

How Rural Communities Can Successfully Recruit Health Care Providers: Tools, Incentives, and Real-World Strategies

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The mission of the Oregon Office of Rural Health is to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care for rural Oregonians.

The Oregon Office of Rural Health's vision is to serve as a state leader in providing resources, developing innovative strategies and cultivating collaborative partnerships to support Oregon rural communities in achieving optimal health and well-being.





Who we are

- Oregon's Office of Rural Health (ORH)
- Created in 1979 by the Oregon Legislature & housed at OHSU
- ORH offers provider recruitment and retention services, provider incentive programs, data and analysis about frontier/remote health, technical assistance, policy development, advocacy, and information services.

Mission

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Vision

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ORH Recruitment & Retention Services

ORH works to match health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dentists and more) with health care organizations that provide health care services throughout rural Oregon and other underserved communities.

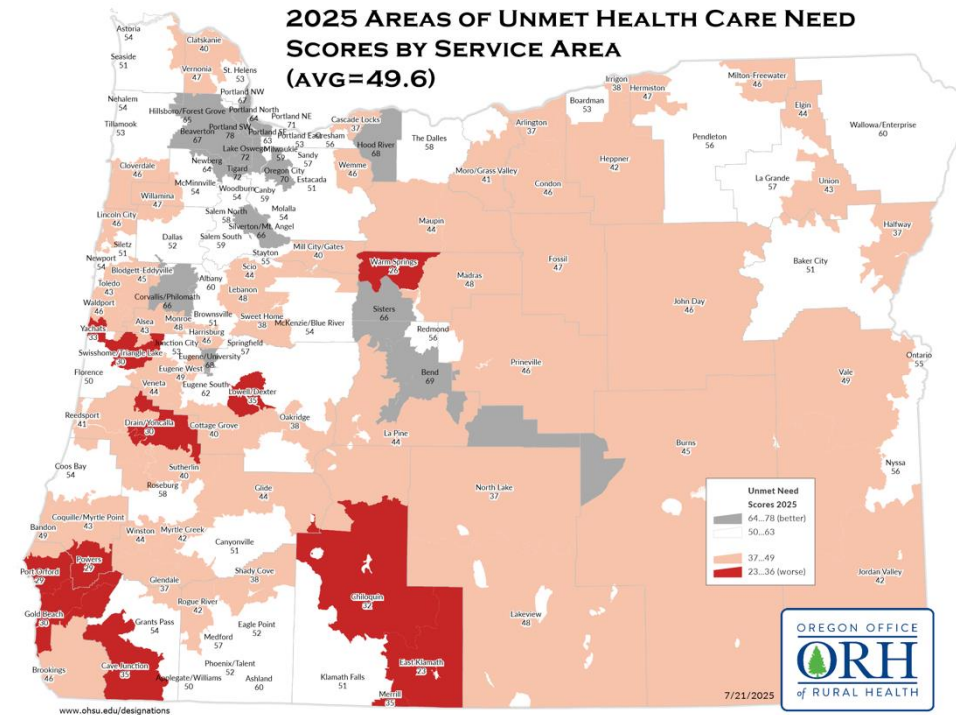
ORH promotes rural Oregon practice opportunities nationwide through [3RNET](#), the national rural recruitment and retention network.

ORH supports rural practice sites by offering assistance with practice site assessments, practice profile development, development of a recruitment & retention plan, facilitating the marketing of current job opportunities and profiles on [3RNET](#), and promoting opportunities at medical and dental schools, residencies, and other health professional training programs.

The Oregon Office of Rural Health is here to be a resource for you...where we believe in **Rural Oregon - Where Opportunity Knocks**.






The Current Workforce Challenge in Rural Oregon

- Aging Workforce
- Competition for Talent
- Perception of Rural Life
- Community Challenges
- Burnout
- Generational Workforce



“Many rural communities are no longer competing only with neighboring towns — they’re competing nationally for providers.”

Core Strategies That Work

-  Community Partnerships: Recruitment is not just the clinic's responsibility.
-  Candidate Experience: Personalize it!
-  Incentives & Loan Repayment
-  Pipeline Development
-  Retention & Provider Support



Recruitment is a Community Effort

- Recruitment cannot happen in isolation
- Communities that recruit together often retain providers longer
- Strong partnerships help providers feel connected earlier









Creating a Strong Candidate Experience

- Personalized communication
- Community information packets
- Spousal employment information
- School and childcare resources

79% of job seekers utilize social media as a part of their job search!!



