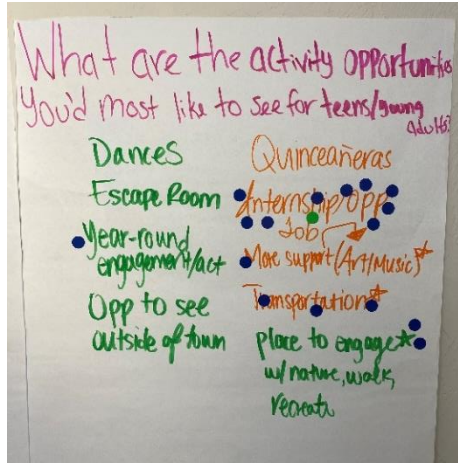


# Elevate Othello

## Small Town • Bright Future



## VISION & RESOURCE PLAN

May 2024



**Elevate Othello**

*Small Town • Bright Future*

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### Report Writers and Editors

This report was prepared by Marci Miller, Senior Program Manager, Rural Development Initiatives; Alison Cassin, Senior Program Coordinator, Rural Development Initiatives; and Amy Hause, Deputy Director, Rural Development Initiatives. Community review was provided by Anne Henning, Community Development Director, City of Othello; and Jose Garza, Director of Operations, Othello Food Bank.



## Executive Summary

Othello, Washington, embodies a vibrant tapestry of community, culture, and heritage. According to the latest US Census data, Othello is home to a diverse population of approximately 8,000 residents, representing a rich mosaic of backgrounds and identities. Othello has a majority minority population, with a 79.7% Hispanic population. It is also a young community with 39.2% of the community under the age of 18. Othello's roots trace back to the transformative era of railroad expansion, a pivotal moment that shaped the town's trajectory and fostered its enduring spirit of resilience and progress. Nestled amidst the rolling hills of Adams County, the renowned Sandhill Crane Festival celebrates the majestic yearly migration of these flying wonders, drawing visitors from far and wide to marvel at the natural splendor of the region, which also includes Potholes State Park just north of Othello. Anchored by a robust sports identity, Othello pulses with the energy of baseball, soccer, and other youth sports, fostering a sense of camaraderie and pride that resonates throughout the community.

Othello's economy is rooted in a thriving agriculture industry, and stands as a global powerhouse in potato production, with a staggering output that surpasses any other region in the world. With an annual yield of 1.5 billion pounds, equivalent to 15 percent of North American production, Othello takes center stage in the creation of frozen French fries, hash browns, and tater tots. The town's agricultural proficiency is evident as every 10 minutes, for nearly 10 hours a day, trucks laden with over 60,000 pounds of potatoes arrive, symbolizing the relentless rhythm of industry and innovation that propels Othello's economy forward. This thriving hub of potato processing not only sustains local livelihoods but also contributes significantly to the global food market, cementing Othello's reputation as a vital player in the agricultural landscape. It has also attracted many generations of migrant workers, resulting in a mix of multi-generational and new Latino immigrants.

As Othello looks to the future, its agricultural sector is positioned for growth and prosperity. Over the next two decades, the town is projected to significantly ramp up its potato production, leveraging its abundance of renewable energy sources and favorable geographical positioning to thrive even as the Earth's climate shifts. With temperatures rising, Othello's northern latitude offers a strategic advantage, ensuring that its surrounding potato farms continue to flourish in the face of changing environmental conditions. This optimistic outlook is reinforced by substantial investments from potato processors, who are wagering hundreds of millions of dollars on Othello's resilience to climate change. Mayor Shawn Logan encapsulates the town's spirit of optimism, describing Othello as a "boomtown" poised to capitalize on its unique strengths and opportunities in the years to come. (Tan, 2023) This economy has attracted a diversity of workers for decades, including many Spanish speaking immigrants from a variety of Latin American countries.

It is in this context that community members have come together to envision a future for the community through the *Elevate Othello* placemaking initiative.

Placemaking is a collaborative planning and technical assistance process that helps leaders from rural communities create quality places where people will want to live, work, visit, and learn. Through a diverse and engaged community team, focus groups, and local events, stakeholders from Othello contributed to this community-led vision and action plan to provide a roadmap for Othello to become the community residents want to see. A core team of community members from Othello helped plan and keep the engagement and effort moving forward. This group named this initiative Elevate Othello and designed and voted on the logo (see the front cover) with the Vision statement “Small Town – Bright Future” to encompass the cross-cultural effort to bring everyone together and support one another into the future.



*Survey responses to the question, “What do you like most about Othello?”*

The visioning process was conducted through a survey, focus groups, and community meetings, which highlighted several priorities. These include:

- Community Engagement & Leadership
- Greater Opportunities for Teens and Young Adults
- Career Pathways & Workforce Development
- Business Environment and Opportunity
- Services to Support Every Community Member

Based on these priorities, community members identified an initial set of community projects and focus areas that support one or more of these priorities, and community teams are actively moving some of these projects forward, including educational opportunities, Latino engagement and cultural events, and other social engagement opportunities.

*Elevate Othello* has also engaged community members in several types of immersive and directed learning opportunities, including community leadership, teen entrepreneurship, financial literacy training in Spanish, and both virtual and in-person peer learning visits with other communities. These are meant to expand the vision of community members around what is possible in Othello, as well as build the capacity of community members to move their priorities forward. In addition, a number of seed grants will be available to help community members make tangible progress on the identified activities.

This document highlights the specific areas of interest and priorities that emerged during the visioning process, as well as possible sources of funding to support those priorities. It is meant to be a living document that can be referred to and updated so that it can support community members to collaborate and partner to create a thriving future for Othello.



## Findings: Priority Areas of Focus

The survey and focus groups surfaced a number of priority areas, challenges, and opportunities that are broken down into the categories below. There are many ways to make progress in these areas, and this section is intended to keep these priorities centered as the community makes decisions about how to focus energy and use resources. Elevate Othello has aimed to highlight priorities of different groups and areas of common interest, and many of the priorities that surfaced are overlapping, or reflect common goals and aspirations. Themes that emerged consistently are described below. The next section focuses on specific projects that community members selected to work on in the immediate future that support these priority areas.



*Survey responses to the question, “What do you want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years?”*

### Community Engagement & Leadership

**Cultivating New Leaders:** With the population under 18 at around 39%, cultivating a new generation of leaders is a high priority for the community. Many of the community’s leaders are older and phasing out of leadership positions, but the existing structures for community involvement are not currently attracting young people. Community leaders expressed the need for mentoring and growing the next generation of leaders, and community groups need fresh volunteers so that the community demographics are reflected in positions of leadership.

- RDI’s flagship program, the Rural Community Leadership Program kicked off in October with 18 participants, 3 are under the age of 18 and they range in age from 16-64. 8 identify as White, 8 identify as Hispanic/Latino, 2 identify as Black/African American. During one of the final sessions, participants identified, presented, advocated, and came to consensus around which community projects and programs would gain financial support from the cohort. A list of the areas of support are as follows:
  - Lighthouse Community Center, for afterschool youth activities (\$1,000)

- Othello Senior Center, for senior center activities (\$1,000)
- The Old Hotel, for community and student art classes (\$1,000)
- Othello Chamber of Commerce, for support of website and event calendar creation (\$2,000)

**Latino Engagement:** We heard that Spanish speakers often do not feel included in community events and have a challenging time engaging in the political structure of Othello. There is an opportunity to address this through greater representation in management positions and leadership in all sectors of Othello business and government, and/or a more intentional effort to include Spanish speakers. Cultural events are also a way of building inclusion and a sense of belonging.

**Community Cohesion:** Many people expressed a desire for more opportunities to bring the community together, and the need for spaces that serve this purpose.

