



It is an exciting time at Connected Lane County, and we're grateful to be in partnership with you!

This year, we provided programs and services to **over 2,000 youth and young adults** in Lane County.

Collaboration has served as our **organizational north star** as we've launched a collaborative youth resource hub in downtown Eugene, expanded industry sites for career-connected learning opportunities, and worked with educational, civic, and business partners across the rural communities in Lane County.

When we work together, we expand the number of trustworthy adults in a youth's life, and we improve access to needed resources and services. We also unlock the power of collective wisdom, enhancing our creativity and innovation. The impact of this type of collaborative commitment is clearly embodied in the new Youth HUB in downtown Eugene.

We started the project asking the county's Youth Voice Network what youth and young adults needed in a resource center. Youth-serving community partners joined the conversation, and it didn't take long for an initial vision to emerge.

It is thrilling to be part of an effort that will provide **afternoon drop-in support five days a week** for young people seeking assistance with **career navigation, mental health support, educational assistance, and basic needs support**.

As we take stock of the past year and what our future may hold, we are cognizant of the challenges facing youth today. The task in front of us is to help youth not only identify potential educational and career pathways but to help them feel seen, valued, and trusted. **We build skills, but we also build confidence, hope, and relationships.**

Ultimately, we will only be successful in serving more youth, and doing so in a transformative way, as we maintain our commitment to collaboration. If you have already partnered with us or contributed support: thank you! **Your partnership is making a significant difference in the lives of young people across the county.**

If you are learning about us for the first time, I'd love to connect. Reach out to me at jesse@connectedlane.org to start a conversation about how we can work together to create more opportunities for local youth.

Together, we can create new systems of support that will assist countless youth as they build the foundation for their future.

In gratitude,

Jesse Y Nelson

Jesse Nelson
Executive Director, Connected Lane County



Connected Lane County



Building Connections.
Creating Pathways.

Annual Report 2025-2026

"When we work together, we expand the number of trustworthy adults in a young person's life, and create more opportunities for them to thrive."

Jesse Nelson
Executive Director



OPPORTUNITY IN ACTION



This year, more than 2,000 young people connected with opportunity, support, and real-world experiences across Lane County.



2,081

Youth Reached



\$381,203

Earned by Young People



180

Community Volunteers

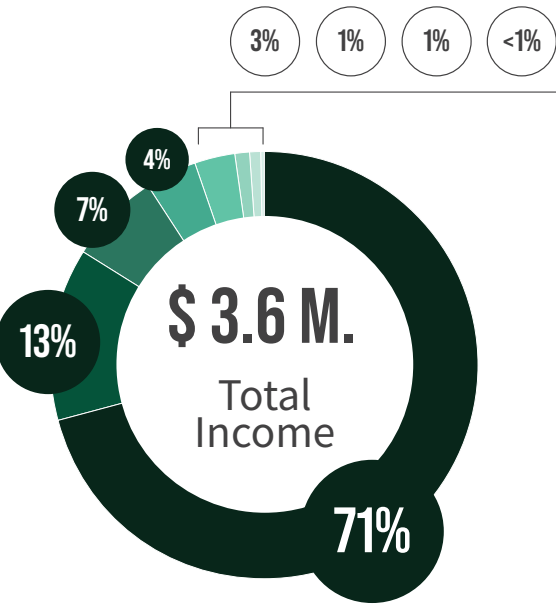


35,122

Youth Participation Hours

Community Investment in Youth

Every contribution, from public funding to individual generosity, helps expand access to career-connected learning, essential resources, and supportive spaces.



- Government Grants ¹ — \$2.55M
- Foundation Grants — \$476.7K
- Program Revenue & Contracts ² — \$251.8K
- Board Partner Contributions ³ — \$126.4K
- Other Income — \$96K
- Business & Corporate Support — \$50.8K
- Individual Giving — \$46.9K
- In-Kind Donations — \$5.9K

¹ Federal (\$1.59M), State (\$714.7K), and Local (\$238.4K) funding.

² Revenue from contracts, events, rentals, workshops, and youth-led projects.

³ Contributions from organizations represented on the board.

Financial figures are preliminary estimates and may be adjusted following the completion of year-end financial close and audit.



The numbers only tell part of the story.

The rest lives in the young people who took a chance, the mentors who showed up, and the partners who helped create new possibilities. **Here are a few moments from the year that brought that impact to life.**



BUILDING SOMETHING REAL

Manufacturing Exceleator participants built an **8-by-4-foot, 3,500-pound, road-ready cargo trailer** from the ground up! They gained hands-on experience working together to measure, cut, weld, and wire every part of the trailer.

The project strengthened their communication, teamwork, and confidence, while helping several participants move into manufacturing internships and full-time jobs. For many, it helped make a career path that once felt out of reach feel possible.

“What stands out most to me is the camaraderie. Instructors, students, and staff were all learning from each other.”

James 
Exceleator Participant

A PLACE TO BELONG

156 youth and young adults accessed Drop-In Services.

Across Eugene and Springfield, young people found practical resources, caring adults, and a welcoming place to belong. Nearly 40% also participated in our other programs.



Looking ahead, together.

Alongside Ophelia’s Place, A Family for Every Child, Lane County youth, and many other community partners, we spent the year designing the new **Youth HUB** in downtown Eugene, a coordinated space connecting supports for education and employment, mental health and wellness, and basic needs under one roof.



They started codeORcreate as students from Eugene, Springfield, and Ukraine who had never met.