Recruitment Incentives That Matter

-  Signing Bonuses
-  Housing Assistance
-  Loan Repayment
-  CME Support
-  Flexible Scheduling
-  Relocation Assistance



 **Yakima Valley
Farm Workers Clinic**

Recruitment Marketing & Storytelling

- Professional job postings
- Provider testimonials
- Social media presence
- Recruitment conferences
- Community branding
- Virtual tours and videos

[3RNET](#)

Your Trusted Resource for
Strategies to Recruit & Retain Physicians to Rural Communities



Building the Future Workforce Pipeline

- Student rotations
- Rural residencies
 - 50 percent of training time in rural during family medicine residency is associated with a 5- to 6-fold increase. [Source: National Library of Medicine.](#)
- Clinical placements
- Local scholarship programs
- “Grow your own” workforce strategies
- School partnerships



Retention starts on Day One

- Mentorship and peer support
- Burnout prevention
- Leadership development
- Flexible scheduling
- Community integration
- Provider appreciation



Oregon Communities Coming Together to Recruit & Retain

Community Example #1 — [Southern Oregon Alliance of Physicians & Providers \(SOAPP\)](#)

- Regional collaboration focused on strengthening provider recruitment across Southern Oregon
- Multiple organizations working together to support workforce development and recruitment efforts
- Community and organizational partnerships helping promote the region collectively rather than competing individually
- Focus on long-term workforce sustainability and provider engagement
- Example of how collaboration across communities and organizations can strengthen recruitment impact



Community Example #2 — Healthcare Access and Retention Program (HARP)

- Southern Oregon coastal communities collaborating to support recruitment and retention of health professionals in the Coos Bay and North Bend region
- Focused on collaboration and coordination to address workforce challenges and opportunities collectively
- Emphasizes retention through relationship-building, community integration, and ongoing support for providers and families
- Increase awareness and visibility of Coos Bay and North Bend as desirable places to live and work for healthcare providers.
- Foster a sense of community and belonging among healthcare providers and their families, and to provide them with opportunities for social and cultural engagement, recreation, and education.

Provider Incentive Programs: Overview

- Support recruitment and retention of providers
- Focus on underserved and rural communities
- Offered through partnerships with:
 - Office of Rural Health (ORH)
 - Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
 - Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)
- Multiple programs available
 - Different eligibility requirements
 - Different service commitments
 - Different financial benefits

Loan Repayment programs offer tax-free funds for qualified health care providers working in approved disciplines at eligible practice sites, in exchange for a service obligation.

- Oregon Health Care Provider Incentive Loan Repayment Program
- Oregon Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Program (OBHLRP)
- State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

- **Full-time physical health** providers must agree to a minimum **two-year service obligation** at an eligible site in exchange for an initial award of up to the lesser of 50% of their total qualifying educational debt or the maximum **federal cap of \$75,000**
- **Full-time dental or behavioral health providers** must agree to a minimum **two-year service obligation** at an eligible site in exchange for an initial award of up to the lesser of 50% of their total qualifying educational debt or the maximum **federal cap of \$50,000**
- **Part-time physical health** providers must agree to a minimum **two-year service obligation** at an eligible site in exchange for an initial award of up to the lesser of 50% of their total qualifying educational debt or the maximum **federal cap of \$37,500**
- **Part-time dental or behavioral health providers** must agree to a minimum **two-year service obligation** at an eligible site in exchange for an initial award of up to the lesser of 50% of their total qualifying educational debt or the maximum **federal cap of \$25,000**

State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

Practice sites must be:

- Nonprofit (public or private); and
- Located in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA); and
- Providing outpatient, ambulatory, primary medical, mental and behavioral, and/or dental services; and
- Providing services on a free or reduced-fee schedule basis to individuals at or below 200% of the federal poverty level; and
- Approved by ORH to participate in the SLRP with a [Site Application](#) on file that is no more than **two** years old (from date the provider submits their SLRP application)

State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

- Provider application will be posted **7/1/2026**
- Awards will **NOT** require site matching funds

Competing Service Obligations

Clinicians can only be under one service obligation (program) at a time. Participating in two programs at once is a violation of a participant's contract. Other programs include, but are not limited to state, federal, or community sponsored incentive programs.

Programs that are not a competing service obligation:

- Tax credits
- Rural Medical Practitioners Insurance Subsidy Program
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)



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