



Rural Leaders for  
Economic Mobility

Mobility Action Plan

# Union County, Ore.

RURAL LEADERS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY  
**UNION COUNTY**  
**OREGON**  
*Mobility Action Plan*



County	Union County, Oregon
County Seat	La Grande, Ore.
County Population	~27,000
Geographic Area	2,038 square miles
RLEM Subgrant	\$50,000
Primary Contact	Commissioner Paul Anderes
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Co-Lead	Grace Donovan, Executive Director, REV Center
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Closing the childcare gap to unlock economic mobility for Union County families*

Union County, Oregon is a rural county in the Willamette Mountains with approximately 27,000 residents, Eastern Oregon University as its anchor institution, and Grande Ronde Hospital as its largest employer. It is also a severe childcare desert — one of the worst in Oregon. Only 9 percent of children ages 0 to 2 have access to a licensed childcare slot, and only 30 percent of ages 3 to 5. In a community where 41 percent of residents fall below the ALICE threshold — employed but unable to meet basic living costs — and the labor force participation rate of 60 percent trails the state average of 63 percent, that shortage is not a family inconvenience. It is the county's most significant structural barrier to economic mobility.

A 2025 survey of 266 Union County parents with children under age five confirmed the stakes. Seventy percent missed educational or professional advancement opportunities due to childcare being unaffordable or inaccessible. Forty-six percent permanently left a job because childcare was unavailable. Sixty-nine percent said they would work more hours if their childcare needs were reliably met. Childcare is economic infrastructure. Union County's plan treats it that way.

Strategy	Focus	Key Partners	Timeline
1. Childcare Expansion & Facilities	Increase licensed slots for infants and toddlers; advance planning and funding for a new county-owned childcare facility on the Riveria lot; support in-home provider growth	Union County, REV Center, CCR&R, Oregon Regional Solutions, Rural Development Initiatives	2026–2029
2. Employer-Supported Childcare	Partner with Grande Ronde Hospital, EOU and La Grande School District to co-develop employer childcare benefits; evaluate cost-sharing models	Grande Ronde Hospital, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande School District, Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	2026–2028
3. Policy & Sustainability Framework	Advocate at Oregon State Legislature for rural provider rate equity, simplified licensing and new rural childcare incentives; build statewide coalition	Union County, Oregon ELD, CCR&R, GEODC, Senator Nash, Senator Anderson	2026–2027
4. Provider Workforce Pipeline	Recruit and train new childcare providers through EOU and La Grande CTE; build substitute pools and shared services; elevate provider professional recognition	Union County, OTEC, EOU, OSU Extension, CCR&R, Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	2026–2028

## **Support Requested from Capstone Partners**

Union County is seeking support in four areas:

- Philanthropic or federal capital funding for development of a new county-owned childcare facility on the Riveria Elementary School lot — the single highest-impact investment the county is pursuing
- State legislative champions to advance cost-based reimbursement for rural childcare providers and rural provider relief legislation in the 2027 Oregon State Legislature long session
- Workforce development partners to help establish an early childhood educator pipeline through Eastern Oregon University and La Grande School District CTE programs
- Peer connections to rural counties that have successfully expanded infant and toddler slots through employer partnerships, micro-center models or rural childcare endowments

## SECTION 1

*Economic Mobility Vision — Every Union County family with access to childcare that supports work, learning and prosperity*

### VISION STATEMENT

*Union County envisions a future where every family has access to affordable, high-quality childcare that supports working parents, strengthens the local workforce and builds a foundation for lifelong learning and prosperity. In five to ten years, Union County will no longer be classified as a childcare desert. Working parents will have reliable options for their infants and toddlers, providers will operate with financial sustainability, and employers will benefit from a more stable and productive workforce.*

### What Success Looks Like in 5–10 Years

Families will be able to pursue employment and educational advancement without sacrificing their children's wellbeing. Childcare will be treated as essential economic infrastructure, on par with roads and broadband, and Union County will be known as a rural community that solved its childcare crisis through coordinated public, employer and community investment. Licensed childcare capacity will have grown by at least 50 slots for infants and toddlers. A county-owned facility on the Riveria lot will be operational. Employers who struggled to recruit and retain parents will have demonstrated that childcare benefits reduce turnover and improve workforce stability. And the Oregon State Legislature will have passed rural provider relief legislation that Union County helped design.