**Communication:** A clear need and barrier to community engagement is the lack of public communication methods such as a newspaper or radio station centered in Othello. There are news outlets that include Othello in their regional scope, but we heard a clear desire to have some type of Othello centric communication option. There are so many community events and offerings that would benefit from a local radio, podcast, and/or newspaper outlet.

*Learning:* RDI organized a learning tour for four Othello community members to travel to Woodburn and Independence, Oregon for a two-day learning tour that included Indy Commons, a community space and small business incubator, CAPACES, a Latino focused civic engagement, leadership and small business development nonprofit, and a walking tour of “El Bloque” which is home to nine sister organizations that offer services and develop highly collaborative projects that focus on community vitality. After the meeting with CAPACES, they were given a downtown Woodburn walking tour with a City of Woodburn AmeriCorps member. They were able to hear about the organizing and to build and enact development plans that support the establishment and maintenance of a vibrant downtown atmosphere. On day two, the participants spent time at Indy Commons in Independence, OR. Indy Commons is an incubator space that offers affordable options, the flexibility of a short-term lease, and a place to work, collaborate, and connect with other professionals. Indy Commons supports new and existing businesses with connections to resources and programming such as technical assistance, funding sources, training, and mentoring.

***“I don’t want to see Othello become less attractive to visitors. I want it to become a place where people can have fun, feel safe and spread the news of how awesome of a town it is.”***

## **Greater Opportunities for Teens and Young Adults**

Teens and young adults are looking for expanded opportunities to live and play in Othello. A number of people talked about how there are not many options for youth activities outside of school, sports, and church—particularly in summer. This contributes to unproductive behaviors such as drug abuse, and some immigrant youth feel disconnected from peers and lean toward gangs to feel a sense of belonging. Sports is the primary activity, but not everyone is interested in sports, while transportation is a barrier for some youth who wish to be involved in sports or other activities. There is an opportunity to create more spaces for teens to convene as a community, and to ensure that these spaces are welcoming to all teens.

Opportunities include both the Lighthouse and the Old Hotel, which have been offering classes and activities for kids and teens and will add more capacity as they are able, and depending on funding and finding teachers for classes. Another opportunity is to engage the Moses Lake Boys and Girls Club, which wants to extend to Othello, but needs facilities, staff, and funding. There is also potential for junior groups for youth to grow into young leaders; this is a role that Rotary and Kiwanis has played in the past. (This ties into “cultivating leaders” above.) Teens and young adults expressed interest in more art and music programs to develop their talents, as well as opportunities to engage with nature.

Challenges that youth identified include age limits for employment (18+ years), lack of representation in community leadership as a barrier to youth engagement, and lack of public transportation.

***“I would spend my energy on the youth of Othello so we can have a better future.”***







*Othello Teens participate in a focus group called “Build Your Dream Town”*

## **Career Pathways & Workforce Development**

Career Pathways came up as a priority for teens and young adults as well as older adults and Spanish speakers. Teens and young adults particularly expressed interest in vocational opportunities including mechanics, welding, construction, and electrician fields. About 25% responded that they would like to see professional job opportunities such as healthcare, technology, architecture, arts, business administration, counseling and therapy. Some respondents expressed interest in more opportunities in agriculture, and they would like more internships, apprenticeships, and entry-level job opportunities. Both small and larger businesses expressed that they struggle to find qualified workers and would like to see more programs to support career pathways. Seasonal farmworkers are interested in career pathways that would provide greater stability.

Focus group participants were aware of and excited about opportunities that are already available and have the potential to expand, including CDL training at Othello High School, the McCain internship program, McCain NextGen for high school graduates, John Deere and SkillSource programs, and healthcare training at Columbia Basin College.

However, respondents and participants noted some challenges, including constraints such as the struggle with basic needs and services to enable access to career development opportunities, such as language services, childcare, transportation, and time. Another challenge that respondents noted is minimal representation for Latino and LGBTQIA2+ in management and leadership in many sectors including agriculture, construction, and government leadership.



## Business Environment & Opportunity

**City Identity:** Many people expressed the need for more investment in tourism and retail infrastructure, including hotel, restaurant and retail shopping options. There is a strong interest in developing the City’s identity, and specifically a desire to see investment in Columbia Street and the creation of a historic district in the downtown area as opportunities for creating a stronger sense of place. Some of Othello’s political and business leaders expressed interest in working with the community to develop the city’s identity.

In addition to Columbia Street and the downtown area, other opportunities that community members mentioned include a sports complex to offer increased services and amenities, and that the old CBHA clinic space could become a multi-use center such as a community space and/or library.

*“I want to see a new hotel, rebuilt schools, and new playgrounds for kids.”*

**Coordinated Marketing:** Businesses expressed a need for a stronger marketing identity for Othello. Small businesses expressed that they would like to be included in the Sand Hill Crane

Festival brochures and marketing materials, as well as other marketing efforts around events in Othello.

**Chamber of Commerce Role:** Businesses expressed an interest in a more inclusive Chamber of Commerce and would like to see more small business representation on the Chamber’s board. Some businesses expressed interest in establishing a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as an independent entity or as a branch of the existing Chamber.

**Food Innovation and Local Food Access:** Numerous ideas came up related to food innovation and building stronger linkages between small local food producers and residents:

- There is a desire to increase food diversity, including a fine dining restaurant.
- The community expressed interest in developing greater access to locally grown foods, and particularly re-opening the farmers market with WIC and SNAP programs.
- Ideas surfaced to develop a network of local businesses and suppliers to access wholesale purchasing and other opportunities.
- An idea came up for a text marketing program for local businesses to buy into and customers can opt into.
- There is a desire to work with the City to address limitations of City regulations on outdoor events involving music.
- Some small businesses expressed that they would like greater understanding of the City’s interpretation of regulations, and that generally businesses would like clearer communication between the City and businesses around regulations.
- There is a need for more butchers (people and facilities) and career pathways in meat processing; the USDA is very interested in supporting this sector.
- The value-added food sector / food processing is one of the possible industries to grow.

*“I’d like us to get more food and culture opportunities and I’d like to see it cleaned up.”*



## Services to Support Every Community Member

Many people in the community expressed challenges to access key services including transportation, childcare, healthcare, school services, language services, and time and opportunities for career development. These factors cause stress, and for some, inhibit the ability to move out of poverty. Farmworkers, particularly, do not feel that they are being connected to social, health, financial, and career development resources. Specific comments, needs, and types of programs that people would like to see more of include the following:

- Schools and After School Programs: The School District is a huge resource and support system, but the schools are overcrowded and need more classroom and gym space (for example, the gym space must be shared by classrooms because there are too many kids/sports for the existing space). A recent bond to fund more space recently failed. After-school programs are limited for school age children and make it difficult for people to balance work and family needs.
- Childcare: Access to affordable childcare before and after school (and after-school activities as noted above), as well as for care options for younger children, are needed while parents are working. This is relevant for many parents, but particularly for migrant parents where adults can work from 5am to 7pm. In addition, regulations in the state of Washington are challenging to meet, even for in-home caregivers.
- Spanish-speaking immigrants would like to have more opportunities to learn English, and see this as a barrier to other opportunities.
- Resources for Elderly: There are little to no resources for elderly people.
- Transportation Options: Lack of options limit accessibility of existing services, particularly for youth and immigrants.
- Healthcare: Limited health infrastructure inhibits residents' access to appropriate health services.
- Housing: There is a need for more affordable and market rate housing.

