about where Oregon’s civic ecosystem may require attention.

While the policies that govern voter registration and participation are critical ingredients for an equitable democracy, the work to sustain our democracy is far broader than those policies. It also includes the attitudes and values with which elected leaders govern and communities come together to find solutions to public interest problems; the ability for community members from a broad range of communities to serve their communities in many elected roles; the resources and capacity for community-based groups to organize and build power; shared cultural beliefs



about the value of democracy and democratic institutions and processes; and the stewardship of community-minded residents, from civics education in middle schools, to a functioning independent media, to lifelong opportunities for engagement and civic dialogue that brings people together across difference and builds civic trust.

We have begun to identify organizations and activities in each area of this ecosystem—and also have noted areas where Oregon may lack sufficient civic strength, such as around developing collaborative governance skills in elected leaders, providing broad support for journalism, or investing deeply in community organizing in rural communities and communities of color. In each “column” in the model we ask: What organizations are visibly active in this space? Who else are stakeholders? Who is not represented? What values lead the work in these spaces? How is work in this area funded? Are funds provided equitably and with input and engagement from communities? Where might new investment or engagement have broad impacts across “columns” in the model?

## **CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS**

Local and national civic organizations encourage community engagement in civic life by bringing people together to work on important issues, community assistance, awards, events, research, and publications. This is often described as “community building.”

### **NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE**

The [National Civic League](#) (NCL) is one of the leading national organizations that supports civic engagement. The NCL states that its mission is to “advance civic engagement to create equitable, thriving communities” by “inspiring, supporting and recognizing inclusive approaches to community decision-making.” The NCL “applies civic engagement principles” through its key programs, including:

- **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE:** The NCL “facilitates strategic planning processes, community engagement trainings, and development of local engagement plans and materials helping local governments and institutions engage and involve residents in ways that lead to tangible outcomes.”
- **ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARD:** “Since 1949, the National Civic League has recognized and celebrated the best in American civic innovation with the prestigious All-America City Award.” Each year, the NCL bestows the Award “on 10 communities (more than 500 in all)” to recognize “the work of communities in using inclusive civic engagement to address critical issues and create stronger connections among residents, businesses and nonprofit and government leaders.” The NCL encourages communities to attend the NCL’s monthly Promising Practices Webinar series “to learn from previous winners and other communities about their innovative projects and about the application process.” (Some Oregon communities have won this award.)
- **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS:** The NCL offers an extensive clearinghouse for “information and other resources in the of field of civic affairs. Some of these resources include:
  - o **National Civic Review:** The National Civic Review is full of articles about community engagement trends, issues, and practices (described in “Journals and other Publications” below).

- o **Promising Practices Database:** The “Promising Practices Database” “includes summaries of projects that leverage civic engagement from All-America Cities and other communities.”
- o **Civic Index:** The NCL Civic Index guides communities in how to measure their community’s “civic capital—the formal and informal relationships, networks and capacities that enable communities to solve problems and thrive” and can be used to “spark conversation about community strengths and areas in need of improvement.” The current (4th) edition includes a “specific focus on equity and engagement.”
- o **All-America Conversations Toolkit:** This toolkit guides local communities in having “conversations that engage residents in talking about the kind of community they want and what it will take to get there.”
- o **Model City Charter:** The Model City Charter “serves as a ‘blueprint’ for communities seeking to draft or revise their own home-rule charters. Valerie Lemmie and Wendy Willis, who both serve on the NCL board of directors, shared with us that the NCL currently is updating the Model City Charter to better reflect up-to-date ideas on issues such as social equity, public engagement, the use of technology and social media and new roles for elected and appointed leaders. The NCL expects to have this language ready by November 2021.
- o **Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook:** NCL’s handbook helps “communities convene diverse groups of stakeholders to envision and implement ambitious goals for the future with an inclusive process for planning and decision-making.”
- o **Making Participation Legal:** A guide for local governments on how to update their legal guidelines that may “stifle innovations and discourage public officials and employees from reaching out to citizens” to better support “a wide range of participatory meeting formats and dynamic online tools.” This resource includes a “model public participation ordinance for local governments.”
- o **Model Executive Orders to Secure Equity:** NCL researched local executive orders and ordinances “designed to improve equity and inclusiveness” that can serve as models for local ordinances and other public policies.

### **NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP**

The [National Conference on Citizenship](#) (NCoC) is a non-profit organization chartered by Congress in 1953. NCoC’s mission is to strengthen civic life in America “through a nationwide network of partners involved in a cutting-edge civic health initiative...cross-sector conferences and engagement with a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations interested in utilizing civic engagement principles and practices to enhance their work.”

The NCoC’s Civic Health Index is central to the organization’s work. NCoC describes civic health “as the way that communities are organized to define and address public problems. Communities with strong indicators of civic health have higher employment rates, stronger schools, better physical health, and more responsive governments.” NCoC documents state and community level civic health across the nation and “has documented the state of civic life in America in city, state and national Civic Health Index (CHI) reports.” NCoC states that, “CHI partnerships have changed the way governments go about their work, reintroduced civics to our classrooms, redirected investments, influenced national and local

conversations resulting in enhancing civic life, and bolstered a network of civic leaders across the country.” In addition to hosting its Annual Conference on Citizenship, NCoC also “partners with institutions to host and convene programs, events, webinars, and discussions throughout the year.”

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

The [League of Women Voters](#) (LWV) was created in 1920 to support women playing a larger role in public affairs after women won the right to vote. In 1973 the League charter was amended to include men. The League is non-partisan and does not support or oppose political candidates or parties. The organization “encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.” The League mission is: “Empowering voters. Defending Democracy.” Its vision is: “We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.” Its value is: “We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.” LWV chapters are active in 700 communities in all 50 states. The League actively supports civic engagement, especially access to voting.

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OREGON**

[League of Women Voters of Oregon](#) (LWVOR) seeks to encourage “informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide” and to “influence public policy through education and advocacy, and to provide support for League members and the League organization.”

Oregon is also home to 15 [local League chapters](#), including: Clackamas County, Coos County, Corvallis, Curry County, Deschutes County, Klamath County, Lane County, Lincoln County, Linn County, Marion/Polk Counties, Portland, Rogue Valley, Umpqua Valley, Washington County, and West Umatilla County. These local organizations host forums and sometimes engage in studies that investigate and advocate for strong local community engagement and DEI efforts.

### **CITY CLUBS**

City Clubs are organizations of community members that host forums for speakers on important local and statewide issues, engage members in issue research, and build leadership capacity among their members. Among those active in Oregon are:

- [City Club of Central Oregon](#)
- [City Club of Eugene](#)
- [City Club of Portland](#)
- [Salem City Club](#)

### **JOURNALS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

Some journals focus on issues of civic participation and community engagement. They are invaluable resources for articles on new theories and issues, the latest trends and techniques, and case studies of successful practices. Publications by local government organizations and professional associations also publish occasional articles related to community engagement. A couple good journals focused specifically on civic and community engagement include:

## **NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW**

The [National Civic Review](#) is published by the National Civic League. The publication states that its “case studies, report, interviews and essays help communities learn about the latest development in collaborative problem solving, civic engagement, local government innovation and democratic governance. Some of the country’s leading doers and thinkers have contributed articles to this invaluable resource for elected officials, public managers, nonprofit leaders, grassroots activists, and public administration scholars seeking to make America’s communities more inclusive, participatory, innovative and successful.”

## **JOURNAL OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**

The [Journal of Deliberative Democracy](#) “publishes articles that shape the course of scholarship on deliberative democracy. It is the forum for the latest thinking, emerging debates, alternative perspectives, as well as critical views on deliberation,” and it “aims to be the platform to broker knowledge between scholars and practitioners of citizen engagement.” The Journal is supported by the newDemocracy Foundation, the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, and IAP2.

## **RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSES**

### **PARTICIPEDIA**

Many of the organizations cited in this section collect and provide information on community engagement research, best practices, and case studies. One source devoted specifically to providing this sort of information worldwide is [Participedia](#), which describes itself as “a global network and crowdsourcing platform for researchers, educators, practitioners, policy makers, activists, and anyone interested in public participation and democratic innovations.”

## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

Federal government agencies have requirements around public participation for a variety of programs and projects implemented by local jurisdictions. They also offer training, support, and guidance to help local governments comply with these rules and regulations.

As noted earlier, the U.S Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration require local Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop a [Public Participation Plan](#) for their transportation plans and improvement programs. The agency offers resources to aid local jurisdictions in meeting this requirement.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides detailed [guidance to local governments](#) on public participation, and to community members with respect to [environmental justice](#) and the [assessment of environmental impacts](#) for local projects subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Even where it is not a matter of legal compliance, federal agencies like the [National Park Service](#) often provide resources to encourage and support community engagement by local governments.

