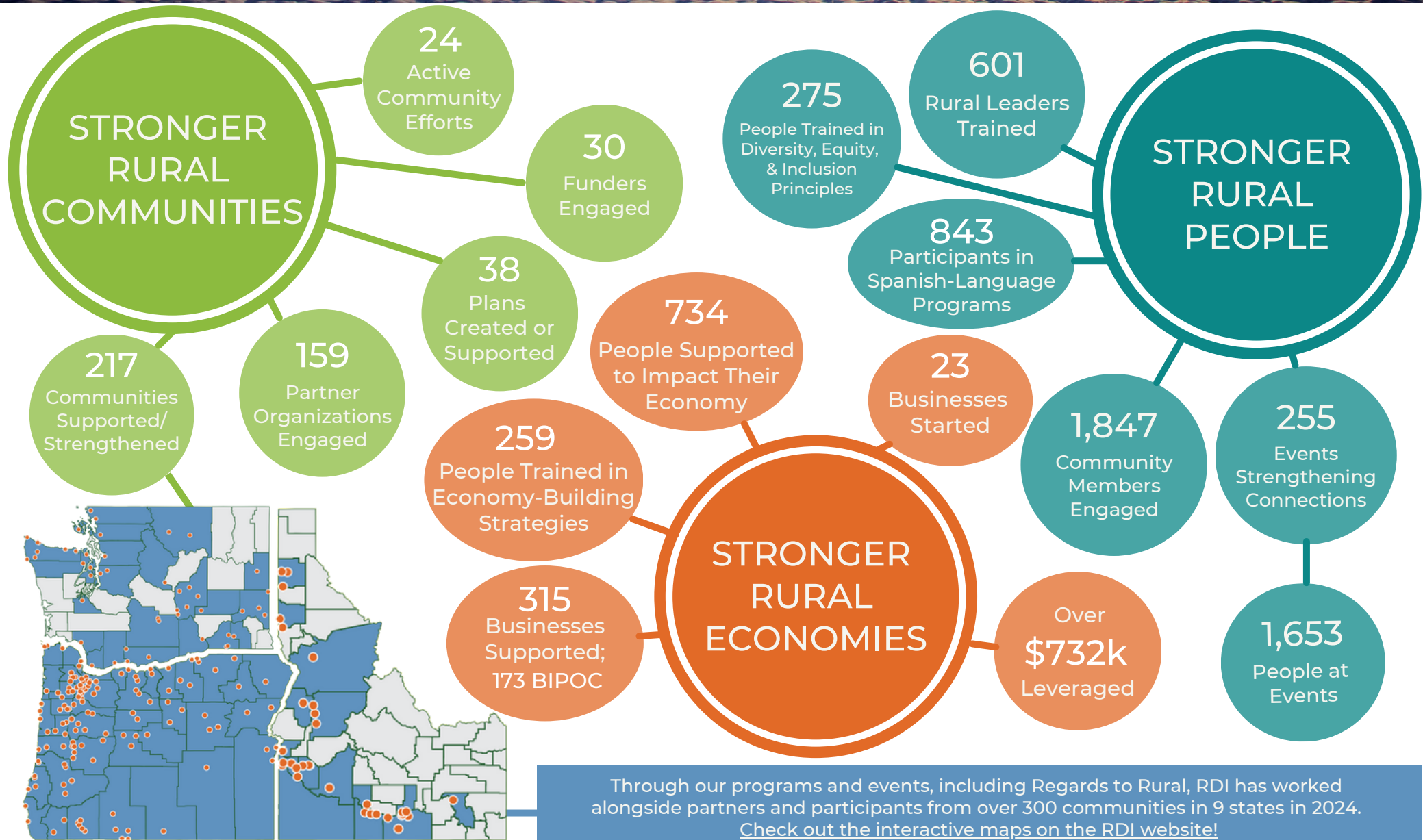
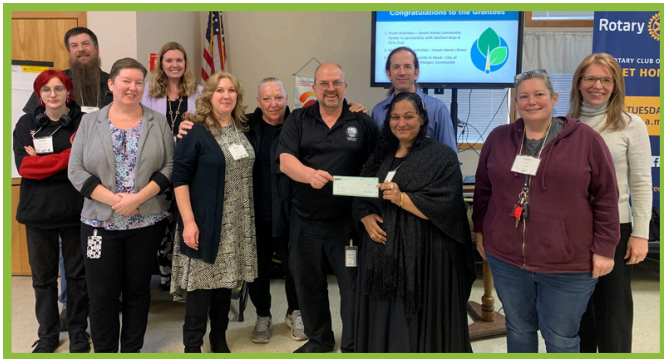


RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES 2024 IMPACT REPORT



STRENGTHENING RURAL LEADERS



RDI's Rural Community Leadership program provides a foundation for vital rural communities by training a critical mass of connected leaders. Over the last 20 years, we have trained over 10,600 leaders in rural communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. In 2024, RDI brought this opportunity for people to get involved at the community level while building their own individual skills to new, emerging, and active leaders from 14 rural communities in Oregon and Washington. Cohorts included the 20th year of partnership with the Sherwood Trust.

“ I feel more empowered to get involved and find out how I can be part of projects as a community member.

~ Rural Community Leadership Program Participant



Being part of this cohort has made it easier to consider becoming more involved in the community and to bring useful tools to new situations.

~ Rural Community Leadership Program Participant



The 2024 Rural Women's Leadership cohort was convened by RDI and the Center for Women's Leadership, with a group of leaders from 16 Oregon counties exploring dimensions of power and their relationship to leadership. At the end of the program, participants gathered in Salem for an intensive learning experience to witness state government firsthand and connect their community-based leadership to policy advocacy. The group will reconvene for Rural Oregon Day in 2025.

POWERING CONNECTIONS & CELEBRATING RURAL



RDI hosted our 13th biennial Regards to Rural (R2R) conference in April in Eastern Washington. More than 300 rural community members, leaders, and stakeholders gathered to learn from insightful, engaging, and inspiring speakers and make meaningful connections. Sessions focused on growing rural economies, increasing rural access to resources, supporting rural leadership, and elevating rural voices, and included a Spanish-language track with English interpretation. R2R 2024 emphasized providing practical tools for people to bring back and implement in their communities. Attendees overall said that the conference inspired them to think about taking new actions in their community.

“ Rural folks need this space to convene, network, and gain renewed confidence.

~ Regards to Rural Participant



STRENGTHENING RURAL ECONOMIES

Through Business Oregon's Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP) and CAPACES Leadership Institute, we were given the opportunity to provide training as well as start-up and investment grants to rural entrepreneurs in 2024. EEIP was created to build economic stability, self-sufficiency including a focus on rural individuals, families, businesses, and communities in Oregon. This program allowed us to provide grants to our program participants and assist them every step of the way, from completing grant applications to helping them plan to utilize the funding effectively, ultimately helping aspiring entrepreneurs overcome obstacles and help small businesses thrive. These initiatives and partnerships, along with our other programs focused on strengthening economic vitality in rural places, have helped us move closer to our goal of empowering people and communities to build lasting economic opportunities.

Providing the Building Blocks to Support Rural Childcare Providers

We were also able to award business seed grants to participants of our Starting a Childcare Business program, "Empieza Tu Negocio de Cuidado de Niños," in the Woodburn, OR, area through the CAPACES Primeros Pasos Early Childhood Education & Care Project. Our Childcare Business training provides aspiring entrepreneurs with information and tools to start and successfully run a childcare business, and participants who complete the training are eligible for startup grants to start or expand their childcare businesses.



From a Home-Based Business to a Brick-and-Mortar Retail Store

Cesi is a business owner in rural Oregon who started her entrepreneurial journey in August 2023, initially selling traditional Guatemalan clothing, drinks, and snacks from her home. By the fall of 2024, she was able to open a brick-and-mortar store, El Shaddai. Cesi participated in our programs that are focused on financial literacy and starting a business, with the dream of owning a retail store. When small business grants became available, we informed her of the opportunity. After hours of hard work on her business plan and gathering estimates and other necessary documents, she submitted an application for the grant. Later that month, Cesi received the exciting news that she had been awarded the grant. She used the funds to purchase a counter, cash register, merchandise display, and a refrigerator for traditional drinks. Cesi's store is now thriving and has been able to expand to offer a wider range of products.

Placemaking Elevates Rural Washington Community

Community members in Othello, WA, participated in a Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge funded by the USDA and led collaboratively by RDI with regional and community partners, building capacity and moving the community into transformative change around their highest priorities.

[Click here](#) to read more about the *Elevate Othello* Placemaking Initiative.

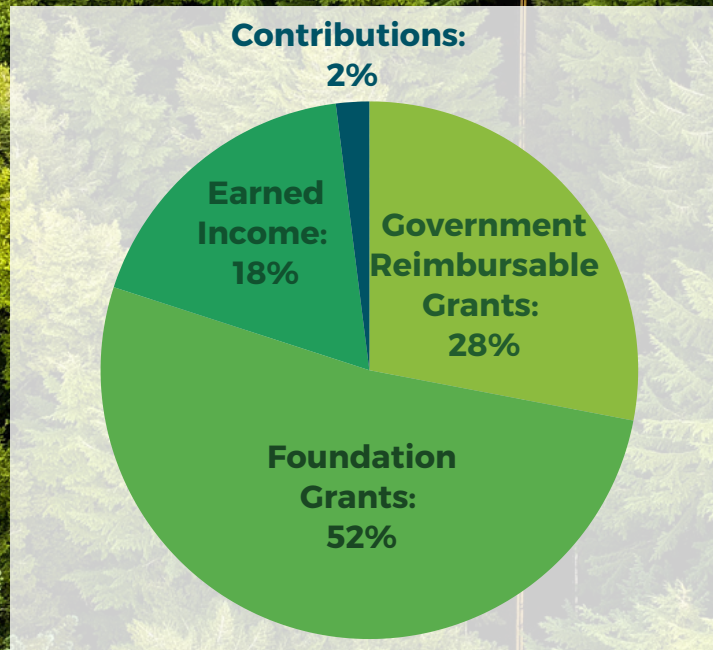
“ Looking at where we started compared to where we're at, everyone that was part of Elevate Othello has a success story. Each individual has grown so much. ”

FUNDING IMPACT

This is a provisional summary of RDI's financial activities for the year ending December 31, 2024. Full audited accounts will be available in 2025.

TREMENDOUS THANKS

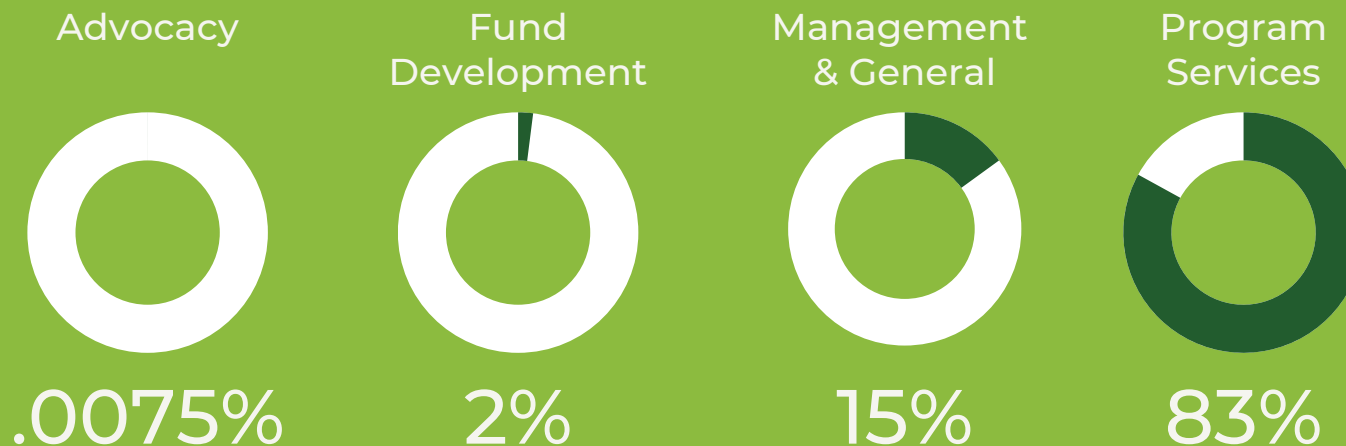
In 2024, your support strengthened 1,847 people in over 300 rural communities.



THANK YOU

We are grateful to generous donors and forward-thinking foundations for providing flexible support that allows us to adaptively respond to the needs of rural people, places, and economies. Tremendous thanks to Business Oregon, The Ford Family Foundation, Medina Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Humanities, Sherwood Trust, The Reser Family Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, Sweet Home Community Foundation, Wells Fargo, the United States Department of Agriculture, and many other funding partners.

RDI Expenses 2024



“ We are incredibly grateful to RDI and everyone who has supported us... We want to share our story with you, inspiring others not to stop dreaming. Thank you!
~ RDI Program Participant ”