

**TESTIMONIAL:
BARBARA ROBERTS CTEC**



May 4, 2023

To Our State Representatives and Senators:

On behalf of Community Resource Trust, I am writing to support the Barbara Roberts Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) in Sheridan, Oregon, and its application to the legislature for \$12 million in construction funds.

As a former educator in rural Oregon, I have seen firsthand the need for Career Technical Education (CTE) in our rural communities. Students in Oregon's small schools have few pathways to choose from as they graduate into the workforce, while local employers struggle to find qualified workers. Living in Southern Oregon, I was looking into CTE solutions for our local and surrounding districts before I moved to Salem.

Naturally, I was excited to join the Salem-Keizer CTEC master planning committee and fundraising team upon my arrival to Salem in 2014. I understood the great impact CTEC would have on our community – and Salem-Keizer CTEC has indeed proven the concept that Career Technical Education (CTE) benefits students and provides a workforce for local industry. Graduation rates at CTEC 2015 – present have stayed between 98% - 100%. CTEC also has a positive placement rate of 92% (this means students have either entered into higher education or secured high-wage, high-demand employment upon graduation).

As CEO of Community Resource Trust, I have been privileged to serve Salem-Keizer CTEC as fiscal agent and landlord, donating the building and improvements to SK School District in November 2021. We also recently contributed \$130,000 to the CTEC fund at United Community Foundation, for activities such as scholarships, donor relations, and internship program costs.

Oregon Department of Education research shows that rural schools in Oregon are underserved by CTE, and it also shows that CTE leads to improved achievement for our young workforce:

The need to increase CTE programming for rural and low-income students in Oregon:

- The smallest schools in Oregon average 1 CTE course, while the state's largest schools average 5.6 programs.
- 58% of rural schools offer at least 1 CTE program compared to 80% statewide.
- High-income schools offer an average of 3.7 CTE programs, while low-income schools offer an average of 2.2 programs. FRPL-status students concentrate in CTE at a rate of 19%, compared to their non-FRPL peers at 26%.
- The number of CTE programs and student participation rates have increased since 2015 in larger districts, but rural district numbers have remained stagnant.

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Positive outcomes for students and greater efficacy of CTE concentrated programs:

- Students who concentrate in Career Technical Education programs are more likely to graduate from high school within 4 years
- These students earn an average of \$2,200 more per year than their peers within 6-7 years after graduation.
- Low-income students who concentrate in CTE programs are 20% more likely to graduate (88% compared to 68%)
- students at higher income levels are 13% more likely to graduate (91% compared to 78%)
- Students who participate in advanced CTE courses experience a 2% wage increase for each additional year
- Students who take 3 or more courses in a single CTE program are 42% more likely to graduate from high school

Salem-Keizer CTEC was created as a replicable model for other school districts to follow, and many districts have the desire to bring CTE centers to their communities. However, rural school districts are challenged in their capacity to raise the capital needed to build a CTE center; raising \$10 million in Sheridan or Myrtle Creek is much different than raising \$10 million in Salem or Portland.

Barbara Roberts CTEC will serve as a replicable model for the development of *rural* CTE centers in Oregon. My greatest hope for this project is that it serves as proof of concept for future state investment into our economy through rural workforce development, bolstering industry and impacting students' lives through generations.

Now is the time to invest in Rural Oregon through Career Technical Education (CTE). The Oregon Legislature now has the opportunity to take a lead role in the revitalization of our economy, through a \$12 million commitment to this shovel-ready project. I respectfully request that the Oregon Legislature join us in this vision for generational impact and commit \$12 million to the development of the Barbara Roberts Career Technical Center.

What you can do:

1. Voice support for this effort.
2. Ask Leadership and your caucus to move it forward with a "Do Pass" recommendation
3. Carry the effort forward to other rural districts in upcoming sessions that could use the support of Oregon in a similar fashion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Hays
CEO, Community Resource Trust