Disaster preparedness is a focus of community engagement for many local governments, often with guidance from the federal government. [Local Emergency Planning Committees \(LEPCs\)](#) are community-based organizations that assist in preparing for emergencies, particularly those concerning hazardous materials. The EPA provides [online training](#) to local governments to help them implement the [Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act \(EPCRA\)](#). The Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their local area and trains them in basic disaster response skills.

The federal [Plain Language Guidelines](#) give direction to all government agencies about clear writing to help community members “find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find to meet their needs.”

## **OREGON STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

Oregon state government affects local government community engagement through state requirements, programs, and funding for local projects. While our project did not have the capacity to do a thorough review of how state government affects community engagement, we did look at the community engagement requirements of Oregon’s state land use planning system and the roles of the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). A more thorough examination of Oregon state government community engagement policies, requirements, capacity, and training opportunities would be very useful.

This section looks at statewide community engagement policies in Oregon, DLCD/LCDC community engagement policies and support programs, and other Oregon state agencies. The State of Oregon does not have an overarching community engagement policy that requires or encourages local governments to use community engagement best practices to engage their communities in decision making.

### **PUBLIC MEETINGS, NOTIFICATIONS, AND RULE MAKING**

The State of Oregon has requirements related to [public meetings, public records, and formal notification](#). The Oregon Attorney General also established [Model Rules for Rulemaking](#) that require public input. While these requirements are useful, they generally do not rise to the level of community engagement best practices as described above.

### **OREGON STATEWIDE PLANNING GOAL 1**

Oregon’s land use planning system was adopted in the 1970s and has been a national model for state government land use planning policies ever since. It requires all cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plans.

As part of their comprehensive plans, “Goal 1: Citizen Involvement” requires local jurisdictions to “develop a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.” One element of the program is an “officially recognized committee for citizen involvement” that broadly represents the geographic areas and interests of the community. The committee must assist local leaders in developing and implementing the community involvement program, although city councils or county commissions (or their planning commissions) may act as the committee (<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/OP/Pages/Goal-1.aspx>)

Goal 1 acts as a statutory driver for local governments to engage their communities in their comprehensive planning and land use decision making, but it does not ensure actions that could be considered necessary for high-quality community engagement, including equitable outreach, effective two-way communication, opportunities for community members to influence all phases of the planning process, adequate technical information in an understandable form, feedback mechanisms by which policy makers respond to public input, or adequate human, financial, and informational resources to

support the effort. Revisions to Goal 1 were proposed in 2021 to address some of these deficits (see below).

### **OREGON DEPARTMENT OF LAND CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (DLCD), LAND CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) support and oversee local comprehensive planning efforts, including the implementation of Goal 1. Our project team interviewed DLCD Deputy Director Kristen Greene and Sadie Carney, DLCD policy analyst and communications director who also staffs the DLCDs Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC).

Both Greene and Carney noted that DLCD has increased its focus on community engagement in recent years. DLCD hired Greene as deputy director. Greene brings to DLCD her years of experience as a consultant supporting local government community engagement in visioning and planning processes. Her senior position in the agency has allowed her to elevate the focus on equity and community engagement in the agency's work. DLCD also hired Carney to serve as the agency's "Goal 1 expert."<sup>9</sup>

One example of Greene's effect on elevating community engagement at DLCD is her success in convincing DLCD to significantly expand the membership and diversity of its Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking committee.<sup>10</sup> Greene said that DLCD now identifies "priority populations" for different projects and referred us to the list of priority populations identified in Governor Brown's "State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response and Recovery." Greene also emphasized the importance of not expecting community-based organizations to participate on DLCD committees without compensation. She said these organizations have their own missions that do not include DLCD's work. DLCD is currently paying stipends to some committee members from community-based organizations. Greene also stressed the importance of using a skilled facilitator.

Both Greene and Carney referenced gaps in community engagement that have existed for many years in Oregon's land use planning system. They noted that Oregon's land use system was designed by and intended to meet the needs of people who were white, relatively affluent, and well educated. Greene acknowledged that expanding engagement in land use planning to people who historically have not been engaged is expensive and difficult, and that DLCD needs staff and support to do this work.

Greene shared that DLCD currently has limited staff capacity to support local government community engagement. She noted that DLCD has not been able to do much community engagement training for local government leaders and staff. Beyond a briefing for LCDC, DLCD also has not been able to publicize the updated 2019 version of the Putting the People into Planning guidebook for local government officials at the time of this writing.

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<sup>9</sup> Carney was very familiar with the work of CIAC when DLCD hired her. She had served as a volunteer member and vice chair of CIAC before she was hired by DLCD.

<sup>10</sup> "The Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking will be developing proposed amendments to Oregon Administrative Rules that will require cities and counties to submit regular reports on local actions and regional performance increasing equity and reducing climate pollution." (<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/LAR/Pages/CFEC.aspx>)

## **CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Oregon state land use planning law (ORS 197.160) established the [Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee](#) (CIAC) to “assure widespread citizen involvement in all phases of the planning process.” The law requires LCDC to appoint a “State Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee” and requires that committee to “develop a program for the commission that promotes and enhances public participation in the adoption and amendment of the [Oregon state] planning goals and guidelines.”

State law requires cities and counties to periodically update their comprehensive plans and engage their communities in that process. CIAC reviews the proposed language of each local government Goal 1 comprehensive plan community engagement program, and to advise LCDC “whether or not the proposed program adequately provides for public involvement in the planning process” and, if it does not, “in what respects it is inadequate.”

CIAC does other work beyond this primary formal task. In 2019, it completed a major update of [Putting the People in Planning](#), a guide to the community engagement requirements of Oregon’s statewide planning law for local government officials and community members. It includes a tool kit to help local agencies “successfully engage the public as they develop and implement important land use plans.” It is intended to help them “improve public participation in many other areas of government service as well.” CIAC recognizes good practices by local governments through its Achievement in Community Engagement (ACE) award program. In 2019, CIAC also developed guidelines for LCDC and DLCD on how they involve the community in policy development “consistent with and in some cases beyond the legal requirements of the Attorney General’s Model Rules of Procedure, state law, and [LCDC’s] administration Rules.”

Carney and the CIAC members have worked to make participation on CIAC more accessible to a broader diversity of people across the state. CIAC shifted to meeting online (even before COVID-19) instead of requiring committee members to drive to Salem from across the state for each meeting. CIAC also has identified “priority populations” to guide recruitment of new CIAC members.

Carney observed that there is a “real deficit” in community engagement training and outreach. She said she has also heard this from local government associations like LOC and AOC, and from DLCD field office staff. She noted that CIAC does not have the capacity to offer training or consultation to local leaders and staff, or to encourage widespread use of the resources it develops. All the members are volunteers. DLCD staff support for CIAC is limited. For instance, Carney’s support for CIAC is only a part of her broader policy analysis and communications responsibilities.

## **DLCD FIELD OFFICES**

DLCD field offices provide technical support to local governments as they develop their comprehensive plans. Carney said that DLCD field office staff are the agency’s most valuable staff members. She said they have a personal touch with local governments and familiarity with local conditions and issues. Carney noted that DLCD field office staff mostly focus on supporting local governments in more technical work on planning goals related to transportation, housing, and the many other state planning goals rather than Goal 1. She was not aware of any special training that field office staff had received on how to support community engagement. Carney supported Greene’s suggestion that an effective use of DLCD resources in this area would be to have Carney provide train-the-trainer training for DLCD district office staff to allow them to provide some level of community engagement capacity building and support to the local governments in their districts.

### **PEER RESOURCE SHARING**

Carney observed that one challenge is how to make people aware of the community engagement tools that are out there. She said that every local government should not have to “invent a wheel to make this happen.” Carney said that a system is needed to make sure that “we all have access to tools that benefit everyone and can capitalize on one another’s knowledge and experience and work.” Carney shared that she is not aware of any network of community engagement people around the state or at other state agencies. She observed that such a network across state government would be helpful. She wondered who would convene such a group and support its role as a resource body.

### **PROPOSED UPDATE OF GOAL 1**

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature considered [HB2488](#), a bill to rename and update the Goal 1 Citizen Involvement requirements. It did not pass in the 2021 legislative session. The bill emphasized environmental justice and would have required local governments to ensure that land use planning and decision-making processes are accessible to “disadvantaged groups.” It also required all Oregon cities and counties to update the Goal 1 language in their comprehensive plans, and it directed all state agencies to update their coordinating agreements with DLCD to ensure that their land use planning activities comply with the new requirements. DLCD is considering the possibility of performing an update without funding, but a heavy legislative policy agenda in 2021 means that any action will likely be on a longer timeline.

### **PROPOSED EXPANSION OF FORMAL NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

In 2021, HB 2556 “Notice for All” sought to require local governments to send formal notices not only to property owners but also to residents including renters. Although the bill was not adopted, Aaron Ray, OAPA president, told us that legislation and administrative rules to improve notification statewide would be helpful. He said some local governments already have expanded their notification systems on their own. Ray said that the development of model notification code language that still meets state requirements would be helpful to local governments.

