

SUMMARY REPORT

COOS, CURRY & DOUGLAS COUNTIES

COOS COUNTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Provide funding streams with flexibility that are accessible to smaller organizations and nonprofits. [\[1\]](#)
2. Invest in a well-trained, well-paid, competent, diverse workforce. [\[2\]](#)
3. Invest in low-barrier affordable housing. [\[3\]](#)
4. Increase the available supportive and transitional housing. [\[4\]](#)
5. Expansion of intergenerational approaches to crisis prevention for youth. [\[5\]](#)
6. Proposals for projects to build small cottage-like units to house homeless youth, and to build a residential facility for youth. [\[6\]](#)

GRANTEE PARTNERS

Alternative Youth Activities

Bay Area First Step

Western Oregon Advanced Health, LLC (Advanced Health CCO)

(Grantees Adapt Integrated Health Care and Bandon Community Health Center (Coast Community Health Center) also serve Coos County, but their grant research focused on Curry County.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Provide funding streams with flexibility that are accessible to smaller organizations and nonprofits.** Grantees requested flexible funding for development projects to allow smaller organizations to compete for funds.
 - 1.1. Funding should be adaptable to the individual capacity and needs of each community, and grant reporting requirements should have as low a barrier as possible so nonprofits can compete for funds.
 - 1.2. Advanced Health CCO also recommends providing funding and technical assistance specifically to CBOs and nonprofits, so they can be sustainable, successful, and responsive to community needs.
2. **Invest in a well-trained, well-paid, competent, diverse workforce.** Grantees emphasized the importance of a well-trained, well-paid, competent, diverse workforce that is representative of the community being served.
 - 2.1. Maintaining a trained staff and recruiting trained behavioral and mental health care workers to rural areas like Coos County has presented a challenge for providers.
 - 2.2. In response to this challenge, Advanced Health CCO and their partners recommended an expansion of peer support and the lived experience workforce. Employment incentives and

funding specifically for staff training are two tools that could lead to a stronger workforce. “The stability and success of the youth behavioral health continuum of care is reliant on a competent and diverse workforce,” says Advanced Health.

“The stability and success of the youth behavioral health continuum of care is reliant on a competent and diverse workforce.”

– Advanced Health CCO

3. **Invest in low-barrier affordable housing.** Grantees highlighted the need for building development projects to increase housing capacity and variety in Coos County. “Any kind of housing is needed,” says Bay Area First Step.
 - 3.1. Lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest health inequities in the community. Says Bay Area First Step, “Other services are available to individuals, but they cannot get their basic needs met without having a place to sleep.”
 - 3.2. Grantees emphasize that affordable housing should also not have stipulations like criminal history or rental check that would disqualify many individuals who need a place to live.
4. **Increase the available supportive and transitional housing.** Coos County needs more supportive and transitional housing for multiple populations.
 - 4.1. The region has a significant need for **residential treatment and transitional housing for youth**. Coos County lacks youth behavioral health residential services, respite services, or transitional or crisis housing. Advanced Health CCO recommends capital and operational funding for their partner agencies to develop youth crisis stabilization transitional housing.
 - 4.2. Similarly, Alternative Youth Activities is working on a transitional housing project for youth, through constructing “small cottage-like facilities.” AYA has continued to rely on finding partnerships for funding and services for their project. However, they encountered **challenges in finding contractors** willing to take on smaller projects.
 - 4.3. Coos County also lacks available supportive housing beds to serve individuals with mental illness who are more likely to end up homeless. The lack of beds causes a challenge for providers to serve individuals. “It seems that within our community partners we are always trying to coordinate finding the appropriate bed (facility) for our clients,” explains Bay Area First Step.
5. **Expansion of intergenerational approaches to crisis prevention for youth.** An important component of youth behavioral health is investing in the skills of families and individuals in the youth’s support system. Coos County currently has a service gap in youth behavioral health services, transitional or crisis housing, services.
 - 5.1. Advanced Health CCO recommends expansion of step-up, step-down services that offer better intergenerational crisis support services based on the unique needs of each youth and their families.

“Any kind of housing is needed.”

– Bay Area First Step

IMMEDIATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Alternative Youth Activities would like to use federal funding to **build small cottage-like units to house homeless youth** and would also serve as a youth work training program. AYA has already purchased the land to build on, worked with the City of Coos Bay to address zoning issues, local architecture firm and land planning consulting, and community partners to provide supportive housing services. They just need funding to see the program through.
- ❖ Advanced Health COO has requested funding for developing a **residential facility for youth** at The Bob Belloni Residential Ranch. The site, called Johnson Home, is a ready-to-go facility that could be adapted to offer short term transitional housing and/or respite care for youth in foster care, youth awaiting placement elsewhere, step-up step-down services, and would add safe transitional housing to Coos County crisis response and stabilization services. The Johnson Home Youth Crisis Center would be an asset for supporting youth mental health needs in Coos County. Advanced Health COO included a budget requesting **\$15,300** in start-up funds. Also requested is funding for the first three years of operation starting at **\$619,624** in the first year, and increasing slightly due to inflation and salary increases over years two and three.

