Funding Sources & Programs for Downtown Revitalization Activities

Downtown revitalization programs and activities are typically funded by a multitude of sources. This report provides a synopsis of popular public and private funding sources that can be tapped for various aspects of downtown/community/economic revitalization initiatives. They are listed below together with websites that provide detailed program descriptions and contact information.

Note: this list is current at the time this report was published (2/27/02); sources and guidelines may change.

Private/Nonprofit Funding Sources

Often, in order to access funding from foundations, the organization requesting funding must have 501c3 tax exempt status, or be a city. Check each source for their specific requirements and programs.

- The Ford Family Foundation & The Ford Institute for Community Development
http://www.tfff.org/

- Meyer Memorial Trust
http://www.mmt.org/

- Northwest Grantmakers
http://www.lib.washington.edu/gfis/resources/pnw-links.html

- Oregon Community Foundation
http://www.ocf1.org/Default.htm

- Philanthropy Northwest
http://www.pngf.org/grantseeker.htm

For a full listing and description of Oregon Foundations, see the Oregon Foundation Data Book, www.FoundationDataBook.com.

- Cascadia Revolving Fund is a non-profit financial institution that provides loans and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations unable to access traditional financing and support. Cascadia lends to businesses owned by low-income people, women or minorities; and to childcare businesses, businesses that restore or improve the environment or have strong potential to crate family wage jobs. Cascadia provides intensive, one-on-one business counseling to borrowers at no additional cost. Contact Cascadia Oregon office at (503) 235-9635 or visit www.cascadiafund.org.

- The Oregon Microenterprise Network (OMEN) is a statewide association of microenterprise development programs and their supporters. These programs provide training, lending and other enterprise opportunities to entrepreneurs with limited access to economic resources. They offer an excellent free publication called *The Microenterprise Development Resource Guide*.
http://www.oregon-microbiz.org/

- Rural Community Assistance Corporation, RCAC, is a major resource for the rural west. Core services include technical assistance and financing for affordable housing, environmental infrastructure and community facilities. In 1996 the U.S. Treasury certified RCAC as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). RCAC believes rural citizens can better control their own future by creating healthy and sustainable communities. Oregon office: 503.228-159 or http://www.rcac.org.

- SOLV, provides materials, planning assistance and small grants to communities/organizations who want to organize a restoration, enhancement, cleanup or beautification project.
http://www.solv.org

Public Funding Sources

The State Community Solutions Team (CST) is made up of the directors of five state agencies serving as a cabinet-level advisory board on community development. The CST directors meet regularly to coordinate policies, programs, and investments for the following state agencies:

- Economic & Community Development
- Environmental Quality
- Housing & Community Services
- Land Conservation & Development
- Transportation

Many of the relevant funding resources are listed in this section. Visit the CST website for a complete listing of funding sources associated with these departments: www.communitysolutions.state.or.us/funding

Oregon Arts Commission has several small grant programs which are summarized below. http://art.econ.state.or.us/programs.htm
800.233.3306 (in Oregon) oregon.artscomm@state.or.us

Arts Build Communities grants are part of an initiative designed to recognize and support the arts in building and strengthening Oregon communities. The program acknowledges the Commission's belief that the arts are integral to community development in Oregon and the expanding role arts organizations are taking in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of those communities. The program provides $3,000 - $7,000 grants for arts and community development projects in rural and under-served urban communities.

Arts Industry Development Grants. Postmark deadline for applications: April 1 annually. The Commission provides funding for the operations of approximately 100 non-profit arts organizations offering programs, presentations and services to the public through its Arts Industry Development Grant program. Grants are a small percentage of an organization's overall budget; state funds should be matched many times over with earned and contributed dollars.

Arts Reaching Youth Initiative Grants. The purpose of Arts Reaching Youth grants is to demonstrate the range of ways in which experiences in the arts can help at-risk youth. The program provides funds to support several substantive projects across the state that serve high-risk youth and their families, in both community-based and institutionally-based settings.

Business Financial Services division of OECDD has a number of funding programs. Though most are not geared toward small commercial business, a few are worth exploring. http://www.econ.state.or.us/businessfinance/index.htm

Community Development Block Grants are federal funds used to provide grants to cities and counties for projects that principally benefit low and moderate income people. The State of Oregon receives about $15 million annually, largely for rural parts of state. Year round application process for public infrastructure, community facilities, and downtown revitalization projects. http://www.econ.state.or.us/cdbg.htm

The Oregon Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund has made more than 140 loans to help companies get started in Oregon. The fund, administered by the OECDD, offers initial direct loans up to $25,000 and additional follow-up loans up to $15,000 to qualified applicants. Contact: Mike.D.Foresee@state.or.us.

