



## MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST: AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE

### Manufactured Home Repair Program: 2017-2019

*Promoting housing stability and the well-being of people living in manufactured homes in rural Oregon.*

#### CROSS-SITE PROGRAM EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT

(February 28, 2017 to March 1, 2019)



In 2017, Meyer awarded grants totaling \$730,000 to support nine programs across rural Oregon assisting low-income residents of manufactured homes with critical repairs and other improvements. Meyer chose to prioritize programs serving rural Oregon because of the important role manufactured housing plays in rural areas, which tend to lack the local resources available in larger communities. This report summarizes key findings from a 2-year program evaluation collecting data from all nine programs.<sup>1</sup> It illustrates the impact of this work on residents' housing stability and well-being, and the capacity of the nine organizations to assist vulnerable Oregonians.

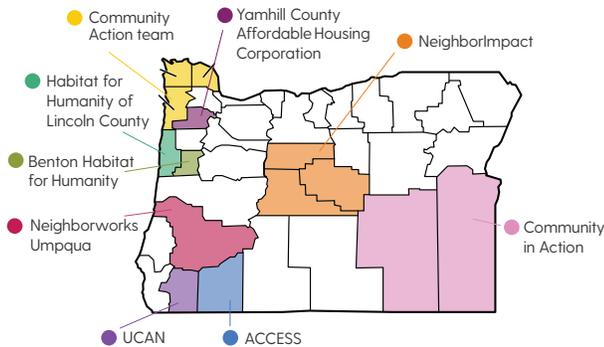
<sup>1</sup>Resident Surveys (N=113); Project Coordinator interviews (yr. 1 N=15; yr.2 N=11); Partner interview (N=1); Home Repair Project Forms (N=205); one-day site visit to Yamhill County Affordable Housing Corporation, and home repair service provider survey (N=18)

# ORGANIZATION PROFILE

A total of \$730,000 was awarded across the nine organizations over the two-year period, with grants to each organization ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000. A brief summary of each organization's focus and activities follows.



Fig. 1: Manufactured Home Repair Program Grants, 2017-2019  
Nine organizations providing services across 14 counties



## ACCESS

provides multiple programs that promote self-sufficiency, with a focus on preservation of affordable housing for low-income residents. For their MHRP focus, they partnered with Age-Friendly Innovators (AFI) to provide health and safety repairs in conjunction with their weatherization work.

**Service Area:** Jackson County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Plumbing and electrical systems, weatherization, and accessibility

## COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

offers services including child development programs, housing services, energy and weatherization programs for low-income residents in their tri-county area. Their MHRP focus was to address essential health and safety issues alongside weatherization initiatives for manufactured homes.

**Service Area:** Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Weatherization, installation of exhaust fans and carbon monoxide detectors

## COMMUNITY IN ACTION

operates with the Healthy Homes approach to identify health and safety issues, as well as energy use and weatherization strategies to reduce utility bills for residents. Their MHRP focus was on the many residents in dire need of roof replacements due to extreme winter weather conditions.

**Service Area:** Harney and Malheur Counties

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Roof replacement, carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector installation, reduction of air infiltration

## NEIGHBORIMPACT

provides services including family services, financial assistance, food, housing, and heat and energy assistance. Their MHRP focus was to provide safety, health, and/or energy-related home repairs to owners of manufactured homes.

**Service Area:** Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Heating and plumbing systems, installation of carbon monoxide detectors

## NEIGHBORWORKS UMPQUA

is a rural housing and community development corporation. In 2015, they purchased Newton Creek Mobile Home Park in Roseburg. A large number of homes are in poor condition in this 50-unit park. Their MHRP focus was to continue repairing these homes to control moisture, the most prevalent problem for this community.

**Service Area:** Douglas County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Doors and ceilings/walls, plumbing systems, foundation repairs

## UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK (UCAN)

has offered weatherization services for low-income residents over the past few decades. Their MHRP focus was on completing health- and safety-related repairs for which weatherization funds could not be used.

**Service Area:** Josephine County, and in year 2, they added Douglas County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Weatherization, installation of carbon monoxide and smoke detectors

## YAMHILL COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION

promotes and supports home ownership for low-income residents. Their MHRP focus was to provide health and safety repairs alongside weatherization services.

**Service Area:** Yamhill County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Windows, plumbing systems

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (TWO AFFILIATES)

Two MHRP organizations are affiliates of Habitat for Humanity International, operating in partnership with the parent organization to provide decent and affordable housing for those in need. Homeowners work alongside staff and volunteers to perform the work and are provided no-interest loans to cover materials cost.

### BENTON HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

used MHRP funding to increase capacity by hiring a program coordinator, and to repair more homes and take on more extensive home repair projects.