### Why This Plan Is Needed Now

Union County's childcare crisis is not new. But the conditions that make action urgent today are: a well-documented and growing body of local evidence; a community survey conducted by Eastern Oregon University that quantified the economic impact with precision; and a once-in-a-generation alignment of legislative relationships, employer partners and community will. The county has already used its RLEM subgrant to build the evidence base, contracting a local childcare expert, commissioning a full survey analysis through EOU, developing architectural plans for the Riveria facility, and running community focus groups. The foundation is laid. This plan is the structure.

Assets & Strengths	Obstacles & Challenges
✓ Eastern Oregon University (EOU) — Head Start programs, early childhood education training, survey research capacity	✗ Only 9% of children ages 0–2 have access to a licensed childcare slot — severe desert classification
✓ Grande Ronde Hospital, EOU and La Grande School District as large anchor employers with workforce participation incentives	✗ Only 30% of children ages 3–5 have access — desert classification
✓ REV Center as a university-based regional capacity partner for research and planning	✗ 41% of residents below ALICE threshold — employed but unable to meet basic living costs
✓ Senator Nash and Senator Anderson as active legislative champions for rural childcare reform	✗ 60% labor force participation rate vs. Oregon state average of 63%

<p>✓ Oregon employer childcare tax credits (ORS 315.204 and 315.208) already available to local businesses</p>	<p>✗ Average county earnings of \$64,212 vs. state average of \$80,160</p>
<p>✓ Riveria Elementary School lot — county-owned, partitioned for new construction, shovel-ready plans complete</p>	<p>✗ Structurally limited tax base — large share of public land generates no property tax revenue</p>
<p>✓ Ford Family Foundation and Golden LEAF as rural-focused philanthropic funders</p>	<p>✗ Rural labor market makes recruiting and retaining childcare workers difficult</p>

## SECTION 2

*Local Conditions — The data and community voice behind this plan*

### Who Lives in Union County

Union County is a rural county in northeastern Oregon anchored by La Grande, the county seat and home of Eastern Oregon University. The county's economy is built around healthcare, higher education, agriculture and small business. Roughly half of the county's 2 million acres is publicly owned by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management — generating no property tax revenue and structurally constraining the county's fiscal capacity. This is not an abstract point: it directly shapes why Union County's childcare strategy depends on braided state and federal resources and employer partnerships rather than new local government funding.

Indicator	Union County	Oregon Average	Source
Population	~27,000	—	U.S. Census ACS
ALICE threshold	41% of residents	—	United Way ALICE Report
Labor force participation	60%	63%	U.S. Census ACS
Average annual earnings	\$64,212	\$80,160	ACS / BLS
Children ages 0–2 with a licensed slot	9%	Higher statewide	Oregon Childcare Deserts 2022
Children ages 3–5 with a licensed slot	30%	Higher statewide	Oregon Childcare Deserts 2022
Licensed in-home providers	~27	—	Find Care Oregon
Licensed childcare centers	3	—	Find Care Oregon
Children under 5 with regulated care	~20%	—	Estimated, local data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS; Oregon Childcare Deserts 2022; United Way ALICE Report; Find Care Oregon. Nearly 3 in 4 Union County families rely on more than one childcare arrangement to meet their needs.

