

2018–2021
Clackamas County Cultural Plan for
Arts, Heritage, Humanities

GROWING THE CULTURAL ASSETS OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY

Cultural activities

festivals • events • classes
activities engaging the public
art in public spaces
studio and farm tours and other activities
stimulating cultural tourism

...

**Cultural facilities
and venues**

community centers
museums • libraries
parks and sports facilities
granges • schools
theatres • colleges
gathering places of all
kinds

...

**Cultural
organizations**

history • heritage
preservation
arts • humanities

...

*Clackamas
County's culture
is bursting
with dynamic
expression.*

Cultural creatives

artists • historians
scholars • researchers
librarians • teachers
artisans • storytellers
cultural sector volunteers

...



Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Coalition and the Oregon Cultural Trust	4
About this plan and what we learned	5
Definitions	6
Mission and purpose	7
Vision and values	7
Cultural assets	8
Barriers to cultural participation	9
Funding priorities	10
How to access coalition funding	12

Above: Pickathon Music Festival,
Happy Valley, Oregon

Photo courtesy Leah Nash

*Communities full of all kinds of art and history,
whether visual, dramatic or interpretive*



Clackamas County Cultural Coalition

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Summary

This plan guides the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition through 2021, and specifically identifies priorities for the distribution of funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust to lay a foundation for supporting culture in Clackamas County. We are focused on building the capacity of local cultural organizations and supporting individuals to enrich the cultural life of the County.

Funding priorities support projects that specifically build cultural infrastructure, sustain and grow local assets, and remove barriers to cultural participation. Under-valuing of our cultural assets is seen as a primary barrier to supporting and sustaining local culture. Priorities specifically implement the Coalition's vision, which is built around key values of:

1. increasing public recognition and valuing of local culture
2. acknowledging the vibrancy that social, cultural and ethnic diversity bring
3. increasing public participation in local culture
4. supporting the inclusion of arts and culture in every community

These priorities and all other key elements of the plan come from public feedback gathered through a seven-month planning process. 180 people participated in this process through community meetings, interviews, and online surveys.

Led by representatives of arts, history, heritage, and humanities organizations in Clackamas County, the Coalition has awarded 220 grants totaling approximately \$360,000 since 2005. Twenty-six people representing a broad range of cultural disciplines have served as members of the Coalition. The Coalition's website provides more details about its work: clackamasulturalcoalition.org.

Above: *Alpine View* (detail)
by Melissa Gannon



About the Coalition and the Oregon Cultural Trust

The Clackamas County Cultural Coalition is one of 45 county and tribal-based local networks in Oregon whose primary function is to re-grant an annual appropriation from The Oregon Cultural Trust (culturaltrust.org). The trust was established in 2002 to support arts, heritage, and humanities across Oregon, and is currently the only funding mechanism of this kind in the United States.

The goal/mission of our Coalition is **to grow the cultural assets of Clackamas County**. The Coalition is led by local members whose primary function is to represent local arts, heritage, and humanities interests and to distribute funds according to the priorities identified in this cultural plan. The Coalition receives between \$20–50,000 a year from the Trust. The intention is to see this amount grow as contributions to the Trust increase. The Clackamas County Arts Alliance provides administrative staff support to the Coalition.

Above: Jerry Joslin's
Bread Upon the Water
in Lake Oswego, Oregon

Photo courtesy Deb Hollister

Giving real attention to and revealing the unknowns can expand our potential and strengthen our ability to approach issues, problems and opportunities creatively

About this plan and what we learned

This plan guides the Coalition and its grant-making process for the next four years. Those applying for grants need to closely address at least one of the **priorities** listed on pages 10–11. Remaining sections of this plan give context for those looking to support, seek funding, or better understand local culture in Clackamas County.

The following four questions drove the planning process:

1. Imagine a Clackamas County that is teeming with local culture. What does that look like? What does it include? What are the challenges to achieving that vision? Who should be more engaged?
2. What are our cultural strengths/assets in Clackamas County? What are you especially proud of?
3. What are barriers to you and others participating in culture in Clackamas County?
4. If you could write three \$10,000 checks to further cultural achievement/growth in Clackamas County, what areas or projects or organizations would you support?

The cover design illustrates a sampling of the range and depth of arts, heritage, and humanities assets in the County. Many participants viewed these assets as undervalued or not easily accessible. Our plan addresses how to support and better utilize these assets as the County grows and changes.

Supporting and celebrating Clackamas County's cultural diversity

Definitions

In our definition of culture we include the arts, history, heritage, and humanities. These are the primary areas of culture supported by the Oregon Cultural Trust:

HISTORY AND HERITAGE define who we are and inform our future through preservation, interpretation, access, and sharing what holds collective meaning.

ART FORMS OF ALL KINDS grow our expressive minds, skills, and encourage creativity and compassion.

HUMANITIES, including literature, dialogue, and critical thinking, help to deepen understanding of what it means to be human.

LOCAL CULTURE means cultural interests and activities that are rooted in Clackamas County. Cultural assets as illustrated on the front cover are the cultural organizations, individuals, facilities, and activities unique to Clackamas County.

Underlying these definitions is the understanding that we all are a product of and participate in culture: we inherit parts of our culture and are continually making, changing, and transforming other elements of our culture.



Mission and purpose

The mission of the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition is to grow the cultural assets in the County. The Coalition's immediate responsibility is to distribute funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust to local arts, history, heritage, humanities organizations and cultural creatives.