**Service Area:** Benton County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Exteriors, doors, stairs, window caulking

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF LINCOLN COUNTY

targeted staff training and certification, as well as capital purchases, to reduce overall operating costs for the home repair component of their program. These investments allowed them to extend their reach for manufactured home repairs.

**Service Area:** Lincoln County

**Most Frequent Repair Types:** Plumbing, window caulking, flooring, stairs

## VARIATIONS IN PROGRAM DESIGN

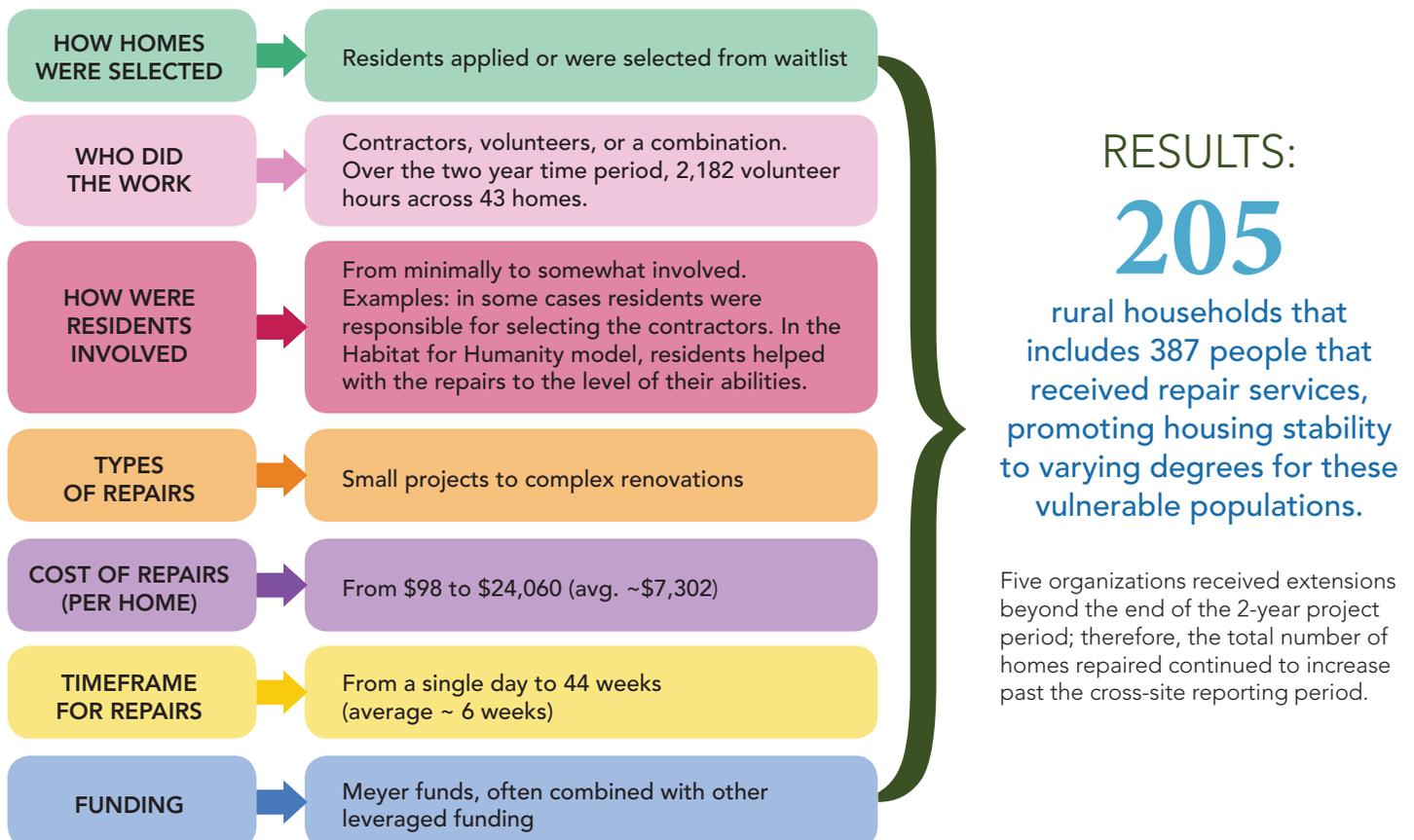
All nine organizations have different approaches to program implementation; each approach resulted in positive impact on residents to varying degrees. This suggests no one program model is better than another, rather, they all vary widely in their program design and despite those differences, they all had a positive impact on residents.

