

Meet the Community and Economic Director

AFTER A NATIONAL SEARCH for our next CED Director, we are pleased to introduce Jenny Glass. She joined us on January 11th after spending the last 11 years as the Executive Director of the Rosewood Initiative in Portland. Not only did she serve as its Executive Director, but Jenny was also



the founder of the Rosewood Initiative where she took her passion and vision for building up underserved communities into a thriving non-profit. The Rosewood Initiative is a local non-profit in the Portland Metro area. They have a focus on community building, economic opportunity, community wellness, and transportation for underserved communities (<https://www.rosewoodinitiative.org>). With her demonstrated history of executive leadership, community and government relationships, and fundraising, we are thrilled to have Jenny join us. We are excited to welcome Jenny Glass and look forward to her involvement in our existing programs as well as her new ideas for the department. We anticipate entering 2021 with a new level of stability which will in no doubt allow the team, and department to improve upon the services we offer to our members.

Transportation Services

THREE APPLICATIONS were submitted to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) discretionary grant program. These projects include the design of a mobility hub at Oregon State University and Linn Benton Community College, a three county planning study on first/last mile connections, and an update to the current Rideline Brokerage software. We should know more about how the projects ranked in March.

The following outlines all of the long range projects Transportation Services are currently engaged in:

- Albany Area MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan
- Jefferson Transportation System Plan
- Albany Transit Implementation Plan
- Salem to Albany Transit Feasibility Study
- Corvallis Bikeshare Study
- Corvallis Area MPO Regional Transportation Plan Update
- Philomath School Safety Circulation Study
- Adair Village Trails Plan
- Sweet Home Transportation System Plan and Neighborhood Refinement Plan
- Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD) 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) (wrapping up)

Census Update

IN PREPARATION FOR the 2020 Census, OCWCOG was contracted by Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties to organize and staff a Complete Count Committee for the OCWCOG region. Complete Count Committees bring together elected officials, agencies, and community organizations to encourage Census self-response among residents. This work began in the summer of 2019 and continued through the entirety of 2020.

The goal of a Complete Count Committee is to increase Census self-response rates over the prior Census. This goal was achieved in Linn and Lincoln Counties, with Benton County coming close to its 2010 rate. *The COVID-19* pandemic posed a significant challenge to the Committee as well as Census operations in general.

This was the first time there has been a collective effort to encourage Census response across the region, and with that there were several lessons learned for future work. The primary takeaway was that the work was seen as important and beneficial to those who participated, but limited staff time coupled with the disruption of *COVID-19* meant that some engagement efforts were more limited than originally planned.

Other Program Updates

Senior, Disability, and Community Services, By Randi Moore

Area Plan Development for 2021-2024

THE AREA PLAN is a four year strategic plan that all Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) are required to develop and is almost complete! It prioritizes and directs the work the AAA will complete over that four year period. Development of the plan takes place by assessing and identifying any barriers and gaps in the service area related to meeting the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. The AAA, with the active involvement of its Advisory Council(s) and utilization of public input, then describes its plan for developing coordinated and accessible systems of care to address community needs and prioritize and develop services.

After the 16 AAA offices across Oregon complete their individual Area Plans, they work

collaboratively with the Oregon Department of Human Services/Aging and People with Disabilities office (ODHS/APD) to develop Oregon's State Plan outlining future work that will address the long-term support and service needs of Oregonians.

The members of OCWCOG's Senior and Disability Services Advisory Councils (SSAC and DSAC) and OCWCOG staff have been working very hard over the last two years to develop a thoughtful plan that will positively impact the lives of older adults and people with disabilities in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties, gathering information through stakeholder roundtables, surveys, and public meetings. We are excited to share the Area Plan draft for 2021-2024 with you at the Board meeting in March.

Eligibility Transformation Update

WE ARE NOW 2 ½ months into the roll out of the new ONE system in our district. As was expected, we faced many challenges with the initial roll out of ONE, but the improvements made in 2 ½ months have been impressive. Staff are more comfortable working in the new system and we are able to serve our community members much more quickly than before. With the ONE system in place our community members requesting assistance now have more options available and we have seen success with those individuals reaching out to the ONE Customer Service line to request benefits as well. The leadership

team, in conjunction with our Advanced Technical Expert and our Quality Assurance Trainers, have built a strong support network for staff who need assistance working with a new system as well as working with new programs (ERDC, TANF, TA-DVS).

We anticipate challenges around working with these new programs and are developing a plan to provide ongoing training and support to staff so that they will be prepared to support our community as best as possible.

