



Connected
Lane County



Reflections from the Executive Director

Greetings, and thank you for taking a moment to learn more about Connected Lane County! Since joining in January 2025, I have also been in the learning phase. It has been deeply rewarding to learn from our talented team, observe the tremendous accomplishments of the youth and young adults coming through our doors, and meet with so many who share our energy for this work.

In this report, you'll learn how we are working to expand access and opportunities for 14 to 24-year-olds in Lane County. There are too many highlights to shout out, but the following are representative of our year.

- Strengthened our Excelerator model by deepening our capacity for one-on-one support, ensuring youth with a range of disabilities have equitable access to opportunities.
- Collaborated with local youth-serving partners to continue the Direct Cash Transfer program, providing \$100,000 in critical financial support to 45 young adults at risk of homelessness.
- Partnered with the Eugene Springfield NAACP to hold the inaugural Black Youth Leadership Summit and educator convening, empowering 47 youth and connecting 12 local educators.
- Launched after-school Invention Clubs with Oregon MESA at Cascade, Hamlin, and Lincoln Middle Schools, expanding STEM opportunities in Bethel, Springfield, and South Lane.

Notwithstanding the positive growth we have experienced over the last few years, we fully recognize there is important work yet to do. According to the most recently available Oregon Department of Education District Profiles, one in three Lane County youth (8th - 12th graders) experience poverty, and one in six experience a disability. In more specific terms, we're talking about 6,000 youth in Lane County who experience the impacts of poverty and 3,000 who experience the effects of a disability. There is much we can do to ensure these youth can access pathways that will support them as they build their future.

Whether you are a long-time partner or just learning about us, I hope a story, photo, or quote in this report sparks your interest and touches your heart. The work we do is life-changing and community-building, but we don't do it alone. Your partnership, through program support, worksite opportunities, and financial contribution, is vital to meeting the needs of young people.

These first months have shown me that the work of Connected Lane County is, at its core, a shared journey of listening and learning. I invite you to reach out to me to explore ways to expand possibilities for youth. Together, we can ensure the rising generation, with their varied lived experiences and identities, feels their worth and can access fulfilling education and employment pathways.

With appreciation for our shared work,

Jesse Nelson
Executive Director

jnelson@connectedlane.org



2024 - 2025 Annual Report A YEAR OF IMPACT

Every young person deserves a future they can be excited about. We connect youth ages 14–24 with opportunities, experiences, and support to help them build lives full of possibility and purpose—helping them explore careers, access paid job training, receive education guidance, find needed resources, and thrive in safe spaces.

What We Achieved Together

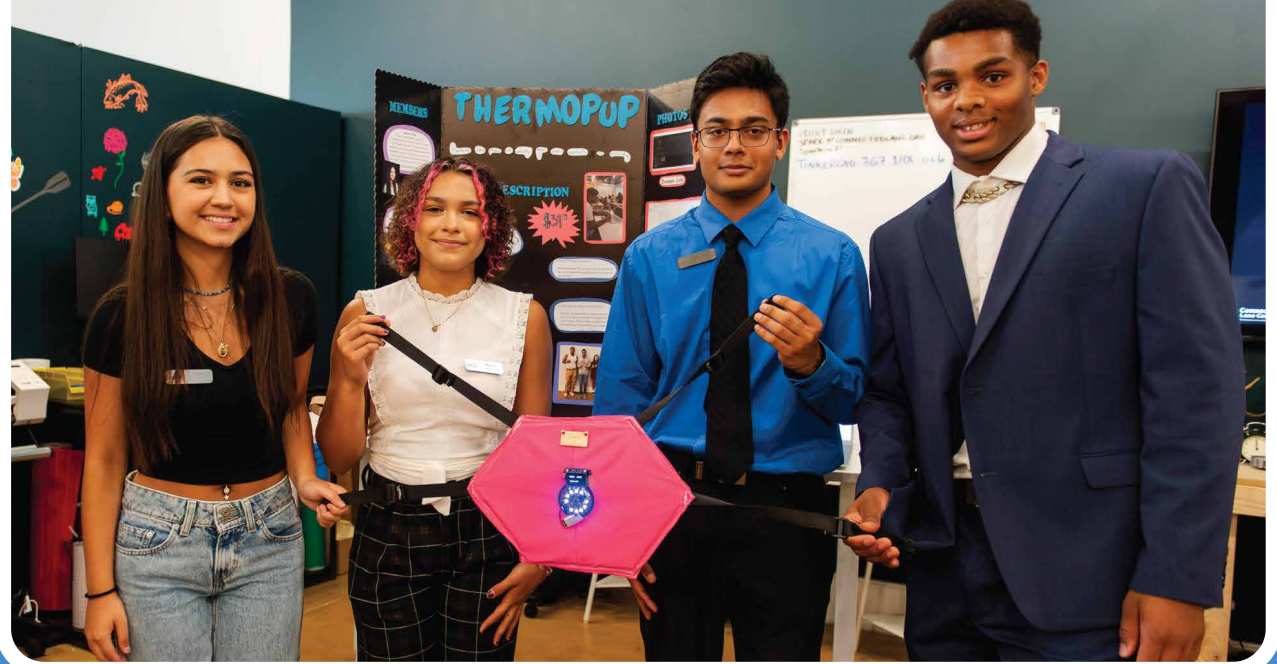
As we say goodbye to the 2024–25 year, we are energized by the progress we’ve made and excited for the opportunities ahead. Guided by a strong sense of purpose, we have been listening, learning, and working to expand opportunities for youth across our community.