*“I love that this community supports one another and is willing to lend a helping hand for those in need.”*



# Project Priorities

	<h2>COMMUNITY CENTER</h2>	<p>A multi-purpose community center was a clear priority when participants were asked to vote on priorities. Some ideas for the community center space were: a place for teens to gather, learn, and engage with peers and the arts; a place for Latino and Hispanic members to host cultural events, vocational &amp; financial literacy training; English as a second language and other social support classes for all community members, and open to all regardless of ability to pay.</p>
<h3>#2 COMMUNICATION</h3> <p>Communication in Othello across community entities, individuals, and visitors is challenged by there being no local radio or newspaper.</p>	<h3>#4 LATINO AND HISPANIC CULTURAL EVENTS</h3> <p>Inclusion of Latino owned small businesses in community events like 4th of July, Sand Hill Crane Festival, the fair and rodeo parade. Gathering and celebration spaces around important holidays like 5 de Mayo, Mexican Independence Day, dances, Fiesta Amistad, and Hispanic Heritage Month.</p>	
<h3>#3 LIBRARY EXPANSION</h3> <p>Libraries are important community places for all ages. The community participants voted a library expansion as #3 in the priority list.</p>	<h3>#5 ACCESS TO LOCALLY GROWN FOODS</h3> <p>A number of ideas around working directly with local farms to sell bulk items, reviving the farmers market, and a natural food store, and value-added processing were all ideas around access to local food.</p>	

*This flyer reflects priorities of community members participating in a September, 2023, community meeting. Other priorities emerged through focus groups and other community meetings.*



*Elevate Othello Community Meeting December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 discuss priority area project ideas*

Based on the community priorities, community members identified a number of projects that support one or more of these priorities. They include the following:

## **A Community Center**

Providing a place for community members to meet and engage with one another, including teens and young adults, businesspeople, and the immigrant population would support multiple priorities. While a new building for this purpose was mentioned, there are currently places in Othello that can function as community centers – the Lighthouse Community Center, the Senior Center, and the Old Hotel. The need is primarily for programming that can take place within these spaces such as creative and practical hands-on educational programs for youth and adults.

Next steps include identifying and prioritizing community interests, securing resources, and organizing programs. This includes collaboration between The Old Hotel, Lighthouse, the Mid-Columbia Library branch in Othello, and other community-based groups to revive the “Community Schools” program for education for youth and adults, programs in Spanish, or English classes. An Elevate Othello Community Grant was awarded to the Lighthouse for this collaborative education project.

***“I’d like to see places for families and kids. Maybe a community center, or a place for kids to be after school. A performing arts center.”***

Potential sources of funding may include the following:

- [Innovia Foundation](#)
- [Empire Health Foundation](#)
- [Columbia Basin Foundation](#)
- [Paul Lauzier Foundation](#)

## **Communication**

Participants are looking for ways to provide Othello-specific community news including print and radio outlets. The most often used platform is Facebook for sharing community information which can include a lot of people for no cost, but information is often hidden by the algorithm unless paid advertising is used. A more robust communication system is desired to reach both English and Spanish speaking residents, including text alerts for community events.

Potential sources of funding may include the following:

- <https://www.caseygrants.org/>
- <https://localmedia.org/2023-local-news-fund-overview/>
- [https://www.macfound.org/press/press-releases/macarthur-announces-\\$48-million-in-support-of-local-news-initial-seeding-of-press-forward-collaborative](https://www.macfound.org/press/press-releases/macarthur-announces-$48-million-in-support-of-local-news-initial-seeding-of-press-forward-collaborative)

## Latino Engagement and Cultural Events

Through the unfolding of Elevate Othello, the community has formed the Hispanic Committee, which will support community events specific to Latino cultural holidays, and which is planning a Cinco de Mayo event on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This event will include a parade, artistic performances, Miss Quinceanera, a car show, musical performances, and locally owned Latino food businesses. The Hispanic Committee received an Elevate Othello Community Grant award to support Cinco de Mayo.

Potential sources of funding for cultural events may include the following:

- [Arts WA Grants to Organizations](#)
- [State of Washington Tourism Arts & Culture Grants](#)

## Access to Locally Grown Foods

Community members are interested in exploring outlets for buying bulk food from local and regional farms, re-establishing a farmers market, community gardens, and fresh produce for the Othello Food Bank. The Othello Food Bank received an Elevate Othello Community Grant award to support a community garden at a local apartment complex.

Potential sources of funding may include the following:

- Washington Farmers Market Association
- [WSDA Food Assistance Grants](#)
- [WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure Grant](#)
- [WSDA Farmers Market Promotion Program](#)

## Childcare Business Training

To address the shortage of childcare slots, RDI, in partnership with the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE), has been able to secure funding for RDI's Spanish language in-home childcare business training to help establish home-based childcare businesses. CIE will provide ongoing support to participants. These classes are taking place in Spring and Fall of 2024.

Current and future sources of funding may include the following:

- [Washington Department of Commerce Child Care Partnership Grants](#)
- Health/hospital foundations

## Career Pathways for Youth and Adults / Spanish-Speaking Community

Based on the Mentor Match Teen Entrepreneurship program that the Lighthouse Community Center facilitated as part of Elevate Othello in which eighteen high school juniors and seniors developed the knowledge and skills to start their own businesses, the Lighthouse would like to continue youth as well as adult entrepreneurship trainings. They are actively looking into options such as Co.Starters, an accessible program designed to support aspiring entrepreneurs to explore business ideas in a cohort model.

*“I would like to see resources for high-schoolers who want to start their own business, as well as internships that help students learn more about the job they want to do.”*

RDI's MoneySmart financial literacy training, conducted in February 2024 as part of Elevate Othello, uncovered a broader desire for continued financial literacy training. There are potential partnerships with ESD123 and McCain Foods for additional training.

English language classes for adults came up over and over again as a priority, and would help the Spanish speaking population participate in the community and have access to career and civic opportunities.

Current and future sources of funding may include the following:

- [Washington Student Achievement Council Challenge Grants](#)
- [Latino Community Fund Washington State](#)

## Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

The business community would like to establish a network of Latino owned businesses with specific support and training. They have a specific desire for the inclusion of Hispanic-owned businesses in events, such as the Sand Hill Crane Festival, and other tourism and travel promotions.

Current and future sources of funding may include the following:

- Washington Department of Commerce grants for rural business creation and development <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/serving-rural-communities/>
- SCORE Resources for Latino owned businesses <https://www.score.org/resource/article/11-funding-resources-hispanic-and-latino-small-business-owners>
- <https://www.vizionsedc.org/>



## Other Project Priorities

In addition to the above projects that were prioritized by community members participating in community meetings, other project ideas included the following:

- Entrepreneurship training opportunities for teens and adults
- A “Welcome Wagon” group who works with local realtors to identify new homeowners and residents moving to Othello with information about schools, nonprofits, and services available in the community.
- Streamlined communication between City of Othello policy and governance and small-business owners.
- More “event friendly” city regulations for live music and after-hours events.

## Next Steps

Next steps for this work are to maintain and build momentum around community priorities, build capacity for fundraising, and access resources to bring projects to fruition. Community members have stepped up to work on specific priorities, and it is important to maintain the momentum of these groups to meet, plan, and take steps toward their goals.

Elevate Othello/City of Othello will apply to Washington Trust for Historic Preservation to become a Washington Main Street Affiliate. This will come with additional support or resources from the organization. The Elevate Othello group would like to explore a food innovation and commercial kitchen space for the numerous food businesses in Othello. Their intent is to apply for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to support this effort.

RDI will facilitate more peer learning opportunities to help these groups understand how other communities have approached similar efforts, and interested community members will have the opportunity to participate in RDI’s Ready Set Grant program, a grant writing training that provides practical guidance on grants and funding.

RDI, with funding from USDA through the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge program, and with additional funding from the Avista Corporation and the Innovia Foundation, provided a number of community seed grants to support prioritized community projects to show progress and build greater momentum. Through a competitive process, community members were invited to submit applications for seed grants for projects aligning with the priorities identified through the course of this process. Projects funded through with Community Grants include Othello Senior Center for the purchase of Bingo equipment, Othello Food Bank for a community garden, the Hispanic Committee for Cinco de Mayo, and The Lighthouse for community education classes.

