

Portland Economic Opportunity Initiative

WHAT WORKS?

Apply best practices, focus on people not places, and build a system that leverages resources, builds community and tracks individual achievement.

People-based strategies

Portland researched local and national best practices and shifted from neighborhood revitalization programs that improved the streetscape, but didn't lift residents' incomes, to replicable, people-based strategies, designed to propel households out of poverty by significantly increasing individual incomes. *Read more about* Elements of Best Practices. [insert hyperlink here]

Real change takes time

The Initiative funds community-based organizations to work with small groups defined by some commonality, such as ethnicity, language, industry, or entrepreneurial ambition. Community-based organizations tailor the project to the group, equipping participants with the specific tools they need to move toward economic and personal stability.

Leverage resources

Develop policies, resources and alliances into a coordinated system to ensure local economic programs benefit residents at 0-50% MFI.

- ❖ *Pro Bono Legal Aid:* micro-entrepreneurs receive free legal services, including incorporating, drafting contracts, lease agreements, and copyrighting.
- ❖ *Health Care:* Formerly homeless participants receive free health care through a partnership with Kaiser Permanente.
- ❖ *Free Market Research:* Participating micro-enterprises can obtain free customized reports on business-to-business information, customers and industry trends.
- ❖ *Matched Savings Accounts:* Savings toward education, homeownership or a small business investment are matched \$3 for every \$1 contributed by participants.
- ❖ *Low-Interest Loans:* micro-entrepreneurs access micro-credit lenders.
- ❖ *Extend TANF Benefits:* Oregon has extended TANF benefits for recipients who participate in initiative projects.
- ❖ *In-depth credit repair*
- ❖ *Clean-slate:* clear up minor issues with the courts that are barriers to work such as suspended driver's licenses, unpaid fines, back child support and old minor offences that can be expunged