This year’s achievements reflect what is possible when community and purpose come together.

We strengthened our Excelerator model to expand one-on-one support for youth with disabilities, provided \$100,000 in direct cash assistance to 45 young adults at risk of homelessness, empowered 47 youth through the inaugural Black Youth Leadership Summit in partnership with the Eugene Springfield NAACP, and launched hands-on STEM Invention Clubs in three middle schools with Oregon MESA. These accomplishments represent just a portion of the impact we’ve made this year, and reflect the power of collaboration and community-driven action, yet they also remind us of the work still ahead. As we look forward, we are eager to deepen partnerships, engage more community voices, and keep advancing our shared mission of uplifting youth and expanding opportunities for every young person to thrive.



\$620,086
Paid Youth Wages



Learn His Story

In Summer of 2024, Kishan participated in Invention Lab after his sophomore year at Willamette High School. During this time, he (shown in bright blue) and his team created ThermoPup, a product designed to alert dog owners when it is unsafe for their pet to be outside in extreme temperatures. He and his team worked on their product over the course of the four-week Invention Lab program and presented their work to family and supporters at the 2024 Invention Lab Showcase! He stayed connected through the school year as a member of The Agency and became a mentor to students at Cascade Middle School through their after-school Invention Club and MESA Chapter.

Meet Kishan
(he/him)

“My experience was a big eye-opener for trying to find career options that suit me. It helped me learn that I enjoy designing and creating. Using the CPX was a huge learning experience, teaching me how to code in basic computer skills.”



2,062
Youth Served



320
Youth Paid



45,102
Participation Hours



188
Industry and Community Partners

Meet Day
(she/her)

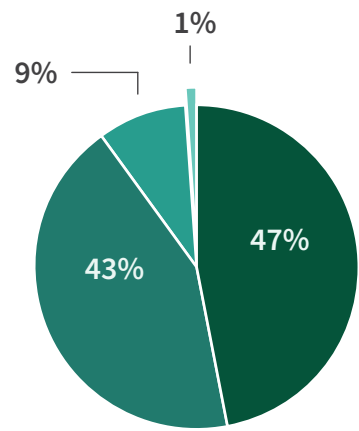


“I really appreciate the classes and the program staff, everything they did, and the effort they put into the Healthcare Excelerator. Working with my friends helped me study and refresh everything. I don’t really like to study, but they made it fun and I felt like I was actually helping them study too. I never felt like I was stupid.”

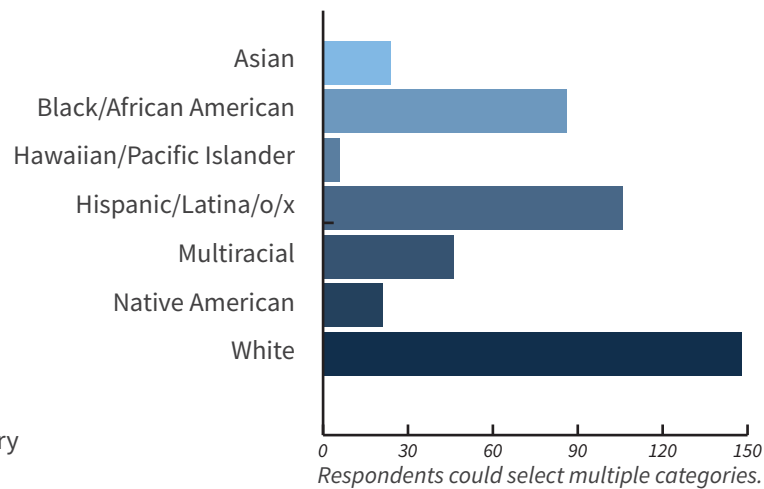
Learn Her Story

Day connected with our team while working toward her GED at Kalapuya High School. She took part in Rent Well and DevNW Financial Foundations and built her confidence and organizational skills. Her Resource Navigator encouraged her to pursue the Health Excelerator, where she committed fully, leaving her day job and coordinating childcare to complete the 10-week program. Despite past struggles in school, Day finished at the top of her class and earned her CNA-1 certification. She now plans to use that credential to support her family and help others, and she credits her study group as one of the best parts of the experience.

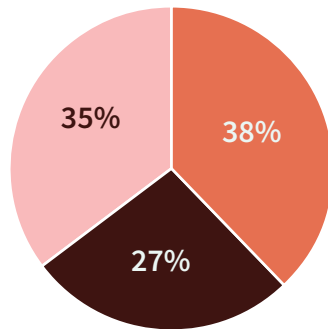
Who We Engaged Through Paid Opportunities (Gender and Race/Ethnicity)



Female
Male
Nonbinary
Other



All data is self-reported participant data. Percentages are only of those who reported.



