

BCCC Cultural Plan
Revised January 2016

Strengthening the Arts, Heritage & Humanities in
Benton County, Oregon



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Table of Contents

Oregon Cultural Trust: History	2
Benton County: History & Background	3
The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Vision and Mission Statements	4
The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Membership.....	5
The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Activities.....	6
The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Grant Procedures.....	7
Appendix.....	11

Oregon Cultural Trust: History

The Oregon Cultural Trust distributes funds to county and tribal coalitions, including the Benton County Cultural Coalition, in support of art, culture and humanities at the local level.

July 2001: OCT is founded by Oregon legislature in a near unanimous vote on HB2923 authorizing the cultural tax credit, cultural license plate and the ability to transfer state assets to build the cultural trust.

July 2013: Oregon legislature renews the cultural tax credit for six more years, until 2020, the maximum renewal that is allowed, giving the Trust a vote of confidence to continue its good work.

Today:

The Cultural Trust is statewide, supporting 41 county cultural and tribal coalitions. These counties and tribal coalitions then sub-grant to local art, culture and heritage projects.

The Oregon Cultural Trust's mission is to lead in building an environment in which cultural organizations are sustained and valued as a core part of Oregon's vibrant communities and economy. OCT distributes over \$1.5 million a year in competitive grants to nonprofits across Oregon.

By this time, over 24,000 Oregonians have given to the Trust, which in turn has granted over 1,000 grants totaling over \$14 million. The Cultural Trust distributes \$.42 of each donor dollar in grants and puts \$.58 away in a permanent cultural fund for Oregon, now over \$20 million and growing, so that future generations may experience Oregon culture as we do today.

All Oregonians can be a part of this vision by supporting any of 1300 eligible cultural non-profits, matching those gifts with a gift to the Trust, and taking Oregon's generous and unique state cultural tax credit: up to \$500 per individual, \$1,000 per household and \$2500 per Class C corporation.

The roles and responsibilities of the Trust in relation to the County Cultural Coalitions are:

- 1) To provide clear program guidelines and reporting procedures
- 2) To support the development of cultural plans with revisions every five years
- 3) To award funds
- 4) To provide technical assistance; facilitate information sharing between coalitions
- 5) To provide staffing

Cultural Trust License Plates

Income from sales of the cultural license plate benefits the Trust program. The cultural plate is available in any DMV office or by mail. The plate features a painting by northwest artist Kelly Kievit, selected in open competition. The abstract color field was chosen to represent the diversity and vibrancy of Oregon culture.

Cultural Trust License Plate Cost: \$54 per set (\$30 surcharge + \$24 plate fee). The \$30 surcharge is due at issuance and at every renewal. It is the same for both two-year and four-year (new vehicle) registration periods. Available for Passenger Vehicles. The Trust receives 100% of \$30 surcharge for the plate and revenue from the culture plates averages about \$30,000 month.

Benton County: History & Background

Established in 1847, Benton County has had a long tradition of supporting arts, heritage, and the humanities. With a heritage that dates back to the time of the Kalapuya Indians before the first European settlers arrived in 1845, Benton County has played an important role in the history of the state and region. The county seat, Corvallis, was an important early commercial center and was briefly the state's capitol in 1855.

Located at the confluence of the Willamette and Marys Rivers, Corvallis developed into a regional trading center and became a major stop on the Applegate Trail. In 1868, Corvallis College was designated the “agricultural college” of the State of Oregon, a land grant college under the Morrill Act, and became Oregon's first state institution of public higher education. In 1879, the development of the railroad through Corvallis spurred further growth.

Outside Corvallis, other communities emerged in the 19th century, including Alpine, Alsea, Bellfountain, Blodgett, Irish Bend, Kings Valley, Monroe, Philomath, Summit, and Wren. Most of these communities were centers of agriculture and/or logging. Adair Village, primarily a “bedroom community,” developed after the Adair Air Force station closed in 1969, and is one of the county's five incorporated cities, along with Corvallis, Monroe, Philomath, and part of Albany.

Today, Benton County's economy is diverse, based upon higher education, technology, agriculture, forest products, and other light industries. Good Samaritan Hospital and surrounding medical facilities in Corvallis comprise a major regional medical center.