### Survey Findings: The Economic Cost of the Childcare Gap

In 2025, Eastern Oregon University professor Dr. Daniel Costie and MPA student Nerita Juda analyzed responses from 266 Union County residents with children under age five. The findings were striking:

<b>70% missed educational or career advancement opportunities</b>	46% permanently left a job due to childcare unavailability
<b>57% changed jobs due to childcare unavailability</b>	44% turned down higher-paying jobs to keep state assistance

<b>69% would work more hours with reliable childcare</b>	Only 19% have adequate childcare today
<b>53% need more care during standard business hours</b>	44% need evening or weekend coverage

### Community Voice

Provider focus groups in July and August 2025 revealed the operational stressors that data alone cannot capture. Providers identified staffing as the most persistent operational barrier. Training substitutes in a rural labor market is costly and time-consuming, and without backup staffing capacity, a single illness can force temporary closure. Many providers intentionally undercharge to help families afford care, placing their own financial sustainability at risk. Several described a broader public perception that undervalues the complexity and importance of childcare work.

*"After re-entering the workforce as my family's primary breadwinner, the only available provider when we moved to La Grande was unlicensed. I was constantly stressed and deeply concerned for my children's wellbeing — but I had no other options." — Union County working mother, community listening session, summer 2025*

### The Intersection of Affordability and Scarcity

Union County's childcare challenge runs in both directions simultaneously. Cost is prohibitive — childcare costs can exceed 20 to 25 percent of household income for a two-child family, more than double the federal affordability threshold. But scarcity compounds cost: even families with the financial means to pay cannot always secure a slot. The county's highest unserved population — infants and toddlers — also faces the longest waitlists and the lowest provider availability. Without a strategy that addresses both supply and sustainability simultaneously, fixing one side of the equation leaves the other unsolved.

## SECTION 3

### *Mobility Pathway — How four strategies work together to close the childcare gap*

Union County's four strategies address different layers of a single problem. Facilities expansion adds slots, but slots without providers are empty. The employer strategy funds access, but employer benefits without available slots don't move families forward. Policy advocacy makes rural provider operations financially viable, but viable providers without trained workers cannot scale. The workforce pipeline ensures staffing, but staff without facilities and funding cannot sustain. Each strategy is the condition of possibility for the others.

The sequence is also deliberate. Short-term: establish governance through the Childcare Task Force and build the evidence base for facility funding. Medium-term: advance the Riveria facility through design, funding and construction; launch employer pilots; advance legislation in the 2027 long session. Long-term: operate the facility at capacity; institutionalize employer childcare benefits; sustain provider workforce through EOU and CTE pipelines.

	<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs (Short-Term)</b>	<b>Outcomes (1–3 Yrs)</b>	<b>Long-Term Impact</b>
Strategy 1 Facilities	RLEM subgrant; county-owned Riveria lot; architectural plans (complete); CDBG, CIP, Business Oregon funds; Childcare Task Force	Apply for facility funding; launch provider technical assistance via CCR&R and SBDC; evaluate shared facility and operating models; convene Task Force	Funding applications submitted; provider TA program launched; site assessment and operating model complete by 2027	50 new licensed infant/toddler slots by 2029; county-owned facility in development; in-home provider base stabilized	Union County no longer a severe childcare desert; county-owned facility operating; childcare supply meeting at least 50% of demand
Strategy 2 Employer	Grande Ronde Hospital, EOU, La Grande School District; Oregon employer tax credits; Eastern Oregon Workforce Board; ORS 315.204/315.208	Convene employer working group; complete workplace policy assessments at 3 anchor employers; evaluate cost-sharing models; pilot employer benefits	3 employer policy assessments complete by 2026; cost-sharing feasibility study done; 2 pilot programs launched by 2027	Employer-reported reductions in turnover; working parents accessing childcare benefits; employers publicly committed to childcare co-investment	Employer childcare benefits normalized in Union County; cost-sharing model operational; workforce participation improving
Strategy 3 Policy	Senator Nash, Senator Anderson; Oregon ELD; CCR&R;	Develop rural childcare policy brief; build statewide legislative	Policy brief published; coalition convened; testimony	1–3 fiscal reforms passed in 2027 long session including cost-	Rural provider reimbursement equitable; licensing burden

