



THE FUTURE FOR OKANOGAN COUNTY RESIDENTS

RESOURCES & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE LOCALLY

Okanogan County Community Action Resource & Training Center

OKANOGAN COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTER

NEED: Replace existing administration and counseling offices & increase space to implement programs

Replace food bank distribution facility

Local vocational education in construction trades, food service, and technology

Community Meeting and Life Skills education Facility

Natural Disaster Shelter

BENEFIT

The current building housing all activities does not provide enough room for us to grow our programs which has translated into a struggle during COVID to adequately serve the community. To add to the problem, the current building has *sick building syndrome*. We will not be able to safely re-open to the public during COVID without over \$100,000 - \$250,000 in building updates including a new HVAC system, flooring, and communication systems. OCCAC's current building can be converted to other community uses or sold to private business for office space development once upgrades are performed. Another option is for us to retain the building and utilize it for other program delivery.

High school graduates can move from school construction classes to professional training and hands on work with OCCAC to repair and improve low income homes and neighborhoods. When young people stay home, they learn a trade, they have options for their futures. Increasing the number of skilled and certified construction workers will reduce the delays in building new affordable housing that most contractors are dealing with. A certain number of trainees will become OCCAC Building Science employees providing the hands on work to weatherize and repair homes of senior citizens and families with small children. This need for employees was a part of the catalyst to provide this training program. With our efforts in preservation, old housing stock can be preserved and new housing stock actually increased rather than just replacing what has been lost. Availability of nice, affordable housing is a roadblock to new businesses trying to move into the county and would be a recruiting advantage for the Economic Alliance. OCCAC has sister agencies in our state network that can provide parts of the certification training initially and other agencies who will want their employees trained by our program.

Food Service Training is like Boot Camp for employment success. Along with actually learning the food service industry, enrollees learn what is necessary to succeed in life and in employment (attendance, attitude, communication). This program will be facilitated by the nationally successful Catalyst Kitchens program that has trained thousands of homeless individuals and created feeding programs not only on a commercial scale but also provided non profit sponsors with a social venture for profit entity that has the potential to pay for itself and earn a profit that goes back to support more programs that reduce poverty.

There are very few spaces where community groups can hold events from meetings to celebrations. Our classroom spaces will be divided by moveable walls that will open up to a huge event center that can be sealed off from the rest of the building. The café provided by the Food Service Training will provide catering as well. We know several boards and community groups that look for this type of space regularly.

Finally, **The event center will be able to be utilized as emergency shelter in the event of a natural disaster.** There will be access to the second floor showers and laundry as well as the café for meals. During the 2014 and 2015 wildfires there was no designated space for sheltering and we saw evacuees sleeping on church pews with food distribution provided randomly.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

We project returns on investment via new job creation for OCCAC and for the trainees who come through our programs initial estimates project over 25 new jobs created at OCCAC and job growth for positions that currently go begging due to the lack of training.

In talking with the owner of The Breadline (our county's most famous restaurant), who is a strong supporter of the proposal, she indicated that being able to hire someone with training saves her thousands of dollars compared to someone who has never had a food service job. She has promised to hire our graduates when ever the need for more staff arises.

We also see a return on investment potential from the café. Acknowledging that the food service business can be difficult, we see a unique opportunity for profit by providing breakfast "snacks", full lunch menus and catering, which is very difficult to find otherwise.

Projections of returns will be more solid once a full feasibility study is complete.

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION!

The proposed location has been secured for us from Bob Tollefson with a purchase and sale agreement that expires in 2021. The property adjoins Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare and Family Health Centers. Our clients are FHC & OBHC) their (clients and we have the advantage of convenience for clients who do not have to come any further to visit all three locations.

SPECIAL FEATURES

The design of the building will meet Leed Platinum standards with low water, native plant landscaping that is accompanied by an interpretive walking trail around the perimeter. The trail will provide information on medicinal and traditional native american uses of local plants. Extensive use of glass will increase efficiency by using windows that actually collect and feed energy back into the power grid. These are just two of the features planned.

GRANT WRITING

With Feasibility study underway thanks to a USDA Grant we are working on submitting grants to state, federal, and philanthropy funders as well as New Markets Tax Credits. NorthCascadesBank has expressed an interest in assisting us with financing however we will need to determine what our tolerance for debt is within the feasibility study (USDA granted us \$55000 for this purpose) **Thanks to a \$400,000 Capital Budget Allocation** from the State of Washington, having the land in hand has given us “skin in the game” or match for some of the funding. Some of the philanthropy will serve as match for federal dollars. Make no mistake, this will be a heavy lift but it is do-able once we have that the land purchase equity into the project. We are simultaneously working on an early adopters CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.

WHAT'S THE TOTAL?

We are currently working to develop a projected final cost. Based on current increases in building materials this will be a guide only as we anticipate more changes up and down over the next year. The projection is a starting point in our efforts with capital campaign and other grant writing efforts. Loans may be needed and our ability to service debt is also being considered.

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