



Yes **Corvallis!**
www.YesCorvallis.org

September 24, 2020



2019

2020

Year in Review

Our goal:

*To create a more prosperous,
diverse, and resilient economy*

Guiding Principles



INNOVATE. Corvallis Benton County is a hub for innovation, research, and entrepreneurs with a vibrant mix of companies, a coordinated network of support organizations, and nationally recognized educational institutions.



GROW. We support the growth of family and living wage jobs, nurture our businesses, foster socially and environmentally responsible policies, create economic diversity, and balance economic growth with livability.



THRIVE. We benefit from the inherent qualities of our area: rich soils and agricultural roots; an educated workforce; a culture of inclusiveness and innovation; and work to create vibrancy in all of our businesses and our downtowns, with a lens toward equality and sustainability

Dear partners and stakeholders,




Our office is honored to support the Benton County business community. This year has presented extreme challenges for our businesses and our community. Throughout the crisis, our team has worked to keep businesses and partners informed and connected with the resources they need to survive. . We acknowledge that our minority businesses are disproportionately hard-hit in this pandemic. Always a part of our office's ethos, but especially now, we are working hard to reach out to and support our minority businesses.

In 2019, we published our Economic Development Strategic Work Plan for the 2019-2021 biennium. This document is the first annual report and serves as a summary of our work in the 19-20 fiscal year.

*-Kate Porsche
Economic Development Manager*

Corvallis & Benton County

"The Heart of the Valley"



93,590
Estimated Population
(Countywide)

Latitude
44°33"

Longitude
123°15"



Home to
Oregon State University



One of only two land, sea, space, and sun grant institutions in the U.S.

6,000+ graduates per year

Top 10 Small Cities
for Entrepreneurs



#1
Nationwide

Patents per capita



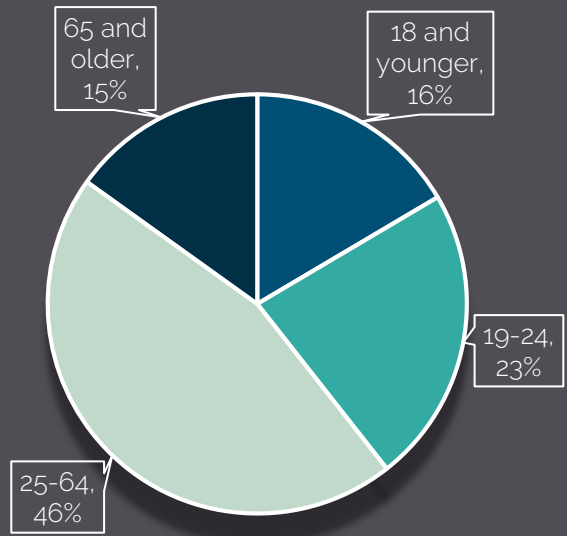
JOBS.
44,000 in
Corvallis alone.
(And counting.)

Educated Workforce

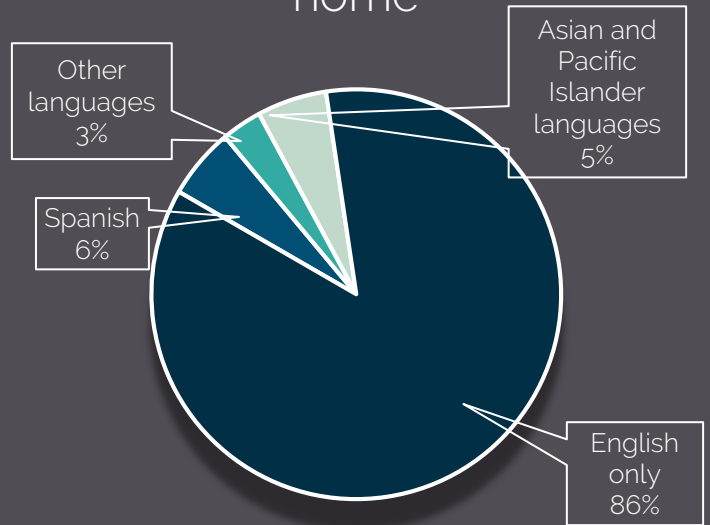
60.1% of workers age 25 and older have a **bachelor's degree** or higher