Currently the biggest challenge we face is correcting Long Term Care Service cases that did not convert over correctly in the new ONE system. There are a number of system defects that the State is working on, but until these are fixed there is an impact on workload and issuance of consumer benefits.



AFTER A SLOW START, the \$BM Program revved up and produced many milestones and achievements in 2020.

The Cascades West Community Development Corporation (CWCDC), a non-profit board that is supporting the \$BM program voted in two Officers: Chair, Hanna Valva has a background of 20 years on Wall Street and 14 years at Wells Fargo as an Asset Manager, and Vice-Chair Stephany Koehne; the current Executive Director at Kids and Company (Kidco Headstart).

In December, the CWCDC approved their Bylaws, and approved adopting the use of OCWCOG's equity inclusion statement, which can be updated in the future if needed.

The CWCDC Board is currently meeting monthly to gain understanding of the mission and goals, get to know each other, and when everyone feels comfortable and up to speed they will begin to meet quarterly. The expectation is to have between nine to twelve people on the Board on a rotating two year schedule. Three to six more Board members will be added this year, with the Treasurer being one of them.

The Board is energized! They are setting goals and completing them one by one. The team is working for tomorrow, with an eye on the future: they have bigger aspirations for CWCDC than just running \$BM.

At this time, there are five coaches that have completed \$BM training. Two are embedded in Kidco, two embedded with Strengthening Rural Families, and one in OCWCOG's Senior and Disability Program. There are plans to add a coach specifically geared towards Veterans within the next four years.

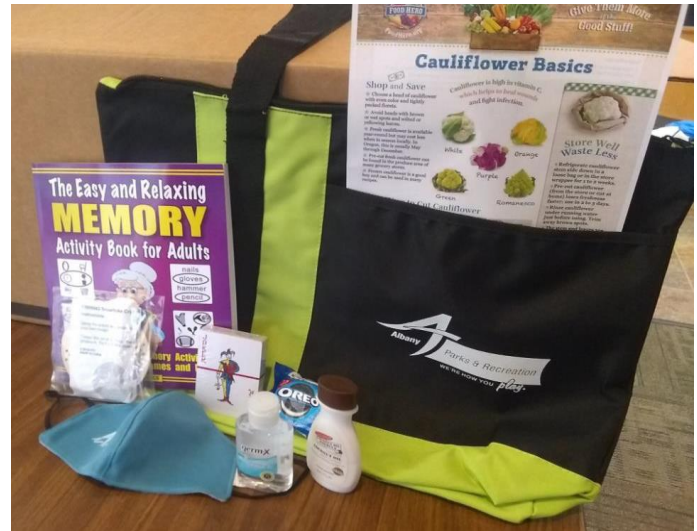
The coaches are excited to start meeting with clients and practice what they've learned. They've developed a one page handout that can be sent electronically, and Kidco developed an outreach video to share: <https://youtu.be/zoWNLfJ3G2E>.

\$BM Mission Statement

"To create a financially aware and empowered community of Oregonians motivated to understand and manage their finances, increase financial stability, and achieve economic goals."

Supporting Community Partners and leveraging resources is a major component of the Older Americans Act. The Senior and Disability Services Advisory Councils are pleased to announce the disbursement of \$73,000 in grants funds to seven local agencies who are working to improve the quality of life of seniors and people with disabilities. These funds were directed to agencies that were providing programs to promote healthy aging, reduce isolation and loneliness, and increase the overall health and wellbeing of the people they serve. The agencies that received grant funds are: The Mid Valley YMCA, Grace Center Adult Day Services, The Samaritan Health Education Department, The Albany Senior Center, the Newport Community Center, Lumina Hospice, and North End Senior Solutions Adult Day Services.

The Albany Senior Center used the small grant to provide “Seasonal Surprise Bags” to 50 seniors that have been affected by the pandemic and are at risk for isolation and loneliness. The first bags were deployed in December and could be picked up at the Senior Center or delivered to the senior’s house. They contained a book of games to encourage a healthy mind, a mask and hand sanitizer to encourage a healthy body, and some other items just for fun. Links were provided to virtual content including a presentation from Helen Beaman on “Dodging the Holiday Blues” and an instructional cooking video for a healthy recipe.



