

**For Immediate Release****Media Contacts:**

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**Supporting Entrepreneurs: Oregon Community Foundation Funds 24  
Oregon Nonprofits to Help Local Entrepreneurs**  
*The nonprofits support rural and women entrepreneurs, and  
entrepreneurs of color across Oregon*

Portland, Ore.—November 30, 2023—Oregon Community Foundation (OCF)’s Thriving Entrepreneurs Program is awarding 24 Oregon-based nonprofit organizations nearly \$575,000 in grant funding to support local entrepreneurs. This funding will be shared among the 24 different nonprofits, all of which provide mentoring, technical assistance, and access to capital for under-resourced entrepreneurs, and help strengthen Oregon’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This year’s nonprofit grant recipients support a wide variety of entrepreneurs, including Oregon youth, Black and Native American, rural business owners and other diverse entrepreneurs from across the state. During this cycle, each Thriving Entrepreneur grant ranges from \$15,000-\$25,000. The Thriving Entrepreneurs grant program aims to support entrepreneurs who are overlooked by traditional markets, or lack other resources or access to capital.

“Oregon’s entrepreneurial landscape is growing, and there is so much potential for innovation. The state is home to a diverse array of small businesses, brimming with innovative concepts. Many local entrepreneurs need assistance to develop business plans, recruit skilled teams, or access additional capital to fuel their ventures,” said Maribel De Leon, Program Officer for Economic Vitality. “These entrepreneurs are instrumental in propelling innovation across the state, and supporting them leads to more thriving communities.”

The Thriving Entrepreneurs Grant is an open, responsive grantmaking opportunity that offers organizations flexible funding. The program prioritizes support for organizations that serve entrepreneurs who are women, people of color, living in under-resourced rural communities, or working in under-resourced sectors. Grant funding is only available to nonprofit organizations, and not individuals.

Highlights of OCF’s 2023 Thriving Entrepreneur grantees this year include:

**Talent Business Alliance**, \$25,000

To support local businesses and entrepreneurs at every stage of development by offering technical assistance, networking, and advocacy to expand the vitality of the community of Talent.

As background, Talent lost 60 percent of its businesses in the Almeda Fire. The remaining 40 percent continue to struggle in the wake of incredible losses from the fire.

**MicroEnterprise Resources Initiatives & Training** (MERIT), \$25,000

To support Oregon's diverse business community by providing 20-30 clients with expert entrepreneurial and financial management training, small business training, financial education, and loan program and individual development accounts (IDA).

**Be Blac Foundation**, \$25,000

To develop and grow the Black community through partnering with and supporting Black-owned and operated businesses/nonprofits and offering culturally specific venture catalyst workshops, training, and bootcamps for emerging and well-established Black business owners and entrepreneurs in Marion and Polk counties.

**Northwest Native Chamber** (NNC), \$25,000

Builds avenues to wealth creation for Native Americans and other diverse communities through small business development and critical business development training, technical assistance, and other key supports to ensure that Native American small business owners and entrepreneurs have the resources that they need.

NNC expects to support 350 Native American small businesses, and this OCF grant will pay for approximately 160 direct counseling hours through contracted Professional Service Providers, who support clients with industry-specific expertise.

**REAP Inc.**, \$25,000

Invests in students grades 3-12 by empowering them to converse with business, community, and political leaders. Specifically, this grant will support REAP's Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP), which is a 10-month curriculum that introduces students to the fundamentals of business.

**Warm Springs Community Action Team**, \$25,000

Supports the Warm Springs Reservation through programs with youth, adults, families, and tribal entrepreneurs; employs and trains workers in its coffee shop and food cart and works with hundreds of tribal households each year through workforce trainings, asset building (IDAs), small business promotion, tax assistance, education, and youth programs.

**Latino Founders**, \$25,000

Supports Latino-led startups looking to scale their products, technology, and services statewide. Latino entrepreneurs with a business idea or an existing business participate in a 10-week accelerator program, where they learn business modeling, finance, and prototyping and get paired up with mentors and resources to help them launch and scale their businesses.

**The BFM Fund** (Black Founders Matter), \$25,000

The BFM Fund's Emerge Initiative supports Oregon-based BIPOC entrepreneurs in the earliest stages of launching their venture with pitch competitions, non-dilutive grant funding, and long-

term, culturally relevant mentorship, networking, and connection to accelerator and other investors.

The full list of OCF Thriving Entrepreneur 2023 grantees is [here](#).

OCF's Thriving Entrepreneurs Fund is open for contributions. Please visit:  
<https://oregoncf.org/community-impact/impact-areas/economic-and-community-vitality/thriving-entrepreneurs-fund/>

### **About Oregon Community Foundation**

Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) was founded in 1973 with a big mission: to improve the lives of all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. In partnership with donors and volunteers, OCF works to strengthen communities in every county in Oregon through research, grantmaking and scholarships. In 2022, OCF distributed more than \$180 million, supporting 3,500 grantees and awarding more than 3,000 scholarships. With OCF, individuals, families, businesses, and organizations create charitable funds that meet the needs of diverse communities statewide. 2023 marks OCF's 50th anniversary. Since its founding, OCF has distributed more than \$2.2 billion in community investments, including grants to 10,850 nonprofits and 53,375 scholarships to students. Individuals, families, businesses and organizations can work with OCF to create charitable funds to support causes important to them. To learn more, please visit: [oregoncf.org](http://oregoncf.org).

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