Population Characteristics

Age



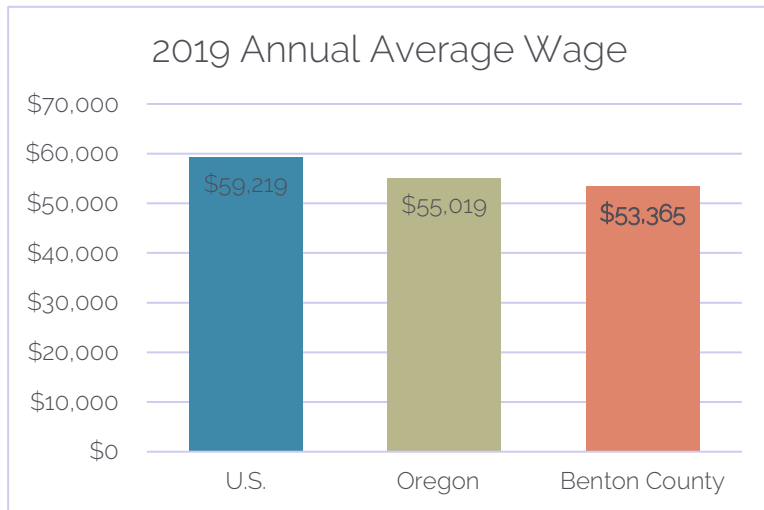
Language spoken at home



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Economic Health

Let's do the numbers



Quick Facts

Geographical Area:
679 sq. mi.

Population (2018):
93,590

Civilian Labor Force (2018):
48,345

Average Employment (2018):
46,810

Average Wage (2018):
\$52,187



#1

Most Economically Resilient College Town in the U.S.

(MarketWatch, 2020)

#2

Most Innovative Metro Areas in the US

(Verizon, 2018)

#5

2019 10 Best College Towns

(Livability, 2019)

#17

Forbes Top 100 Best Small Places for Business and Careers

(Forbes, 2019)

Benton County's July employment was 39,030. The last time employment was that low was in spring of 2013.



Benton County COVID Employment Impact		
	Employment Change from Feb. 2020 to June 2020	Percent Employment Change from Feb. 2020 to June 2020
Total nonfarm employment	-5,400	-12%
Mining, logging, and construction	-70	-5%
Manufacturing	-190	-6%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	-240	-5%
Information	-20	-3%
Financial activities	-40	-3%
Professional and business services	-300	-7%
Education and health services	-430	-6%
Leisure and hospitality	-1,970	-45%
Other services	-290	-20%
Government	-1,850	-12%

Challenges & Opportunities in 2019-2020

In the Middle of Every Difficulty Lies Opportunity. -Albert Einstein

COVID Response

The COVID pandemic turned everything on its head. Beginning in mid-March, the entire EDO team pivoted to focus solely on helping businesses through emergency response, then economic recovery work.

Wetlands

The EDO continues to participate in the Cascade West Council of Government's Regional Wetland Consortium, which is working to support an Oregon legislative fix that would see the State of Oregon DSL fulfilling the permitting to satisfy both State and Federal Requirements. Possible implementation in 2022.

Codes and Regulations

Our office has continued to work with city and county departments to identify ways to streamline processes. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, we were exploring a post project review where internal staff could break down certain projects and better understand opportunities for improvement. We are currently working with the Public Works Department to explore a streamlined process for leases at the Airport Industrial Park.