CURRY COUNTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Make long-term investments to support mental health services. [\[1\]](#)
2. Increase in affordable housing, including supportive and transitional housing. [\[2\]](#)
3. Strengthen community support for homeless services by reducing stigma. [\[3\]](#)
4. Find solutions to rural and geographic barriers to service. [\[4\]](#)
5. Increase translation and language access services, specifically Spanish. [\[5\]](#)
6. Proposals for projects including behavioral and mental health services in schools, and an employment path program for current and former foster youths. [\[6\]](#)

GRANTEE PARTNERS

Adapt Integrated Health Care

Bandon Community Health Center (Coast Community Health Center)

Bay Area Enterprises

Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Make long-term investments to support mental health services.** Curry County has a lack of mental health support for adults and youth, and many programs are overburdened.
 - 1.1. As a result of this service gap, many residents with mental health issues are not being treated or seen regularly by a doctor. Grantees also noted that the area has a lack of providers experienced in psychiatric/psychotropic medications.
 - 1.2. In 2022, there was a gap in service providers in Curry County as Adapt, the new mental/behavioral health provider contracted through OHA, was establishing itself. Bandon Community Health Center emphasized the importance of regional partnerships in mental and behavioral health to help cover service gaps when they occur.
 - 1.3. To support mental health services for youth, Bandon Community Health Center and Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation are also working on a project to provide behavioral/mental health services in Curry County school districts (see "Immediate Funding Opportunities" below).
2. **Increase in affordable housing, including supportive and transitional housing.** Curry County is currently lacking in affordable housing, supportive housing, transitional housing, and homeless shelters.
 - 2.1. Supportive housing is especially needed for individuals with mental/behavioral health issues, those with substance use disorders, as well as for the elderly.
 - 2.2. Bay Area Enterprises noted how the skyrocketing local real estate market is causing first-time homelessness for many individuals, which often exacerbates mental health issues or preexisting conditions.

- 2.3. In addition to impacting mental health outcomes, housing scarcity has also forced many out of the community. “Many individuals we tried to work with ultimately chose to leave the area in search of a more affordable place to live,” states Bay Area Enterprises.
- 2.4. Bandon Community Health Center notes a limited amount of collaboration in Curry County on developing housing. They cite political pushback and a denial from some community, county, and city leaders that building more housing would be a helpful solution.

“Many individuals we tried to work with ultimately chose to leave the area in search of a more affordable place to live.”

– Bay Area Enterprises

3. **Strengthen community support for homeless services by reducing stigma.** Curry County grantees comment on a lack of community support and encountering a NIMBY mentality.
 - 3.1. Bay Area Enterprises encountered community pushback when working to establish sheltered housing, as members of the community came out in overwhelming opposition to the plan. In contrast, when the project was framed around helping “persons with disabilities” rather than the “homeless”, the plan received overwhelming community buy-in. The stigma attached to behavioral health services is preventing the implementation of solutions.
 - 3.2. Some grantee partners found that some local leaders view these solutions as not their responsibility. However, Bandon Community Health Center emphasizes that county and city investment into solutions is incredibly important for potential solutions.
4. **Find solutions to rural and geographic barriers to service.** As a small, rural county, Curry lacks the number of support organizations found in larger cities. But, at the same time, it faces many of the same issues as urban communities. “Resources from Salem often don't get to our area for services,” states Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation.
 - 4.1. Curry County's rural geography acts as a barrier for all residents in accessing services, but especially for marginalized populations.
 - 4.2. Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation notes that “For many in are largest population center, California is minutes away but doesn't accept most insured in Oregon and it is a minimum two-hour drive to services with only one way north or one way east.” Given its geography, local service availability is essential for Curry County.

“Resources from Salem often don't get to our area for services.”

– Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation

5. **Increase translation and language access services, specifically Spanish.** Curry County has a small but growing Hispanic/Latino population that have language and cultural barriers to accessing services.
 - 5.1. Grantees also identified the migrant farmworker community in Southern Curry County as a target population to expand services and outreach. To reach this group, Curry County needs more available language resources, especially in-person Spanish translation services.

IMMEDIATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Bandon Community Health Center (Coast Community Health Center) and Southwest Oregon Children's Foundation are working together on a project to provide **behavioral/mental health services in schools**. Capital investment projects in Central Curry School District and Brookings-Harbor School District will result in building out school-based health centers. The partnership will also build up student health services in Port Orford-Langlois School District.
- ❖ Bay Area Enterprises is working on an **employment path program for current and former foster youths** who are at a high risk of homelessness as they 'age out' of the system. The program will provide employment counseling, exploration services, and goal setting resources to help these youth exist the foster system with support system to help them reach independence.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Let organizations define what is needed in their own communities. [1]
2. Invest in affordable housing, supportive housing, and residential treatment housing. [2]
3. Improve service accessibility. [3]
4. Offer programs that increase culturally specific services, staffing, and cultural competence in the region. [4]

GRANTEE PARTNERS

Adapt Integrated Health Care

Douglas County Children's Center (Douglas CARES)

(More grantees are active in Douglas County, but their grant research focused on nearby counties.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Let organizations define what is needed in their own communities.** Adapt emphasized that local organizations know best what is needed within their own communities based on their experience.
 - 1.1. "Many of the issues across rural parts of the state have common elements, although projects that address them are likely to look quite different," Adapt says. "Allowing the organizations define what is needed, based on their data and experience will allow the applicants to be responsive to the issues they are seeing in their communities."

"Allowing the organizations define what is needed, based on their data and experience, will allow the applicants to be responsive to the issues they are seeing in their communities."

– Adapt Integrated Health Care

2. **Invest in affordable housing, supportive housing, and residential treatment housing.** Douglas County has a low inventory of affordable housing, supportive housing, and residential treatment housing.
 - 2.1. Douglas County needs more **affordable housing** options for all individuals, but especially for those with poor, or no rental history.
 - 2.2. The county also lacks **supportive housing** for those with behavioral health disorders or have experienced homelessness.
 - 2.3. The region lacks **residential treatment beds** for substance use disorder and mental health treatment in the short-term.
 - 2.4. Finally, grantees mentioned a low availability of **adult foster care facilities** to support clients with an SPMI living in the community.

3. **Improve service accessibility.** Grantees noted that community members reported difficulty accessing services.
 - 3.1. Community members faced challenges accessing services due to a **lack of availability and communication**. Individuals reported barriers to scheduling appointments due to conflicts with the hours of operation, work schedules, and a lack of childcare during appointments. Some individuals had reported inconsistent phone communication with the provider. “These types of barriers are more likely to have a noticeable impact on those who are more vulnerable and with fewer resources,” says Adapt.
 - 3.2. Lack of **rural access to transportation** is another challenge for many to access services. In Douglas County, transportation is centered around Roseburg, causing a barrier for those that live in other parts of the county.
4. **Offer programs that increase culturally-specific services, staffing, and cultural competence in the region.**
 - 4.1. First, Douglas County needs more a **culturally-representative workforce** at all levels. “The biggest gap for our families is lack of representation among providers, professionals and law enforcement in our community,” Douglas CARES says. Targeted programs towards recruiting and training more culturally representative staff would help close this gap.

“The biggest gap for our families is lack of representation among providers, professionals and law enforcement in our community.”

– Douglas CARES

- 4.2. Second, the county needs more **language and translation** resources. Douglas County has a small but growing Hispanic/Latino population that have language and cultural barriers. Currently, there is a low availability of language resources and in-person translation services. Adapt found their services have a lower-than-expected penetration into the Hispanic community, but that targeted, linguistically specific services could help close this gap.
- 4.3. Grantee partners also stress the need for **more community bias training and awareness**. Douglas County providers have seen that their clients of color, LGBTQIA2S+ clients, and differently abled clients experience discrimination in the community. Says Douglas CARES, “We are experiencing many of the challenges common to small rural communities, in that many of our neighbors have a difficult time seeing the value of doing equity work and do not see the problems inherent in the system.” Bias training and awareness would help minimize the impact of bias in the behavioral health system.
- 4.4. Healthcare providers should also receive **training on how to provide culturally-competent services**. Specifically, the training should include providing services that meet CLAS standards. An understanding of how to meet the standard is important and will allow OHA to rely on the organizations to take into account the needs of all community members, says Adapt.

- 4.5. Next, Douglas County grantees recommend offering **equity-diversity focused grants with lower barriers for qualification**. Providers want to create programs for underserved groups, but they lack sizable enough minority populations to qualify for funding. Douglas CARES says, “We often are unable to qualify for equity-diversity focused grants due to the fact that we have very few minority clients and struggle to justify full time, or even part-time personnel to serving them, or creating programs specifically for the purpose of serving minority clients.” Lower barrier grant funding would help Douglas County, and other rural communities, to extend their outreach and improve their direct service to underserved groups.

“We are experiencing many of the challenges common to small rural communities, in that many of our neighbors have a difficult time seeing the value of doing equity work.”

– Douglas CARES

IMMEDIATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Douglas County grantees identified no specific projects with need for immediate funding.