

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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RE: Community Services Consortium COVID Response

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## **Community Services Consortium Impact: Responding to the Need of COVID-19**

This month, an additional \$2.5 million in COVID Rent Relief funding is coming to Community Services Consortium (CSC)—a Community Action Agency providing assistance with housing, utilities, food, education, employment and more. Once received, they will reopen their program to qualifying households in Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties that are at least one month behind in rent due to the pandemic.

In 2020, CSC provided over \$3.7 million to the community in rental assistance for households that were financially impacted by COVID-19. Of that, more than 2,100 individuals were served, comprising over 750 households.

Over the past year, precious funds distributed by CSC to the local community included housing and utility services, food distribution programs, and direct wrap-around services for those that have tested positive for the coronavirus.

“CSC is proud to be part of a strong support network responding to the growing needs in our community,” said Pegge McGuire, CSC’s acting executive director. “I think of CSC as the backing on a patchwork quilt, the foundation for a large collaboration of partnerships working together to make this impact possible.”

So far, CSC provided more than \$2 million in supportive funds to partners and worked collectively to find solutions for motel and non-congregate shelters in Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties. They have now extended collaborations with partner organizations to help establish safe shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness, or in need of quarantine, in the new year.

Their Utility Assistance program was also prepared with additional COVID-19 funding at the start of the pandemic. Overall, they served over 3,700 people, comprising more than 1,200 households, with utility assistance that were financially impacted by the pandemic. Total provided utility assistance to COVID-impacted households was more than \$755,000.

During 2020, their Linn Benton Food Share program provided more than 5 million pounds of food to Linn and Benton County communities. Despite the changing safety protocols, they also

received over 300,000 volunteer hours from community members. With the help of these volunteers, they supplied enough food for 381,847 meals and 38,332 emergency food boxes to their partner food pantries and meal sites in Linn and Benton Counties. These efforts are continuing into 2021.

CSC's Workforce and Education programs, serving adults and youth, assisted participants and families with the transition to safe and remote services. In 2020, they supported 15 students in graduating with their GED's, readying them to enter the workforce or explore secondary education.

The agency also contracted with the Oregon Health Authority as a Community-Based Organization to provide services and support for over 500 people so far that have tested positive for the coronavirus in Linn, Benton Lincoln and Polk Counties. This program allows affected individuals and their families to safely quarantine while meeting their essential needs, including home deliveries and financial support, helping to keep the infection rate down.

To learn more about CSC, their services and community impact, visit their website <https://communityservices.us>