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## Multnomah County unveils plans for stimulus cash

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Most federal stimulus grant proposals presented to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners this week are just that: Proposals, ideas, requests for six- and seven-figure slivers of the \$789 billion the Obama Administration is funneling toward worthy jobs-generating projects.

However, the county has already moved one project past the paperwork phase. It scored a cool \$854,000 that will increase staffs at the La Clinica, Mid-County and East County clinics.

It's a success story both in terms of patient care and jobs creation. The clinics can now serve an additional 5,500 patients. To provide care, the county will bring on an additional full-time 18.6 employees.

The clinic funding is part of the Obama team's overall effort to boost health care for poorer residents, especially those who are uninsured.

"It's a huge one for us, it's already getting started," said Tom Rinehart, chief of staff to County Chair Ted Wheeler who's overseeing much of the county's stimulus-related work.

Rinehart and 12 other county department leaders disclosed their stimulus-seeking efforts at a Tuesday county board meeting. The county is still working on disseminating information on project contracts.

County workers are trying to land more money that will be distributed next month. In the health care arena, health care workers hope to collect some \$2.2 million that would open a new community clinic in the Rockwood area, as well as upgrade other facilities and improve HIV services. The grant will be awarded by June 11.

Many of the county's stimulus initiatives target programs within the local government's wheelhouse, such as public safety and human services. A program that would help low-income individuals and families become "self-sufficient" would require \$1.5 million worth of the stimulus program's community services block grants.

That's not to say officials don't have a few infrastructure needs. Eighteen jobs would result from a \$1.4 million project to improve sidewalks in Wood Village and Troutdale. The project would also enhance signage, add rumble strips and radar speed signs and make guardrail improvements along the West Side's Cornelius Pass Road.

Plus, many of the county's pending energy construction initiatives would provide excellent jobs to armies of qualified contractors. A program that would expand and upgrade direct digital controls in county-owned buildings would award \$1 million, while replacing virtually every type of lighting fixture with more energy-efficient treatments would create \$2 million worth of jobs.

The county also hopes to build \$2 million worth of bioswales and install, at the Inverness Jail Laundry, a co-generation facility that combines water heating and electricity generation with heat recovery. Doing so could merit \$1 million in stimulus money.

### Under Construction

Efforts to coordinate various agencies' stimulus-gathering strategies have largely stalled. County officials are still trying to assemble a coalition from public safety agencies to seek protective services money.

"It's harder than you think," Rinehart said. "It's hard to talk about things like divvying it up."

That helps explain why the state continues to work on ways to communicate, in a one-stop form, exactly which projects are in the bid or contract phases. There are many, many moving parts, as well as hundreds of millions at play.

Oregon's getting closer, though. The state plans to soon unveil a database to track which stimulus projects are occurring, which ones need bids and how many workers each needs. It will also link to a site revealing various employment opportunities, said Courtney Warner with the Oregon Way Advisory Group, which is charged with securing as much "green" stimulus money as possible.

Administrators are finalizing a breakdown of how much money is coming to Oregon and which state agencies will oversee specific contracts.

### Go-DOT

In the meantime, the Oregon Department of Transportation has created a nifty clearinghouse that details which "Go Oregon" projects it will fund through the state's own \$175 million stimulus package, passed in February.

The site, at [http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/OPO/Go\\_Oregon.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/OPO/Go_Oregon.shtml) (click on the "Projects" tab for the PDF), is a tad short on

financial details but deftly explains specific project needs in more than 60 endeavors. Plus, in many cases, the site lists the primary contractor, gold-standard information for firms looking to do some quality job partnering.

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