Industrial Space

The EDO is working with partners, such as the Corvallis Foundry, to create manufacturing incubator or flex manufacturing space. Additionally, with the urban renewal district coming online in South Corvallis, and potential changes at the Airport Industrial Park, this may create opportunities for the creation of small-scale industrial space.

Downtown Vibrancy

In November 2019, we held the *Your Downtown: What's Next* event—a community outreach and listening session to understand the community's goals and ideas related to downtown. From that event came good data and comments, as well as the development of a core workgroup to focus on these efforts as we move forward. The EDO continues to work closely with the Downtown Corvallis Association and Visit Corvallis to help affect change in the downtown area.



Supporting our women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.

A [2016 Kauffman Foundation Article](#) indicated, "The need to dramatically increase investment in minority entrepreneurs is vital to the survival of the U.S. economy." Additionally, we acknowledge that our minority businesses are disproportionately hard-hit in this pandemic. We have looked for ways to improve our communication, outreach, and understanding of the needs of our minority businesses:

Equal Access

Recently, we brought on to the team a Spanish-speaking staff member with the goal of creating better lines of communication with Latinx businesses.

In the roll-out of the Benton County grant program to support local businesses we reserved 30% of the funds for minority and rural-owned businesses, provided all materials in English and Spanish, and did not require social security numbers on our applications, in order to encourage business owners of all immigration and citizenship statuses to apply for the program. At that time, neither the federal nor the state government had funds available for business owners without social security numbers. The program benefitted 12 businesses, with 33% of loans provided to minority-owned businesses, and 25% of loans going to rural businesses. Forthcoming funding from Business Oregon and CDBG money will focus on minority, rural, and sole-proprietors.

Communication

- Publish and communicate in both English and Spanish programs and resources including the *Back to Business Guide*, new policies from state and local public health, and PPP and EIDL loan information, to name a few.
- *Business Support Calls*: With the assistance of our friends at Benton County Public Health, we have worked to connect with minority businesses through "support calls." Through these calls, we have connected businesses to funding sources, state guidelines, and our partners at the SBDC, who have multi-lingual advisors available for support.
- *Latinx SBDC Videos*: Our Spanish-speaking EDO staff member has actively been a part of these programs. Working to get the word out on programs, and finding ways to better engage with the Latinx community and businesses in Benton County.

Support of minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses creates equity, strengthens our community, and fosters businesses and services for the full spectrum of diverse populations in Corvallis and Benton County. Our office continues to look for better pathways to funding, communication and access to networks for our minority businesses and partners throughout the community.

Furthering the Community's Vision

The work of our office directly supports the Imagine Corvallis 2040 Vision and the Benton County 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative, including:

- Family & Living Wage Jobs
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation
- Innovative Tech Businesses & Start-Ups
- Vibrant Downtown with Employment, Retail & Housing
- Balanced Economic Growth with Livability
- Global Economic Impacts & Local Benefits



Our office also works with & contributes to fulfilling goals in the other sections of the Vision and the city's Climate Action Plan.

Goal #1

SUPPORT AND GROW
EXISTING BUSINESSES



We believe in strengthening and growing our existing businesses. Corvallis Benton County has a strong base of small, medium, and large businesses. Keeping these businesses local, healthy, and growing is a top priority of this office.

Our office handles the **Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)** efforts through outreach to Benton County Businesses. We provide support to new, expanding, or at-risk businesses and refer businesses to our various partners.

This year, we surpassed our goal with 170 business touches pre-COVID, then an additional **731** touches through our extensive outreach as part of the COVID-19 crisis.

We act as an ombudsman to traded sector businesses who need help through the regulatory processes of the city, county, state or federal agencies. We also work with city and county Community Development Directors to identify and, where possible, streamline codes or policies.

We completed the **biennial survey of Benton County businesses** regarding potential incentives and barriers, and conducted a second, smaller survey at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This data has helped us to assess the business climate and identify business needs, barriers, and opportunities.

