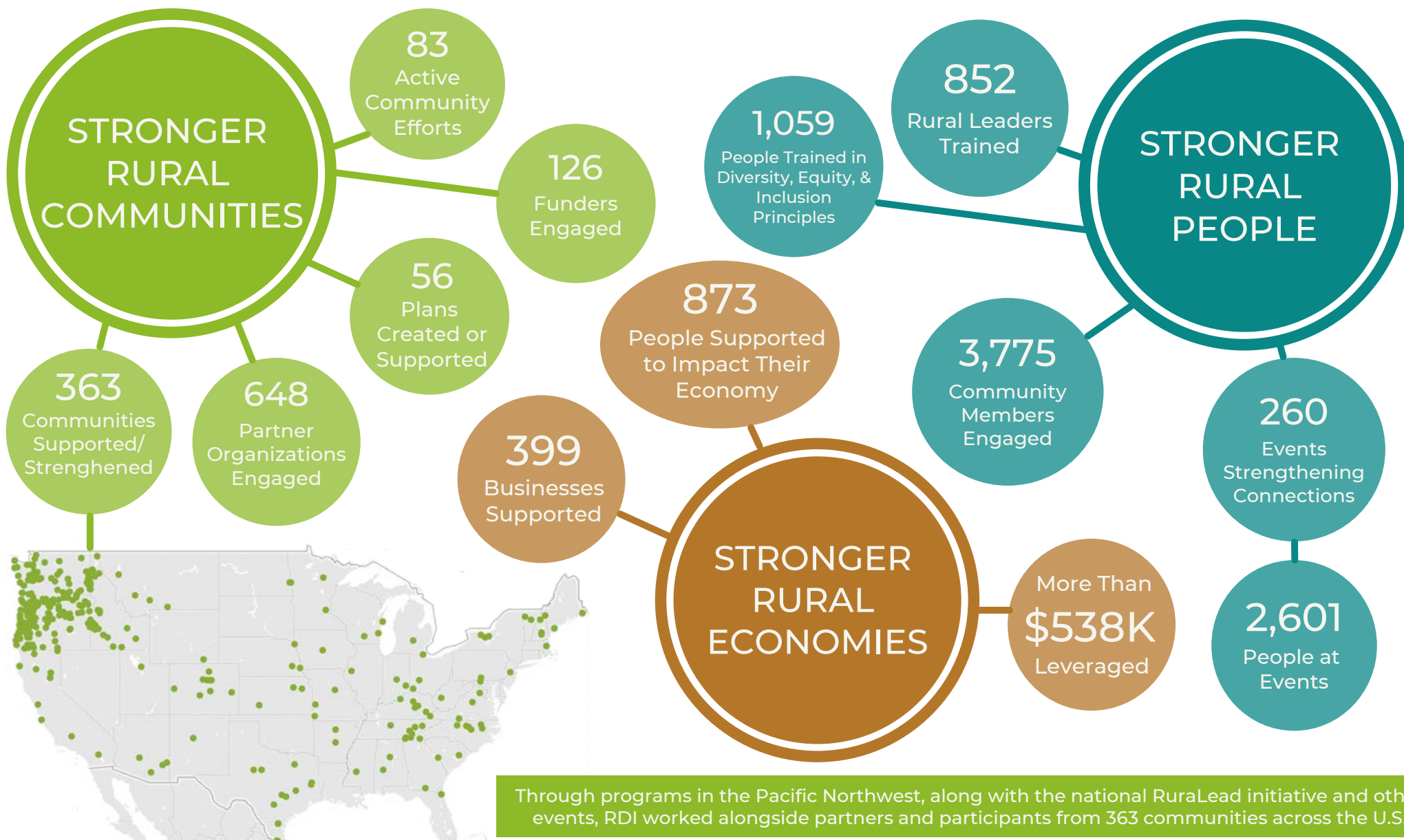


RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES 2021 IMPACT REPORT



EMPOWERING YOUTH LEADERS



Along with community co-trainer Tyler Reece, program director for the local Boys and Girls Club, RDI delivered the inaugural Rural Youth Leaders Program in Sweet Home, Oregon in 2021. The training empowers youth and provides an opportunity to learn how to make things happen, connect to community, and become more invested in its future. A dozen youth participated in the 2021 program in Sweet Home to expand their skills, meet others in the community, and learn to make a difference.