Multiracial
Community of Color (Single Race)
White (Single Race)

Celebrating our Champions for Youth!

With a gift of \$500 or more, these individuals provided youth with access to paid work experiences, job training, STEM education, mentorship, and essential support. Beyond giving, Champions amplify their impact by sharing our mission and advocating for youth in the community. Thank you!

Adam Wendt • Angela Cherbas • Beatrice Dohrn • Darren Emmons • Deborah Burns Deppen • Elaine Twigg Cornett and Zane Cornett • Eric and Katie Sucre • Heidi Larwick • Jamila Hunter • Joseph Calbreath • Kraig Sproles • Robert Lang • Todd Hamilton

Supporting Partners

Your generosity fuels our mission, providing critical resources, safe spaces, and opportunities in education, job training, and mentorship. Thanks to your support, thousands of young people are gaining the skills, experiences, and confidence to navigate challenges and reach their full potential.

- 5th St. Public Market

Andersen Construction

Autzen Foundation

Baker's Gas & Welding Supplies

Cascade Manor Residents Association

Central Lane Metro Planning Organization

Chambers Family Foundation

City of Eugene Transportation Department

CLF Network

Corson and Johnson Law Firm PC

Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation

Discard Upcycling

Dowl, Inc.

Elias Wolf Music LLC

Eugene Education Foundation

Eugene Emeralds

Eugene Family YMCA

Eugene School District 4J

Fern Ridge School District

Henry E. Niles Foundation

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Homes for Good

Honoring Our New Ethnic Youth

John Serbu Youth Campus Fund of OCF

Junior League of Eugene

Kelly Middle School

Lane Arts Council

Lane Community College

Lane County

Lane County Community & Economic Development

Lane County Health and Human Services

Lane Education Service District

Lane Workforce Partnership

McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center

McMenamins North Bank
- National Philanthropic Trust

Network Charter School

Oakshire Public House

OCCU Foundation

OnPoint Community Credit Union

Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative

Oregon Community Credit Union

Oregon Community Foundation

Oregon Department of Education

Oregon Department of Human Services

Oregon Food Bank

Oregon Forests Resource Institute

Oregon MESA

Oregon Pacific Bank

Oregon Social Learning Center Developments, Inc.

PacificSource Community Solutions

PacificSource Foundation for Health

Peace Health

Pivot Architecture

Rainbow Valley Design and Construction Company

Reser Family Foundation

Roundhouse Foundation

S Foundation of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Siletz Tribal Fund

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Springfield Education Foundation

Springfield Public Schools

Travel Lane County

Tykeson Family Charitable Trust

UnitedHealth Group

University of Oregon

U.S. Bank Foundation

Washington Federal Foundation

Weyerhaeuser

Willamalane Park & Recreation District

Youth Development Oregon



Turning Talents Into Impact

Albert has long had an interest in passing his wealth of technical and engineering knowledge on to the next generation. He has volunteered in Connected Lane County’s Tech and Manufacturing Excelerators since spring 2024. Always patient, Albert guides Excelerator participants through projects in programmable logic computing, welding and metal fabrication, and sheds light on what it’s like to work in the industry.

“Something that stayed with me as an instructor was this one student who stayed late, welding quietly long after the others had moved on. As a dad, I see how much today’s youth carry. Watching her set that aside and give herself fully to something new that could grow into a career and a creative outlet meant a lot.”

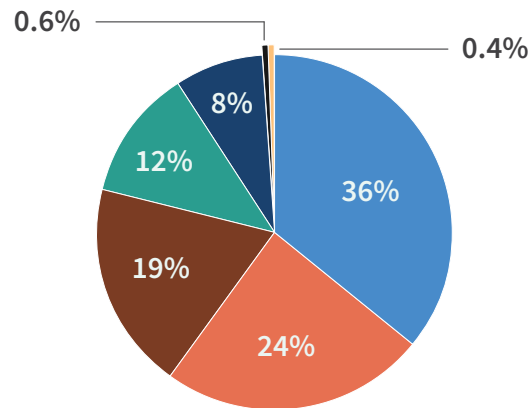
How to Get Involved

- Give — connectedlane.org/donate
- Partner — Host a Job Shadow or Internship
- Share — Spread the Word with Your Networks
- Follow our Socials — @connectedlane

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Our Funding Sources

Diverse funding makes us resilient; community giving makes us thrive.



State Grants	\$1,462,711
Local Education & Workforce Partners	\$963,422
Federal Grants	\$760,906
Foundations & Donor Advised Funds	\$472,845
Earned & In-Kind	\$330,913
Individual Donations	\$21,725
Business Contributions	\$10,344

Total Income \$4,022,866

“Connected Lane County greatly influenced my desire to pursue my skills in computer science... it significantly strengthened my resume, confidence, and experience, which led me to achieve scholarships, a job in information services, and remain confident in pursuing my degree.”

Learn More