In April 2024, 9 Elevate Othello participants attended Regards to Rural in Kennewick, WA and spent three full days learning and networking with other rural community members and organizations including USDA Rural Development representatives from Washington, DC and the Pacific Northwest. They were able to share the work of Elevate Othello and their dreams for the future.



*Anne Henning, City of Othello; Kasandra Edeza, STCU; Kim Coreson, Nazarene Church of Othello; Jose Garza, Othello Food Bank visit Independence and Woodburn, Oregon as part of Elevate Othello Learning Tours*



## Funding Opportunities

Specific funding opportunities have been listed above with the current set of prioritized projects. The following is a list of funding opportunities to explore as new project ideas arise that support community priorities.

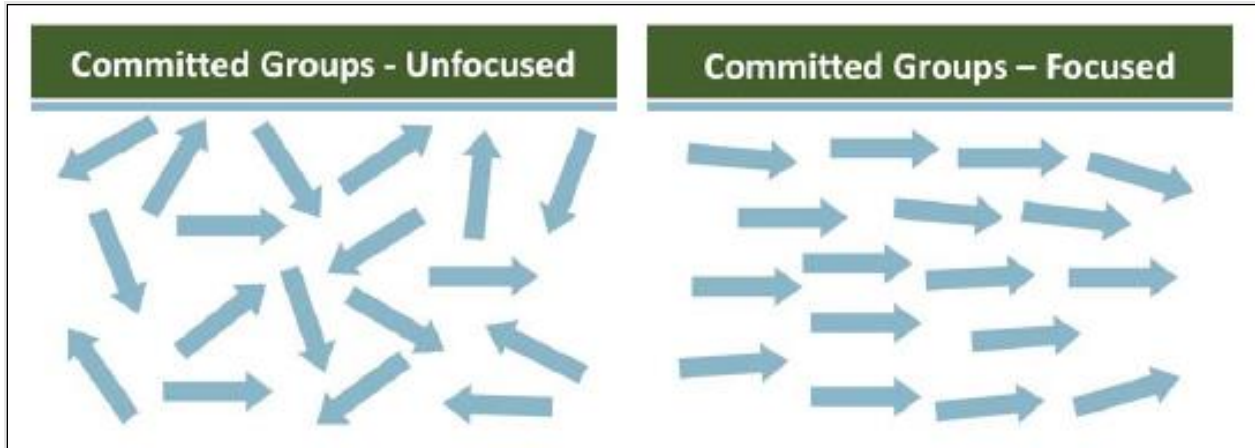
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) Rural Business Development Grants (Deadlines are usually in February): This federal funding supports programs for small business and entrepreneurs in rural communities.  
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants>
- T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program: In partnership with Smart Growth America and Main Street America, the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program awards up to 100 small towns a year with community development project funding—up to \$50,000 each.  
<https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/fundingopportunities>
- RAISE Grants (Deadlines are usually in February): These federal funds support streetscape infrastructure implementation in local communities.  
<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/344667>
- Community Heart and Soul Seed Grants (Deadlines are Rolling): These seed funds can be used to establish the Community Heart and Soul community engagement model in the region. <https://cloud.3dissue.net/18406/18451/20374/48585/index.html?74455>
- Community Facilities Grant Program (Deadlines are Rolling): These federal funds can be used to develop community facilities that provide crucial community services in rural areas. <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>
- Community Foundation Locator: Use the following link to find local community foundations: <https://cof.org/page/community-foundation-locator>

# Appendices

## The Process

This section outlines the *Elevate Othello* community process.

### Community Engagement



What does community engagement look like? It is when you see community members in a workshop applying themselves, finding their particular areas of interest, meeting others with similar interests, finding enough common ground, capturing good ideas, and taking responsibilities for actions needed to move forward. It is a groundswell of dialogue and constructive conversation; it is solid bridge-building and the elimination of some of the alienation, frustration, division, negativity, and sense of near helplessness that we often feel. The vision process included all of those moments and more in a series of events and activities described below.

### Steps in the Visioning Process

The process consisted of several elements, including a diverse steering committee, sector-based focus groups, and events, to develop a community-led vision and action plan that provides a roadmap for Othello to become the community residents want to see.

# Visioning Process

## Survey

April-June



## Innovation

January 2024

Seed Grant Committee,  
Connect with Funders



## Final Placemaking Plan

January

Report to City Council



## Focus Groups

August



6 Small Community Groups  
Explore Survey Results and Focus  
Topics (including teen and young  
adults, farmworkers, small businesses,  
career pathways, food innovation)

## "Y'all Come" Work Session

December

Prioritize Project Ideas  
and Develop Action Plan

## Community Ice Cream Social & Meeting

September

- Set and Affirm  
Priorities
- Project Ideas
- "Sign Me Up"

## Learning Tours

Nov-Ongoing

Peer Learning  
Field Trips and  
Virtual "Field  
Trips"



## Community Engagement

### TEAMS, ROLES, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Participate in Placemaking Learning Journey, visioning process, skill building trainings, project implementation.



#### IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

RDI and Partners keep project on task, convene people, facilitate community-informed program design, and coordinate and facilitate Planning and Advisory Teams.



#### PLANNING TEAM

Works with the Implementation team to plan the specific steps of the project, while engaging and centering community.



#### ADVISORY TEAM

Makes sure the project is broadly meeting the community needs and aligned with defined priorities.

To kick off the Elevate Othello program, a virtual meeting with stakeholders was held on February 22. Planning Team and Advisory Team members attended.



The Implementation Team (representatives from RDI and Partners for Rural Washington) visited Othello on March 6, and met with the Planning Team, the Mayor, and the Superintendent of Schools, and presented to Othello City Council. During the meeting, participants chose to name this project “Elevate Othello.” Other key takeaways included feedback that cultivating a new generation of leaders is a high priority for the community; Elevate Othello is an opportunity to reach out to groups that are typically not involved in civic activities to build more engagement; interest in extracurricular activities and opportunities for children, teens, and young adults; schools play a critical role in community support; constraints to attract and develop industry for various reasons, but value-added food products is one of the priority areas of focus.

## ***Elevate Othello Community Survey***

A community survey was conducted online in both English and Spanish, with one version for the broad community and one specific for teens and young adults. From the themes found in the data there were focus groups formed around Teens and Young Adults, Career Options, Latino Business Engagement, and Small Business Owners. Farmworkers were surveyed during this same time and it was clear that training that helped with skill building, like English language and finance was a high interest.

Four versions of the survey were created and tailored for community groups, and surveys were distributed beginning in April 2023. Surveys included versions in English and Spanish, and a version specific to youth. The youth version had an additional question to gather input regarding career opportunities in Othello. Outreach efforts included distributing flyers at businesses and organizations and handed out at in-person events, and a link to the survey was shared electronically via social media, emails, and through the high school. Two-hundred seventy-two responses were collected.

The surveys contained four questions and optional demographics questions, with an additional question for the youth. The following highlights findings for each survey question.

### **1. What do you like most about Othello?**

When asked, “What do you like most about Othello?” nearly half of the survey respondents highlighted the small community feel and the people. Respondents said that they like that Othello is family-oriented, quiet and peaceful, walkable and accessible, and has little traffic. Other themes included the parks, retail stores including small businesses, and the food and restaurants. Some of the youth respondents specifically mentioned appreciating Frutaletas for the food but also as a place to hang out with friends.

*“The small town environment and the ability to get easily to all aspects of the town.”*

*“I love that this community supports one another and is willing to lend a helping hand for those in need.”*

*“The parks because you can enjoy the outdoors with friends and family.”*



## 2. What DON'T you want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years?

When asked "What DON'T you want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years?" the top five response categories were crime and gangs, negative appearance such as trash and graffiti, lack of variety of businesses or new/local businesses, transportation issues, and deterioration of buildings and empty buildings. One respondent stated they "hope the rise in crime and drugs does not get worse."