### **OTHER OREGON STATE AGENCIES**

Like DLCD, other state agencies also have staff who interact with local government leaders and staff. Some agencies have formal field offices located around the state. These agencies often establish requirements for local government policies and programs and establish requirements for projects paid for with state funds. Different systems of state government field offices could provide a vehicle by which state staff could provide some level of support to local governments in effectively engaging their communities on projects related to a particular state agency’s work if they had appropriate training and access to resources. For instance, Jeanne Lawson with JLA noted that ODOT projects come with some basic process requirements that local governments must follow when they receive state funding for local transportation projects. ODOT also has field offices across the state.

Carney observed that some state agencies have much more robust community engagement programs and more resources to support these activities than DLCD. She mentioned the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Human Services.

A deeper look at community engagement activities and capacity at different state agencies would be useful.



## **EQUITY FRAMEWORK FOR COVID-19**

In 2020, Governor Kate Brown issued the [State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#). The Equity Framework requires state agencies to engage with diverse communities through “inclusive communications” and “community-informed policy and partnerships.” This includes engaging and centering “diverse community stakeholders and local leaders across the state to be an essential part of the data-informed-decision-making process.” The framework also directs state agencies to “Build on and collaborate with the trusted network of community-based organizational partners to lead in policy making and ensure that we proactively address policy gaps.”

## **EXAMPLES FROM LOCAL JURISDICTIONS**

### **CITIES**

We began this project as a survey of training programs in Oregon. As we conducted our interviews, we discovered a more nuanced picture of how local governments build their capacity for community engagement. This section describes some examples as reported by people we interviewed. They are brief snapshots that should be taken as leads for further investigation. There are undoubtedly many more examples of good work that we did not discover through our interviews.

Each of the cases in this section illustrates one or more practices that could be applied by other jurisdictions. Our research suggests that the cities of Milwaukie, Independence, and Tualatin are working intentionally toward an organizational culture and program that we describe earlier as the highest level on a spectrum of government approaches to community engagement. Because this project is exploratory and not exhaustive, we assume that other cities in Oregon are doing the same.

A more rigorous analysis of community engagement programs and activities in cities throughout Oregon would be extremely valuable, to share experiences across jurisdictions, describe organizational models, and collect feedback from local governments about the kind of support that would be most useful to them. We heard that local governments pay close attention to what works in other communities as a main source of learning. This suggests that case studies are valuable to identify best practices, develop guides and resources, and inform training curricula and consultation.

### **BEAVERTON**

After he left his position in Cornelius, Dave Waffle worked for Beaverton as a project manager and city liaison to Metro on regional issues. He secured a federal grant to develop health policies in the community. Building on his experience in Cornelius, the city conducted community surveys in five languages. This led to a new chapter on community health in the city’s Comprehensive Plan, which addressed housing, wrap-around services, food deserts, and community gardens. The city also partnered with [Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center](#), [Pacific University](#), and mental health agencies. Waffle stressed the value of the community surveys, which helped lead to smoke-free campuses, facilities, and parks. [Beaverton](#)

### **CORNELIUS**

Former city manager Dave Waffle told us about the city’s effort to engage families who had children with disabilities, most of whom spoke Spanish as their preferred language. They began in 2006 by holding an event at a Catholic church, which already offered a mass for people with disabilities. He said he learned the value of working with community elders, who can provide acknowledgement and

affirmation of your project and can signal to the community the need to participate in the public process. He affirmed the importance of food in helping to bring people together (and the less well-known skill of balancing a plate of mole on your lap while engaging).

The project produced videos about the lack of sidewalks and how families can advocate for their needs. Over eight or nine years, the city worked closely with [Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center](#), leading to much better cooperation and coordination with that important community institution, school districts, and other agencies. These relationships changed the way the city did business and engaged with the community, with multiple positive impacts: more bilingual public meetings, more Latino representation on city council, more sidewalks and park improvements, changes to health policy in response to community needs, greater fund raising for a new library, and, anecdotally, better relationships with the police. Waffle said this work left a legacy, as his successor remains committed to engaging the community based on the strong relationships and trust built over time.

## **FLORENCE**

We spoke with Megan Messmer, assistant city manager and public information officer. She discussed recent initiatives to engage the community, including the city's first community attitude survey, a 125th anniversary block party, National Night Out, a community policing event, a block party and ice cream social, and a digital scavenger hunt.

She emphasized that while Florence is a tourist destination, these festivals are targeted to residents as community building events. The city works with schools and other agencies on events to help bridge the gap between different populations, and to help people understand the relationship between the city and special districts for emergency preparedness. The city is considering developing a citizen's academy to educate community members about the city and create a pipeline to service on city committees.

Messmer discussed the importance of building trust in different ways: being present in the community, providing helpful information, keeping people informed about the progress of projects during "quiet" design phases. She said some staff are afraid to engage because people might get angry with them as representatives of the city. She reassures them that she "has their back" and sets an example by standing up for her work and letting them know that they "deserve to be treated as human beings" and it's not okay for people to yell and cuss at them. She believes the personal benefit of engaging confidently is that you take pride in your work, and it becomes rewarding and fun to "wear the shirt with the logo and be in the know" while you help people.

Messmer also talked about the challenges of persuading elected officials of the benefits of community engagement in an organization that has traditionally had a "head down, do your work" culture. The fact that you are not hearing complaints or seeing problems does not mean they are not happening, just that you are not paying attention. She said that engaged community members can also become allies and help to build trust in government. She described how a city manager and mayor supportive of engagement have helped to change the culture. Our conversation illustrated the impact that one or two individuals can have within a smaller organization. It also reaffirmed our conclusion that leadership support is necessary for sustained engagement, and the fact that Messmer has worked in different positions in the city manager's office for eight years has helped her individual talents influence the city's culture around community engagement.

## **GIRIBALDI**

The city faced well-publicized challenges with corrupt practices by some of its leaders. We spoke with Mayor Tim Hall, who was elected in part to address these problems and refocus city government on serving the community. Hall said it is difficult to recruit members for city committees, and that a basic “Know Your Government” program would help the community understand how government works and how it should work. As he noted, “When people are kept in the dark they don’t know” how budgets are developed or where their taxes go. He said that a challenge of engaging people in the work of government is that Garibaldi is a small coastal community comprised largely of retirees who want to buy a house and go fishing. Hall said that one of his public engagement goals is to increase community involvement in the planning of popular events like the city’s annual festival.

Hall is familiar with trainings offered by the League of Oregon Cities and the National League of Cities. He served on the IAP2 Cascade Chapter board and encouraged IAP2 to expand its outreach to smaller communities in Oregon. He believes council members would benefit from community engagement training, but it only makes sense if they are willing to participate (which is an open question). Hall’s insights are also informed by his past role as a community engagement manager for the City of Portland.

## **INDEPENDENCE**

The City of Independence has successfully “knitted together”<sup>11</sup> many of the key components of a robust community engagement program and culture. Independence has a diverse population of just over 10,000 people with a wide range of incomes; about forty percent of Independence residents are Latino. Mayor John McArdle and City Manager Tom Pessemier talked with us about the city’s approach to community engagement.

Community engagement in Independence is guided by strong overarching values. McArdle and Pessemier stressed the importance of listening to the community. They said city council members and staff have a “servant attitude” and focus on “doing what people want you to do.” The city also strives to hear from the broader community and identify broader community interests, not just the loudest voices. McArdle said, “We want to work with the community.”

The city uses formal visioning processes as a major tool to engage the community and set priorities. In 2018 and 2019, the city worked with the community to create the [Independence Vision 2040](#) process that currently guides the city’s work. The city used a wide range of effective and innovative techniques to engage community members in the development of this plan.

The city has committed significant resources to build a strong formal community outreach program. Several years ago, the city created a position dedicated to community engagement and is now adding a separate communications position.

The city prioritizes engaging its large population of Latino residents. The current community engagement manager, Ramon Martinez, has taken the lead on engagement with Latino community members and has become the “go-to guy” for the Latino community to connect with the city.

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<sup>11</sup> Professor Phillip Cooper used the term “knitting together” to describe the innovative work by former Independence City Manager David Clyne to integrate the city’s many different community engagement efforts.

McArdle and Pessemier noted that Independence is not well served by traditional mass media. They stressed the importance of the city recognizing the different communities within Independence and developing strategies to reach and engage them.

The strong community engagement culture in Independence grew over time. Pessemier noted that support from the mayor, city council, and community gives the city manager and city staff “freedom to go and actually do what the community wants to get done” as opposed to a governance approach “where you’re trying to force projects on the community that the community doesn’t really care about.”

In 2014, Independence was one of ten U.S. cities honored in 2014 as an [All-America City](#) by the National Civic League. In 2018, Independence received the Oregon League of Cities’ [Award for Excellence](#) “for revitalizing a rural community through attitude, engagement and alignment.”