State Historic Preservation Office Programs, in the form of grants and/or Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits are available for improvements to historic property and other activities related to local preservation efforts. The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program provides a 20% income tax credit for qualified rehabilitation of depreciable, income-producing, certified historic properties.
http://www.shpo.state.or.us/services.php
Grants Program: kimberly.dunn@state.or.us
Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program: david.skilton@state.or.us

Housing Grant & Tax Credit Programs are often used to bring housing into downtown settings, either through the redevelopment of existing property or new development. For more information on what these programs are, how they work and their timelines:
http://www.hcs.state.or.us/housing/grants_taxcredits.html

Community Incentive Funds are part of the Oregon Livability Initiative. This $20 million state resource is designed to help local communities meet four main goals:

- Create more jobs in distressed communities that want economic growth;
- Increase the supply of affordable housing near jobs and transportation;
- Reduce sprawling development patterns;
- Revitalize urban centers, downtowns, and main streets

This fund is located in the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services. For more information and timelines:
http://www.hcs.state.or.us/communityincentivefund.html

Old Growth Diversification Funds. Discretionary grants to assist rural, timber-dependent and resource dependent communities with projects that could aid in averting decline of the community and stabilize and diversify their economies. U.S. Forest Service (via Economic & Community Development Dept. OECDD)

State Pedestrian & Bicycle Grants are for pedestrian or bicycle improvements on state highways or local streets. Grant amounts up to $200,000, local match encouraged. Projects must be situated in road, street or highway right-of-way. Project types include sidewalk infill, ADA upgrades, street crossings, intersection improvements, minor widening for bike lanes. Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT)
http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/bikewalk/funding.htm

The State receives about $550,000 per year. Grants are normally small--$30,000 or less. Grant awards are rarely used for construction projects. However, communities have established façade improvement programs with these funds. A number of federal regulations apply to the funds. Toll-free In State/TDD (800) 233-3306.

The Rural Investment Fund is distributed to regional investment boards to help develop their rural economies; provides a flexible source of funds needed to fill gaps in funding not available from other locally determined funding sources. Boards prepare a Rural Action Plan to guide the use of the funds. Project decision-making and processes are decentralized to Regional Investment Boards.
http://www.econ.state.or.us/RIPlist.htm

TEA-21 (Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century) is a federal grant program administered through state Departments of Transportation. For more information on this program contact Pat Rogers Fisher at the Oregon Department of Transportation: patricia.r.fisher@odot.state.or.us

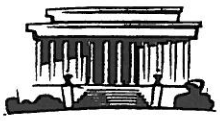
The Oregon Tourism Commission (OTC) Matching Grant Program was created to help strengthen Oregon's tourism infrastructure by providing seed money to municipalities, non-profits, tribes, and ports for tourism-related projects for tourism marketing and development projects. The program is managed by the Commission's Tourism Development Manager, who is assisted by a Project Review Committee that screens and scores applications.

In the 2000/01 biennium, $50,000 in Commission funds was made available, augmented by $50,000 from USDA Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program to total $100,000 in awards. The maximum award amount is currently set at $10,000. The 2000-2001 Matching Grants Program Award Recipients will be listed on this website on or before March 1, 2002. Contact: info.oregontourism@state.or.us

The Transportation Growth Management (TGM) Program is a joint effort between the Department of Transportation and Department of Land Conservation & Development. TGM mission is to: "To enhance Oregon's livability, foster integrated land use and transportation planning and encourage development that results in compact, pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly communities." The TGM program has several tools to fulfill this mission. The program offers planning Grants to local governments. Grants help local communities plan for streets and land use in a way that creates livable, transportation-efficient communities and makes the best use of state highway infrastructure.

