

# RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

### RURAL FELLOWS ORGANIZE FOR SAFE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Our inaugural **Rural Organizing Fellowship** brought together and supported 10 leaders to expand the rural movement for justice in their own communities. Some of this year's powerful fellowship projects included:

- The creation of **Oregon HORSE** (Heritage Organizations for Rural Social Equity), a growing network of 6 museums that are publicly committed to being safe and welcoming places for all community members and to generate conversations about justice, equity, and access for all.
- In Umatilla County, Latinx organizers formed **Raíces**, a group focused on organizing for immigrant rights and supporting the growth of powerful new community leaders. This Spring, Raíces got out the vote to defend

Oregon's sanctuary law and pass Driver's Licenses For All.

- Community leaders formed **Unite Warm Springs** and created Awareness Through Art, a program that uses traditional and modern art forms to aid in the process of restorative justice and healing for tribal members involved in the parole and probation system.
- In Klamath County, two new groups formed: **Rainbow Falls** is working to build power for the LGBTQ+ community, and the **Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Committee** is advancing conversations about racial justice and equity in the Klamath basin.



- Students at Central Oregon Community College formed the campus **Dreamers' Club**, a place for documented and undocumented students to build connections, share resources, and advocate for just policies for undocumented students on and off campus.

**WE CAN'T WAIT TO WELCOME THE NEXT GROUP OF RURAL ORGANIZING FELLOWS IN 2020!**

**MORE INFO AND APPLICATIONS AT [ROP.ORG/FELLOWSHIP](http://ROP.ORG/FELLOWSHIP)**

### DEMANDING AN END TO DETENTION AND DEPORTATION

Rural Oregonians **Break the ICE!**

We are pushing back against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to defend community members from detention and deportation.

When **Yamhill and Clatsop County** groups heard that ICE was detaining people at their courthouses, human dignity groups mobilized legal observers to track ICE activity. Their sustained actions documenting ICE's violations of constitutional rights is part of a statewide strategy to prevent ICE from accessing our courthouses.

**Linn and Benton County** leaders are launching a monthly mobile clinic staffed by lawyers and trained volunteers. Their pro bono services will prevent detention



and deportation by providing legal assistance to local immigrants and asylum-seekers pursuing paths to citizenship.

When ICE detained multiple **Umatilla County** community members on their way to work, groups quickly mobilized to provide Know Your Rights resources to workers, dispel ongoing rumors, and hosted a workshop on how to defend against deportation. This convening brought together people from across the county to develop strategies on how to intervene when ICE violates our constitutional rights.

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION



**WE MOBILIZED IN EVERY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IN THE STATE**

Rural Oregon showed up to pass equitable legislation that makes our communities more safe and welcoming

for all. We packed the steps of the capital in support of driver's licenses for every Oregonian regardless of documentation status. We testified in support of paid family leave. We mobilized in every legislative district in

the state, collecting thousands of postcards, making hundreds of phone calls, and organizing dozens of in-person meetings.

**We saw results!** In Central Oregon a legislator changed their position and voted in favor of Driver's Licenses for All after we exerted consistent pressure on them.

### RURAL OREGON SAYS NO TO WHITE POWER

As white power groups move from the margins to the mainstream, rural leaders are fighting back.

When the community of **Cave Junction** woke up to discover

"KKK" spray-painted in bright red all over their town, neighbors immediately joined together to remove the white supremacist symbols.

ROP worked with city leadership to develop a response, including a powerful statement denouncing white supremacy.

After 2018's opening of a neo-Nazi knife shop on Main Street in



**Cottage Grove**, the newly formed group, Cottage Grove Community United, organized fellow students, educators, and business owners to respond. After hosting packed

interfaith conversations on racial justice, coordinating antiracism workshops, and organizing sustained pressure from the community,

Cottage Grove celebrated the closure of the storefront in 2019 with a "That's The Way The Cookie Crumbles" cookie potluck. Cottage Grove Community United continues to organize for racial justice and equity.



Community leaders in Lebanon, Cottage Grove, and Klamath Falls participated in **Democracy at Work in Rural Oregon: Demystifying Budgeting for Local Changemakers** workshops to learn how to strategically engage in the budgeting process at the

city, school board, and county levels. Inspired by a strategy session at the annual Rural Caucus and Strategy Session, these workshops broke down the basics of local budgets and empowered participants to organize in their own communities for local budgets that truly fund local priorities.