### **JOHN DAY**

We interviewed city manager Nick Green. He explained that the city is faced with substantial demographic changes as younger families move to the city and more people commute from surrounding communities to work in the city. He described the city’s strategy for growth and economic revitalization, involving fundraising to redevelop brownfields, dramatically increasing the city budget and staffing, and taking an entrepreneurial approach to government. He highlighted the city’s use of public funds to create the first [municipally owned greenhouse](#) in the country, which the city proposes to [convert to a co-op](#) in order to access other revenue sources and help the community “feel like this is their asset and not some government project.”

Green said the city uses public involvement best practices (“operating by the book”) to implement plans that are often controversial. He described the city’s approach as apolitical and based on diversity, inclusiveness, transparency, online engagement, and an open public process that “gives people a reason to show up.” The city’s capacity to conduct extensive outreach and engagement comes from a mix of staff (particularly younger employees willing to network in the community), consultants paid with grant funding, the in-house expertise of state and federal partners, and community volunteers who become grassroots advocates.

According to several people we interviewed for this report, the strategy has been extraordinarily successful in moving projects forward, gaining the support of elected officials, and bringing new voices into the public process. While rapid change has intensified opposition from some longtime residents, Green believes that constructive participation by most community members is driving the future direction of the city, and that broad-based engagement will reveal what is best for the community. He pointed us to a directory of the city’s [master plans](#) that shows broad participation in each initiative, including the RERC Action Plan— Goal 8 Update (2020), John Day Innovation Gateway Area Plan (2019), and the John Day Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy—Goal 9 Update (2019).

### **LAKE OSWEGO**

Scott Lazenby, former city manager, told us about the [D Avenue Improvement Project](#), which was recognized as the 2019 Project of the Year by the Oregon Chapter of the American Public Works Administration. Professor Lazenby reported that the project created a mile of sidewalks, new streetscapes, rain gardens, and roadway improvements in an older neighborhood. The proposal was controversial because some residents who were influential in formal neighborhood associations believed that sidewalks would hurt the neighborhood’s rural feel.

Staff took a proactive approach to community engagement—“pounding the pavement,” conducting walking tours, distributing postcard surveys widely with a tailored version to residents on the affected streets, holding community forums, and providing various opportunities for written and oral feedback. The outreach revealed that more recent residents favored sidewalks and it resulted in a customized design sensitive to individual needs (e.g., preserving parking spots and saving certain trees). The solution was still opposed by a small number of vocal individuals, but staff were able to refer to the city’s [Citizen Involvement Guidelines](#) requiring balanced membership in neighborhood associations. Professor Lazenby said that the process “was not cheap,” but it was the right way to engage the community and allowed the city to deliver the project.

Apart from this project, he also noted that the city has found it valuable to hold “National Night Out” and other events where they block off streets, council members and staff in mingle with community members, children touch fire trucks, etc. This creates a more positive and casual atmosphere than at city business meetings, but where people can still learn about the work of government and how to stay engaged. It reflects a general best practice of “meeting people where they are.”

### **MILWAUKIE**

The City of Milwaukie has created one of the most comprehensive city government community engagement strategies and programs in Oregon, placing it at the top level of our community engagement spectrum. Some hallmarks of the city’s approach include:

- Strong support from leadership for community engagement: Mayor Mark Gamba, city council members, and City Manager Ann Ober.
- A focus on building capacity citywide through regular meetings of community engagement staff from different departments and the use of a community engagement manual to support consistency across projects.
- A dedicated staff member, Community Engagement Coordinator Jason Wachs, to help guide and support the overall program.
- Investment in staff skills, with five members recently attending IAP2’s weeklong Foundations training.
- A robust communications program to share information through the city’s website, social media, and a monthly paper newsletter sent to all residents.
- An online engagement platform—[Engage Milwaukie](#)—designed and moderated with support from the consulting firm [Bang the Table](#).
- Sponsorship of fun events and volunteer opportunities to engage community members.
- An integrated and coordinated approach to supporting boards and commissions, a citywide neighborhood association system.
- Coordination with a variety of local organizations to reach diverse communities.
- Use of demographic data and other information about the community to identify groups to engage and develop effective engagement strategies.
- Strategic work with consultants to augment the city’s in-house community engagement capacity. In 2018, the city worked with consulting firm Cogán Owens Greene to design and implement its

“Milwaukie All Aboard” community visioning project, which won the League of Oregon Cities’ [Good Governance Award](#) that year.

- Recruitment and support of community leaders through the Milwaukie Leadership Academy.
- Use of an annual community survey to solicit feedback from residents on issues, services, and priorities.

In 2020, the city collaborated with the Center for Public Service to do a comprehensive review of its community engagement efforts.

## **PORTLAND**

Two of the report authors worked previously for the city. Paul Leistner was the longtime coordinator of the Neighborhood Program, and Greg Greenway served as the coordinator of the Public Involvement Best Practices Program. We also interviewed Aaron Abrams, Community Outreach and Public Involvement Program Manager for the Bureau of Environmental Services. The largest city in the state, Portland is an example of a highly institutionalized approach to community engagement.

The City Council adopted [Public Involvement Principles](#) in 2010. The city’s [Public Involvement Advisory Council \(PIAC\)](#) represents an innovative model of collaboration between community volunteers and city staff, recommending policies and guidelines to city council and promoting best practices across city bureaus. In part through PIAC, the city has developed a wide range of [resources](#) over many years to help guide, implement, and assess community engagement efforts. Portland has possibly the most wide-ranging and detailed [Community Involvement chapter](#) of its Comprehensive Plan, supported by a [Community Engagement Manual](#) to guide implementation. Its [Office of Equity and Human Rights](#) offers extensive guidance, education, training, and technical assistance to city bureaus and their staff, including a [Racial Equity Toolkit](#). Through its [Diversity and Civic Leadership Program](#), the city has worked for more than a decade with BIPOC-led community organizations to design and implement programs that support leadership development and civic engagement. [Engaging for Equity](#) describes the origins of the program and reports on its first seven years.

This kind of institutionalization is essential for any large city with a strong commitment to community involvement, if for no other reason than the population is too large to rely solely on informal networks and relationships to engage the full range of stakeholders who are affected by government decisions. While this structured approach embeds core principles of community engagement in the city and is backed by significant investment and staff capacity, there are inherent challenges in any large organization to apply these resources consistently and effectively. Portland faces the additional challenge of coordinating efforts and standardizing practices across multiple bureaus because its system of government does not include a city manager or central administrator.<sup>12</sup> We address this issue conceptually in the conclusion with respect to a possible “sweet spot” related to city size.

## **TUALATIN**

We interviewed city manager Sherilyn Lombos, deputy city manager Megan George, and community engagement coordinator Betsy Rodriguez Ruef. They told us that the city’s current community engagement program emerged from the “scar tissue” of an unsuccessful effort to create a downtown urban renewal district a decade ago. In 2009, the city had identified problems, developed solutions, and

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<sup>12</sup> As noted on the City Auditor [webpage](#), “The City of Portland has the last remaining Commission form of government among large cities in the United States.”

was prepared to make a significant investment in the project. When they asked the community for input on their proposed solutions, people said they were addressing the wrong problem. It shook the city to lose such a major opportunity because the community didn't want it.

Lombos said the city did a year of soul searching and went through a painful process to shift their approach. Neighborhood organizations became activated around the failed project, and the city began to work with them more closely. In June 2011, the city council adopted seven [Community Involvement Principles](#), and the following month it created a [Community Involvement Organization \(CIO\) Program](#). The city learned from their experience with the downtown project that the community wanted more consistent outcomes across city initiatives. One response was the passage of a \$20 million bond measure for transportation funding in 2018, and extensive public engagement to develop a list of community priorities ([Tualatin Moving Forward](#)). In 2021, the city adopted the [City Council Vision & Priorities](#) to support an inclusive, connected, informed, and engaged community.

In addition to the CIO program, the city established the non-geographically based [Grupo Tualatinos](#) as an avenue for engagement and representation. The city's approach has both formal and informal elements. There is a structured relationship with the CIO's and the city provides staff support to Tualatinos. It has less structured relationships with other community groups. Rodriguez Ruef (the city's "subject matter expert") connects CIO's and community groups to council members and staff, identifies community allies and potential leaders, and plays the role of "matchmaker" in various ways. Flexibility, adaptation, and relationship building appear to be hallmarks of the city's approach.

Our interview reinforced our observation that both consistent leadership and the location of staff within an organization are key success factors for community engagement programs. Elected officials have set standards and expectations through the adoption of the city's vision, principles, and priorities. Lombos has been with the city for nearly fifteen years, and her leadership as city manager has clearly contributed to the evolution of engagement as central to the city's mission. Both George and Rodriguez Ruef report directly to the city manager. The city's investment in staff dedicated to community engagement and relationship building is essential to capacity building, and their access to leadership multiplies the value of that investment.

There are other jurisdictions that were recommended for further research by those we interviewed. We did not investigate or confirm these accounts directly with city representatives because of time constraints, but we want to mention them:

### **CANNON BEACH**

Community members are highly engaged. While the city has about 1,000 year-round residents, it must plan as though the community has a population of 10,000 because of seasonal tourism.