“I was able to wash dishes, do my laundry, take a shower or bath. I can say that I never realize[d] how much having hot water means in everyday living and how important it is to have. Today I’m clean and have clean dishes, clothes and my home is clean. Thank you so much. You see I live on a fixed income and I could not have afforded to get a new hot water heater without this program or [to] have it installed. The men did a very good job installing as well. Again thank you.” - Resident

In general, the program implementation model across all organizations includes the following three steps:

1. A resident completes an intake/application process.
2. If selected and approved, the home is assessed for repair needs.
3. The organization oversees the completion of repairs.

How these three basic steps were completed varied across the nine organizations. The program design for each organization is different, in terms of who did the work, repair costs, time to complete, and other program design aspects as depicted in the illustration below.



## IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS



### TYPES OF HOME REPAIRS

The repair types fell into the following categories.

*Percentages are greater than 100%, as home repairs may have been completed across multiple categories.*

**64%**

HOME  
SYSTEMS

Plumbing,  
heating and  
electrical repairs/  
replacements

**57%**

STRUCTURAL  
IMPROVEMENTS

Windows, doors,  
flooring, roofs, and  
foundations

**56%**

SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY  
IMPROVEMENTS

Installation of smoke and  
carbon monoxide detectors  
and exhaust fans, along with  
accessibility modifications

**53%**

ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY

Insulation  
installation, duct  
and air infiltration  
repairs, and caulking

**30%**

EXTERIOR  
IMPROVEMENTS

Stairs, siding,  
skirting, and  
yard work

## RESIDENT PROFILE

### DEMOGRAPHICS

*Percentages are greater than 100%, as residents can be included in more than one category.*

**68%**

SENIORS

**54%**

PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

**20%**

FAMILIES WITH  
CHILDREN UNDER  
THE AGE OF 18

**10%**

PEOPLE  
OF  
COLOR

**8%**

VETERANS

### INCOME

THE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR

**87%**

OF THESE RESIDENTS IS LESS THAN

**\$30,000**

### OWNERSHIP

**57%**

OWN THE HOME  
AND  
LEASE THE PROPERTY

**41%**

OWN THE HOME  
AND  
OWN THE PROPERTY

**2%**

RENT THE HOME  
AND  
LEASE THE PROPERTY

## IMPACT: RESIDENTS

**89%**

report the comfort of their home is better because of the repairs completed.

**83%**

of residents report their ability to continue living in their home is better because of the repairs completed.

"It impacts me every morning when I wake up and walk across my living room to kitchen; it is dry (no more mystery wet spots) with wet smells that attack other wet stuff that is yucky. I don't feel so overwhelmed by life when I look across these rooms and I feel inspired and a little bit proud of my living quarters since [organization] has changed the way it is." - Resident



### ENERGY

**80%**

**OF RESIDENTS**

report energy efficiency is better because of the home repairs completed.

"I'm finally warmer without \$250 light bills."

- Resident



### SAFETY

**81%**

**OF RESIDENTS**

report the safety of their home is better because of the home repairs completed.

"The peace of mind I now have that my home will not catch on fire. It was so wonderful having reliable heat. What a joy it is for me to [feel] warm, secure and safe."

- Resident



### HEALTH

**66%**

**OF RESIDENTS**

report the health of the people living in their home is better because of the home repairs completed.

"One woman couldn't sleep in her bedroom because of mold and damage. We cleaned that up and health improved for her."

- Project Coordinator

"Home care education is important. Some things can be avoided if residents know how to maintain their homes. In some cases, they report an issue with water, but then have no idea where the water heater is." - Project Coordinator

"Now they are able to reside in their homes and not fall through the floor. Now people are more comfortable having people over, they have pride in their homes. They have good bathing facilities and feel better about going out. It's not chaotic. Their home is repaired. They don't have that stress that comes from living in those conditions."

- Project Coordinator



Photo courtesy of Housing Authority of Yamhill County

## IMPACT: ORGANIZATIONS

Some funds were used to increase organizational capacity and/or expertise. Since all organizations vary widely in terms of their operations, and therefore, needs, the ways in which funds were used to build organizational capacity and/or expertise also varied.

### Examples of increased organizational capacity and/or expertise:

- **Staff training** on software system to streamline the bidding process for increased efficiency.
- **Hire a project coordinator** to oversee the repair program. Prior to the grant staff capacity was limited to one person functioning in several roles.
- **Project coordinator used funds to obtain a general contractor license.** Prior to the grant, funds were spent on hiring someone else to oversee the work.

In addition to grantees using funds to increase capacity and/or expertise, Meyer hosted two peer convenings providing grantees the opportunity to learn and network. Project coordinators shared these meetings helped them to increase their capacity and/or expertise because of the information shared as well as networking opportunities.



“I established connections with three other grantees because of the convening. This has helped me to get additional information and learn more how other people approach the same problem.”