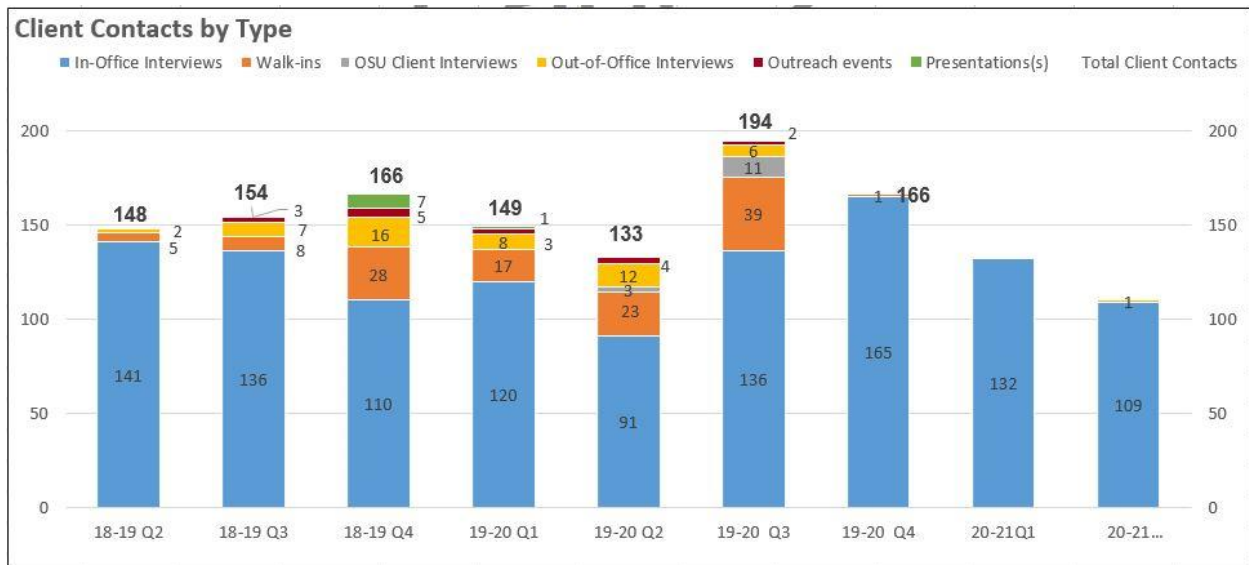
Two people who received a bag emailed the Senior Center with these comments:

“I just wanted to thank you for the wonderful seasonal surprise bag with all the goodies inside. I’m sitting at my dining room table working on the memory activity puzzles and watching the rain outside.”

“Thank you to you and others who gifted the Seasonal Surprise Bag that I picked up at the Albany Senior Center yesterday. The book “The Easy and Relaxing Memory Activity Book for Adults” has some fun activities. Come to find out, I AM able to do easy Sodoku, an activity that I’ve never really tried because I thought it was beyond me. Now I plan to get another easy Sodoku book to do on my own. I am a mostly self-isolating senior, staying home to stay safe, but really, really bored. Collecting your goodie bag was the one thing I had to look forward to this week, and the activity book it contained did not disappoint.”

BENTON COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES OFFICE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent safety measures implemented, the Corvallis office was closed to the public on March 23, 2020. All County Veteran Services Office (CVSO) staff were either deployed to work remotely or redeployed to an alternate office location. All scheduled interviews with Veteran clients were moved to tele-interviews. As of this report, the office continues to conduct business remotely. It should also be noted that in response to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, the VA halted C&P exams. This in turn delayed claims from being decided. We expect these exams to begin again as guidelines begin to be lifted.



While the physical office was closed mid-March in response to the *COVID-19* pandemic, staff are still serving clients remotely. The number of calls for assistance remains steady, and support normally given to a walk-in client is now being delivered electronically (whether by phone or email), and will continue to be considered a “walk-in” contact point.

Presentations and events have been put on hiatus until Executive Order 20-21 is lifted.

Out-of-office outreach appointments at the locations listed below **have been put on hiatus** until Executive Order 20-12 is lifted. The CVSO continues to take appointments by phone.

- 1st Wednesday: Boy Scout Lodge, Philomath
- 2nd Wednesday: Snell Hall, OSU main campus, Corvallis
- 3rd Wednesday: American Legion Hall, Monroe
- 4th Wednesday: Hewlett Packard (HP), Corvallis

Service to Veterans

- Staff continue participation in Vet-Net and local Operation Welcome Home meetings as they are scheduled.
- VSO Nelson and Molly Murphy are coordinating with the *Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative (OABHI)* team regarding collaborating on available resources for Veteran clients.

Current Job Openings

- Assistant Loan Officer reopened as FT
- Contracts Coordinator
- Coastal Planner
- Case Manager Toledo
- APS Specialist Toledo or Albany

To learn more, or apply, please visit:
<http://www.ocwCog.org/careers>

Contact Information

Seniors & Disabilities Service
 (541) 967-8630

Rideline
 (541) 924-8738

Economic Development
 (541) 924-8465

General Administration
 (541) 967-8720



ADRC
 (800) 638-0510