

Community Economic Development Grant 2023-24

Row 4

Name of Applicant (Organization)	Oregon Coast Aquarium
Mailing Address	2820 SE Ferry Slip Road, Newport, OR 97365
Name of Contact Person	Molly Dumas
Contact Phone	541-283-1106
Contact Email Address	molly.dumas@aquarium.org
Name of Project	Oregon Coast Aquarium Net-Zero Pathway
Total Project Budget	\$20,000.00
Amount Requested from this Program	\$15,000.00
Project Description	<p>The Oregon Coast Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Aquarium visitation alone contributes an estimated economic value of \$171 million each year and boosts employment for rural Lincoln County. Our onsite, online, and outreach education programs typically reach an average 500,000 people per year. Our mission is to create unique and engaging experiences that connect visitors to the Oregon coast and inspire ocean conservation. The sea is a major force on the planet; producer of over half of the oxygen in the earth's atmosphere and regulator of the world's climate. The Aquarium trains 240 volunteers in interpreting exhibits, and engages youth volunteers in public programs, beach clean-ups, and environmental awareness campaigns. Rural, coastal, low-income, BIPOC residents and businesses are most adversely affected by the consequences of environmental concerns such as stronger storms, flooding, ocean acidification, and plastic pollution that affect regional tourism and fishing industries. We have increased equitable access to all the Aquarium offers through free and discounted admissions for these populations. The Aquarium contracted Verdis Group, environmental consultants, to provide long-term climate action plans and shape regenerative environmental efforts that will empower our organization and catalyze our efforts to improve ocean literacy. As a trusted authority for environmental education, and informed by our work with Verdis Group, we have the opportunity to impart what we learn with our visitors to be part of the solution in reducing the impact climate change. Most importantly, we will be able to help those in our local community change practices and become more resilient to</p>

climate change. We participated in Verdis Group's national study of aquariums, comparing carbon footprints to ascertain our impact and set goals for reducing our carbon footprint. Impressed by Verdis Group's expansive knowledge and counsel, we wish to contract them further at a project cost of \$20,000. With funding, we will consult with Verdis Group to: 1) form a Net-Zero emissions plan, 2) identify strategies for climate resiliency, and 3) obtain tools, resources, and models for public education. We believe this guided work will benefit the Aquarium, our community, and visitors. We will share our findings with local businesses and civic organizations, as well as through our education programs.

Funding	We have been awarded a \$5,000 Ford Family Foundation Technical Assistance Grant for this project. We are seeking \$15,000 in last-in funds for a total project cost of \$20,000.
Collaboration	We plan to contract with Verdis Group to better prepare our nonprofit organization in dealing with the effects of climate change by identifying strategies for climate resiliency and forming a Net-Zero emissions plan. The lessons we learn will be applicable to local businesses and organizations in our community. As an active member of the Newport Chamber of Commerce and an organization focused on environmental education, we collaborate with a number of business and civic partners including Oregon State University and the Hatfield Marine Science Center, the Lincoln County School District, the Oregon Coast Visitors Association, and the Elakha Alliance of Tribes (more of our partners can be found at https://aquarium.org/conservation/partners/).
Viability	Verdis Group initially consulted senior leadership at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, then added other staff stakeholders in various focus groups to determine where we might implement changes in areas such as employee commuting, product sourcing, and energy use. We are looking at several next-step consultations on our plan to meet four goals: 35% carbon emission reduction and carbon offset by 2035; expand local food purchases for animals, and food and beverage services; procurement sustainability; and regenerative strategies within the community to expand impact and climate resiliency. Grant funds will pay for consulting fees. We are now focused on next steps: review climate impact data, review the consequences of identified climate impacts, and assessing the adaptive capacity of our organization. Through a series of assessments and workshops, Verdis Group will guide the Oregon Coast Aquarium to become more adaptable in the face of climate change. We will consider this project successful upon the completion of a strategic plan to meet the four achievable goals mentioned above. Verdis Group will provide several other yet-to-be-determined deliverables such as: baseline studies of our current emissions; employee commuting surveys; identified grant opportunities to fund conversion to clean/more efficient energy systems; and/or content for interpretation and education. These will inform our strategic planning process as well as curriculum development, and we will be able to share the lessons we learn with our partners in Lincoln County.
Desired Start Date	06/01/24
Desired Completion Date	06/01/25
Name of Chief	Carrie E. Lewis

Executive

Position Title President/CEO

Chief Executive Email carrie.lewis@aquarium.org

Tax ID# 93.08778

Type of Applicant 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

Grant Pool Standard Grant (max \$15,000)