### **EUGENE**

[Envision Eugene](#) was the largest community engagement effort ever undertaken by the city. Focused on managing growth to protect and enhance the community's quality of life, the vision included an Urban Growth Boundary that was approved by the state of Oregon in 2017 after seven years of community engagement and technical analysis. We were also encouraged to learn about [Opportunity Village Eugene](#), "a pilot project for a tiny home community that could provide a safe space for people experiencing homelessness to sleep, keep their belongings, participate in a village community, and receive supports to help them stabilize and transition into permanent housing." The Village is located on city public works property.

### **MCMINNVILLE**

We were encouraged to investigate the city, which reportedly has a commitment to public involvement and is working to engage community members experiencing houselessness.

### **MEDFORD**

We heard that the city manager, council members, and top staff went door to door and ask people, “What’s on your mind?” to discover which issues residents care about. While community members appreciated the outreach, it was time consuming, labor intensive, and hard to scale and sustain.

### **MONMOUTH**

We were encouraged to reach out to the city to learn about its community engagement work but were unable to do so based on our time constraints.

### **SALEM**

We heard that the city has a strong planning team with effective messaging and service provision, including outreach to the Latino community. We recommend that any future research includes a case study of community engagement in the state capital.

### **SANDY**

The city tried to create formal neighborhood associations, but the community was not able to sustain them. As an alternative, council members would attend meetings in different neighborhood areas. Sandy was also credited by one interviewee with providing child care and food to encourage attendance at a town hall focused on the city’s large Latino community.

### **TIGARD**

The city has a [dedicated web portal](#) for community engagement that encourages participation in active city projects and invites input “at times that work best for you.” They have staff dedicated to community engagement and reportedly do effective outreach and messaging to the community.

Other cities that our interviewees mentioned as possible cases for future research into their overall approach to community engagement or work on specific projects include **Ashland, Bend, Boardman, Butte Falls, Gladstone, Happy Valley, Wilsonville, Joseph** and **Elgin** (together in collaboration with Eastern Oregon University on the Joseph Branch Trail).

### **OTHER CITIES**

As we have emphasized, this report is exploratory. We know that there are many cities doing good work to engage their communities and we encourage further research to describe these local efforts.

### **COUNTIES**

It is not surprising that the three most populous counties in Oregon—Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas—also have the resources to staff significant community engagement programs as a part of their service delivery model. For **Multnomah County**, there is an entire [Office of Community Involvement](#); **Washington County** combines community engagement and equity and inclusion in [one office](#); and **Clackamas County** includes community engagement in their [Public and Government Affairs](#) office. Based on our interview with Amanda Garcia-Snell, it appears that Washington County is making deliberate efforts to build an organizational culture around community engagement that we describe earlier as the highest level on a spectrum of government approaches.



**Polk County** joins these three counties as the only other county in the state with an entire department devoted to community engagement: the [Family and Community Services Department](#) helps connect community members with various services and resources provided by the County or its partners. **Klamath County** includes a general Public Affairs department that says it emphasizes “two-way communication between the County and involved citizens,” though the scope of their community engagement work is unclear from the website.

Several medium-sized counties in Oregon also have various community engagement staff with programmatic lenses. However, the scope of their community engagement efforts generally targets specific services or populations. For instance, **Josephine County** has two staff members with community outreach responsibilities: one in the [Juvenile Justice](#) department and the other focused on the [Emergency Services Program](#). **Jackson County** has several similar positions with programmatic focuses in the areas of [community health education](#) and [general community programming](#). Another example is **Deschutes County**, which offers a free ten-week “[County College](#)” program.

**Clatsop County** is emerging as a jurisdiction in Oregon with programmatic community engagement efforts. There is a community engagement-focused staff member working in the County Manager’s office, and the County’s most recent [strategic plan](#) commits to developing a comprehensive community engagement plan and increasing their capacity for engaging their community beginning in 2021.<sup>33</sup> This [presents itself](#) as a potential opportunity for conducting a real-time case study.

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Many counties have also developed approaches to community engagement that relate to specific goals, plans or projects, including **Benton**, **Coos**, **Curry**,<sup>13</sup> **Gilliam**,<sup>14</sup> and **Lane** (for [parks/open space](#) and [frequent service users](#)).

We do not to assume that the counties not mentioned do not value or practice community engagement. As Dr. Shannon Donovan detailed in our interview with her, many rural counties may simply lack the resources to devote to the development of programmatic community engagement. There also may not be information on counties’ community engagement efforts publicly available. The findings described above were established through a review of each of the counties’ websites, and programs or projects that involve community engagement may not be reflected online.

There are also county employees at all levels of leadership who actively engage with their communities through their regular work even though community engagement may not necessarily be a central focus of their position. Their work is not to be forgotten or diminished, as they are a critical part of the fabric of building capacity to engage their communities.

## **SPECIAL DISTRICTS**

We did not interview representatives of specific special districts, but we spoke with Frank Stratton, executive director of the [Special Districts Association of Oregon](#) (SDAO). As noted earlier, Stratton explained that special districts have different community engagement needs and challenges than cities or counties because of the kinds of services they provide, the fact that the populations they serve usually cross other jurisdictional boundaries, and the relative lack of awareness of what districts do. He also said that more than half the districts have little or no staff and annual budgets under \$100,000,

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<sup>13</sup> pp. 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> p. 2

limiting their engagement capacity. He and others mentioned several cases of special districts and regional agencies that would offer helpful case studies:

### **CLEAN WATER SERVICES**

The [water resources management agency](#) responsible for the Tualatin River watershed has reportedly been engaging the community effectively for years. They do regular community surveys and have a long track record of collecting longitudinal data on what community members want for the Tualatin Basin.

### **FIRE AND RESCUE**

[Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue](#) focuses on engagement to promote a culture of safety in the community and the organization. “Education delivered to residents and businesses motivates their active role in emergency prevention, preparedness, and resilience measures.”

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

[Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District](#) conducts ongoing outreach to inform the public about its parks, services, and programs, and engages the public in decision making on a variety of projects to ensure that they reflect community needs and desires.

### **DRAINAGE**

In partnership with [Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare](#), the [Multnomah County Drainage District](#) launched a program to address safety and infrastructure issues through targeted outreach, education, and engagement to individuals experiencing houselessness and vulnerable communities in low-lying areas during high water events. The Houseless Outreach & Coordination Pilot Project received the 2020 [Outstanding Special District Program award](#) from the SDAO.

### **HOUSING**

While not a special district, the [Northeast Oregon Housing Authority](#) (NEOHA) was reported to be proactive in its engagement of the communities it serves in eastern Oregon. The agency provides a range of housing services to enhance the quality of life for individuals of low to moderate income, working closely with community partners. Stratton also suggested that we might find interesting cases of engagement at the Tualatin Valley Water District, the Port of Astoria, the Port of Tillamook Bay, and the Bear Creek Valley Sanitary Authority.

## **A CASE STUDY APPROACH TO BEST PRACTICES**

Taken together, these examples from cities, counties, and special districts point to some of the possible best practice resources that could be developed from more systematic case studies throughout Oregon. Areas of focus based on just the examples here might include: practices related to boards and commissions, development of equity policies, strategies for engaging diverse communities, effective partnerships with community-based organizations, the use of community visioning processes, engagement for economic revitalization, how to select and work with consultants, how to build support for community engagement among elected officials, models for leadership training programs, integrating digital and in-person techniques, and educating the community about bond measures. It is our observation that the most useful and well-received resources for local governments would be grounded in the real-world experience of their colleagues across juris.

# APPENDIX 1

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND COURSEWORK RELATED TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many public universities offer coursework related to community engagement. This source of education can affect local government capacity for community engagement in at least three ways: (1) working professionals can take courses that enhance their skills and knowledge, (2) students who receive degrees in public administration or public policy may go on to work for local government, and (3) universities collaborate with local governments on publicly funded projects through student internships, fieldwork, and degree programs. Among Oregon’s seven public universities, three offer a public administration degree, four offer a public policy degree, and one offers a combination of public administration and policy.

**Table 1: Public Universities’ Public Administration and Policy Degrees**

Name	Public Administration Degree	Public Policy Degree
Portland State University	Y	Y
University of Oregon	Y	Y
Oregon State University	N	Y
Western Oregon University	Y - Combined	
Eastern Oregon University	Y	Y
Southern Oregon University	N	N
Oregon Institute of Technology	N	N

Two universities offer civic engagement-related concentrations. Oregon State University offers a [Community History and Civic Engagement Graduate Option](#) as a part of their Master’s of Arts or Master’s of Science in History degree, and Southern Oregon University offers a [Civic Engagement Concentration](#) as a part of their Bachelor’s of Arts in Political Science degree. Interestingly, neither of these degree options includes coursework specifically related to civic or community engagement, though much of the coursework is related to the skills upon which community engagement professionals often rely.