We continue to explore the possibility of a manufacturing incubator space, flex manufacturing space, which we understand is in great need in our area.

Our office manages and oversees the economic development tools for our area, including the Enterprise Zone, Opportunity Zones, and Urban renewal district in South Corvallis. This year we successfully implemented an **Electronic Commerce Overlay** for our Enterprise Zone. This will allow e-commerce businesses greater accessibility to the e-zone program and will go into effect January 2021. The **Corvallis Urban Renewal Agency** held its first meetings, adding a Benton County Commissioner to the board, and approved policy guidelines for TIF-funded affordable housing.



The EDO passes funds through to the Linn-Benton Small Business Development Center for enhanced business support in Benton County. In FY 19-20 the SBDC was an integral partner in our economic development and COVID Response work, as we were able to seamlessly connect businesses needing further support to the SBDC advisors.

SBDC Achievements 2019-2020	
Advisory Clients Served	173
Client Advisory Sessions	389
Advising hours	654
Business Starts	13
Jobs created or retained	45

45

Jobs that SBDC Advising has helped to create or retain in 19-20.

173

Benton County Clients served.



Work Slated for 20-21

- Champion and focus on a “continuity of care” paradigm for existing businesses in our area.
- Work with CD, PW, and Benton County on the annexation of the Airport Industrial Park (AIP) into the city limits and streamlining of industrial development processes at the AIP.
- Urban Renewal: Assist Adair Village with a new program; consider programs and funding opportunities in South Corvallis
- Implement Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program in Corvallis and Benton County. This work began in 2019, but was delayed due to COVID. Conversations have begun again.
- Continue to work to find ways to better serve and support women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.

Outreach in the time of COVID

Finding better ways to keep our businesses informed

Outreach and communication with our businesses became especially critical during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Our team moved quickly to produce and distribute information needed and to keep businesses updated.

- **Communication** about programs such as the eviction moratorium, new policies from state and local public health, PPP and EIDL loans, and directing businesses to our partners at the LBCC SBDC who can help them with these applications.
- **Back to Business Guide:** A centralized guide created to offer businesses a simple resource to understand state guidelines for reopening their business (in English and Spanish)
- **Back to Business Videos:** Features local businesses that have found creative ways to stay open while keeping the community safe; promoting community, connection, and resiliency.
- **Business Support Calls:** The EDO has led an initiative to connect with local businesses through direct outreach calls. We then send personalized resources, if needed, based on the business' feedback and follow up as needed. To this point, over 731 businesses have been called.
- **Latinx SBDC Videos:** Our Spanish-speaking EDO staff member has actively been a part of these programs. We have been working to get the word out on programs, and find ways to create connections with the Latinx community and businesses in Benton County.
- **Let's Keep Connected:** Regular town halls that offer live business support on relevant concerns to the pandemic. Past topics include reopening guidelines, legal considerations, statewide/legislation support and updates.

10

Back to Business Videos produced

22

Let's Keep Connected Business Forums

13

Online Latinx (in Spanish) events

CONVERSATIONS & KINSHIP TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS STRONG

LET'S KEEP CONNECTED

THURSDAY, MAY 7TH @ 11:30 AM PAC



KATE PORSCHE ANNE WHITTINGTON LYNN MEYER MELISSA MURPHY



CONVERSATIONS & KINSHIP TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS STRONG

LET'S KEEP CONNECTED

TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH @ 11:30 AM PAC



SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY



Goal #2

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND INNOVATION



We seek to support an environment where new ideas form and develop into successful businesses. Corvallis and Benton County is a hub of innovation and entrepreneurs. Oregon State University is a Driver of Innovation in our community, and in Oregon.

The EDO supports the work of partners in the entrepreneur and innovation space. We provide this support through both financial and time and effort contributions.