Benton County residents enjoy a wealth of cultural and creative activities promoted by many organizations representing a wide variety of interests in the arts and humanities. Interest in the heritage of our people, from Native Americans to more recent arrivals, is strong. With the development of Oregon State University, Corvallis has become a hub for cultural activity and diversity. Opportunities to participate abound in nearly every community within Benton County, and we constantly strive to strengthen and increase those opportunities.

In spite of the evolution of such a strong and diverse cultural base, reduced funding for all aspects of the arts, heritage and humanities has jeopardized the continuation of many of the county's programs and innovative potential.

In recognition of the serious threats to culture and creativity throughout the state of Oregon, the 2001 Oregon Legislature passed the Oregon Cultural Trust Act. The trust was created to support and maintain existing cultural resources, to provide encouragement and support for new cultural efforts, and to expand public awareness of culture and to increase opportunities for participation. The overriding goal of the Trust is to ensure that Oregon's cultural resources are strong and to make dynamic contributions to the quality of life and future of every Oregonian.

The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Vision and Mission Statements

VISION:

The Benton County Cultural Coalition seeks to promote an active cultural life throughout Benton County with high quality art, culture and heritage experiences that are accessible to everyone.

MISSION:

The Benton County Cultural Coalition exists:

- 1) To distribute funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations (or individuals who partner with a fiscal non-profit sponsor) in Benton County, Oregon, thereby strengthening art, heritage and humanities programming.
- 2) To increase donations to the Oregon Cultural Trust through public awareness of how the Trust operates and benefits the citizens of Benton County.
- 3) To increase the number of Benton County cultural non-profits registered with the Oregon Cultural Trust. A financial gift to one or more of these qualifying nonprofit organizations followed by a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust allows a donor to claim a tax credit.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COUNTY COALITION IN RELATION TO THE OREGON CULTURAL TRUST:

- 1) Re-grant funds from OCT to local non-profits based upon our Cultural Plan.
- 2) Serve as local ambassadors for the Oregon Cultural Trust; at minimum, each coalition member should fully understand the Oregon tax credit that is given when people donate to a local cultural non-profit and then also make a matching donation to the Trust.
- 3) Although not required, some Coalitions offer grant writing workshops and/or award receptions.
- 4) Coalitions that are registered as 501(c)(3) organizations may also focus on fund raising for additional art & culture projects within their counties, or raise additional monies for OCT. The Benton County Cultural Coalition is not an independent 501(c)(3) and is therefore not eligible to raise additional funds. Benton County government serves as the fiscal non-profit sponsor of the Benton County Cultural Coalition.

The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Membership

Membership

The Benton County Cultural Coalition consists of thirteen Benton County resident volunteers who represent three major aspects of Benton Culture: art, heritage and humanities.

We strive to maintain a minimum of six seats of coalition members who are non-Corvallis residents, representing the rural areas of our county.

The term of membership is two years with the possibility of two successive re-appointments for a maximum of six years of volunteer service to BCCC.

New members are solicited from all of Benton County through an annual call for membership via our Listserv, Facebook page and word of mouth. Member Interest Forms are submitted online at our website. New members are selected and voted in by the Coalition.

Executive Committee

Officers of the Coalition are elected by Coalition members and consist of:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson, Grant Committee Lead
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The chair presides over Coalition meetings and activities; in the absence of the chair, the Grant Committee lead presides. The Secretary and Treasurer are responsible for all minutes and financial records respectively. The Vice Chair/Grant Lead is responsible for leading the Grant Committee.

Committees

- Grant Committee: Responsible for guiding grant applicants through the BCCC grant process from Letters of Intent through to the submission of their Final Grant Report. Files the Coalition Summary Report with the Oregon Cultural Trust each January.
- Communication Committee: Publicizes call for Letters of Intent. Announces Grant Awards. Responsible for the promotion of BCCC and OCT. Encourages Benton County non-profits to register as Cultural Non-Profits with the Oregon Cultural Trust.
- Membership: Facilitates board recruiting to assure that BCCC remains fully staffed.

Conflict of Interest

All members are to abide by the Conflict of Interest Policy. See Appendix.

