

City of Florence Economic Development Report



2020 - 2021

City of Florence
A City in Motion

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Friends & Business Leaders,

2020 has been a year of growth, unprecedented challenge, and incredible resilience. Through it all, we have stood with you in commitment to the health and wellbeing of our City.

Our business community has continued to invest and have found new ways to innovate, our tourism-focused businesses has continued to pivot while welcoming visitors safely, and our creative sector has found new ways to spread joy virtually. Our citizens' compassion for each other has never ceased to inspire.

As we have worked through the last year and we move into the future, the City of Florence's economic development staff have diligently worked to support the local business community. By providing PPE to over 200 local businesses, working with agency partners to promote small business grant programs, and advocating on the state level for business needs in our community, the Economic Development staff has been here to support Florence's business economy.

Moving into future, the City of Florence is committed to supporting existing businesses, driving investment, and retaining and creating quality jobs in our community. We will work with our tourism partners to promote the City as a destination for business and travel. We will continue to support the recovery of small businesses and communicate with you and tell authentic stories that celebrate the fabric of our community.

We cannot do this work without our City's partners, stakeholders, and business leaders. We as a community care about one another and the people who work each day to make Florence Oregon's premiere coastal community. Together, we will continue to work to make Florence a *City in Motion*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "John A. ...". The signature is fluid and cursive.



A Year in Review:

In celebration of International Economic Development Week, the City of Florence wanted to take a moment and celebrate the economic development initiatives and investments that the City of Florence launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn. When reviewing the last year, there were four clear themes in the projects that the City of Florence undertook since March 2020:

Financial Assistance

Communication & Outreach

Advocacy & Coordination

Innovative Projects

Thanks to a shared sense of teamwork and dedication by staff, volunteers, and partner agencies, the City of Florence was able to support our business community over the last fourteen months. The City leveraged \$90,000 in funding to provide over \$800,000 in support by way of grants for local businesses, relief for childcare programs, and other unique opportunities to support the business community and workforce of Florence.



Economic Development Week:

Economic Development Week is a week sponsored by the International Economic Development Council to increase awareness of local programs that create jobs, advance career development opportunities, and improve the quality of life in communities everywhere.



Financial Assistance:

Emergency Business Grants:

Starting in March 2020 and continuing throughout 2020, the City of Florence worked with partners like Business Oregon, the State's economic development agency, Community LendingWorks, a community development financial institution (CDFI) based out of Eugene, and Lane County to provide over \$500,000 of grants to local businesses. The City of Florence was able to leverage additional funding by Business Oregon by **investing \$25,000** of CARES Act funding into the Business Grant Program.



	Number of Florence Businesses Awarded	Total Amount Rewarded	Total Percentage of funding round going to Florence Businesses
Round 1	1	\$30,000	6.8%
Round 2	13	\$33,500	15.3%
Round 3	0	0	0%
Round 4	14	\$108,000	11%
Round 5	12	\$76,529	12%
Round 6	20	\$322,500	8%
Total Awards:	60	\$571,029	

Utility Relief Program:

At the March 23rd meeting of the Florence City Council, the City Council voted to declare an emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the emergency declaration including creating a policy to not send shut-off notices or shut off water due to nonpayment of unpaid utility bills. However, the City Council went one step further at their September 21, 2020 meeting when they **invested \$40,000** of CARES Act funding to create an Utility Relief Program, which was administered in partnership with Siuslaw Outreach Services.

\$14,109
Total Utility Bills Paid



61
Households Assisted

Communication & Outreach:

THE FLORENCE FOUR

A Weekly Business Resource Newsletter

<https://www.ci.florence.or.us/economicdevelopment>

Florence Four, Weekly Business Resource Newsletter:

In March 2020, the City of Florence Economic Development staff created the Florence Four, a once-a-week business resource newsletter that features four pieces of information that are the most important for the business community to know.

Over 52%

Percentage of subscribers that are **moderately** or **highly** engaged with weekly editions

877

Subscribers

48

Issues

200+

Resources Shared

General Business Support:

RAIN
OREGON

Oregon RAIN has supported businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, helping them pivot their business plans, access government funding and learn about new virtual ways to market their business. The City of Florence biannually supports Oregon RAIN with a **\$15,000 investment** to ensure that all of Oregon RAIN's programming and mentorship opportunities are available to all Florence businesses and entrepreneurs.

\$172,667

Funds Leveraged

63

Virtual Events
Hosted

26

Businesses
Assisted

Advocacy & Coordination

Florence Economic Task Force

In March of 2020, the City of Florence's Economic Development staff convened economic development partners from the region to meet on a weekly basis to coordinate the economic response and work on mutual goals. The Task Force is comprised of twelve different agencies that are involved in different aspects of Florence's economic success.

With assistance from Rural Development Initiatives' Business Retention and Expansion program, the Task Force was able to identify three main concerns in the business community that the Task Force will continue to collaborate on solutions for. These three concerns are; business financial literacy and tech challenges, business communication and outreach, and workforce development & education.