Programs with a concentration in community engagement are rare in the United States, with notable exceptions such as [Notre Dame University](#), [Duke University](#), [Michigan State University](#), [University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee](#), and [Northwestern University](#), all of which have undergraduate or graduate certificates in community or civic engagement. Two programs that we focused on for this project were Pepperdine University’s [Professional Certificate in Advanced Public Engagement for Local Government](#), hosted by the Davenport Institute at Pepperdine University in California, and Simon Fraser University’s [Dialogue and Civic Engagement Certificate](#).

## **The Carnegie Foundation’s Elective Classification for Community Engagement**

Evaluation of community engagement is critical to sustaining institutional investments. What are the benefits of these programs and why should we continue to support them? Compared with local government, the education sector has been particularly proactive in both engaging their communities (students, faculty, local communities, donors, etc.) and in measuring the outcome of these efforts.

As a nationwide example, colleges and universities that demonstrate a commitment to community engagement can receive the Carnegie Foundation’s Elective Classification for Community Engagement. Administered by Albion College in Albion, MI, this classification “is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. In this way, it is similar to an accreditation process of self-study. The documentation is reviewed by a National Review Panel to determine whether the institution qualifies for recognition as a community-engaged institution.”<sup>15</sup> Portland State University received this classification most recently in 2015, and Oregon State University received the classification in 2020. This sort of certification could be adapted to acknowledge good community engagement by local governments.

The Professional Certificate program at Pepperdine University’s Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership is a five-week commitment of two-and-a-half-hour weekly sessions. According to their website, “Through this program, mid-career professionals are prepared to lead a publicly-engaged organization by gaining a deep understanding of the context, purpose, and best practices for engaging residents in the decisions that affect their lives and communities.”<sup>16</sup> While there are no specific courses involved (rather, a condensed program with interactive exercises), the experience is an opportunity for professionals to immediately apply their learning to their work.

The Dialogue and Civic Engagement Certificate at Simon Fraser University includes a series of workshop style, one-to-three-day courses over at least eight months and no more than three years. According to their website:

SFU’s Dialogue and Civic Engagement Certificate will help you build the skills you need to design and implement engagement strategies where people feel valued, connected to the process, and more committed to the outcomes. By integrating proven dialogic principles and engagement techniques, you can enable your stakeholders, whether internal or external to your organization or community, to influence outcomes on key issues.<sup>17</sup>

While no university or college in Oregon offers similar applied programs for community engagement, each public university offers courses that relate to the work of community engagement professionals. We identified 61 community engagement-related courses across the state based on two criteria:

1. Is the course explicitly named or described as related to the practice or theory of community engagement?
2. Would taking the course help community engagement professionals in any department of an organization learn or develop the necessary skills to engage their community?

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<sup>15</sup> <https://carnegieelectiveclassifications.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/certificate-public-engagement/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs/dialogue-and-civic-engagement-certificate/why-this-program.html>

## Table 2: Community Engagement Related Courses—Oregon

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total CE-Related Courses</b>
Portland State University (PSU)	36
University of Oregon (UO)	3
Oregon State University (OSU)	6
Western Oregon University (WOU)	4
Eastern Oregon University (EOU)	2
Southern Oregon University (SOU)	6
Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

### Community Engagement Related Courses - WA and BC

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total CE-Related Courses</b>
University of Washington	11
Washington State University	6
Simon Fraser University	12
University of British Columbia	2
University of Victoria	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

**Table 3: Community Engagement Skills by Oregon University**

Name	Collaborative Governance/Action	Leadership	Conflict Resolution	Issue Exploration	Decision-Making	Dealing w/ Conflict/Emotion
PSU	69.44% (25)	11.11% (4)	41.67% (15)	33.33% (12)	33.33% (12)	52.78% (19)
UO	66.67% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	66.67% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)
OSU	33.33% (2)	16.67% (1)	33.33% (2)	50.00% (3)	33.33% (2)	50.00% (3)
WOU	50.00% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	75.00% (3)	0.00% (0)	50.00% (2)
EOU	100.00% (2)	50.00% (1)	0.00% (0)	50.00% (1)	50.00% (1)	0.00% (0)
SOU	16.67% (1)	16.67% (1)	100.00% (6)	0.00% (0)	33.33% (2)	100.00% (6)
OIT	25.00% (1)	25.00% (1)	100.00% (4)	0.00% (0)	25.00% (1)	100.00% (4)
Totals	57.38% (35)	13.11% (8)	44.26% (27)	34.43% (21)	29.51% (18)	55.74% (34)
Name	Facilitation/Mediation	Inclusion	Organizing	Participatory Planning	Comm.	Engagement Methods/Tools/ Procedures
PSU	47.22% (17)	27.78% (10)	38.89% (14)	58.33% (21)	80.56% (29)	72.22% (26)
UO	33.33% (1)	33.33% (1)	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)	0.00% (0)	66.67% (2)
OSU	33.33% (2)	33.33% (2)	33.33% (2)	66.67% (4)	66.67% (4)	66.67% (4)
WOU	50.00% (2)	0.00% (0)	50.00% (2)	50.00% (2)	50.00% (2)	100.00% (4)
EOU	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	50.00% (1)	50.00% (1)	50.00% (1)	0.00% (0)
SOU	83.33% (5)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	100.00% (6)	16.67% (1)
OIT	100.00% (4)	50.00% (2)	0.00% (0)	25.00% (1)	100.00% (4)	75.00% (3)
Totals	50.82% (31)	24.59% (15)	32.79% (20)	50.82% (31)	75.41% (46)	65.57% (40)

**Table 4: Community Engagement Skills Totals**

Skill	Totals
Leadership	13.11% (8)
Inclusion	24.59% (15)
Decision-Making	29.51% (18)
Organizing	32.79% (20)
Issue Exploration	34.43% (21)
Conflict Resolution	44.26% (27)
Facilitation/Mediation	50.82% (31)
Participatory Planning	50.82% (31)
Dealing w/ Conflict/Emotion	55.74% (34)
Collaborative Governance/Action	57.38% (35)
Engagement Methods/Procedures/Tools	65.57% (40)
Communication	75.41% (46)

Descriptions of the courses taught in Oregon universities were catalogued based on the community engagement skills they address: Collaborative Governance/Action; Leadership; Conflict Resolution; Issue Exploration; Decision-Making; Dealing w/ Conflict/Emotion; Facilitation/Mediation; Inclusion; Organizing; Participatory Planning/Budgeting; Communication Engagement Methods/ Procedures/Tools.

Leadership and Inclusion are the least-developed skills in any of the Oregon universities. Communication and Engagement Methods/Procedures/Tools are comparatively common, while the remaining skills are generally covered between about 30% and 58% of the time.

**Excluded Courses**

Many courses might relate to the identified skills in ways that could help train or educate government professionals. These include most courses in the Communication discipline or courses such as “Community Studies”. However, they were not included in the analysis because they did not appear to meet one or both of the criteria described above. Similarly, there are many courses in specific disciplines such as Urban Planning, Education, or Criminal Justice that discuss some elements of community engagement within that industry or sector. Unless a course met at least one of the two criteria, these courses were not analyzed. This research also did not compare any private, for-profit, or community college offerings in Oregon, which may yield additional resources and warrant further research.

**Community Colleges**

There are seventeen community colleges in Oregon, several of which are the only institutions of higher education in their communities. Each provides relatively affordable and accessible education and training for students and members of the local workforce, and some may offer courses like those identified in the analysis of the four-year universities. Especially for local governments in rural areas, community colleges may be useful resources for accessing community engagement-related education and training. They may also present opportunities for unique and dynamic partnerships for engaging the local community or developing joint solutions to local problems. We recommend further research to identify coursework at community colleges related to community engagement, and a more thorough analysis of how these programs support capacity building for local governments in Oregon.

## CONCLUSIONS

This analysis demonstrates the academic richness of community engagement and the robust variety of options available in Oregon. It also presents some opportunities for improvement, such as skill-building community engagement coursework in Leadership and Inclusion; more academic opportunities to build community engagement skills outside of the Portland metro area; and creation of professional degrees or certifications specifically for community engagement.

Portland State University is particularly well-positioned among the four-year universities to provide academic opportunities for building community engagement skills. The wide variety of courses at PSU described in the report suggests that there may be untapped potential to formalize a community engagement professional certificate program. The skills identified here may also provide a starting point for building program or course outcomes for any university or college that is interested in offering coursework related to community engagement.

Finally, there may be opportunities to enhance community engagement skills beyond what is currently offered at any public university in Oregon. As evidenced by the coursework in OSU's Community History and Civic Engagement Graduate Option as a part of their Master's of Arts or Master's of Science in

History degree and SOU's Civic Engagement Concentration as a part of their Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science degree, studying community engagement need not be bound to explicitly skill-building coursework. Indeed, the challenges presented by the global pandemic and the current attention to equity in government present new challenges and opportunities to universities to be relevant and innovative in their course offerings.

