

**Print**

**Community and Economic Development Grant Application FY2025-26 - Submission #2614**

**Date Submitted: 11/21/2025**

**Name of Applicant Organization\***

Oregon Coast STEM Hub

**Mailing Address\***

2030 SE Marine Science Drive

**City\***

Newport

**State\***

Oregon

**Zip Code\***

97365

**Person Completing the Application**

**Name\***

Kama Almasi

**Email Address\***

kama.almasi@oregonstate.edu

**Phone Number\***

5412721721

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**Name of Your Project\***

Blue Economy High School Internships: Building Lincoln County's Economy through Youth Workforce Development

**Total Project Budget\***

\$67,500

This includes all anticipated sources of funding

**Amount Requested from this Program\***

\$50,000

(max \$15k for STANDARD, \$50k for IMPACT)

**Location of Project Activities\***

Variety of locations, including Otter Rock, South Beach, Taft (LC), Toledo, Siletz, Waldport, Newport

Where in Lincoln County is your project happening?

**Pool of Funds Applying to\***

STANDARD (\$15K Max)  
 IMPACT (\$50K Max)

## Project Description\*

According to the Oregon Employment Department (OED), unemployment in Lincoln County reached 5.8% in August of 2025, as compared with a state rate of 5.0% and national rate of 4.3%. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 16% of Lincoln County's residents are below poverty level, and 22% of children are below poverty level.

A solution to address poverty rates is by supporting opportunities for youth to gain skills in high paying STEM jobs. The Oregon Coast STEM Hub (OCSH) aims to help develop economic strength in Lincoln County through workforce development of our youth in STEM fields in which students also interact with coastal visitors and community members. We believe that the project, if funded, would help economic development in Lincoln County in two ways:

1) Boost the economic earning power of Lincoln County youth by helping them develop employability and STEM skills needed for high-wage, high-demand STEM careers. By fostering a "grow your own" skilled workforce of local students in natural resources and the Blue Economy, our workforce becomes more sustainable. Research shows that when youth obtain high-skills jobs in communities to which they have a deep connection they are more likely to stay in the community. These experiences also help students develop self-confidence and a STEM identity, which will help them in college and future careers. The experience also allows students to build their resumes and support college and scholarship applications.

Examples of the many types of blue sector jobs include: Marine Engineering, the design and construction of marine and underwater systems or equipment (average annual salary of \$80,000, depending on whether the engineer has a graduate degree or not; can be much higher); Fisheries Biology, (salary can be highly variable, but with an average of about \$60,000); Shipbuilding, (salaries over \$50,000 without requiring a four-year degree, with even higher possible); Fishing, (widely varying salaries).

2) Support low capacity/high impact non-profit organizations with tourist engagement and natural resource management. Such non-profits are generally small with relatively limited income, but have a disproportionately large, positive impact in their sector.

The OCSH is one of thirteen state-supported STEM Hubs that are tasked by Oregon Legislature with reducing opportunity gaps for K-12 students who are underserved in STEM careers. Our STEM Hub accomplishes this with educator professional development and student programming. One of our main targets is to build student skills and understanding of their career options. This also serves to strengthen our coastal economies.

During the summer high school internships, students earn \$15 per hour and work 20-35 hours per week, for 8-10 weeks, depending on the host organization. We expect this grant will fund 8-13 student interns, depending on the number of hours and number of weeks the host organization requires of the students.

The Service Areas are spread throughout the county. We expect to fund internships with at least three organizations that work in the Blue Economy and Natural Resources sector. The following three organizations are interested, and if this proposal is funded, we will expand our partnerships with these and other organizations to help interns gain experience in natural resources and community/tourist engagement:

- Yakona Nature Preserve and Learning Center, based in South Beach, would train interns in estuary and coastal forest restoration, state park trails management, and outreach with summer visitors.
- Friends of Otter Rock, in Otter Rock, would train interns in outreach and education with summer tourists about tidepool ecosystems.
- Grow Lincoln County would train interns about nutrition and organic gardening, while students tend and maintain school and community food gardens in Lincoln City, Newport, Toledo, Waldport, and Siletz.

A successful project will be students with enhanced: self-confidence, employability skills, and tourists' understanding of the coastal environment. For specific measures, please see the Viability section below.