They left as Team THIS, the 2025 winners, after creating a youth safety campaign to help young riders navigate the Lane Transit District (LTD) system. Their work, including videos, social media content, an infographic, and bus PSAs, earned them the opportunity to present their ideas to the LTD Board of Directors.

This year brought exciting achievements for our Invention Club youth and MESA chapters at local schools.

Hamlin Middle School advisor Megan Brown was named Oregon MESA's Melanie Ramsey Advisor of the Year for her outstanding leadership. Our Springfield Invention Club team, Rhythm Ribbons, earned third place in the High School division at the 2026 MESA Day State Championship. Rhythm Ribbons developed a project that uses microcontrollers to help Folklórico dancers improve their technique by providing real-time visual feedback on their movements.



Among alumni who responded
to our 2026 survey,

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our impact doesn't end when a program does.

Each year, we reconnect with alumni to learn where life has taken them and how their experiences with Connected Lane County continue to shape their education, careers, confidence, and connections.



96%

Earned a high school diploma or equivalent or remain on track to graduate.



9 in 10

Gained confidence applying for jobs and internships.



3 in 4

Developed a clearer vision for their education and career goals.



MEET JESSE (She/Her)

“This experience gave me confidence in my decision to build a future outdoors. I learned how to care for native plants and the important role they play in supporting wildlife, and I know I'll carry that knowledge into my everyday life.”

EDUCATION SUPPORT → SUMMER INTERNSHIP → EXPLORING NATURAL RESOURCES

After working with our Education Navigator throughout the year, Jesse earned a summer internship at Doak Creek Native Plant Nursery. She gained hands-on experience caring for native plants while exploring a future in natural resources, including potential paths through Youth Corps or Job Corps.



MEET DAKOTAH (He/Him)

“If you have the opportunity to do it, do it. It'll probably change your life.”

GED → CONNECTED LANE COUNTY PROGRAM → INTERNSHIP → FULL-TIME CAREER

After earning his GED, Dakotah joined the Manufacturing Excelerator to build skills in welding, CNC machining, CAD, and more. His experience led to an internship at Western Shelter and, today, a full-time manufacturing career at 9Wood as he works toward his professional welding certification.

Celebrating Our Champions for Youth

We're grateful to recognize the individuals and families who made a significant investment in young people this year through gifts of \$500 or more or ongoing monthly support.

Adam Wendt	Emily Tanner-Smith	Judy Newman	Maiyra Espinoza	Shane Yorton
Angela Cherbas	Eric Sucre	Karen and Terry Nelson	Matt Sayre	Tiffany Cink
Carleen Mathews	Francie and Luke White	Kornelija Houston	Mitch Baker	Todd Hamilton
Darby Giannone	Jade Luther	Kristan Sarconi	Mónica Reynoso	Tracey Ward
Deborah Burns Deppen	James Chang	Levi Barnes	Noelia King	Valerie and Daniel Close
Elaine Twigg Cornett and	Jessica Villeda	Lisa Luther	Oni Ruiz	Yvette Velasco Salinas
Zane J Cornett	Joseph Calbreath	Lizette Nunez	Robert Lang	

Supporting Partners

American Water Works Association
Andersen Construction Foundation
Baker Web Academy
Blachly-Lane Electric Co-Op
Bounce Gymnastics and Aerial Arts Center
BRING Recycling
City of Eugene
CLF Network
DLX Family Foundation
Elias Wolf Music LLC
Emerald People's Utility District
Eugene School District 4J
Eugene Water and Electric Board
Eugene, Cascades, & Oregon Coast Visitor Center
Falling Sky Brewing
First Congregational Church
Henry E. Niles Foundation
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
In Vivo Biosystems
Industrial Source
Jerry's Home Improvement
John Serbu Fund of Oregon Community Foundation
Junior League of Eugene
Lane Arts Council
Lane Community College
Lane Community Health Council
Lane County
Lane Education Service District
Lane Transit District
Lane Workforce Partnership
Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation
National Philanthropic Trust
Network Charter School
NVIDIA
NW Natural Gas

OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation
Ophelia's Place
Oregon Community Foundation
Oregon Department of Education
Oregon Department of Human Services
Oregon Forest Resources Institute
Oregon MESA
Oregon Pacific Bank
Oregon TRIO
PacificSource Community Solutions
PeaceHealth
PGM Arising
Rainbow Water District
Robert Half Foundation
Rotary Club of Eugene Airport
Roundhouse Foundation
Sierra Pacific Foundation
Sierra Pacific Industries
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Springfield Education Foundation
Springfield Public Schools
Rotary Club of Springfield
Springfield Utility Board
Trillium Community Health Plan
U.S. Bank Foundation
United Way of Lane County
University of Oregon
Verizon Foundation
WaFd Bank Foundation
Walmart Foundation
Westwind Fund of OCF
Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund
Willamalane Park & Recreation District
Women's Gift
Youth Development Oregon

Thank you for being part of this work.

Your support helps young people across Lane County explore their futures, build skills, and find their way forward.

Make more opportunities possible. Give at connectedlane.org/donate.



Watch our Connected Voices series on YouTube to meet the youth, alumni, and community partners who make Connected Lane County possible.

Youth Voices • Alumni Stories • Industry Perspectives



go.connectedlane.org/ConnectedVoices



HELP CREATE WHAT'S NEXT

- Give — connectedlane.org/donate
- Partner — Host a Job Shadow or Internship
- Connect — Share an opportunity

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