Naturally, local government professionals join Oregon's public service workforce with a variety of educational, experiential, and geographic backgrounds. Many may not have been on an educational path that included coursework or programs such as the ones described here. A central goal of this analysis is to contribute to the understanding of the many opportunities that students and local government professionals have to build their community engagement skills in Oregon, and the possibilities for learning in the future.



## APPENDIX 2

### CONSULTANTS & ONLINE SERVICE PROVIDERS

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

As noted in the report, we did not seek to create an exhaustive list of community engagement consultants. Those listed here are offered as a small sample of the numerous private companies that provide services to local governments in Oregon. They are included not because we endorse them, but because they were mentioned to us by people we interviewed. In some cases, we spoke with principals from these firms, but for most the descriptions are based on information from their websites.

#### JEANNE LAWSON AND ASSOCIATES

JLA has been working with local governments to engage communities in Oregon since 1988. JLA's website asserts that "public involvement is a dynamic, ever-changing discipline" and requires tailored strategies that evolve and adapt to new needs. JLA's stated goal is to reach out to and engage "people who are impacted, interested and influential, as well as those who have been traditionally under-represented in public decision making." JLA believes that good public process "means building relationships and having genuine conversations—listening and responding," resulting in "better decisions and projects." JLA tailors the services it provides and tools it uses to each unique project and community based on learning during a project and stresses the importance of being prepared to adjust a process to "better address changing circumstances."

JLA's services include:

- Customized Engagement Strategies and Decision-Making Processes.
- **Stakeholder Input and Reports:** Stakeholder interviews, small group discussions in multiple languages, online surveys, or informal intercept surveys, etc.
- **Facilitation:** Meeting design, implementation, and documentation by neutral facilitators, for "advisory committees, blue ribbon panels and policy groups, sounding boards, and other groups" to "allow various viewpoints to engage in dialogue, discuss trade-offs, and seek common ground on complex policy issues."
- **Strategic Communications:** Development of comprehensive communications plans, "key messages, talking points, templates, visual resources and implementation strategies."
- **Online Engagement:** "[C]ustom online open houses, social media campaigns, online surveys, e-newsletters, websites, interactive storytelling, map-based feedback tools."
- **Digital Storytelling:** JLA supports the use of video as a public involvement tool through their in-house services, including "strategy, scripting, filming, interviews, animation, post-production, captioning, and translation.
- **Public Meetings and Events:** Planning and support for "public open houses, workshops, ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking, living room meet-ups, community celebrations" that bring together "a few neighbors to hundreds of people."
- **In-Person Engagement:** Getting out and "talking to community members where they are" through "new and alternative formats to conduct neighbor and business canvassing, tabling events, area tours, community presentations, and many types of individual engagement."
- **Design and Copywriting:** Engaging stakeholders "through clear, compelling print and digital communications" including "copywriting, graphic design, print production, illustration infographics, map creation" and other elements needed to explain a project to a diverse community.

#### ENVIROISSUES

EnviroIssues states that it specializes in "complex projects that require community involvement" and tackling "some of the thorniest public policy and environmental issues of our day." The firm develops

and implements “comprehensive public involvement, strategic communications, and outreach plans and programs” that seek to ensure that “members of a community understood and could comment on the developments that affected their commutes, their water and power systems, and beyond.” EnviroIssues describes its staff as experts in “community outreach, public involvement planning, communications strategy, web design and development and graphic design” as well as the “science, engineering and technical aspects that underlie many issues....” They state that their work in “communications, outreach, public involvement, and facilitation” seeks to bridge “the gap between critical projects or decisions, the leaders charged with building or implementing them, and the communities where people live, work, and play.” The firm works on projects that may range from “public involvement as part of regulatory processes,” “proactive communications to build support for a project,” “facilitating a multi-day science advisory board, helping businesses stay open during construction, developing a new website or brand, or gathering input on the future alignment of critical infrastructure...” EnviroIssues has offices in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, and Oakland.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION CONSULTANTS**

Some community engagement consultants have specific expertise in reaching out to and engaging diverse communities, including communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities. They bring knowledge of culturally appropriate engagement strategies and techniques. Local governments that work with this type of consultant can gain valuable insights into how to engage diverse groups respectfully and effectively in their communities. These consultants also may assist local governments in public relations, facilitating culturally appropriate focus groups and community surveys, helping local government agencies to assess their internal cultures and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

### **MULTICULTURAL COLLABORATIVE**

Anita Yap and her firm [Multicultural Collaborative](#) were identified by several people we interviewed as leaders in the field of multicultural consulting for local governments. MCC states that it “brings together a unique multicultural and interdisciplinary team of planning and business professionals. Our distinct MCC approaches help build capacity in institutions and empower communities of color by having a voice in policy and decision-making. We strengthen emerging markets and local economies by helping develop leadership, governance, and self-advocacy.”

Yap’s TEDx Mt Hood Salon presentation, “Creating New Models of Engagement” summarizes MCC’s approach and shares some best practices.<sup>18</sup> Yap asserts that MCC’s “model of change” is to “work with communities to empower them to raise their voices to lead with their strength and their wisdom. And to encourage governments to share the wealth of leadership, decision making and public investment.” She describes MCC as a team of multi-cultural professionals with “lived experience of racism, oppression, and colonization” that brings to their work “a wide network of social justice leaders, government officials, community-based organizations, and elected officials.” MCC also includes “subject matter experts in affordable housing, public policy, urban design, and transportation.”

In her presentation, Yap shares some best practices MCC has learned from working with diverse communities. These include:

- **Show Up:** “Go to places you normally don’t go to. Go to a new restaurant that’s somewhere outside your neighborhood that serves some other type of ethnic food.” Attend cultural events in different communities.
- **Build Relationships and Trust:** “Volunteer in organizations with different events. Better yet, put your money where your intentions are. Donate to a candidate of color that running for office...or many of

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<sup>18</sup> A link to Anita Yap’s TEDx presentation can be found on the MCC website “Projects” page: <https://mcc-pdx.com/our-projects>.

the nonprofits, such as the Social Justice Fund, that raises money to donate to small, community-based organizations.”

- Learn: “Learn and understand the systems of oppression, the history, and institutional inequities that marginalize not only our communities but also within your organizations.”
- Dismantle: “Learn to dismantle the systems that lead to these inequities.” The best way to start is start with yourself. Or get your house in order. There are many people and resources available that will help you conduct equity assessments, strategic planning and training.”

#### EXAMPLES OF MCC PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Division-Powell Transportation Plan
- Jade District Vision Planning
- Climate Action Plan Social Equity Guidance and Metrics • Cully Park Safe Access Project 1: Let Us Build Cully Park!
- City of Canby Transit Master Plan: Public Involvement and Latino-specific Engagement
- EPA Greening the Jade
- City of Tigard, community approved park master plan
- Multnomah County Library: Framework for Future Library Spaces

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LIAISON SERVICES**

CELS was created in 2014 to provide “language, cultural contextualization and interpretation services for local governments, corporations and private entities” to improve “communication, understanding and civic engagement.” CELs liaisons are community leaders, activists, and respected elders from a wide range of communities of immigrants and people of color “who are fluent in their native language(s) and active in their local community.” CELs liaisons are “passionate about supporting and improving their community’s visibility and welfare.”

The CELS program can help local governments create authentic partnerships to engage underserved communities in culturally appropriate and effective ways. The CELS website reports that the program has liaisons “all over the State of Oregon and Washington, with the majority residing in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Clark counties.” Languages spoken by liaisons include: “Arabic, Farsi, Hindi,

Karen, Nepali, Russian, Ukrainian, Somali, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Toishanese, Zomi, Burmese, Mon, Vietnamese, Tongan, Chuukese, Cambodian (Khmer), Lao, Thai, Japanese, Korean, Fulani, Wollof, Hausa, Krio, Amharic, Mai Mai, Swahili, Tigringa, Bhutanese, Dari, Uzbek, Pashto, Turkish, Urdu, Armenian, Romanian etc.”

In response to community demand, CELS reports that it now includes liaisons that serve “underserved African American/Black, Native/Indigenous/Tribal, disability and LGBTQ+ communities.”

### **ESPOUSAL STRATEGIES**

Espousal Strategies is a government, community, and public affairs firm that focuses on collaborative problem solving, equity and inclusion, issue lobbying, and coalition building. Johnell Bell is founder and president. The firm’s promotional materials identify the services they provide as: government affairs and legislative advocacy; community engagement and public affairs, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and business development and procurement. The materials state that the firm brings an “ability to work closely with public, community, and other stakeholders from local communities to the nation’s capital.” Espousal Strategy’s community engagement and public affairs services include:

- Developing strategic plans to manage public and political issues and processes;

- Coalition-building, negotiation, and strategies;
- Authentic, effective stakeholder engagement in community and public decision-making processes;
- Siting and permitting projects;
- Constituent and stakeholder relations;
- Civic engagement and education;
- Public outreach;
- Communications, messaging, public and media relations; and
- Group facilitation and process design.
- Espousal Strategies worked with Washington County to help develop its equity policy, and with the City of Portland on its CELs program.”
- Planning, Engineering, Environmental and Economic

## **DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS**

Some consulting firms have created in-house community engagement teams that can provide community engagement services to local governments as part of larger planning, engineering, environmental, housing, transportation, or economic development projects.

