

Northeast Oregon Network (NEON) supports individuals, communities, and systems to collectively promote equity, health, and wellbeing at home and beyond. OHA Public Health Equity funding has supported our direct services and collaboration with public health efforts in Union, Baker, and Wallowa Counties. Our services are committed to reducing health inequities by addressing Social Determinants of Health barriers, fostering stronger ties between service sectors, ensuring that isolated and frontier communities have access to services, and providing culturally responsive care through our Community Health Worker (CHW) support. Community members we serve frequently face complex barriers to health, and our work, directly supported by OHA Health Equity grants, aims to reduce these barriers.

OHA Public Health Equity has funded the following efforts in our rural and frontier communities:

- Building capacity for health care interpretation with a focus on Spanish, Marshallese, and Chuukese languages, all commonly spoken in Northeast Oregon. This includes efforts to train additional health care interpreters and help them navigate state certification systems, reducing strain on both individuals and health systems.
- Supporting distribution of emergency preparedness materials including trauma kits to highly isolated communities, air purifiers to individuals living in substandard housing, and emergency planning educational materials across our service area.
- Organizing events in collaboration with local public health organizations to provide school exclusion vaccines in a welcoming atmosphere after work hours to make vaccination easier for working families.
- Providing Community Health Worker resource navigation that addresses the specific barriers community members face to accessing resources and getting the care and resources they need, from transportation to documentation challenges.
- Supporting VapeEducate and other tobacco prevention programming in rural school districts with high levels of tobacco product and substance use.

We express our support for bill HB 5025 and urge the legislature to fund this bill at \$25 million. At this amount, it will ensure that programs and work like ours continue. Each community is different, and this funding will ensure that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) like ours have the resources we need to build community-specific responses to public health challenges.

Sincerely,



Liberty Avila, Executive Director  
Northeast Oregon Network