	GEODC; rural provider network; Union County data	coalition; provide testimony resources to providers and community; monitor outcomes	submitted to 2026 short session	based reimbursement; licensed in-home providers increased 25% by 2028	reduced; new rural childcare incentives in Oregon statute
Strategy 4 Workforce	EOU early childhood programs; La Grande School District CTE; Eastern Oregon Workforce Board; Early Learning Hubs; CCR&R	Establish EOU and CTE training pathways; build substitute pool and shared services model; professional recognition events; coordinate wage improvement funding	One formal ECE training pathway established by 2027; 10+ credentials earned by 2028; substitute pool operational	Provider turnover reduced; fewer temporary closures; more residents trained and entering childcare workforce	Sustainable childcare workforce pipeline; providers professionally recognized and financially stable; new providers entering from EOU pipeline annually

## SECTION 4

### *Strategic Actions & Implementation — Four strategies, one system*

Union County's RLEM subgrant has already been deployed to build the foundation: a local childcare expert contracted to advise on licensing and provider realities; EOU's full survey analysis commissioned and completed; architectural plans for the Riveria facility developed; and community focus groups and listening sessions conducted. The four strategies below build on that foundation.

#### STRATEGY 1

### Childcare Expansion & Facilities Development

There are not enough licensed childcare slots in Union County to meet demand at any price point. Affordability interventions and employer supports can reduce the financial strain on families — but they cannot create slots that do not exist. Expanding licensed capacity, particularly for infants and toddlers, is the prerequisite for every other strategy to succeed.

The centerpiece of this strategy is a new childcare facility on county-owned property at the Riveria Elementary School site. The county owns the land; the tax lot is partitioned to allow new construction alongside the existing building; and architectural plans are complete and shovel-ready. Union County's vision is to own the building and lease space to childcare providers, while establishing shared governance and services infrastructure that reduces providers' administrative and operational burden — making it easier to launch and sustain a childcare business in a rural market, not just providing space.

<b>Lead Partners</b>	Union County, REV Center, Childcare Task Force, Oregon Regional Solutions, Rural Development Initiatives
<b>Key Partners</b>	CCR&R, Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, Business Oregon, philanthropic partners
<b>Timeline</b>	2026: Apply for facility funding; launch provider TA → 2027: Complete site assessment and operating model → 2028: Advance to construction or operator agreement → 2029: +50 infant/toddler slots achieved
<b>Key Milestones</b>	Facility funding applications submitted (2026); operating model finalized (2027); construction begun or operator agreement signed (2028); 50 new slots operational (2029)
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	+50 licensed infant/toddler slots by 2029; +25% licensed in-home providers by 2028; county-owned facility operational; provider TA program serving 10+ providers annually
<b>Budget</b>	\$3,098,000 for facility planning, construction and startup. Provider TA: \$75,000–\$100,000 annually through partner organizations.
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Federal CDBG and Community Initiated Projects (CIP); Business Oregon Child Care Infrastructure Investment Fund; philanthropic (Ford Family Foundation); employer partnerships

<b>RLEM Subgrant Use</b>	Architectural plans for Riveria facility (shovel-ready); local childcare expert (Alexia Nice) contracted for licensing and provider guidance; EOU survey analysis (Dr. Daniel Costie and Nerita Juda); community focus groups and provider listening sessions
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## STRATEGY 2 Employer-Supported Childcare Programs

Union County employers are not widely providing childcare-specific benefits. Survey data shows that while some employers offer flexible scheduling, very few provide direct childcare assistance — subsidies, on-site care or backup care options. The gap contributes to workforce instability, absenteeism and turnover particularly among employees with young children. Baseline turnover costs employers at least 33 percent of an employee's annual salary. The U.S. economy loses more than \$172 billion annually from childcare-related workforce disruptions. Engaging employers as partners in childcare solutions is a workforce strategy and an economic development strategy.