TGM consultants provide transportation efficient design alternatives to development proposals. On request, a team helps a community or developer meet Smart Development design objectives. Code Assistance is provided to local governments to prepare or amend development codes for transportation systems and land use plans, and apply urban growth management tools. The TGM Outreach program is aimed at increasing the understanding and acceptance of smart development principles through workshops, a partnership program and technical assistance for practitioners.
http://www.lcd.state.or.us/tgm

Vertical Housing Development Zones are a brand new tax abatement tool to help promote redevelopment within core urban and rural community centers and transit oriented areas. The goal of this program is to provide increased residential density in concert with commercial development in targeted areas. The percentage of tax abatement is determined by the number of residential floors above the groundfloor commercial space. This program is implemented through the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. For more info contact: Bill.Campbell@state.or.us



Federal Programs

Small Business Administration, or SBA, is "Americas small business resource." SBA's Office of Business and Community Initiatives administers programs and activities designed to provide information, education, and training to prospective and existing small business owners. The Office engages in co-sponsorships with private sector partners which are designed to provide small business owners with information, education and training that is cost-effective, of high quality and reflective of trends in small business development. As a result of these co-sponsorships, small businesses receive a broad variety of education and training opportunities, written materials, and other forms of assistance that are provided free of charge or at extremely low cost. Oregon office contact: marlin.mowery@sba.gov; helpful SBA websites include:
http://ww.sba.gov/aboutsba/indexprofile.html or
http:./www.sba.gov/I/programs.html.

USDA - Rural Development is another excellent resource for economic revitalization activities. USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending Loan Program provides financing for "the establishment of new business, the expansion of existing businesses, creation of employment opportunities, saving of existing jobs, or community development projects."

Though specific grant programs are not published, USDA, Rural Development has been an active partner throughout the state in business improvement programs.
Contacts: Pendleton Office, Donald C. Hollis, (541) 278-8049, Ext. 129, don.hollis@or.usda.gov

Redmond Office, Robert K. Haase, Cooperative Development Specialist
(541)923-4358, Ext. 124 bob.haase@or.usda.gov

Public/Private Sources

Creation of a sustainable funding district to support downtown economic revitalization activities is becoming increasingly popular in Oregon communities. Listed below is a synopsis of these special assessment districts.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)/ Business License Fees – implemented by city and paid by business owners for revitalization programs and projects. Fee can vary widely. Usually renewed every 5 years.

Economic Improvement Districts (EIDs) – implemented by city an assessment on property and used for revitalization programs/projects. Fees can be based on a variety of criteria. Up to 5 year duration, with option to renew.

Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) – implemented by city, paid for by property owners and focused on capital improvements. One time payment or payment over time.

Urban Renewal Districts – implemented by city, uses tax increment financing for capital improvement projects. Duration: 20-30 years.

Technical Assistance Organizations

The Association of Community Development Corporations, AOCDO, is a statewide non-profit organization supporting community development corporations, and nonprofits developers of affordable housing around Oregon committed to improving the quality of life and living conditions of poor families around the state. http://www.aocdo.org

The Oregon Downtown Development Association, ODDA, is a statewide non-profit that provides downtown revitalization assistance to communities through "Tools, Training and Technical Assistance." ODDA's *Tools* are a wide variety of user-friendly handbooks on a wide range of downtown redevelopment topics. ODDA's *Training* consists of highly successful quarterly workshops and an annual statewide conference. *Technical Assistance* is provided through on and off site work with communities; tailored to their specific needs. For more info: http://www.odda.org

Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, or OAME, is a non-profit organization formed to promote and develop entrepreneurship and economic development for ethnic minorities in Oregon. OAME provides training, technical assistance, access to credit, access to markets and asset development. http://www.oame.org

A Native American Business Network (ONABEN) provides business training, one-on-one business counseling, access to markets and access to credit through their programs http://www.onaben.org

The Neighborhood Partnership Fund, NPF, is a n Oregon non-profit that provides ideas, resource and training to community development organizations and partners to create economic opportunities and affordable housing for low-income people. http://www.tnpf.org

Rural Development Initiatives, RDI, is a non-profit organization that assists rural community leaders, the organizations they create, and those that support them. RDI's services include: leadership development, action training, strategic planning and special projects. http://rdiinc.org

The State Network Office of Small Business Development Centers can guide you to the nearest Small Business Development Center for personal hands-on help for small businesses and potential businesses. Experience d advisors and instructors address all aspects of business ownership to help create prosperous businesses. The centers are hosted by community colleges and universities throughout Oregon. http://www.bizcenter.org

Technical Assistance for Community Services, better known as TACS, provides assistance to nonprofit organizations to help them develop the people and skills they need to achieve their missions. TACS has provided training and/or consultation for over 3,000 non-profits throughout Oregon and Washington. TACS provides workshops, networks, and consultations on financial management, board development, strategic planning, building diversity, organizational development and leadership issues. http://www.tacs.ogec