### **COMMUNITAS**

Communitas works with “businesses, residents, developers, non-profits, and government staff” to create community development and redevelopment strategies. Communitas tailors participation to focus on “results and broad inclusion of stakeholders.” The firm uses a range of techniques from “focus groups to developer interviews to community workshops” and works to “involve citizen typically underrepresented in public processes and those who face barriers to traditional formats.” Communitas has been led by Deb Meihoff since she founded the firm in 2006. She also leads the Community Assistance Planning Program (CAPP) of the American Planning Association’s Oregon chapter.

### **MIG**

MIG focuses on “community visioning, strategic planning, landscape architecture, and urban planning and design.” MIG says their projects “always involve the community” and “engage and inspire people” through story telling using a variety of techniques. The firm’s design projects seek to create “user-friendly, human centered environments” that create a “sense of place.” MIG incorporates into its projects a focus on “how people think about their place in the world, using an arsenal of digital and grassroots tools to create new social norms for sustainability, environmental justice and environmental stewardship.” MIG describes itself as a “multidisciplinary firm” that allows it to create project-specific teams that can take a project from design through implementation. The firm can draw on staff with skills that range from “urban and policy planners to landscape architects, civil engineers, and storytellers” as well as “biologists, scientists, and environmental compliance experts” to ensure that projects “remain true to the original community vision.” MIG was founded in 1982 and now has offices in California, Colorado, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

### **DAVID EVANS AND ASSOCIATES**

DEA describes itself as “a recognized leader in the design and management of complex transportation, land development, water resources, and energy projects.” DEA brings to its project “the talents of engineers, surveyors, planes, hydrographers, landscape architects, and natural resources scientists.”

DEA’s staff also includes public involvement specialists that opportunities for “those who are affected by a decision...to be involved in the decision-making process” in the projects DEA manages and facilitates. DEA asserts that “[p]ublic involvement is essential to successful projects and today’s public expects convenient opportunities to participate in the process as well as influence the outcome.” DEA public involvement specialists can “provide a positive, strategic, and effective engagement experience” and

provide “the public with accurate and clear information tailored to their interest, easy opportunities to participate, and considerate and timely responses to their concerns.” DEA states that they “focus on equitable engagement, recognizing that additional efforts are often necessary to hear from underrepresented groups such as immigrant, low-income, and older adult populations; individuals with limited English language proficiency; or people with disabilities.” DEA designs and implements communication processes that allow “community input to be gathered and used in a meaningful way” and can plan and facilitate “in-person telephone, and online engagement events” using a “multitude of formats and platforms.”

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS**

Some local governments work with public relations firms to assist them in reaching out to and engaging the community and other stakeholders around basic communications, project or policy advocacy, and crisis management. Local governments often use public relations firms to help develop and support bond measure campaigns. Individuals we interviewed mentioned two firms:

### **CFM ADVOCATES**

CFM states that its public affairs works is “a full-contact sport” that does not focus on “grass-top outreach or stealth social media campaigns” but rather is grounded in contacting “the people who count— government officials, community leaders, people affected by major projects, news reporters” and “even opponents” and providing them with “fact-based information,” answering their questions and responding to their concerns. CMF services include crisis communications, public affairs counsel, media relations, strategic communications, communications audits, and media training.

### **WINNING MARK**

Winning Mark describes the firm as a “full service media firm” that works with clients “every step of the way: from big picture strategy to meticulous execution to real-time optimization.” Areas of work listed include: ballot measures, public engagement, progressive candidates, community mobilization. Services listed include: digital advertising, direct mail and print media, creative strategy and graphic design, communications planning and consulting, email marketing and online fundraising, and website development.

## **OTHER TYPES OF CONSULTANTS**

Other types of consultants also can help local governments build their capacity and effectively engage with their communities through processes like community visioning, strategic planning, and recruitment.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING – JENSEN STRATEGIES**

Jensen Strategies describes the firm’s work as helping “public, private, and non-profit organizations make key decisions, plan for the future and improve productivity and effectiveness.” The firm’s services include collaborative decision making, organizational development, policy analysis, and recruitment. One example of collaborative decision-making support is Jensen Strategies facilitation of a process for the City of Lebanon to create a community strategic vision action plan based on the City’s 2040 Vision Statement. The process included facilitation of a citizen-led Strategic Vision Action Plan Task Force and a “community/ stakeholder engagement process utilizing multiple outreach tools.” Jensen Strategies also develops and manages recruitment processes for cities and counties who are seeking to hire city managers and fill other senior management positions. These processes often include community input. For instance, in recruiting city managers, Jensen Strategies often seeks input from community members and staff and schedules panel interviews with department managers, community leaders, local public administrators and the City Council.

Jensen Strategies founder and principal, Erik Jensen, has taught classes for the League of Oregon Cities in both community visioning and strategic planning. Jensen shared with our project team that his

community visioning class focuses on creating a vision with community input that is community driven and his strategic planning class focuses more inwardly on how elements within a local government interact and work together effectively.

### **APPRECIATIVE ORGANIZING – SHELLY PARINI**

Appreciative Organizing is a powerful and effective strategy that can help local jurisdictions engage their communities in building a shared vision that can lay the foundation for a successful bond measure funding campaign. Shelly Parini shared with our project team that she developed the concept of Appreciative Organizing based on the concepts of Appreciative Inquiry. Parini’s approach to local governance is rooted in a strong focus on listening to and working with the community and building on the strengths of a community versus focusing just on what is wrong with the community.

Parini shared with our project team the experience of Clackamas Community College (CCC) which failed to pass a bond measure using traditional political campaign approaches. After this failure, CCC board members agreed to support Parini in leading an Appreciative Organizing process. Instead of focusing on another bond measure right away, Parini focused instead on engaging community members in a broad discussion of the types of educational services they wanted to see in their community. The process was called, “Imagine Clackamas.” Parini trained CCC board members in the Appreciative Organizing approach. She then engaged community members in helping to develop a broader outreach strategy that engaged community members, students, teachers, and representatives of other local governments in the district.

Through this “discovery campaign” community members learned about CCC and shared their hopes for education in their district and developed a sense of ownership in a vision for the future of CCC. After six months of input, Parini and CCC went back to the community with community’s vision for what it wanted for CCC. Parini shared that by the end of the process community members and local government leaders were strongly behind the vision. When CCC went back out to the community with a new bond measure to implement the community’s vision, it passed.

Parini worked for many years through her consulting firm Parini Connections, helping local jurisdictions and organizations use her Appreciative Organizing model to engage their communities in support of different projects. She currently is employed with Clackamas County Water Environment Services and leads the agency’s strategic communication and engagement. While Parini is not currently offering consulting services, she shared with our project team that she is interested in exploring opportunities to teach a class on Appreciative Organizing and may return to consulting sometime in the future.

More information about Appreciate Organizing and “Imagine Clackamas” can be found in Parini’s article cited in the references of this report.

### **Online Tool Providers**

Like consultants, these providers are generally private fee-for-service companies. There are many competitors in the field. We offer no endorsement of any particular provider. Those below were mentioned during our interviews, and we offer them only as examples of providers in the field.

### **BANG THE TABLE**

Bang the Table offers a suite of online community engagement tools known as Engagement HQ. The tools include online forums that support community dialogues, idea boards where residents can post their thoughts and suggestions, interactive community maps, story-telling tools to gather community experiences, a guestbook to collect community comments, a Q&A tool that allows community members to ask questions and get answers, polls to drive interest and assess community sentiments, and surveys to get feedback and quantitative data. The City of Milwaukie has been using Bang the Table since 2020. Granicus acquired Bang the Table in 2021.

### **METROQUEST**

[MetroQuest](#) offers an online visual survey tool to inform the community and collect input to support urban and transportation planning. Clackamas County has used MetroQuest.

### **ZENCITY**

[Zencity](#) is an online platform that allows local governments to “easily hear from and understand all of their community members’ real-time needs and priorities.” Zencity reports that they use “AI and expert analysts to automatically transform resident feedback into actionable data and tailor-made insights.” Scott Lazenby shared that the [City of Lake Oswego](#) used Zencity for a few years and found it was useful for spot surveys of community opinion on different issues and topics. The city stopped using it after a few years because of cost constraints. Lazenby said that the cities of [Sandy](#) and [Gresham](#) also used Zencity to do spot surveys and snap polls on specific issues and that community members liked using it.

### **GOVDelivery**

[Granicus’ govDelivery](#) is a web-based communications management system that allows community members to subscribe to receive local government news and information on topics that interest them.