- Sit on OSU Advantage Accelerator Board
- Support Willamette Innovators Network through board liaison position, staff support of events including PubTalks, Shark Tank, and Expo events.
- Continue to support connections with partner organizations associated with the University, including OSU Colleges, ATAMI, OregonInC, ONAMI
- Continue to create connections amongst other partner organizations including BEC, Chamber, DCA and other downtown organizations.
- Pass-through funds to RAIN Oregon, Corvallis Foundry, and Linn-Benton SBDC from Benton County; Draft, monitor, and manage contracts and review metrics and goals.





Goal #3

CULTIVATE BUSINESSES IN TARGET & EMERGING SECTORS

We focus on the following sectors because they are top contributors to our economy, capitalize on the inherent qualities of our area, and connect to the core values of our residents:

- Food
- Beverage
- Agritourism & value-added agriculture
- Science, research, & technology

Work on this goal is underway, with much of it scheduled for FY20-21 due COVID response work.

- Mid-Valley Food Trail – complete. Helped with support and promotion.
- Identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors
- Help local clusters develop its vision and strategy; assist with valuable connections regionally and beyond.
- Convene small group listening sessions
- Focus on collaborations with OSU (such as the Food Innovation Center and Fermentation Sciences Program).

Mid-Willamette Valley FOOD TRAIL
WILLAMETTE VALLEY

TRAVEL TIPS
This year-round, self-guided Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail is designed to be explored at your own pace — you can start and finish wherever you like. We encourage you to inquire at individual businesses about seasonality and hours of operation before visiting.
High season varies per business but is typically May-Oct. Seasonality of key products is listed below:
• Flowers: April-July
• Strawberries: May-June
• Blueberries: June-July
• Apples and Cider: September-October
• Pumpkins: September-October
• Wine Harvest: September-October
• Hazelnuts: October-November

The working farms along this trail provide some of the most unique and engaging experiences. We ask that you respect the invitation to enter each property and be cautious around farm animals and equipment. Children must be supervised at all times and you should be prepared to follow all site-specific rules. For your safety and comfort, be prepared with appropriate footwear, sun protection and water.
Interested in a guided farm, foodie and beverage tour? The following operators offer tours to select trail stops and can build custom itineraries:
• Best Oregon Tours | bestoregontours.com
• Oregon Traveling Tours | oregontouringtours.com

Your experience along the Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail should not end when you leave the area. We encourage you to bring a taste of your journey back home to share with friends and family as a reminder of the bounty available in the Mid-Willamette Valley.

OREGON food trails | VISIT CORVALLIS | TRAVEL OREGON | VISITORS ASSOCIATION

Learn more at MidWillametteValleyFoodTrail.com
Explore other Oregon Food Trails at OregonFoodTrails.com

The Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail offers a self-guided journey through a bountiful land of historic farms and trailblazing spirits. These businesses are committed to sustainable practices to last through the next century and beyond.

Goal #4

LEADERSHIP &
COLLABORATION
IN THE REGIONAL
ECON. DEV.
ECOSYSTEM



The EDO is a leader and key partner in the Economic Development Ecosystem. Our role is to act as the hub of the wheel in Benton County, convening, connecting, and working with partners to move initiatives forward. We work with an eye toward creating regional synergy and finding new and better ways to collaborate across the region.

“ It’s been my pleasure joining your support calls and I thank you for the opportunity. I want to add I am supremely impressed with your management of economic development activities and our ongoing COVID-19 recovery.

-Nick Kurth, Benton County

Our office’s support of the Main Street model in communities throughout Benton County counties to expand. We held the *Your Downtown What’s Next*—a community outreach and listening session to understand the community’s goals and ideas related to downtown. The EDO continues to work closely with the Downtown Corvallis Association and Visit Corvallis to help affect change in the downtown area.

We continue to coordinate Economic Development work through the county, and have led the communication and coordination efforts during the COVID 19 crisis. Our office will continue to focus on economic resilience and emergency planning efforts in the coming year.



Corvallis, Benton County OREGON

World Class Lifestyle. Small Town Perks. Best College Town.

A recent [Forbes article](#) highlighted the idea that it is critically important for communities, especially those in states that don't have significant tax breaks to use branding and a focus on what, "makes an area unique and attracts a community that shares that vision and set of beliefs." Branding and marketing highlights and raises the visibility of economic development work, and more importantly, of the businesses in our area.

Goal #5

BRANDING
AND
MARKETING



corvallisbentonedo • Following ...

corvallisbentonedo Back to Business - Softstar Shoes

Corvallis and Benton County are getting "Back to Business" and you might see some changes around town! Businesses are working hard to adapt to state guidelines and remain connected with their customers. We would like to show you some of the great ideas around town! Watch our new video with @softstarshoes to hear how they have changed things up in the factory and created a clever solution to communicating with one another. Do you know of a local business for us to feature? Send us a message here or e-mail us at economic.development@corvallisoren

Liked by [nyssaoregon](#) and others

JUNE 30

Add a comment...

Post

Short, Ryan, "Branding is the New Economic Development," <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/08/31/branding-is-the-new-economic-development/#1f7398e477dc>, (August 31, 2018)

EDO Work Featured in the CORVALLIS Gazette-Times

- Making business connections matter in mid-valley
- Benton small business loan applications launch Thursday
- Businesses get chance to chat with Merkley
- Outdoor expansion could benefit business owners in Corvallis and Albany
- How you can help our businesses (Op/ED)

Throughout the COVID pandemic, and our extensive outreach, we found that businesses were tuning in and receiving their information through social media platforms and videos. While we continued to disseminate information through traditional channels, such as our weekly newsletter, we responded by increasing our outreach via social media, created and pushed out **22 Let's Keep Connected Business Forums**, produced **10 Back to Business Videos** (<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7276214>), and **13 Online Latin-X/Spanish events**.

In February 2020, we completed our annual presentation to the Chamber of Commerce.

We will begin work on the **AIP marketing plan** and **development guide** following the annexation of the AIP into the city limits. Also lined up for post-COVID time is the **Made in Benton County** event, which will highlight local manufacturing in Benton County.



Where to Find Us



@yescorvallis



@yescorvallis



@Corvallis-Benton
Economic
Development Office



@CorvallisEDO

Followers

7/19-6/20

Instagram 269

↑ 103%

Facebook 680

↑ 40%

Twitter 701

↑ 9%

LinkedIn 108

↑ 74%

Who We Are

Economic Development Office Staff

Our small but mighty team is the Economic Development Office for the City of Corvallis and Benton County. With a focus on strengthening businesses, building place, and creating a diverse economy, staff leads business retention and expansion efforts, coordinates entrepreneurship efforts, and collaborates with our community and business partners to create a robust support system for local businesses.



Kate Porsche,
Economic Development Manager



Heather Stevens,
Economic Development Specialist



Jerry Sorte,
Economic Development Supervisor



Kathryn Duvall,
Economic Development Specialist

Key External Partners

The success of our businesses is a team effort. Our work is solidified by the partnerships and relationships and efforts of the people and organizations listed here. While our office represents Corvallis and Benton County as your Economic Development team, the time and effort of all of these entities is what makes our community strong. Thank you for your partnership and support!

- City of Corvallis & Benton County staff
- City managers from Adair Village, Corvallis, Monroe, and Philomath.
- Marketing and outreach coordinators, such as PIO's from Corvallis and Benton County
- Linn-Benton Small Business Development Center
- Visit Corvallis
- Corvallis, Philomath and Tri-County Chambers of Commerce
- Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
- Downtown Corvallis Association
- Business Association of Monroe
- Cascades-West Council of Governments
- Oregon RAIN
- Foundry Collective
- Willamette Innovators Network
- OSU Advantage Accelerator
- Business Oregon
- Oregon Economic Development Association