*“I don't want to see Othello become less attractive to visitors. I want it to become a place where people can have fun, feel safe and spread the news of how awesome of a town it is.”*

## 3. What DO you want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years?

When asked "What DO you want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years?" about half responded that they would like to see more restaurants and businesses, and a better variety of restaurants and businesses; Youth activities, a youth center, youth sports, and playgrounds; more activities (that were not specifically tied to youth activities), a community center, and indoor pool; a new school and improved education; more parks and trees; and growth in the community.

*“I want to see a new hotel, rebuilt schools, and new playgrounds for kids.”*

*“I'd like us to get more food and culture opportunities and I'd like to see it cleaned up.”*



*“I’d like to see places for families and kids. Maybe a community center, or a place for kids to be after school. A performing arts center.”*



**4. Where would you spend your energy to make Othello a better place to live?**

When asked where people would spend their energy to make Othello a better place to live, respondents indicated they would spend their energy on recreation, community events, youth activities, and a community center; the schools; parks; new businesses and business support; and beautification and clean up. These themes are mirroring what people said they want to see in Othello in the next 5-10 years. A number of youth responded that they are unsure.

*“Encouraging new businesses and community events.”*

*“I would spend my energy building another school and better food.”*

*“I would spend my energy on the youth of Othello so we can have a better future.”*

**5. What job or career opportunities would you like to see in Othello? (This question was only included in the versions of the survey created for youth – teens/students)**

The survey targeted toward youth asked about job or career opportunities they would like to see in Othello, and many responded that they'd like to see more job opportunities in general, and more variety for teens and youth, including internships and mentorships and job opportunities for younger teens.

Some would like to see retail and restaurant jobs, and vocational including mechanics/ welding/ construction/ and electricians. About one-quarter responded that they would like to see professional job opportunities such as healthcare, technology, architecture, arts, business

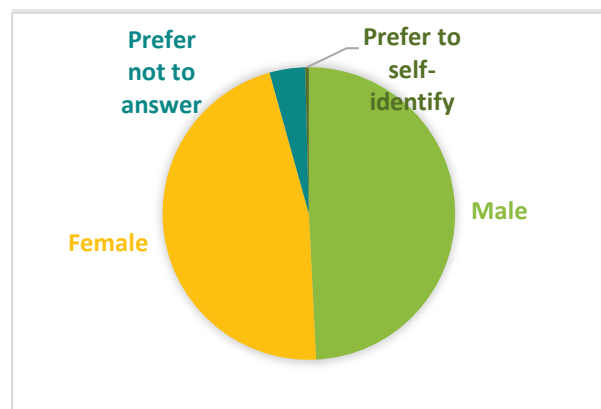
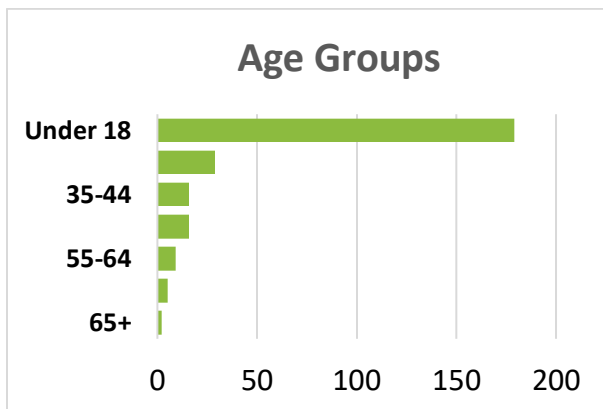
administration, counseling and therapy. And others are interested in more opportunities in agriculture.

*“I would like to see resources for high-schoolers who want to start their own business, as well as internships that help students learn more about the job they want to do.”*



Optional demographics questions gathered information related to age and how respondents identify. Two-hundred seventy-two responses included:

- 221 Youth Responses in English
- 51 General Responses in English
- 9 General Responses in Spanish
- 1 Youth Response in Spanish
- 199 Identify as Hispanic/Latino (80% of question respondents)
- 61 Identify as White/Caucasian (25% of question respondents)
- 30 Reported Language Other Than English Spoken at Home (12% of question respondents)



## Farmworker Survey



Fifty-seven participants responded to the farmworker survey that was distributed in Spanish. Opportunities that came up were increase career pathways and stability for seasonal and migrant labor; increase food and retail shopping options; develop spaces that allow community gatherings. Respondents brought up challenges including residents reflected on the lack of English as a second language education opportunities and identified it as a main barrier to career advancement; lack of health infrastructure prevent resident's access to appropriate health services; the lack of childcare and after-school children activities limit parents ability to participate in the workforce. Overall, the residents do not feel that they are being connected to social, health, financial, and career development resources.

## Focus Groups



Community Focus Groups drew 44 participants. A separate kick-off event with eight teens and young adults was conducted, and a focus group listening session with Teens and Young Adults included 21 high school students and seven adults. Other focus group topics included food innovation, small business owners, career pathways, and a farmworker survey in Spanish.

### Themes from the Focus Groups:

**Career Pathways** focus group themes included structures to develop local talent (OHS, McCain, SkillSource, John Deere all have technical training programs); regional training programs are available in Moses Lake and Tri-Cities; Othello High School is developing more technical programs including a new CDL training program. Challenges that surfaced included lack of representation for Latino and LGBTQIA2+ in management and leadership in many sectors including agriculture, construction, government leadership; workforce constraints: barriers to access key services to move out of poverty including transportation, childcare, language services, and time for career development.

**Food Innovation** focus group themes included interest in opportunities to create more places for teens to gather, including making existing places feel more inclusive; increase food diversity, including a fine dining restaurant; text marketing program for local businesses to buy into, customers can opt-in; non-sporting community events; – increase inclusion of local business events in the guide or supplemental marketing of the Sand Hill Crane Festival; look for resources to re-open the Farmers market including WIC and SNAP matching funds. Challenges identified at the Food Innovation focus group included lack of network of local businesses and

suppliers to access wholesale purchasing and other opportunities; city regulations limit outdoor events involving music; small business owners reflected that city interpretation and regulations lack transparency; not all businesses feel represented or supported by the Chamber of Commerce.

**Small Business Owners** focus group themes included interest in the creation of a Historical District near Main Street; developing an identity and investment in Columbia Street; develop a sports complex with increased services and amenities; old CBHA clinic space could become a multi-use (city, library, community) center. Challenges that surfaced included the current tourism infrastructure needs investment; hotel, restaurant and retail shopping diversity; workforce development: small businesses struggle to find qualified workforce and insufficient training opportunities.

**Teens and Young Adults** focus group identified opportunities to provide career starting opportunities through internships, apprenticeships, and entry-level job opportunities; create spaces for teen and young adults to convene as a community and engage with nature; increase funding of art and music programs as a way to develop teen and young adult talent. Identified challenges include age limit for employment which limits teen's opportunities for career development; lack of representation in community leadership presents a barrier to youth engagement; lack of public transportation options limits mobility of teens and young adults; teen and young adults feel that there is a lack of community engagement and connection to available resources.

# September Community Meeting



Seventeen community members attended the September 23 Ice Cream Social and Community Gathering to learn about the Elevate Othello project, hear input from other community members, share thoughts and ideas, and identify ways to move to action for community and economic success. Identified priorities that surfaced during this meeting were Community Center; Communication; Library Expansion; Latino and Hispanic Cultural Events; and Access to Locally Grown Foods.



# ELEVATE OTHELLO



## EMERGING PRIORITIES

Rural Development Initiatives is partnering with USDA, the City of Othello, local organizations, and community members to develop a placemaking and implementation plan. Through diverse steering committees, sector-based focus groups, and local events, Othello is developing a community-led vision and action plan that provides a roadmap for Othello to become the community residents want to see.