<b>Lead Partners</b>	Grande Ronde Hospital, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande School District
<b>Key Partners</b>	Union County, REV Center, Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub, Eastern Oregon Workforce Board, CCR&R
<b>Timeline</b>	2026: Convene employer working group; complete policy assessments at 3 anchor employers; assess cost-sharing feasibility → 2027: Launch 2 employer pilots; connect to state tax credits → 2028: Evaluate and scale
<b>Key Milestones</b>	3 anchor employers complete workplace policy assessment using Best Place 4 Working Parents tool (2026); 2 employer pilots launched (2027); employer-reported workforce outcomes documented (2028)
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	3 employers with completed assessments; 2 employer childcare benefit pilots; documented reductions in employer-reported turnover or absenteeism; cost-sharing model feasibility assessed
<b>Budget</b>	\$30,000–\$50,000 annually for coordination and technical assistance. Individual employer investments vary. Oregon employer tax credits (ORS 315.204, 315.208) provide partial offsets.
<b>Support Needed</b>	Employers willing to share best practices; legal and HR expertise for structuring rural Oregon employer childcare benefit programs

## STRATEGY 3 Policy & Sustainability Framework

Oregon's reimbursement rates for subsidized childcare programs are set below the actual cost of delivering quality care in rural markets, creating a persistent gap between what providers receive and what it costs to operate. Home-based and sole-proprietor providers — the backbone of Union County's supply — absorb these structural shortcomings most directly. Without the revenue scale of a larger center, a delayed reimbursement or unexpected expense can threaten the viability of an entire operation.

Union County has established legislative relationships and is positioned to advance rural childcare priorities during the 2027 Oregon State Legislature long session. Senators Nash and Anderson are active champions. The county's 2025 survey data — 266 respondents, EOU-analyzed — provides the evidentiary foundation for legislative testimony that providers and community members can deliver in their own voices.

<b>Lead Partners</b>	Union County, Oregon Early Learning Division, CCR&R, REV Center, Senator Nash, Senator Anderson
<b>Key Partners</b>	Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC), Oregon Regional Solutions, statewide rural childcare advocacy coalition
<b>Timeline</b>	2026–2027: Build coalition; develop rural childcare policy brief; prepare testimony → 2027: Advance 1–3 fiscal reforms in Oregon long session → Ongoing: Monitor outcomes and measure provider impact
<b>Key Milestones</b>	Rural childcare policy brief published (2026); testimony resources prepared for providers and community members; 1–3 fiscal reforms advanced in 2027 long session; provider impact measured 2028
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	1–3 fiscal policy changes in 2027 long session; licensed in-home providers increased 25% by 2028; documented improvements in provider stability and reimbursement equity
<b>Budget</b>	\$20,000–\$40,000 for staff time, policy brief development and coordination. Legislative success may unlock state-level funding with far greater downstream impact.
<b>Support Needed</b>	State-level policy expertise in rural childcare financing; examples of successful rural provider relief legislation from other states

## STRATEGY 4 Provider Workforce Pipeline

Union County's childcare workforce is small, underpaid and difficult to grow in a rural labor market. Provider focus groups in summer 2025 identified staffing as the most persistent operational barrier to sustaining and expanding services. Without a reliable pool of trained substitutes, a provider illness can force a temporary closure — leaving parents without care and unable to get to work. New facilities and policy reforms cannot deliver on their promise without a sufficient workforce to staff them.

Union County has local educational assets that can anchor a meaningful pipeline: Eastern Oregon University and the Career and Technical Education programs at La Grande School District. The goal is to make entering and staying in the childcare profession easier — through formal training pathways, shared substitute pools, administrative support, peer learning networks and public professional recognition.