- Project Coordinator

The funds as well as peer convenings fulfilled an important need for these organizations, helping them expand their capacity and expertise in a variety of ways. This positions them successfully to serve their communities.



## LESSONS LEARNED

### Manufactured homes are a viable affordable housing option.

“The building of affordable housing is at a low. There aren’t a lot of alternatives here. Manufactured home repair allows people that need a place to stay, to have a place to stay. And sometimes, that’s their only option.”

- Project Coordinator

“These dwellings are for many their last resort from homelessness. They provide dignity and shelter when nothing else comes close in terms of cost and availability.”

- Home Repair Service Provider

### Timing of repairs is important as well as home care education to prevent costly repairs.

“If the funding comes too late, you lose the preservation of that home.”

- Project Coordinator

**More funding is needed to support this work.** Several organizations maintain waitlists, which can be up to two years. These nine programs alone identified more than 1,000 homes that need repairs right now. This need presents an opportunity for the community as a whole to expand their impact by providing support to increase the number of homes receiving critical repairs. As a home repair service provider stated, “I’ve noticed that of the 19 repair projects I’ve been involved in, most served older and/or some sort of handicapped populations. This serves a critical need in our community.”

**Sustainability.** The sustainability of the program varies across organizations. Some feel the organizational structure is in place to continue the work and are actively seeking additional funding sources, while others are not sure how they will continue without Meyer’s flexible funding dollars. At the conclusion of the 2 year project period, five organizations received extensions to complete the home repairs, and separately five received an additional \$50,000 for a third year.

**Flexible Funding is a key success.** Other funding sources restrict how funds can be used, which limits the types of repairs that could be performed. This is especially true for manufactured homes built before 1976. However, the Meyer funds were unrestricted, allowing organizations to complete a range of projects from small to complex. As summarized by one project coordinator, “No other funding mechanisms other than Meyer to do these repairs, because it’s flexible.”

**Staff turnover is a significant challenge.** Seven out of the nine organizations (78%) experienced losing 1 to 2 staff members over the two year time period. For some, there was little disruption to the program because other staff members covered the work until a replacement was hired. For others, it did impact program implementation. The most common ways were a delay in completing home repair work and fewer homes being repaired than originally proposed. These positions remained vacant for months, creating a barrier for organizations to complete the repair work.

**Continue to center equity and inclusion.** While the repair programs served high numbers of seniors and people with disabilities, it is difficult to gauge how accessible they are to people of color living in manufactured homes. Funders should support more focused attention to reaching populations who may not be well served, especially when outreach and engagement aren’t an urgent priority because many programs already have more people on their current waitlists than they can help.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to continue this critical work, Evaluation into Action recommends the following next steps:

### **Continue flexible funding for manufactured homes built before 1976.**

Partner with other funders and/or policymakers to ensure a funding stream exists that supports these critical home repairs that may otherwise go unrecognized as a viable way of preserving affordable homes for low-income residents.

### **Staff turnover was a significant barrier to implementing programs as planned for some organizations.**

A literature review on staff turnover in this sector including the causes, management and solutions may reveal insight into how organizations can be better prepared for staff turnover when it happens. The review results may benefit the sector as a whole and move the conversation forward.

### **Support the development of a homeowner preventive maintenance education curriculum to maintain manufactured homes and prevent costly repairs.**

A standardized home-care education curriculum or checklist may help organizations provide home-care maintenance education. Increased homeowner knowledge may ultimately prevent costly repairs in the future if manufactured home repair residents are offered a free home maintenance inspection and/or workshops.

### **Continue peer-learning opportunities.**

These valuable networking opportunities help organizations learn from each other and network to strengthen their capacity. While grantees are interested in continuing peer learning opportunities, they do not have the capacity to take on planning or coordinating these events without support. Therefore, a third party may be retained to coordinate the details of these ongoing learning opportunities for these nine organizations as well as others conducting similar work.

Session topics may include: equity and outreach, homeowner preventive and maintenance education, and staff turnover.

In summary, the MHRP assisted many low-income residents with critical repairs that helped them remain in their homes. The safety, health, and/or energy efficiency of these homes improved to various degrees. Data show there is more work to be done - more manufactured homes are in need of repairs and opportunities exist to increase organizational capacity so organizations are positioned to successfully serve their communities. Meyer Memorial Trust's flexible funding was a key ingredient in the success of this program, helping to repair homes that would have otherwise remained in poor or unlivable condition. The cross-site program evaluation illuminated the successes and challenges of this program as well as identified the opportunities to further support the organizations and the people they serve.

#### **Questions about Meyer's support for affordable housing?**

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#### **Questions about this report?**

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