Florence Economic Task Force Members

- City of Florence Economic Development dept.
- Lane Community College - Florence Branch
- South Coast Development Council
- Lane County Economic Development dept.
- Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lane WorkSource
- Oregon RAIN
- Oregon Coast Visitors Association
- Lane Small Business Development Center
- Community & Economic Development Committee



Regional Coordination

In addition to the Florence Economic Task Force, the City of Florence's Economic Development partners continue to coordinate and advocate for Florence's small business community at the regional, state and federal levels.

City Staff attend weekly, biweekly, and monthly meetings with agencies in Lane, Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, and discuss important issues with members of the State and Federal legislative representatives.

In addition, the City of Florence also sits on the board of the South Coast Development Council, a non-profit that promotes economic development, job creation, encourages new investment, and enhancing the economic vitality of the central and southern Oregon Coast region.



Innovative Projects:

Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Small Businesses:

The City of Florence, in partnership with Business Oregon, distributed PPE to Florence-area small businesses in August, December, January, and April. The PPE was purchased by the State of Oregon and distributed to local “depots” for distribution. Businesses signed up on the City’s website and could receive an allotment at every distribution date.

In 2020 and 2021, **the City of Florence will distribute over \$135,000 of PPE** to local area businesses at no cost to the business.



What Does \$135,000 of PPE Look Like?

- 80,000 disposable masks
- 1,940 boxes of disposable gloves
- 6,240 packages of disinfectant wipes
- 2,200 cans of aerosol sanitizing spray
- 433 gallons of hand sanitizer
- 323 touchless thermometers
- 125 automatic hand sanitizer stands



How Many Businesses Received PPE?

Over 250 small businesses received PPE in the Florence-area. Because the PPE was purchased by the State, businesses from outside of Florence’s city limits could partake in this program. Businesses from Mapleton, Dunes City and unincorporated Lane County participated. Overall, **over 1,500 employees benefited** from the PPE distribution. The **average business that participated had 6.2 employees**, which is considered a microenterprise by the Small Business Administration.

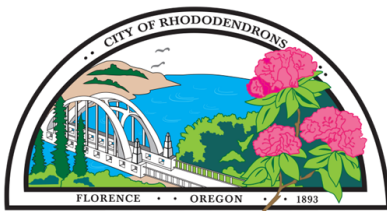
The City of Florence was able to support local non-profits with the PPE, which was able to benefit over 450 routine volunteers.



Innovative Projects:

Investment in Childcare for Florence's Workforce:

The City of Florence, through a partnership with the Tykeson Family Foundation and United Way of Lane County, was able to **leverage a \$10,000 investment** in the Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane County into a **\$30,000 grant program**. The City's investment was able to provide 100% scholarships for 9 families, 64% scholarships for two families and reduce the weekly cost for all families that attend the Boys and Girls Club by \$25 dollars per week, 43% of which are A.L.I.C.E families (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). This investment in the Boys and Girls Club is an investment in the City's workforce. When children have a safe, welcoming environment to be at, their parents and guardians can be part of the workforce.



City of Florence

A City in Motion



ACHIEVING DREAMS

Environmental Aide Program Scholarships:

The City of Florence received a **\$36,000 grant** to provide scholarships for local-area workforce to complete the Environmental Services Aide (ESA) program through Lane Community College. The ESA program has two tracks; one specifically designed for people in the healthcare industry and one that's designed for people in the restaurant, retail and hospitality field. These programs take between 8-18 hours to complete and are completely online.

Lane Community College created this program after being called upon by the Bureau of Labor & Industries at the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Innovative Projects:

Creation of Outdoor Plaza on Siuslaw River Boardwalk:

The City of Florence received a \$44,361 grant from Travel Oregon, the State's Tourism Commission through their Destination Ready Grant program. This program was designed to financially support shovel ready projects that were COVID-19 appropriate, aid in economic recovery, enhance local livability, and provide access to a diversity of explorers. The City applied to create an outdoor seating plaza on the Port of Siuslaw's boardwalk and installing additional equipment along Bay Street.

By the end of Summer 2021, Florence residents and visitors will be able to enjoy new picnic tables, benches and bike racks along the Port of Siuslaw's boardwalk, as well as dispose of their trash, and safely lock their bikes up in additional equipment along the Old Town corridor.



Expansion of Outdoor Seating for Restaurants:

At the advent of the Spring, the City of Florence heard from restaurants across the City about the need to expand their seating options. Many restaurants had outdoor seating opportunities already, but some along Bay Street did not. Because of the guidelines by the State of Oregon, restaurants were not able to seat customers at more than 25% capacity, which limited significantly how many people a restaurant could serve at a time.

The City of Florence created an expansion of Outdoor Seating program that allowed restaurants to expand into normal parking spaces, or expand into the vehicular right-of-way, taking over the parking lane on Bay Street to create more seating for their customers. Coordinated by the Economic Development department, the creation of this program took effort from every single department at the City of Florence.



Connect with Us!



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