<b>Lead Partners</b>	Union County, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande School District CTE programs, Eastern Oregon Workforce Board
<b>Key Partners</b>	CCR&R, OTEC, OSU Extension, Early Learning Hubs, AmeriCorps RARE program

<b>Timeline</b>	2026–2027: Partner with EOU and CTE on formal training pathways; build substitute pool model → 2027: At least one formal ECE training pathway established → 2028: 10+ credentials earned; turnover rates tracked
<b>Key Milestones</b>	Formal EOU/CTE ECE pathway established (2027); substitute pool operational (2027); 10+ credentials earned (2028); 2+ annual provider recognition events underway (2027)
<b>Measurable Outcomes</b>	1 formal ECE training or internship pathway by 2027; 10+ new ECE credentials by 2028; reduced provider turnover; fewer temporary closures; improved provider wages
<b>Budget</b>	\$60,000–\$120,000 annually for training, internship stipends, substitute pool coordination and professional development.
<b>Support Needed</b>	Funding for internship stipends and credential scholarships; employers with training infrastructure willing to partner with EOU on practicums; rural childcare workforce pipeline models from other states

## SECTION 5

### *Governance & Partnerships — Multi-stakeholder coordination anchored by county, REV Center and the Childcare Task Force*

The Union County Mobility Action Plan is led through a multi-stakeholder governance model anchored by Union County government, the REV Center and the Union County Childcare Task Force. No single organization owns all aspects of the plan — responsibility is distributed among the partners best positioned to advance individual strategies, with Union County and REV Center maintaining the convening and coordination role.

Decisions are made through discussion and consensus among participating partners, recognizing that individual organizations retain authority over their own budgets and programs. Strategic direction is set collaboratively through the Task Force; operational decisions are made by strategy leads. The Task Force reviews progress, identifies opportunities for collaboration and adjusts strategies as conditions evolve.

Partner	Role	Strategy
Union County	Lead governance, funding, advocacy, implementation oversight	All
REV Center	Research, coordination, planning capacity, workforce pipeline	1, 3, 4
Childcare Task Force	Multi-stakeholder governance, accountability and cross-strategy coordination	All
Grande Ronde Hospital	Employer-supported childcare pilot, employer working group	2
Eastern Oregon University	Employer pilot, workforce pipeline, Head Start programs	2, 4
La Grande School District	Employer pilot, CTE workforce pipeline	2, 4
Oregon Early Learning Division	State policy advocacy and reimbursement reform	3
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)	Provider support, technical assistance and advocacy	1, 3, 4
Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	Workforce training and pipeline coordination	4
Senator Nash & Senator Anderson	Legislative champions for rural childcare reform	3
Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corp.	Regional policy alignment and rural childcare advocacy	3
Oregon Regional Solutions	State agency coordination and facility planning	1

### Key Leader Profiles

*Commissioner Paul Anderes serves as the primary county governance lead and advocate for the childcare initiative at the county level. Grace Donovan, Executive Director of the REV Center, has led the planning process and community engagement that underpins this plan, including coordination of the 2025 survey, focus groups and provider listening sessions. Kristen Kendall (AmeriCorps RARE) provided project management and community outreach throughout the planning process.*

## SECTION 6

### *Sustainability & Funding Strategy — Building a system that outlasts any single grant cycle*

Union County's sustainability strategy is built on a coalition-based model that braids multiple funding sources, leverages in-kind resources and pursues systemic policy changes that improve the long-term financial viability of the childcare system itself. Rather than relying on any single funding source, the county will pursue a diversified approach that evolves as strategies mature.

Funding Source	Target Use	Status
RLEM / NACo Foundation (\$50,000)	Survey research, architectural plans, local expert, community engagement	Deployed
Federal CDBG & Community Initiated Projects	Riveria facility construction and development	Pursuing
Business Oregon Childcare Infrastructure Investment Fund	Facility capital, if renewed	Pursuing
USDA Rural Development	Facility planning and rural service delivery	Pursuing
Early Head Start / Head Start expansion	Increased slots and programming for infants and toddlers	To be pursued
Oregon Early Learning Division grants	Provider support, training pathways, TA coordination	Partially secured
Oregon employer childcare tax credits (ORS 315.204/315.208)	Employer cost offsets for childcare benefits piloted in Strategy 2	Available now
Ford Family Foundation / philanthropic	Facility development, provider support, gap funding for innovation	To be developed
Grande Ronde Hospital, EOU, LGSD (employer co-investment)	Cost-sharing contributions and in-kind support	In conversation
Earned revenue — county-owned facility (future)	Operating sustainability once Riveria facility is operational	2029+