Date Submitted 12/13/23 1:23 PM

**Oregon Coast Aquarium
Net-Zero Pathway**

Expense	
Item	Cost
Consultation with Verdis Group for Net-Zero Emissions Plan/Climate Resiliency Strategies	\$20,000
Revenue	
Funding Source and Status	Amount
Ford Family Foundation Technical Assistance Grant (Secured)	\$5,000
Lincoln County Community and Economic Development Fund (Pending)	\$15,000



Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce

555 SW Coast Highway . Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-8801 . Fax: (541) 265-5589 . 1-800-262-7844
www.newportchamber.org

May 1, 2023

The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) 501(c)(6) corporation has long been a strong partner to the Oregon Coast Aquarium, beginning with its development over 30 years ago. This partnership continues today as we work together to draw tourism, strengthen our local economy, and facilitate ocean research and education.

The Aquarium reaches more than 500,000 people annually and is consistently ranked among the top ten aquariums in the nation. The Aquarium is a key driver of this rural community's economy; their visitors stay longer and have a \$100M impact to the coastal economy. Most of the Aquarium's 6000+ member households reside outside this county, and attract return visitors. Further, the Aquarium partners in a reciprocal membership program with Portland Attractions Marketing Alliance (PAMA). Reciprocity between the Aquarium and 13 other organizations throughout Oregon encourages patronage to cultural experiences in rural areas they may never have considered.

The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and its Board have strongly supported the Aquarium's capital campaign to renovate attractions and enhance their public programming. Through its educational efforts, the Oregon Coast Aquarium teaches visitors about the wildlife they may encounter on the beach, and how they should protect them.

Local families and businesses look forward to the Aquarium's fascinating special exhibits which take a unique approach to connecting humans to the oceans, and reinforce our collective commitment to sustainable tourism, fishing and ecology.

We urge you to support the Oregon Coast Aquarium's fundraising efforts and educational mission.

Sincerely,


Judy Kuhl
Interim Executive Director
Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce



8403 Colesville Road, Suite 710
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3314
301-562-0777 tel 301-562-0888 fax
www.aza.org

February 19, 2019

Governor Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Brown:

As Executive Director of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a national organization that oversees 233 zoos and aquariums across the country, I'm pleased and proud to support the Oregon Coast Aquarium's thoughtful and exciting plans. As an accredited member of the AZA, the Oregon Coast Aquarium meets the highest possible standards in all aspects of animal care and management. The Aquarium is dedicated to the conservation of marine wildlife in the State of Oregon and to engaging the public in active conservation. The Aquarium also has a significant economic impact on the community drawing visitors from the entire Pacific Northwest and beyond.

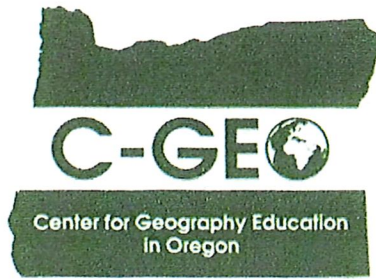
The Oregon Coast Aquarium educational efforts are extraordinary. Each year the Aquarium reaches thousands of children through engaging and unique educational experiences. The planned Marine Wildlife Rehabilitation/Education Center will greatly expand the work of the Aquarium in wildlife rescue, care and rehabilitation, as well as expand the educational component of that vital work. The Oregon Coast Aquarium with its immersive exhibits and captivating programs provides the personal connection to marine life that inspires visitors of all ages to care for animals and for the oceans.

On behalf of the AZA, I respectfully request that you consider supporting the Oregon Coast Aquarium. This investment will provide countless learning experiences for the children of Oregon and ensure that this excellent community resource will continue to thrive and pursue its compelling conservation mission for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin L. Vehrs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "V".

Kristin L. Vehrs
Executive Director



February 18, 2019

Re: Support for the Oregon Coast Aquarium

To whom it may concern:

The Center for Geography Education in Oregon (C-GEO) is pleased to show support for the Oregon Coast Aquarium's (OCAq) master plan and education programming. As C-GEO's director, I have partnered with OCAq staff on creating and conducting educational programming. In my former position as the Director of Education at the Hatfield Marine Science Center, the Aquarium was an invaluable partner in our ocean literacy efforts, as well.

My experiences working with the OCAq staff has really helped me to understand the incredible value of their work in education and conservation, which goes far beyond simply reaching their visitors. For instance, the extensive publicity garnered by the Aquarium's animal rehabilitation efforts furthers their educational reach and messaging.