There are several clear interests in developing plans and strategies that were voted on by the community members who attended the September 23rd Community Ice Cream Social. Together, we envision an Othello where all community members can thrive as entrepreneurs and leaders in a strengthened local food and agriculture economy, with a focus on Latino and youth engagement and capacity building.



### COMMUNITY CENTER

A multi-purpose community center was a clear priority when participants were asked to vote on priorities. Some ideas for the community center space were: a place for teens to gather, learn, and engage with peers and the arts; a place for Latino and Hispanic members to host cultural events, vocational & financial literacy training; English as a second language and other social support classes for all community members, and open to all regardless of ability to pay.

### #2 COMMUNICATION

Communication in Othello across community entities, individuals, and visitors is challenged by there being no local radio or newspaper.

### #4 LATINO AND HISPANIC CULTURAL EVENTS

Inclusion of Latino owned small businesses in community events like 4th of July, Sand Hill Crane Festival, the fair and rodeo parade. Gathering and celebration spaces around important holidays like 5 de Mayo, Mexican Independence Day, dances, Fiesta Amistad, and Hispanic Heritage Month.

### #3 LIBRARY EXPANSION

Libraries are important community places for all ages. The community participants voted a library expansion as #3 in the priority list.

### #5 ACCESS TO LOCALLY GROWN FOODS

A number of ideas around working directly with local farms to sell bulk items, reviving the farmers market, and a natural food store, and value-added processing were all ideas around access to local food.

COMPILED FALL 2023

## December Community Meeting

A community meeting was held on December 8 to continue to help the community move to action based around areas of interest that had already been identified in community survey and focus groups. Thirty-five participants built social capital, understood assets, and identified concrete actions and next steps through project planning in small groups. Goals were drafted for projects including the creation of a **Community Center** as a place with classes, tools, “library of things,” maker space, sustainable gathering space for people of all ages to be lifelong learners; a **Latino Small Business/Chamber of Commerce**; the need for more **career options**; a project with a focus on **agriculture/outdoors** including an Ecopark, harvest festivals, and theme events to bring money into the community, and support one another; and a communications plan for **text alerts for community events**. People also signed up for teams to move projects forward.

## Learning Tours

Part of the Elevate Othello project is to discover and learn from other rural places how they are working together to create community, engage a diverse population, support and involve teens and young adults, and create vibrant economies. This Learning Tour is an opportunity to learn both in person and virtually from the people who have created and manage the types of programs that the community has identified as priorities.

As part of the visioning process, Othello community ambassadors visited Woodburn and Independence, Oregon, to experience placemaking success stories hands-on. These communities are deeply engaged in Latino cultural engagement and I business support with a local food emphasis. Interests that resulted from this vision include communications focused efforts such as radio and podcast, and shared mixed-use spaces focused on business and food incubators and business training and support.

Virtual learning tours have included a “visit” to Talent Maker City in Talent, OR where a maker space has continued to grow with the interest and demand of the community. A visit with K’Lynn Lane from The Ford Family Foundation and her previous role as Executive Director of Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce and her innovative approaches to attracting businesses to Main Street and a local Ambassador program. Reinventing Rural has included Othello in their weekly webinar series “Business is Brewing” during a weekly coffee hour hosted by local coffee shops in coordination with the Greater Othello Chamber of Commerce.

Upcoming opportunities include a series of 1-hour Zoom visits with folks from all over the Pacific Northwest who run a range of programs from maker and art spaces, youth leadership programs, food incubators, pop-up markets, and community centers focused on inclusive cultural engagement. Othello community members met virtually in December to learn from Talent Maker City in Talent, OR. Talent Maker City is a nonprofit organization working to build a more connected, prosperous, and resilient community through hands-on creativity and innovative STEAM-based learning (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math). Watch the learning visit recording here: [https://youtu.be/jbP83OVB\\_94](https://youtu.be/jbP83OVB_94)



What would YOU do to make Othello a more vibrant place to live, work, and play?



*Your input matters!*

**Take the Elevate Othello Community Survey today.**

Scan the QR code to take the survey, or visit:  
[surveymonkey.com/r/o1all](https://surveymonkey.com/r/o1all)



*Survey respondents will be entered into a drawing for a local gift card.*

¿Qué puedes hacer TU para que Othello sea un lugar vibrante para vivir, trabajar y jugar?



*¡Tu opinion es importate!*

**Toma el cuestionario de “Elevate Othello” hoy.**

Escanea el código para tomar la encuesta o visita el enlace:  
[surveymonkey.com/r/s01all](https://surveymonkey.com/r/s01all)



*Los que respondan a este cuestionario, estarán en la lista de la rifa para una tarjeta de regalo de un negocio local en Othello.*

# What do YOU envision for Othello? Your input matters!

You're invited to an ice cream social and community gathering to learn about the *Elevate Othello* project, hear input from other community members, share your thoughts and ideas, and identify ways to move to action for community and economic success.



**Saturday, September 23, 3:00–5:00 pm**  
**Othello City Hall, 500 E Main St**

For more information, please contact:  
Marci Miller: 208.301.4538 | [mmiller@rdiinc.org](mailto:mmiller@rdiinc.org)

Funded by USDA Rural Development, *Elevate Othello* is a collaborative Rural Placemaking effort to improve community vitality and foster economic growth in Othello.





¡Estas invitado a  
Elevar a Othello!  
*Se proveerá cena.*

**Viernes, Diciembre 8 | 4:00–7:00 pm**  
**Iglesia Nazarene de Othello, 835 S 10th Ave**

Reserva tu espacio antes  
del 5 de Diciembre:  
[surveymonkey.com/r/EO12](https://surveymonkey.com/r/EO12)



Solo escanea  
y reserva!

**¡Haz de Othello el lugar que quieres que sea!** Ven a nuestra  
asamblea comunitaria a desarrollar un plan de acción para  
las áreas de prioridad comunitaria. Se han identificado  
las siguientes prioridades comunitarias:

- Espacio para reuniones comunitarias
- Expansión a la biblioteca y sus servicios
- Eventos culturales latinos
- Economía de alimentos local
- Oportunidad de desarrollo para la juventud
- Participación comunitaria multicultural
- Desarrollo y capacitación profesional

Contáctenos si necesita cuido para niños.

Para mas información, contacte a Ada Márquez: [amarquezacevedo@rdiinc.org](mailto:amarquezacevedo@rdiinc.org), 787.396.4944

Financiado por el departamento de desarrollo rural del USDA y socios, el proyecto “Elevemos a Othello” es un esfuerzo colaborativo para mejorar la vitalidad comunitaria y fomentar el crecimiento económico de Othello.





**Elevate Othello!**  
**You're invited!**  
*Dinner provided.*

**Friday, December 8 | 4:00–7:00 pm**  
**Church of the Nazarene, 835 S 10th Ave**

**RSVP by December 5:**  
[surveymonkey.com/r/EO12](https://surveymonkey.com/r/EO12)



**Scan to  
RSVP**

Make Othello the place you want it to be! Come to this bilingual community meeting to help develop action plans for community priorities including:

- Community Gathering Space
- Library Expansion
- Latino Cultural Events
- Local Food Economy
- Youth Opportunities
- Cross-Cultural Community Engagement
- Career Pathways

Contact us if you need childcare.

For more information, contact Marci Miller, [mmiller@rdiinc.org](mailto:mmiller@rdiinc.org) | 208.301.4538

Funded by USDA Rural Development and partners, *Elevate Othello* is a collaborative effort to improve community vitality and foster economic growth in Othello.





*Elevate Othello Community Survey*

**Demographic Data** (Responses to these questions are optional. Please feel free to skip any questions you do not wish to answer.)