### Policy Foundations for Long-Term Success

- Institutionalization of Childcare Task Force as a permanent county coordination body
- Equitable cost-based reimbursement for rural childcare providers through Oregon State Legislature
- County operating budget line for childcare coordination — embedded as recurring item
- Data-sharing and outcome tracking systems embedded across partner organizations
- Workforce pipeline institutionalized through EOU and CTE ongoing enrollment

## Requests to External Partners

Priority Area	Specific Request
Facility capital	Philanthropic or federal funding for development of a county-owned childcare facility on the Riveria Elementary School lot; connections to experienced rural childcare facility operators
Employer strategy	Employers willing to share best practices in employer-supported childcare; legal and HR expertise for structuring rural Oregon benefit programs; examples of public-private cost-sharing models
Policy advocacy	State-level policy expertise in rural childcare financing; examples of successful rural provider relief and reimbursement equity legislation from other states
Provider workforce	Funding for internship stipends and credential scholarships through EOU and La Grande CTE; examples of rural childcare workforce pipeline models
Knowledge sharing	Rural counties that have successfully expanded infant/toddler slots through micro-center models, employer partnerships or dedicated childcare endowments

## SECTION 7

*For More Information — Key contacts for partnerships, funding and implementation*

Union County welcomes partnerships from employers, educational institutions, philanthropic organizations, state and federal partners and other rural counties working on childcare access. For information about Union County's childcare initiatives and opportunities to partner, please contact:

Organization / Contact	Role	Contact Info
Commissioner Paul Anderes Union County, Ore.	County governance, strategy oversight and public accountability	panderes@union-county.org 541.963.1001 www.unioncountyor.gov
Grace Donovan, Executive Director REV Center	Planning coordination, research, community engagement and strategy development	gdonovan@revcenter.org 541.962.3012 www.revcenter.org
Childcare Task Force Union County, Ore.	Multi-stakeholder implementation coordination	Contact via Union County or REV Center
Eastern Oregon University	Higher education partner; survey research, ECE training, Head Start programs	www.eou.edu
Grande Ronde Hospital	Employer partner — Strategy 2 employer working group	www.grh.org
Oregon Early Learning Division	State policy and reimbursement alignment	www.oregon.gov/oel
CCR&R — Child Care Resource and Referral	Provider support, TA and licensing navigation	www.childcareresource.org

To stay informed on Union County's childcare progress, read reports and receive updates, visit [www.unioncountyorchildcare.org](http://www.unioncountyorchildcare.org) and sign up for email notifications.

### Acknowledgements

This work was made possible by Alexia Nice (local childcare expert), Kristen Kendall (AmeriCorps RARE, project management), Dr. Daniel Costie and Nerita Juda (EOU survey analysis), Terri Kaiser and Eric Carlson (REV Center, outreach), Taylor Sarman, Nick Vora, Associated Design and Engineering, and the parents and providers who shared their experiences through focus groups and listening sessions. Thank you to EOU President Kelly Ryan, Dean Rae Ette Newman, GRH CEO Jeremy Davis, and La Grande School District's George Mendoza and Scott Carpenter for their leadership. And to Jennifer and Mady at NACo and Meredith Whitehead at The Cedric Group for their partnership throughout RLEM.

## ABOUT RURAL LEADERS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY (RLEM)

Rural Leaders for Economic Mobility (RLEM) was a 22-month peer-learning initiative that supported rural county leaders in advancing equitable economic mobility. The initiative brought together leaders from 10 rural counties to strengthen local systems that expand opportunity for residents, particularly in communities facing persistent workforce, education and infrastructure challenges. NACo continues to share RLEM experiences with rural counties across the United States.

### **Mobility Action Plans**

The central outcome of the RLEM initiative is the development of a Mobility Action Plan (MAP) in each participating county. These locally informed roadmaps help counties move from learning to action by identifying priority economic mobility challenges, target populations and practical short- and long-term implementation strategies.