The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Activities

Grants Awarded

From 2005 – 2016 the BCCC has awarded over \$131,400 in grants to promote the arts, heritage and humanities in Benton County. More than thirty-five organizations or individuals have received grants. For a full listing of the grants that have been funded through the years, please visit the Grant History page of our website, <http://bentonculture.org>

Grant Writing Workshop & Networking Event

In 2009, BCCC offered its first Grant Writing Workshop. The event provides guidance and answers questions about the BCCC grant application process. It has evolved into a networking opportunity for Benton County art and culture organizations as well as an opportunity for applicants to describe their proposals.

Outreach: Promotion of Donations to the Oregon Cultural Trust

We encourage Benton County residents to make contributions to the Oregon Cultural Trust, particularly with end of year giving. In addition to financial donations, we continue to feel proud of the number Benton County drivers who purchase and display Cultural Trust license plates.

Website & Facebook Page

We maintain a website for the purpose of providing public information and education pertaining to both the Benton County Cultural Coalition and the Oregon Cultural Trust. We also manage a BCCC Facebook page where we promote the activities of our Coalition.

Urban Storefront Window Display

In the Fall of 2012, our Communication Committee reserved a 2-week opportunity to promote the activities of the BCCC and donations to the Oregon Cultural Trust in a prominent downtown Corvallis store. We continue to challenge ourselves to come up with an annual eye catching display that highlights the impact of our efforts throughout Benton County.

Award Reception

In 2008, the BCCC included a public presentation of grant checks in a public hearing that was held as a part of its Cultural Plan revision process. This evolved into an annual award reception showcasing the efforts of our grant recipients. For several of those years, the BCCC also elected to present Contribution to Culture awards to acknowledge the efforts of individuals who dedicate numerous volunteer hours on behalf of art, heritage and culture within our County.

Visibility & Getting to Know Our County

We are true to our goals of having member representation from various geographic locations within our county and enjoy holding our meetings throughout Benton County.

The Benton County Cultural Coalition: Grant Procedures

Funds are allocated annually from the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Benton County Board of Commissioners, with a base of \$6,000 with additional money based on population.

In late August, BCCC completes the OCT Participation Agreement. The Benton County page of the OCT website & account information is also updated. It is usually the Chairperson who does this but it may be any member of the Exec Committee or the Webmaster.

The Benton County Board of Commissioners allocates these funds (less the 5% administration fee for serving as the fiscal non-profit sponsor) in late September. Either the BCCC Chairperson or a member of the Exec Committee signs the Cultural Participation Grant Agreement with the Benton County budget officer to secure these funds for distribution.

New Fiscal Year Grant Cycle:

Note: Samples of all on-line forms, letters etc. will be found in the Cultural Plan Appendix. Applicants will find them on-line at www.bentonculture.org

The BCCC accepts Letters of Intent from August 1 – September 10 each year via the on-line form at www.bentonculture.org

Upon reviewing the Letters of Intent, the Grant Committee invites those who meet criteria and best support the vision of BCCC to submit a Grant Application from October 1st to October 31st. Those who are declined are also notified by the Grant Committee via e-mail with encouragement to re-apply the following year.

The Benton County Cultural Coalition hosts a Grant Workshop & Networking event in early October. Quite often the event is held at the Benton County Historical Museum. Those who have been invited to submit a full Grant Application are invited to attend. Applicants learn more about the BCCC and OCT, and enjoy a relaxed social atmosphere with plenty of opportunity for networking. Questions about the grant process and on-line form are answered.

Full Grant Applications are accepted online October 1 through October 31. The Grant Committee meets to review applications and presents the slate of candidates to the full coalition board at its November 15th meeting (set with discretion for weekend) The Grant Committee notifies those receiving grant awards as well as those who have been declined within two days.

The Treasurer submits the list of recipients along with the TAX ID's (for the non-profit or their fiscal non-profit sponsor) to the Benton County budget officer by December 5th. BCCC must receive a signed Grant Agreement by December 15th.

Upon receipt, the Treasurer either presents checks at the award reception or mails checks to grant recipients along with the instruction sheet for completing the Final Grant Report which is due within 30 days of project completion.