As a geography education organization, C-GEO is particularly supportive of the strategic priorities identified by the Oregon Coast Aquarium. They relate to improving and expanding their educational resources to include more geographic concepts, such as sense of place and fieldwork. OCAq is already recognized as a trusted resource for ocean education and conservation throughout the state. When these goals are achieved, they will serve as a significant investment in the future of Oregon.

I look forward to continued work with and support for the Oregon Coast Aquarium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancee Hunter', is written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Nancee Hunter

Director, Center for Geography Education in Oregon

(Previously, the Director of Education at the Hatfield Marine Science Center)

February 13, 2019

Governor Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

Travel Oregon's vision is a better life for all Oregonians through, strong, sustainable local economies. This includes enhancing economies throughout the state by helping communities better leverage the state's \$11.8 billion tourism industry. It also means working together for improved and upgraded facilities that enhance the visitor experience while also enriching Oregonians' quality of life.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is one of the highlights of the Oregon Coast. From sea otters to harbor seals to jelly fish to Tufted Puffins, many of us grew up learning about local fauna by exploring the aquarium with friends and family. As a key driver of the tourism industry, Travel Oregon strongly supports the Oregon Coast Aquarium and their recent capital campaign. Enhancing and improving the aquarium will result in long-term, sustainable benefits for visitors and locals alike.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is not only a mainstay of the community, but it's also a pillar in the tourism economy as it attracts more than 400,000 visitors annually, with 35 percent traveling there from out of state. This visitation contributes greatly to the local tourism industry on the Central Oregon Coast, where visitors spend \$788 million, resulting in more than 8,900 folks directly employed in the industry.

Funding for the Oregon Coast Aquarium will generate sustainable economic benefits by strengthening the local tourism industry and will improve local livability. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Todd Davidson
CEO, Travel Oregon

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE OF LINCOLN COUNTY

Strengthening Lincoln County's economy. Attracting and supporting primary jobs.

June 7, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County is pleased to offer unconditional support for the Oregon Coast Aquarium. Our Alliance has been actively providing economic development services to the county for over twenty years, and has worked closely with the aquarium since its inception at approximately the same time. The aquarium represents a unique and very valuable cultural asset. Its growth and expansion in functionality over the years reflects this. It is now a destination in its own right as it continues to beautify its landscape, provide educational experiences, and provide animal rehabilitation.

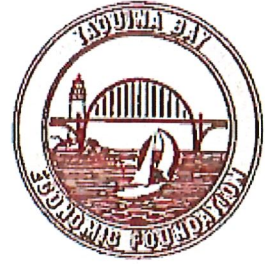
We understand that periodic improvements are necessary to modernize and upgrade the physical plant of such a large institution. The Community and Economic Development fund of Lincoln County has granted funds to the aquarium over the years. We urge others to do the same under the current fundraising campaign for capital and program improvements. Local support is strong and the community is highly involved in the workings of the aquarium. From the loyalty of staff and the large numbers of volunteers in every age range, the love and affection for the aquarium is evident. It is used for community events of all kinds.

The aquarium honors its visitors by its desire for the best and most professionally polished experience for them. We hope you will agree and support the fundraising campaign now underway.

Sincerely,



Caroline Bauman
Executive Director



May 21, 2018

*Stimulating economic growth
in the greater
Yaquina Bay region*

The Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation (YBEF) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(6) corporation formed in 1981 to encourage and promote growth and economic development in the greater Yaquina Bay region. Numbering nearly 40, YBEF's Directors represent a dynamic cross section of public and private sector business and community leaders throughout the Newport and Toledo area.

YBEF was instrumental in the concept and development of the Aquarium over 25 years ago. As one of YBEF's premium projects, the Aquarium was developed and supported by YBEF to help revitalize the local economy, draw tourism, facilitate ocean research and education.

The Aquarium brings more the 400,000 people through its doors each year and is consistently ranked one of the top ten aquariums in the nation. The Aquarium works collaboratively with OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center, NOAA, Oregon Coast Community College, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and many other key partners in marine science education. The Aquarium is an essential to Newport and surrounding communities in Lincoln County.

The members of YBEF strongly support the Aquarium's current fundraising campaign to enhance the current facility and programming so this legacy continues to thrive for the local community, the state of Oregon and beyond.

We strongly encourage foundations and philanthropists to support the Oregon Coast Aquarium's fundraising efforts and educational mission.

Sincerely,

Birgitte Ryslinge
President, Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation