

Small Community Incentive Fund Program

*By Lisa Joyce, Interagency Policy Strategist
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For many communities across the state, the biggest barrier to achieving important community goals is money. Small Community Incentive Fund (SCIF) small grants and loans (maximum \$80,000 in total) offer Oregon's cities and towns a chance to complete projects that promote vibrant downtowns, increase well-paying jobs and support affordable housing opportunities.

Recovering from Nature's Moving and Shaking The Spring Break Quake of 1993 damaged buildings throughout the northern Willamette Valley. One significantly damaged building sat right in the middle of Woodburn. Dating back to 1891, the building, known as Association Hall, became a black eye, blighting the downtown area.

A \$25,000 grant and a \$25,000 loan from SCIF supported city's \$150,000 restoration of the building's façade. Earlier city work addressed the major structural damage caused by the earthquake.

A Building with Potential

Association Hall played many roles during its century of use: bank, dry goods store, and migrant health clinic.

Among the possible futures for Association Hall, a community heritage center that will feature the many significant paleontological finds unearthed in the area and celebrate the region's rich history.

According to Woodburn City Manager John Brown, the building's renovation made a great impact. "It's giving other people some motivation to improve their buildings." The owner of a neighboring building, inspired by the city's work, plans to incorporate the design elements of the Association Building's façade, and several downtown businesses have given their buildings new coats of paint.

"It set into motion a chain reaction," says the city manager. "It's having exactly the kind of impact we wanted."



The restored facade of Woodburn's Association Hall, funded, in part, by the Small Community Incentive Fund.

Development Funding Sources:
Small Community Incentive Grant and Loan

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Creating a More Livable Oregon

SCIF is one part of the “Oregon Livability Initiative.” The initiative provides local communities and state agencies with better tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Resources available through the Livability Initiative help local communities meet three main goals:

- promoting affordable housing development near jobs and transportation.
- revitalizing downtowns and community centers.
- rebuilding rural and distressed economies.

Other SCIF Awards

In addition to the Woodburn Association Hall, previous SCIF awards benefited the following communities:

- **Sisters** — Ash Park. A \$25,000 SCIF grant funded the city’s development of public restrooms.
- **Fairview** — Community Center Plaza. A \$25,000 loan and \$25,000 in grant-supported development of a plaza around the Community Center in historic Fairview.
- **Fossil** — Glover Memorial Hall. A \$24,630 grant to purchase materials for exterior renovation of the hall, located at the main intersection of Fossil, to its original splendor as recommended by the Oregon Downtown Development Association. Fossil area residents contributed significant volunteer effort to this project.
- **Myrtle Creek** — Myrtlewood Place. A \$30,000 grant and a \$20,000 loan funded rehabilitation of a vacant and derelict four-unit apartment complex. Coos County donated the building to the Umpqua Community Development Corporation to create affordable rental housing.

In 2006, SCIF support will go to projects that support Governor Kulongoski’s six principles for prosperity. They are:

- Children’s educational needs are met and adults have lifelong opportunities to develop career skills through post-secondary education, ongoing training and professional development.
- Oregon’s most vulnerable have their basic health, food and shelter needs met.
- Oregon has a positive business climate and invests in economic development in order to create and retain sustainable businesses and family-wage jobs.
- Oregon has a healthy balance between growth, infrastructure development and environmental protection.
- Oregonians are safe in their homes, communities and in state institutions.
- State government is stable, responsive and accountable to Oregonians.

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Distribution of Funds

Each of the state's ten Economic Revitalization Teams will receive an allocation of \$240,000 from a total of \$2.6 million for 2006. Each region will establish its own application process. Half of the funds will be awarded as grants and half as very low-interest loans. View the regions online at www.governor.oregon.gov/Gov/ERT/offices.shtml

Oregon Housing and Community Services' Regional Advisors and Regional Economic Revitalization Teams will work together to establish a review process that meets the needs of the region.

The regional teams will forward proposals to an Advisory board responsible for making recommendations for funding. The OHCS director makes final decisions.

Learn more: contact an OHCS regional advisor by calling 503.986.2000, or visit the OHCS web site at www.ohcs.oregon.gov.

Oregon Housing and Community Services is the state housing finance agency, providing financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality, affordable housing for lower income Oregonians. The agency also administers federal and state antipoverty, homeless and energy assistance community service programs.

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