Taken into consideration:

- BCCC funds 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations or those who declare a Fiscal Non-Profit Sponsor and are geographically located in Benton County, Oregon.
- Is the proposal describing an innovative, new experience? or Does it provide sustainability for a cultural champion?
- Does the project or event serve a unique population which may not have routine access to art and cultural events? or Will the general public be able to attend at zero to minimal out-of-pocket expense?
- How well will the proposed project serve its targeted participants?
- Is BCCC funding a balance of urban and rural projects as well as a balance of art, heritage and cultural projects and events? Are funds being distributed throughout Benton County?
- Is the non-profit a first time applicant?
- If an applicant has been funded in the last year or in previous years, did they utilize the BCCC and OCT logos within their publicity materials? Was their Final Grant Report submitted within 30 days of project/event completion? Are they a registered Participating Cultural Non-profit with the Oregon Cultural Trust?

Our policy is to fully fund grant requests each cycle.

Grant funds are distributed with the intent to fully fund projects. Most applicants will receive the full amount of their grant request. Some applicants will receive zero funding and will be encouraged to re-apply again for the next fiscal year grant cycle. One applicant may receive an amount smaller than their request simply due to the numerical remainder that we have left available to give.

- BCCC has openly received feedback that the majority of groups prefer to either be fully funded or not funded rather than somewhere in the middle.
- We trust grant applicants to ask for what they need and respect that they are working hard to function within our time lines as well as their own project and event time lines.
- Fully funded projects have demonstrated more timely submissions of their Grant Agreements and Final Grant Reports.
- Tracking grant funds, as required for the Oregon Cultural Trust, is simplified when all of the funds are well utilized and we have a reasonable number of grants to manage throughout the year. This is particularly helpful when it comes time to file our annual report with the Oregon Cultural Trust.

BCCC adheres to the project benchmarks that have been identified by the Oregon Cultural Trust:

- 1) **Build Organization or Individual Capacity:** Projects that have as a main goal to strengthen the capacity of an organization or individual to do the work they do in art, heritage or humanities; this includes but is not limited to buying new equipment, purchasing uniforms, hiring an employee.
- 2) **Improve or Preserve Structures:** Projects that have as a main goal to preserve or improve a structure i.e.: a storefront, school, historic bank, heritage site.
- 3) **Increase Participation In and Access To Culture:** Projects that have as a main goal to increase participation and access to culture for all Oregonians; this includes but is not limited to increasing diversity of participants and/or creating plans that include all community members.
- 4) **Public Art:** Projects that seek to place art in public and community environments.
- 5) **Lifelong Learning:** Projects that target adults and senior citizens as program participants; this includes but is not limited to adult music programs, art, heritage or cultural programs for adults & senior citizens, etc.
- 6) **Stories/Oral Traditions:** Programs with the main goal of sharing stories in the oral tradition.
- 7) **Cultural Tourism:** Projects and events that promote cultural tourism.
- 8) **Youth:** Any project that is youth related, specifically those for children in grades K-12; it may be partnering with or created by a school; however, to be a youth-focused project, school affiliation is not required.
- 9) **Economic Development:** For projects that have as a main goal to improve the economy of their community; this includes but is not limited to seeding organizations, encouraging investment in culture, main street projects, preservation for the sake of increasing commercial traffic to area businesses.

Grant Reporting:

Final Grant Reports for grant recipients of the previous grant cycle are due within 30 days of project completion or by August 31.

Any unused funds must be returned by check made payable to the Benton County Cultural Coalition, and must be submitted along with the Final Grant Report.

Grantees who wish to apply for funds in the next grant cycle must complete current year projects and submit a Final Grant Report by August 31st in order to be considered.

If a project will not complete by August 31st, a group must file an Interim Report by August 31st for an extension. All Final Grant Reports are due by 11:59pm on December 31st.

Two years is the maximum time limit for project completion. If a project has not completed within two years, a representative from the funded organization must meet with the BCCC Executive Committee to determine a resolution.

The Grant Committee maintains a file for each grant recipient which includes their Letter of Intent, IRS Letter of Determination, Grant Application, signed Grant Agreement and Final Grant Report. Files shall be maintained for a maximum of 3 years following completion of the BCCC Coalition Summary Report to the Oregon Cultural Trust.

Upon approval by the coalition, Members of the Grant Committee file the BCCC Coalition Summary Report with the Oregon Cultural Trust as instructed each year. (Late January)