The classes culminated with a project to improve a local park. The group volunteered to mulch trees, repair benches, and contribute to the beautification of Ashbrook Park. In collaboration with the city, they are installing memorial benches to honor Sweet Home community leader Tim McQueary and former teacher Melissa Klumph.

The program was supported by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Santiam, the City of Sweet Home, and community leaders Jo Ann and Tim McQueary. Building on the success of the initial cohort, a second youth leadership class is underway in Sweet Home in 2022.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

“Youth are always seen as the future of our community. But really, they’re part of what we’re doing now.”

“Your meeting gave me a unique opportunity to hear from fellow community members in a way I have not previously had the chance to experience. I really appreciate the conversations that were facilitated by your team and look forward to seeing what else comes from this community venture with RDI.”

- Rachel King, Mayor of Amity, OR

“This program changed my life by educating me on how to make a change in my community.”

- Sweet Home Youth Leadership Program Participant

ENERGY ON MAIN STREET



With inspiration from past Main Street, Energy Trust, Pacific Power, and Clatsop Community College collaborations, RDI virtually convened utility and energy assistance providers, community leaders, and experts in the field of historic preservation to discuss opportunities and incentive programs aimed at reducing energy consumption, saving small businesses hard earned money, and investing in historic preservation in their downtown districts.

Attendees heard an engaging presentation by faculty from the Historic Preservation and Restoration program at Clatsop Community College. Through this session, participants built connections with their local utility providers and statewide partners in accessing incentives, heard expert presentation, and engaged in peer learning conversations that will help them add an energy-focused component to future economic vitality action plans.

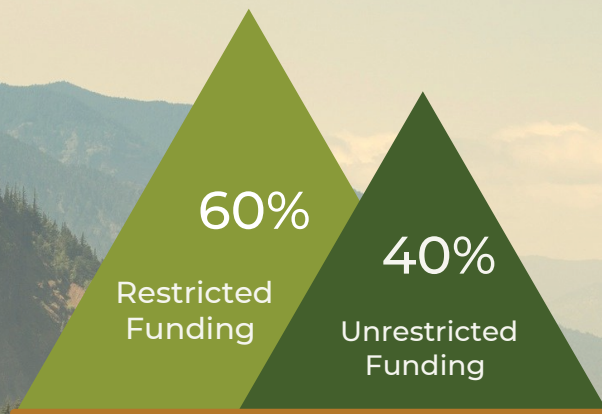
This effort was funded by Pacific Power, with participating partners Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, Idaho Power, Milton-Freewater City Light and Power, Energy Trust of Oregon, and Lake County Resources Initiative.

FUNDING IMPACT

RDI Incoming Funds 2021



RDI is grateful to generous donors and forward-thinking foundations for providing flexible support that allows us to pivot and respond to the needs of rural communities.



9%
Contracts
& Fees

79%
Grants

12%
Contributions/
Sponsorships/
Other

RDI Funding Uses 2021



Management
& General



12%

Program
Services



88%



In addition to the connections I made, my time in the program opened my eyes to opportunities for change within my community that I didn't know existed.



- Rural Community Leadership Program Participant, 2021



Best grant writing class I've taken!



- Ready, Set, Grant! Program Participant, 2021



Great trainings on so many different subjects for our rural folks who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend.



- RDI Community Survey Respondent, 2021



In 2021, RDI shared lessons learned from the Rural Opportunity Initiative (ROI) program, a two-year program modeled on the Business Oregon program of the same name, to support rural entrepreneur ecosystem building in six communities in Oregon. Led by RDI in partnership with Foundry Collective and Kelley Nonprofit Consulting, the program provided funding and support for communities to design and build locally driven entrepreneur ecosystems.

[Click here to read our takeaways.](#)

The nine lessons learned through the initiative include big picture perspectives, needs of entrepreneurs, and systems building. We recognize the critical role that small business entrepreneurs play in the vitality of rural communities, and we hope these lessons can contribute to more robust and vibrant rural entrepreneurship, and ultimately contribute to greater rural vitality. We also heard a call to action to move forward to support the entrepreneurs at the heart of rural communities, and as a next step, we hosted a regional virtual session in 2021 that focused on collectively building on these lessons.

This work was funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

“ Algo que aprendí en el programa y que usare en mi vida diaria: sin duda alguna el manejo de los alimentos (Alimentos Seguros). Hoy en día tengo mi tarjeta de Manejo de Alimentos. Este programa fue una gran experiencia en mi vida - aprendí mucho. ”
Gracias RDI.

