

Submitter: Lynelle Christiani
On Behalf Of: Four Rivers Cultural Center and Museum
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Oregon Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to request \$500,000 in funding for the Four Rivers Cultural Center and Museum. This center is a valuable resource for our small Eastern Oregon community and provides access to the arts and other programs for minority and low-income children who might not otherwise have that opportunity. As you may know, the arts are a vital part of communities which enrich the lives of those who participate. By providing access to the arts and other programs for minority and low-income children, we can help to close the achievement gap and provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

In addition to benefiting our children, this funding would also benefit our entire community. Last year we brought art (actual art classes), music, and theater exposure to over 12,000 youth. We also brought low cost or free programming for seniors, differently abled people, and we provided free health care seminars and exercise classes for all ages, interests, and abilities. The Four Rivers Cultural Center and Museum truly is the hub of Malheur, Payette (Idaho) and Washington (Idaho) counties. Over 40,000 additional people passed through our facility last year to attend a conference, training, wedding, celebration of life, to watch a performance in our theater, go through our museum or enjoy our Japanese Garden. With the continued growth of the Four Rivers Cultural Center and Museum we have become an important source of jobs and economic growth in our area. In the last 3 years we have gone from 4-5 employees to 12-14 employees. With additional funding, we could create more jobs and stimulate economic growth, which would benefit not only our community, but the entire state.

Again, with this funding for the arts and other programs for the underserved youth in our community you could help level the playing field for our City and County. You could help us make a difference in our community. This is exactly what capital funding requests are about. We are the poorest county in the state and granting us this funding is not only equitable, but true social justice at work, benefiting our hard-working families and children. We desperately need capital improvements, and this would be essential to continue our financial stability and our ability to provide low-cost or free programming to our community.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of our community.

Lynelle Christiani
Executive Director
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