6. In what zip code do you live in?

7. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

8. How do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to self-identify (optional to specify)

9. Please select ALL that apply:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Economically disadvantaged
- Language other than English spoken at home
- LGBTQIA+
- Person with a disability
- U.S. Veteran
- Other ancestry or cultural identity (optional to specify)





Elevate Othello Community Survey

5. Por favor provee la siguiente información para estar al tanto de este proyecto, si quieres participar y para tu oportunidad de ganar una tarjeta de regalo para Desert Rose Café.

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_

Correo electrónico \_\_\_\_\_

Numero de teléfono \_\_\_\_\_

**Información de demografías.** (Estas respuestas son opcionales, Sientase con la libertad en saltar estas preguntas si no las quiere contestar.)

6. ¿Cuál es tu código postal?

7. ¿Qué edad tienes?

- Menos de 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

8. ¿Cómo te identificas?

- Femenino
- Masculino
- Prefiero no contestar
- Prefiero auto-identificarme, (es opcional especificar)

9. Por favor de seleccionar todos los que apliquen:

- Nativo Americano o Nativo de Alaska
- Asian
- Americano Africano o negro
- Hispano o Latino
- Nativo Hawaiano o Isleño del pacifico
- Caucásico o blanco
- En desventaja financiera
- Habla otros idiomas en casa aparte de ingles
- LGBTQIA+
- Persona con alguna discapacidad
- Veterano militar de Estados Unidos
- Otra forma ancestral o identidad cultural (es opcional especificar)





**Welcome to the Elevate Othello Community Survey!**

The City of Othello was selected for a special project by the USDA Rural Development Program. For this project—Elevate Othello—we want to hear from teens and young adults to involve you in helping make our community a more vibrant place to live.

If you'd like more information or want to volunteer, leave your name and contact information in this survey. This will also give you a chance at a card for the Lighthouse.

For any questions about this survey or the Elevate Othello Project, please contact Marci Miller, Project Manager, at [mmiller@rdiinc.org](mailto:mmiller@rdiinc.org) or by calling 208-301-4538.

*This program is brought to you by Rural Development Initiatives (RDI), the City of Othello, the Adams County Development Council, Partners for Rural Washington, and Reinventing Rural, with funding from Columbia Bank, the Avista Foundation, the Innovia Foundation, and the United States Department of Agriculture, and support and participation from a number of local organizations and volunteers.*

1. What do you like most about Othello?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What don't you want to see on Othello in the next 5–10 years?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What do you want to see in Othello in the next 5–10 years?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What job or career opportunities would you like to see in Othello?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Where would you spend your energy to make Othello a better place to live?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Please enter your name and contact information if you would you like to stay updated about and/or involved in this project and for a chance for a Lighthouse card.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Elevate Othello Community Survey*

**Demographic Data** (Responses to these questions are optional. Please feel free to skip any questions you do not wish to answer.)

7. In what zip code do you live in?

8. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

9. How do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to self-identify (optional to specify)

10. Please select ALL that apply:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Economically disadvantaged
- Language other than English spoken at home
- LGBTQIA+
- Person with a disability
- U.S. Veteran
- Other ancestry or cultural identity (optional to specify)





*Elevate Othello Community Survey*

6. Por favor provee la siguiente información para estar al tanto de este proyecto, si quieres participar y para tu oportunidad de ganar una tarjeta de regalo para Lighthouse.

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_

Correo electrónico \_\_\_\_\_

Numero de teléfono \_\_\_\_\_

**Información de demografías.** (Estas respuestas son opcionales, Sientase con la libertad en saltar estas preguntas si no las quiere contestar.)

7. ¿Cuál es tu código postal?

8. ¿Qué edad tienes?

- Menos de 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
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- 45-54
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- Masculino
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10. Por favor de seleccionar todos los que apliquen:

- Nativo Americano o Nativo de Alaska
- Asian
- Americano Africano o negro
- Hispano o Latino
- Nativo Hawaiano o Isleño del pacifico
- Caucásico o blanco
- En desventaja financiera
- Habla otros idiomas en casa aparte de ingles
- LGBTQIA+
- Persona con alguna discapacidad
- Veterano militar de Estados Unidos
- Otra forma ancestral o identidad cultural (es opcional especificar)



## Farmworker Survey Questions

1. **Short open answer:** What do you like most about Othello?
  - a. ¿Qué es lo más que le gusta de Othello?
2. **Short open answer:** What do you want to see in Othello in the future?
  - a. ¿Cómo se imagina un Othello ideal en el futuro?
3. **Short open answer:** What opportunities would you like to see for you and your family?
  - a. ¿Qué oportunidades quisiera ver en su comunidad para usted y su familia?
4. **Short open answer:** What are the barriers to making those happen?
  - a. ¿Qué barreras limitan las oportunidades en Othello?
5. **Multiple choice + short open answer:** Would you like to stay updated about and/or involved in this project and the opportunities associated with it? If so, please provide us with your name, phone number, and preferred method of contact (texts or whatsapp).
  - a. ¿Le gustaría mantenerse informado de las oportunidades dentro de este proyecto? Si, le interesa, por favor proveanos su nombre, número de contacto y si prefiere textos o Whatsapp.

Yes, I'm interested in staying informed.

Sí, me interesa mantenerme informado  
Place to type their contact info

No, I am not interested in staying informed.  
No me interesa mantenerme informado.

6. **short open answer:** As a part of the Elevate Othello project, RDI is interested in knowing what kind of professional training would you be interested in? Please keep in mind this will be used to develop programming and shared with local government officials to expand professional training opportunities in Othello.
  - a. Como parte del programa "Elevate Othello", RDI está interesado en saber ¿Qué tipo(s) de capacitación profesional le interesaría atender? Esta respuesta será utilizada para, junto al gobierno local, desarrollar oportunidades de capacitación profesional en Othello.
7. **Multiple choice:** Elevate Othello and RDI will be offering a free Spanish food business training next spring in Spanish. Please indicate if you are interested in receiving more information about this training.

El proyecto "Elevate Othello", junto con RDI, estará ofreciendo el proximo año una capacitación profesional libre de costo para aquellos interesados en empezar su propio negocio de comida. Por favor indique si le interesa recibir mas información acerca de esta oportunidad.

Yes, I am interested in receiving more information.

Sí, me interesa recibir mas información a mi número de contacto

No, I am not interested in receiving information about this opportunity.

No me interesa recibir más información.

## Focus Group Questions

### Food Innovation

- What is your vision for the food system in Othello look like in 10 years?
- What are the opportunities to get you there?
- What barriers need to be addressed to make those happen?
- What resources do you need, or have you heard about that you need more information about?
- Who else should be involved?

### Teens & Young Adults

Imagine Your Dream Downtown activity (include pictures)

Discussion:

- What are the activity opportunities you'd most like to see for teens and young adults?
- What barriers need to be overcome to make these happen?
- And are there barriers that teens need addressed in order for them to participate?

### Small Business Owners

- What makes Othello a great place to own a business?
- What are the biggest challenges?
- If you could make changes in the business environment, what would the top 1 - 3 be?
- Are there any specific businesses that you would like to see in the community?