**BUDGETS ARE MORAL DOCUMENTS!**

# RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT IS A NETWORK OF 65 AUTONOMOUS GROUPS BUILDING POWER ACROSS RURAL OREGON.

**THIS YEAR WE HAD 16 NEW GROUPS JOIN OUR NETWORK**

**ROP member groups take action year-round for human dignity and democracy. Across the state, our network of local human dignity groups represent 30 of Oregon's 36 counties and one tribal community.**

<p><b>BENTON</b> Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism Community Action for Racial Equity Mid-Valley Race Matters at 1st Congregational UCC Rapid Action Community Response Veterans for Peace Chapter 132, Linus Pauling Chapter</p>	<p><b>DOUGLAS</b> Support for Asylum Seekers and Immigrants</p> <p><b>GILLIAM</b> Rural Voices</p> <p><b>GRANT</b> Grant County Positive Action Blue Sage Ministries</p> <p><b>HARNEY</b> Blue Sage Ministries</p> <p><b>HOOD RIVER</b> Columbia Gorge Women's Action Network Gorge Ecumenical Ministries / Somos Uno Hood River County Rapid Response Team Hood River Latino Network</p> <p><b>JACKSON</b> Peace House Veterans for Peace Rogue Valley Chapter 156</p> <p><b>JEFFERSON</b> Central Oregon PFLAG Jefferson Positive Action Group</p> <p><b>KLAMATH</b> Klamath Think and Drink Peace Reading Group Social Justice Committee at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Klamath County</p> <p><b>LAKE</b> Indivisible Lake County</p>	<p><b>LANE</b> Blackberry Pie Society Community Alliance Of Lane County/ Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect Community Rights Lane County Cottage Grove Community United Deadwood Resists Eugene Democratic Socialists of America Florene ORganizes Springfield-Eugene SURJ Stand for Peace Support for Asylum Seekers and Immigrants</p> <p><b>LINCOLN</b> Acompañar Central Oregon Coast Chapter of the National Organization for Women Lincoln County People Power PFLAG of the Oregon Central Coast</p> <p><b>LINN</b> Albany Peace Seekers Community Action for Racial Equity Mid-Valley Linn County Rapid Response Coalition Rural Oregon Progressives</p> <p><b>MARION</b> Silverton Progressives</p> <p><b>MORROW</b> Rural Voices</p> <p><b>POLK</b> Polk Communities for Human Equality Polk Rapid Response Team Unidos Club at WOU</p>	<p><b>TILLAMOOK</b> Tillamook Alliance</p> <p><b>UMATILLA</b> Economic Community for Healthy Opportunities Raíces</p> <p><b>UNION</b> Oregon Rural Action Racial Justice in Eastern Oregon</p> <p><b>WASCO</b> Gorge ICE Resistance NORCOR Community Resources Coalition POP/The Dalles Indivisible Wasco County Rapid Response Team</p> <p><b>WASHINGTON</b> Adelante Mujeres North Plains Grassroots</p> <p><b>WHEELER</b> Rural Voices</p> <p><b>YAMHILL</b> Progressive Yamhill Unidos Bridging Community West Valley Advocates</p>
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## RURAL CAUCUS AND STRATEGY SESSION

Over 140 organizers from 25 counties across rural and frontier Oregon convened this spring in Cottage Grove for the 27th annual **Rural Caucus and Strategy Session**. Together we exchanged ideas from our own communities and created organizing plans for the next year. Conversations included hometown strategies to challenge detention and deportation, aligning local budgets with our values, expanding rural community media, and more!

## RURAL ROOTS RISING

At our rural Caucus, community members raised concerns that across rural Oregon local media sources are getting sold to faraway corporations and reflecting less and less of what matters most to us. So we have created the **Rural Media Center** to share stories, lessons, and messages through a variety of media channels. Our inaugural project is **Rural Roots Rising**, a monthly podcast by and for rural Oregonians who are creatively and courageously building stronger and more vibrant communities for a just democracy. Visit [ruralrootsrising.org](http://ruralrootsrising.org) to listen in and get involved!



## COMMUNITY ORGANIZING CENTER

**ROP has officially opened our Community Organizing Center on Main Street in Cottage Grove!** Equipped with an open area for gatherings, a large-scale kitchen, a seating area for living room conversations, a projection and sound system for movie nights, and an organizing library, the building is a community space for groups in Lane and Douglas counties. The Community Organizing Center also serves as a location for the convening of human dignity leaders from across the state. In the months and years ahead we will be transforming the building into a space where we can build relationships across communities, learn from each other's local organizing victories, and build statewide strategy.



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