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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GRANTS FUEL COMMUNITY RESILIENCY AND SOLUTIONS IN
SOUTHERN OREGON**

Organizations Share \$2.25 Million to Support Children and Families Living on Low
Incomes

MEDFORD, Ore. – Seventy-three nonprofits serving some of Southern Oregon’s most vulnerable residents will share \$2.25 million in grants through the Reed and Carolee Walker Fund of Oregon Community Foundation, continuing a longstanding commitment to improving the lives of people – particularly children – living on low incomes in Jackson County.

Established in 2003 through the generosity of Reed and Carolee Walker, the Walker Fund supports organizations addressing critical community needs across Jackson County. The 2026 grants invest in programs and services that strengthen educational opportunities, family stability, health and wellness, youth development and access to essential resources.

“These grants reflect the deep commitment Southern Oregon organizations have to children and families facing economic hardship,” said Amy Drake, Senior Program Officer for Oregon Community Foundation. “The Walker Fund supports the people and partnerships helping communities build resilience and create brighter futures.”

Grants were recommended by the Walker Fund Advisory Committee comprising Jackson County community members.

Grants support programs for teens

Southern Oregon University Foundation received a grant to support culturally specific youth summer camps.

Russell Zook, Director of Outreach and Engagement for SOU, said the funding will enable the university to continue to offer overnight camps that demystify the college experience, cultivate leadership and foster belonging.

"We are deeply grateful for the Walker Fund's ongoing support of these vital programs," said Russell Zook, Director of Outreach and Engagement for SOU. "We appreciate Oregon Community Foundation's continued partnership in creating opportunities where youth can truly flourish."

SOU will receive \$135,000 in the first year of the three-year grant.

"The Walker Fund has backed Southern Oregon University's youth programs for many years, and as SOU undergoes a financial transformation, we're proud to offer a stable source of support for the next three years," Drake said. "Academia Latina, Konaway Nika Tillicum and the Black Youth Summer Institute are critical for the youth they serve, creating cultural experiences and providing access to the university and to programming that the students may not otherwise experience."

Since its founding, the Walker Fund has invested more than \$43 million in Jackson County organizations working to create greater opportunity and stability for local children and families.

[Here is a full list of 2026 grants.](#)

Representative Grants

Douglas Education Service District

Roseburg

\$10,000.00

For evening and weekend Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education family events.

"Many of our families are juggling work schedules, transportation barriers, caregiving responsibilities and other demands," said Stacy Inman, Director of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. "Offering family events outside of the traditional workday will make a meaningful difference."

Opportunities for Housing, Resources, and Assistance

Ashland

\$80,000

For general operating support to help low-income people build better lives.

“We work with low-income people to move them from crisis to stability. We do that by offering resources and support, to make sure they have the tools and skills to be on a path of recovery and sustainability. We meet their needs, which are anywhere from resource navigation to having a 6-month shelter program and even having a health clinic in house.” – OHRA Executive Director Dan Cano

Upper Rogue Rotary Community Foundation

Eagle Point

\$15,000

To fund a summer snack program, shoes and clothing through schools and holiday food baskets.

“Hope looks like a hallway of schools where kids no longer have to wonder what they'll eat on Saturday, worry about holes in their shoes, or wonder if there will be any cheer at the holiday season – and that's exactly the difference we work to make every day.”

– Thomas Lee, President, Rotary Club of the Upper Rogue

"Kids shouldn't have to worry about food. Not here. Not anywhere."

– Georgi Cook, Member & Summer Snack Program Lead

About Oregon Community Foundation

Since 1973, Oregon Community Foundation has worked to improve the lives of all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. Each year, OCF distributes more than \$200 million in grants and scholarships statewide in partnership with donors and volunteers. Individuals, families, businesses and organizations can work with OCF to create charitable funds to support causes important to them. To learn more, visit oregoncf.org.

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