

Oregon Solutions

National Policy Consensus Center | Hatfield School of Government

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About Oregon Solutions

The mission of Oregon Solutions (OS) is to develop sustainable solutions to community-based problems that support economic, environmental, and community objectives and are built through the collaborative efforts of businesses, government, and non-profit organizations. Oregon Solutions provides the structure, staff and the place for innovative problem-solving to occur. By using a collaborative process, partners reach agreement on what they will do and how they will work together to solve the problem. Our staff and project managers have over 160 combined years of public service, mediation and facilitation experience which they bring to communities to coordinate diverse partners' resources.

The Oregon Solutions Process

- 1. Problem or Opportunity Identified.** A problem or opportunity is defined by the community that addresses an economic, environmental, or community sustainability objective. Often, the community completes a "Pre-Assessment" questionnaire to describe the potential project.
- 2. Assessment Completed.** The pre-assessment is reviewed, and, if the project appears to meet basic criteria, then an OS staff person will complete a full Assessment of the potential project. The assessment involves person-to-person or telephone interviews. The assessment helps us identify outcomes for the project, how OS can add value to the project or opportunity, identifies potential project team members and potential Conveners, develops a basic budget for the staffing portion of the project, and so forth.
- 3. Governor Designates.** If the assessment is positive, an OS staff person recommends the project to the governor's office. The governor designates the Oregon Solutions project and appoints an impartial convener, or co-conveners, who can bring partners together to address the challenge. OS assigns a project manager who helps support the convener and the project team.
- 4. Project Team Formed.** The Oregon Solutions Project Team is created, consisting of government entities (federal, state, and local), businesses, non-profits, and citizens. Team members are selected based on their ability to contribute to a solution.
- 5. Project Team Reaches Consensus.** The project team meets on a regular basis (usually every 4-6 weeks) to discuss how best to implement the project or take advantage of the opportunity. Sub-committees may also be formed. The Project Team works in a collaborative manner and tries to reach consensus on major issues. After anywhere from three to 12 meetings, the project team develops an integrated solution that leverages resources to meet the challenge at hand.
- 6. Declaration of Cooperation (DOC) Signed.** A Declaration of Cooperation is signed by team members which memorializes their commitment of resources and/or time to an

integrated action plan. This plan is the end of the OS process, but is a means to provide a “road map” for the project team for implementation.

7. Reconvening. 9-12 months after the signing of the DOC, the OS project manager will reconvene the OS project team to review the commitments made by individuals and check on progress made.

Criteria for Oregon Solutions Projects*

- The potential project meets the legislature’s sustainable community objectives and it addresses one or more regional priorities identified by a Regional Advisory Committee.
- The project is ripe for Oregon Solutions to assist. A lot of the basic ground work has been done and there is a clear definition of the community problem or of the project to be implemented. The outcome is pretty clear to the multiple parties who will be participating on the project team, and there is a focus on action and implementation, rather than planning and design.
- There are multiple players involved from the local, state, and federal governments, the private sector, and non-profits. The potential for collaborative problem-solving and implementation planning among the multiple players is likely. It is unlikely that any single party can solve the problem or implement the project themselves.
- It does not involve a substantial amount of controversy, although some controversy is to be expected. There is no need for a mediator or some sort of dispute resolution process in order to proceed. If mediation is needed the project may be appropriate for Oregon Consensus services.
- The potential project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the governor and state legislators who represent the area. The politics around the project are favorable. It is also a priority for state and/or federal agencies.
- There is a clearly defined lead partner for the project. In addition, there is an individual champion or multiple champions for the project. There is likely to be a strong sponsor or sponsors who will lead the project past the signing of the Declaration of Cooperation to full implementation.
- There is a high level of excitement or enthusiasm for the project. The Regional Solutions Coordinator is enthusiastic about the project.
- There is a good likelihood that the project is affordable and funds can be found for it, and funding is not the only barrier to implementation.
- Project sponsors can contribute towards the cost of the Oregon Solutions process and have identified other possible funding sources for implementing the project.

*Although these are the *ideal* criteria, all potential projects will be evaluated on an individual basis during an assessment process to determine the appropriateness for Oregon Solutions or Oregon Consensus services.