- Participante del Entrenamiento para Negocios de Comida

“ Something I learned in the program and that I will use in my daily life: without a doubt, food management (Safe Food). Today I have my Food Handlers card. This program was a great experience in my life - I learned a lot. ”
Thank you RDI.

- Food Business Training Participant



RDI designed and implemented a Food Business Training specifically for the Latinx immigrant population, launching the program in Cottage Grove, Oregon in 2021. RDI partnered with the Bohemia Food Hub, which is comprised of a shared commercial kitchen, multiple food trucks, and a food market, to create the pilot training.

Training sessions covered Food Safety and Legal Regulations, Business Registration, Costing and Pricing, Marketing and Sales, and Commercial Kitchens. The 12 program participants toured a local commercial kitchen and had the opportunity to explore marketing options through pop-up restaurant events, food carts, and the local food market. The majority of participants also participated in RDI's Pasos al Éxito program.

This program was funded by United Way of Lane County, The Ford Family Foundation, MillsDavis Foundation, and Pacific Power.

RDI is offering the next Food Business Training in Spanish in Independence, Oregon, starting in March 2022.

RURALEAD INITIATIVE

Rural leaders are the head and heart of rural communities. They are often the difference between whether a community flounders or flourishes.

“ *RuraLead changed the way that I approached my work by helping me to create a new awareness - a new consciousness - about the value of the work that I do, along with others in rural communities.* ”

Throughout 2020 and 2021, RDI served as lead partner for RuraLead - a learning initiative and national network of rural and Indigenous serving organizations.

Together, we explored the broad field of rural leadership development and how we can elevate leaders in all their forms. We inventoried nearly 400 rural leadership development efforts, held 4 regional learning journeys with dozens of rural leaders, interviewed more than 100 leaders, practitioners, and funders, and convened the wide and varied field to make meaning of initiative learnings. RuraLead resulted in immediate change in our work and the development of a peer support network.

Go to ruralead.org and watch the video to the right to learn more.

This initiative was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



“ *We always knew this initiative would have an equity focus. We just didn't know it would have an equity heart.* ”

- Heidi Khokhar, RDI Executive Director

“ *Working with other partners has affirmed that the results of this work may be long-term. What matters is not that someone can lead a meeting or plan a project, but what that person chooses to DO with running a meeting or planning a project, and in turn, their impact on their community.* ”

- RuraLead Partner

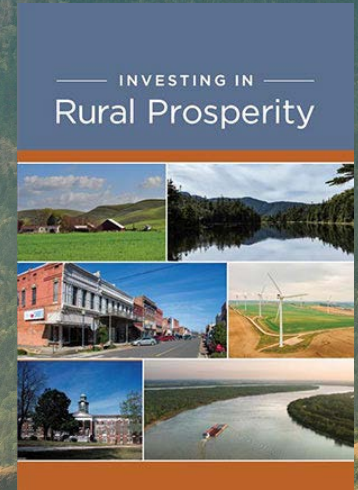
RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES – 2021 IMPACT REPORT

INVESTING IN RURAL PROSPERITY

In 2021, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the Federal Reserve Board of Governors published a rural development-centered publication which featured a chapter written by RDI's Executive Director Heidi Khokhar. The chapter "Meeting Leaders Where They Are: Lessons from the Rural Community Leadership Program" highlights learnings from RDI's decades of working hand-in-hand with rural leaders in the Pacific Northwest and makes the case that developing rural leaders provides the foundation to creating rural community vitality.

The book, "Investing in Rural Prosperity," aims to inform rural development stakeholders how initiatives at local, state, and federal levels can support the achievement of long-term economic opportunity in rural communities.

[Click here to access the electronic version of the book.](#)



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF RDI

As RDI celebrates 30 years of helping rural communities thrive, we are reflecting back on the hundreds of rural communities we've worked alongside over the years. As RDI's Executive Director Heidi Khokhar has said, "Every town in the rural Northwest holds a special place in our hearts, with a familiar face, a favorite coffee spot, or a great memory." These communities are several miles away, or hundreds of miles away, yet they are the home away from home for RDI.

In 2022 we are looking back at the many stories of community-based recovery and resiliency from RDI's collaborations throughout the region over the last 30 years. We know that the work of rural community vitality doesn't happen overnight, and we are looking toward the next 30 years of strengthening rural people, places, and economies throughout the Pacific Northwest to create solutions for a vibrant rural future.