What is the project and what will it do for community and/or economic development? What tangible items or results will the project deliver? How will the success of this project be judged? IMPORTANT: This fund is not intended for staff or operations. Please describe the economic impact of the project and how it creates or retains jobs in the community.

**Funding\***

Our summer internship program began with seed money from an Oregon Community Foundation Ignite grant received in 2021. Since then, Oregon Coast STEM Hub has been building and expanding Career-Connected Learning opportunities in the Blue Economy through paid, high school internships. We have applied for two grants to fund internships in Coos and Curry Counties. For Lincoln County internships, we will be applying for a small grant (\$7,500) from Spirit Mountain Community Fund and have applied for a grant from Samaritan Health to fund a Healthcare Job Shadow program (not internships, but workforce development). We do not yet know whether any of these will be funded and have not applied for any that were not funded.

We also have leveraged funds for personnel costs to run this program. A STEM Hub Backbone Grant from Oregon Department of Education has been awarded for the 2025-27 biennium; this funds the staff necessary to work on this project. An Ignite Grant from 2021 has limited funds remaining and could fund 1-2 interns, if necessary. This Lincoln County grant would help us expand the project to serve more students.

If applicable, please describe the status of other funding sources you have applied for or intend to apply for, and indicate whether those funds have been awarded. Also, list any other funds for which you have applied but were not funded - how much did you ask for, from whom, and why was the application not funded?

**Collaboration\***

For this project, we will collaborate with a variety of partners, some of which will be determined later if funding is awarded. Current collaborations that we would like to maintain and expand support to are Friends of Otter Rock, Yakona Nature Preserve and Learning Center, and Grow Lincoln County. These three organizations are partners who train high school students in high-skills, career-connected internships in Natural Resources, Outreach, Ecology, and Gardening/Nutritional Health. We will also work closely with Lincoln County School District and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Education Department for recruitment and outreach to high school students.

If applicable, please list who you are collaborating with and why.

**Viability\***

If the project is funded, recruitment of student interns will begin in March, 2026. Student interns will begin work in June and work through the summer. If funds allow, some student interns may work during the school year, but in general, we expect internships to finish by the end of September. Reflections, data analysis, and project success determination will follow the end of the internships.

To evaluate the success of this project, we will:

- Administer pre- and post-surveys to students to gauge increases in self-confidence (STEM Identity) and in skills learned;
- Collect reflection essays from students upon completion of the grant;
- Ask host organizations to collect data on student demographics, level of interaction with public (when applicable), skill set development;
- Host organization reflections.

How will the success of this project be judged? State success measures and timeline. Will this project need ongoing funding? How will this be secured?

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**Desired Start Date\***

5/18/2026
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**Desired End Date\***

12/31/2026

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**Budget Documents\***

Youth Workforce Development Proposed Budget.pdf

Please submit as a PDF file - project budget only (not organizational budget)

**Letter(s) of Support**

Combined LOS for OCSH.pdf

At least one letter of support is required for an IMPACT application.

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**Name of Chief Executive\***

Heather Toro

**Title\***

Director of OSRAA Financial Management

**Chief Executive Email\***

OSRAA.Finance@oregonstate.edu

**Tax ID Number\***

61-1730890

**Type of Applicant Organization\***

Other Nonprofit

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Request to Lincoln County/EDALC</b>
Intern Hours Subject to OSU Indirect Rate	8-13 interns	39,682
Indirect Rate Between Lincoln County and OSU: 26%		10,318
<b>Total Request</b>		<b>50,000</b>



November 17, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Friends of Otter Rock, I am pleased to offer strong support for the Oregon Coast STEM Hub's proposal to fund paid high school internships focused on the blue and green economy. This initiative represents an important investment in our region's youth and in the long-term vitality of Oregon's coastal communities and ecosystems. Friends of Otter Rock is a community-based nonprofit organization that supports outreach and education for the Otter Rock Marine Reserve. We engage residents, visitors, and youth in learning about marine conservation, sustainable coastal practices, and stewardship of our nearshore environments. Providing young people with real-world experiences in science and sustainability is central to our mission and essential to preparing the next generation of coastal leaders.

