

## Highlights of Our Work

Early in 2026, this work hit the ground running, already increasing local capacity, moving community-driven efforts forward, and strengthening relationships that help align resources and elevate rural influence across the Pacific Northwest. **Leadership in action:** Through programs in Othello, Ontario, and Milton-Freewater, participants are building skills, confidence, and connections they are already putting into practice in their communities, including youth and Spanish-speaking leaders stepping into new roles. **Local economies advancing:** In 16 communities, our Main Street Economic Vitality Program is strengthening small businesses, activating downtowns, and building momentum around shared economic goals, alongside regional sector work in maritime, arts and culture, and forestry. **Expanded access to opportunity:** Through Oportunidades en el Bosque and other Spanish-language trainings, participants are gaining tools to start or grow businesses and build financial stability, broadening access to economic opportunity in rural communities. **Stronger rural voice:** Engagement with 126 partners and more than 50 legislators and policymakers is strengthening connections between rural communities and decision-makers, creating more opportunities for rural priorities to shape policy and investment.

## Program Spotlight

Participants of the inaugural **Ontario Rural Roots Leadership Academy** in Ontario, OR, gained new leadership skills to strengthen community development efforts. To implement what they learned, the ten participating cohort members were tasked with creating a community project that would have a positive economic impact, and they came to consensus on building a stage at Moore Park. Through the process, they established relationships and collaborated with local organizations and agencies resulting in the creation of new programs and partnerships. Through the City of Ontario and Revitalize Ontario, cohort members leveraged a \$625,000 commitment to support the ongoing development of Moore Park. Thanks to Eastern Oregon Border Board, Revitalize Ontario, City of Ontario, Valley Family Health Care, and Depot District for their support of this program.

“The concept of looking for community partners helped me to form another community group that is wanting to increase support and awareness for some of those who can be overlooked.”

~ Ontario Rural Roots Leadership Academy Participant



426

Rural People Engaged



74

Small Towns and Rural Regions Across OR, WA, ID, & Northern CA Served



\$33,975

Directly Invested in Rural Communities



150

People Increased Capacity/Skills to Collaborate



45

People Trained in Leadership



126

Partner Organizations Engaged



23

Businesses Have Better Access to Support



8

Businesses Started

“ I discovered that there were more people in our community than I realized who really do care and want positive change. ”

~ Ontario Rural Roots Leadership Academy Participant