### Career Pathways

*We heard from teens and young adults survey that there is interest in professional services and trades. Thinking more broadly of all community members.*

- What career pathways are available?
- What structures are in place to support young workers just entering workforce, early career, farmworkers?
- What opportunities and obstacles come up when hiring or developing local talent?
- What skills and talents would businesses and local organizations like to see in hiring?
- Do businesses and local organizations currently engage & develop local talent?
- Career readiness? Trades? Apprenticeships, journeymen? Mentorships?
- New business start-ups (tech, manufacturing, construction, AG tech)

## Action Plans and Action Teams Identified at December 8 Meeting

## Community Center

PROJECT: Community Center

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE? Place with classes, tools, "library of things," maker space, sustainable gathering space for people of all ages to be lifelong learners

### OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Start with classes – charge nominal fee	Lighthouse OIC	Money Quarterly Announcement Subject Experts Volunteers Someone to Coordinate USDA RD Grants/Loans Space	1-year comm classes 3-5 years
Community Schools	Community Schools		
Skill Source BBCC	Skill Source BBCC Comm Experts		

### TEAM CONTACTS

Name	Email	Phone	Role
Georgia Reitmire			
Carla Hampton			
Deena Vietzke			
Jannifer Campbell			
Ruth Sawyer			
Danae Valdez			
Kasandra Edeza			
Janice Baginski			
Anne Henning			

## Community Center 2

### OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: Community Center

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Having one

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Funding	Someone rich, grants		
Find other people			
Partnership: City, Schools, CBHA, Chamber, County, Biz			

## Latino Small Business/Chamber of Commerce

### OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: Latino Small Business/Chamber of Commerce

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Community/Educate Plan ahead and be consistent	Mike Garza City of Othello	Facility People/Involvement Funding	Seasonal After Harvest
Child Care Reaching Out	Existing Chamber The Port	Recorded Meetings Zoom Type Meetings	Monthly/Quarterly
Flyers, Radio Station, Word of Mouth, Social Media			
Facility Community Center			

### TEAM CONTACTS

Name	Role		
Kasandra Edeza			
Martin Garcia			
Maria Martinez			
Sulema Martinez			
Roger Farwell			

## More Career Options

### OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: More Career Options

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Anyone that wants a job can find one

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Shared workspace			
Entry level – not 18 and above			
Not entry level – draw back those with college degrees			
Wifi – everywhere – good stuff			
Diversity of options			
Entrepreneur incubator/ Training program			
Pullman Stopping ground			



# Outdoors/Agriculture

## OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: Outdoors/Ag

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE? Ecopark, harvest festivals, other events, fishing, event promotion, apple, cherry, etc... theme events. Know the why ... Bring \$ into town. Community supporting one another. Strategies for marketing (WA Post). Potato art

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Highlight Outdoors in theme and communications	Chamber	Potatoes	
Recreation/ Ag / Crane	Volunteers Sandhill Crane committee	Donations Business Develop	
Constant Locations - Mar Jon - Scootney - Wildlife Refuge - Farmers Market	Fair Committee Spud Run Amestad		
Festival Promotion Marketing of Events	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Christmas Main Color Run		

## TEAM CONTACTS

Name	Role		
Kim Coreson			
Timm + Lori Taff			
Melody Anguiano	Business Owner		
Chris Dorow	Serial Volunteer		
Craig Simpson	Mgr		

# Text Alerts for Community Events

## OTHELLO GROUP ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: Text Alerts for Community Events	Charge to place a text
WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	
50% of Othello signs up to use the service	
Nonprofits & businesses put messages out	

ACTION STEPS What you need to do to reach the goal	PERSONS OR PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE Who is responsible for each action step	RESOURCES NEEDED INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL Resources needed to complete action steps	COMPLETION DATE When you expect to complete each action step
Research & select a service	Erika RDI		End of Jan
Figure out how many texts/day			
Find a curator 2 hours/month	Jose Garza - FB Page - or City - or Chamber - Talk to Shawn Logan		
Let people know how to sign up		Put on water bill Reader board QR code	
Go live when we have 125 signed up			

## TEAM CONTACTS

Name	Role		
Kathy Oord	Community Member		
Erika	Community Member		
Mike (Jen's Husband)			

# Elevate Othello Grant Application



## Grant Application

This grant opportunity is part of the Elevate Othello Program. Elevate Othello is supported through a USDA Rural Development Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge grant, with support from other partners including City of Othello, Adams County Development Council, Innovia Foundation, Avista Foundation, and Columbia Bank. Its purpose is to improve community vitality and foster economic growth in the community of Othello. Through this program, there is community grant funding available in the amount of \$30,750. We anticipate providing three to six community grants, and these grants must be spent by September 2024.

### REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY

- 1) Your group has participated in an Elevate Othello Community Meeting.  
AND
- 2) You have a project that will benefit your community, which you would like to complete within the coming year.
- 3) This project is related to the outcomes of Elevate Othello.
- 4) A mini-grant of up to \$10,000 would help you accomplish this project.
- 5) Projects can be completed within a year.

Grant applications are due **January 30, 2024** and will be reviewed by members of the Elevate Othello Planning Team and funding partners. Funding decisions will be made by March 1, 2024.

*Complete applications can be submitted by emailing Marci Miller at: [mmiller@rdiinc.org](mailto:mmiller@rdiinc.org)  
or by completing the online form: [surveymonkey.com/r/appw](https://surveymonkey.com/r/appw)*



## **APPLICATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING**

### **1) Contact Information**

- a) Organization/Project Team Name
- b) Contact Name
- c) Address
- d) E-mail Address
- e) Phone Number

### **2) Your Community Project**

- a) Did your project plan come from an Elevate Othello community meeting?
- b) Briefly describe how your proposed project is related to one or more of the priorities that emerged from the Elevate Othello process.
- c) Please describe any progress that has been made on this priority since the community meeting.

### **3) About Your Proposed Project (2-Page Limit)**

- a) Briefly describe your organization/team and its current activities.
- b) Describe, in detail, the community project you would like funded by the mini-grant.
- c) How do you anticipate this project will benefit Othello?

### **4) Project Budget and Timeline**

- a) How long will the project take to complete?
- b) Please provide an itemized budget for the mini-grant. (You may attach a Microsoft Word or Excel document if you prefer.)
- c) Who will be the fiscal agent (recipient of funds) for the project? Fiscal agent must be a registered nonprofit, a religious institution, or the City of Othello.

### **5) Additional Comments (1-Page Limit)**

Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the project, your community, or your organization.

## **WHAT WE WANT TO FUND**

We are able to fund projects that provide broad community benefit, or benefit smaller groups such youth, seniors/elders, people with disabilities, etc. Examples of possible projects include but are not limited to: a community and/or cultural event, a bike rack, podcast or other communications equipment, public art, landscaping in a public place, new resident welcome materials, promotional materials for community engagement or business support, development of community classes, teen entrepreneurship program, farmers market and makers market participation support, culturally specific educational programs, etc.

## WHAT WE DO NOT FUND

- a) Individuals.
- b) Debt retirement, operating deficits, or after-the-fact support.
- c) Capital campaigns
- d) Direct or grassroots lobbying.
- e) Expenses, including travel expenses to attend conferences, workshops, events, or symposia.
- f) Routine operating/administrative expenses for organizations.
- g) Public, private, or parochial education institutions (including their foundations) except in special circumstances when support is essential to programs/projects that meet community needs and are not considered standard educational services.
- h) Programs addressing specific diseases or health conditions or other special-interest organizations, except when such support significantly benefits the disadvantaged.
- i) One-time fundraising events or fundraising campaigns.
- j) Organizations or projects that unlawfully discriminate against anybody for any reason.
- k) Hospitals (including their foundations) and governmental agencies except in special circumstances when support is essential to programs/projects that meet community needs.
- l) Programs with religious content. In considering applications for funding from faith-based organizations we will apply the following criteria:
  - *The program or service to be funded must be open to all members of the community (not just members of the particular faith community applying for funding).*
  - *In the course of providing programs or services, faith-based organizations cannot proselytize, nor require clients to participate in or adopt any specific religious practice or belief.*

Criteria for selecting the final grants include the following:

- Alignment with priorities that have emerged from Elevate Othello
- Potential impact on the community
- Feasibility of plan, budget, and timeline

## References

Tan, E. (2023, August 21). A french-fry boomtown emerges as a climate winner — as long as it has water.  
*The Washington Post*.