Through this partnership, Friends of Otter Rock will host and mentor student interns who will serve as Tidepool Ambassadors at the Otter Rock Marine Reserve. These interns will engage directly with the public, teaching visitors about the tidepool ecosystem, marine life, and responsible recreation in protected areas. This hands-on experience builds valuable skills in science communication, leadership, and environmental stewardship—while fostering pride and connection to place. Interns also participate in data collection and submission for the following community science surveys: NOAA marine debris, WSU beached bird, MARINE sea star, and Oregon Shores CoastWatch.

Paid internships are critical for ensuring equitable access to career-connected learning. By compensating students for their work, this program enables participation from youth of all backgrounds and helps them develop both professional and personal confidence. Together, we are creating opportunities that strengthen local workforce pathways, support the blue and green economy, and encourage young people to remain engaged in their coastal communities.

Friends of Otter Rock wholeheartedly supports this proposal and the Oregon Coast STEM Hub's leadership in providing meaningful opportunities for coastal students. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and to seeing the positive impact it will have on our youth, our community, and our coast.

Sincerely,

Fawn Custer

Treasurer & Education Specialist

Friends of Otter Rock

[Treasurer@FriendsofOtterRock.org](mailto:Treasurer@FriendsofOtterRock.org)



11-15-25

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express our strong support for the Oregon Coast STEM Hub's proposal to fund paid high school internships focused on the blue and green economy. This program represents an important opportunity to empower youth through meaningful, place-based learning.

Grown Lincoln County is a community-based organization dedicated to supporting and maintaining school and community gardens throughout the Lincoln County School District. Our mission is to connect students and families to healthy, local food systems through hands-on education in gardening, nutrition, and environmental stewardship. We believe that experiential learning rooted in sustainability and community connection is powerful for students.

As part of this collaboration, Grown Lincoln County will host and mentor student interns who will help care for and maintain school gardens across the district. Interns will learn about plant science, soil health, and sustainable agriculture practices, while also engaging younger students in garden-based learning. In addition, they will gain experience teaching peers about the importance of healthy eating, local food production, and environmental responsibility. These skills align directly with the green economy and build pathways toward careers in agriculture, sustainability, public health, and education.

Paid internships are essential for ensuring that all students—regardless of financial background—can participate in meaningful career-connected learning experiences. This investment will help our interns develop valuable professional and life skills while making a tangible contribution to their schools and communities.

Grown Lincoln County wholeheartedly supports this proposal and the Oregon Coast STEM Hub's leadership in expanding opportunities for coastal youth. We look forward to partnering on this initiative and to helping cultivate the next generation of environmentally literate, community-minded leaders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renée Johnson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Renée Johnson, Executive Director  
Grow Lincoln County  
[renee@growlincolncounty.org](mailto:renee@growlincolncounty.org)



November 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Yakona Nature Preserve & Learning Center, I am writing to express our strong support for the Oregon Coast STEM Hub's proposal to fund paid high school internships focused on the blue and green economy. This initiative directly supports our shared goals of environmental stewardship, workforce development, and economic vitality in Lincoln County.

Yakona provides hands-on environmental education and stewardship experiences for youth and community members in Lincoln County. Our programs immerse participants in coastal ecosystems and foster understanding of the connections between healthy environments and sustainable communities. We are dedicated to cultivating the next generation of environmental leaders through experiential learning that links science, habitat restoration, and career exploration.

As part of this collaboration, Yakona will host and mentor student interns who will participate in habitat restoration, ecological research, and environmental monitoring projects throughout the summer. Interns will learn about a range of environmental and coastal stewardship careers—such as conservation science, habitat management, and natural resource restoration—while gaining practical field skills and professional experience. This work not only strengthens their academic and career readiness, but also contributes directly to the ecological health and resilience of our region.

By providing paid internships, this program ensures equitable access for all students and fosters a sense of local investment in the natural resources that sustain our economy. Building these skills in local youth is a critical step toward long-term economic development in Lincoln County, as it prepares a skilled, environmentally literate workforce capable of supporting our growing blue and green economy sectors.

Yakona is proud to partner with the Oregon Coast STEM Hub in this important initiative. We look forward to working together to inspire and equip young people to care for our coast, strengthen our community, and build a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Natalie Schaefer, Executive Director

[natalie@yakonaoregon.org](mailto:natalie@yakonaoregon.org)

805-674-3784

214 SW Coast Highway | Newport, OR 97365  
Yakona Nature Preserve, EIN 82-2403781 | Yakona Learning Center, EIN 88-3696351