Vision and values

We envision a Clackamas County that embodies the following ideals:

- Culture is highly recognized for its inherent values and ability to support community needs including education, health, and community and economic development
- Arts, heritage, history and humanities in all forms are highly visible and accessible
- Social, cultural, and ethnic diversity create pride. Diversity is visible and valued as creating essential vibrancy for communities. We are serving new areas of our communities
- People from all parts of the County are actively participating in cultural activities and organizations. This may be as creatives, makers, volunteers, board members, donors, teachers, students, legislators and more. We are demonstrating that access to local cultural resources strengthens communities
- Including arts and culture in all forms of community development is the norm, not the exception. Arts and cultural centers and gathering places are prominent and popular in every community

Above: Swan Island Dahlia Festival at Swan Island Dahlias in Canby, Oregon

Photo courtesy Deb Hollister



Cultural assets

Clackamas County is rich with cultural assets. The following were most commonly mentioned through the public engagement process.

- The history and heritage of the people—past and present—are unique strengths of the County
- There is a wide variety of artists, arts, heritage/cultural organizations, attractions and events
- The County’s libraries and parks provide public gathering spaces and need to be developed, utilized and supported
- Natural/geographic diversity is considered the County’s most outstanding characteristic and a source of great pride. Our natural environments shape communities and local economies, and inspire cultural expression

Above: Children grind corn at Philip Foster Farm, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in Eagle Creek, Oregon

Photo courtesy Mt. Hood Territory

*Local history, theatre, lectures, gallery shows,
dance, classes for all ages, public art abounds*

Barriers to cultural participation

The following were expressed consistently as barriers to people participating in local culture.

- Funding and support for local culture is limited. Many local cultural assets are undervalued by residents and visitors alike, and are not being fully utilized, marketed or supported
- Time is people's most precious resource. Demands on people's time limit their ability to volunteer and become more engaged in local cultural life
- The large County and distances between communities results in cultural activities attracting mostly local participation. Costs related to travel, food, lodging and fees is often a deterrent for attracting countywide engagement
- Communications and marketing are challenging and time-consuming; this appears to be a near-universal concern



Funding priorities and indicators of success

The following priorities directly underscore the coalition's mission, vision, and values. Projects and organizations should focus on supporting/growing local assets and removing barriers to cultural participation. Projects must result in measurable outcomes within at least one priority. The Coalition supports innovative approaches and projects.

1. Increase how local culture is valued and supported

Indicators of success:

- Increase in cultural support from local businesses and governments
- Increase in contributions to the Oregon Cultural Trust from county residents
- Increase in local media coverage for cultural success stories illustrating public recognition for the value of arts, heritage, humanities
- Increase in projects which specifically recognize and celebrate the growing diversity within communities

2. Support the creation of, or participation in, cultural projects and activities

Indicators of success:

- Increased attendance at events and other cultural activities
- New volunteers are leaders and are engaged in cultural activities
- Improved access to cultural assets and activities
- Increased investment to support and sustain cultural facilities and gathering spaces
- Arts, heritage and humanities are integrated with learning experiences (e.g., schools, workshops, mentoring, etc.)

Above: Restored Historic Arch
Bridge between Oregon City and
West Linn, Oregon

Photo courtesy Mt. Hood Territory

Breaking down barriers created by a deficiency of money, time, volunteers and collaboration

3. Stimulate partnerships and collaborations that grow capacities to support assets and remove barriers. We include here partnerships that support cultural tourism

Indicators of success:

- Cultural tourism projects which attract people from at least 50 miles away or encourage people to linger longer
- Increase in cross-sector collaborations between cultural and non-cultural organizations
- Partnerships that engage diverse groups, leverage resources and expand investment in cultural assets and activities

4. Work closely with local governments, businesses, and others to embed local culture in community development

Indicators of success:

- Culture is clearly integrated with development and creatives serve in civic leadership positions
- Cultural assets are solidly embedded in community
- Increase in cultural supporters assuming leadership roles
- New initiatives are reaching underserved audiences
- Art in public spaces and historic interpretation/preservation are prevalent

5. Grow communications capacity for cultural groups, organizations, and artists/creatives

Indicators of success:

- New cooperative marketing strategies which increase awareness of cultural activities and assets
- Initiatives reach new or expanded audiences
- Increase use of Cultural Guide as a vehicle for cultural organizations to tell their stories and to promote their activities



How to Access Coalition Funding

1. Project grants

Up to \$2,500

Annual application process

2. Special Opportunity grants

Up to \$750

Available during calendar year until all funds are expended

Project Grant Application Guidelines

Who is eligible to apply for a project grant from the Coalition?

- Nonprofit tax-exempt status is **not** required
- Organizations physically located in Clackamas County with a Clackamas County mailing address
- Organizations located in Oregon with a project that clearly benefits Clackamas County residents, demonstrates strong community support and county partnerships may be eligible to apply. Please contact us to confirm eligibility before applying
- Individuals who live or work in Clackamas County who have partnered with a Clackamas County-based organization as a co-applicant
- Prior Clackamas County Cultural Coalition grant recipients who are current on all agreements and have submitted all required reports

See the Coalition website for specific information about how to apply for a grant. Clackamas County Cultural Coalition: clackamasculturalcoalition.org.

Above: Grindstones Public Art installation, June 2016
West Linn, Oregon

Photo courtesy Suzi Anderson