



Children's Forest of Central Oregon

Partnership Overview and Application

WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Children's Forest of Central Oregon is to unite our community to inspire lifelong connections to nature for all kids. We are a network of 20+ public, private, and non-profit organizations working to connect children and families to nature through learning, exploration, and play. We define nature broadly, from backyard gardens to neighborhood parks to neighboring National Forests.

As a convener, facilitator, and backbone organization, we coordinate strategic conversations and leverage the strengths of our partners to create greater community impact. We focus strongly on equity and inclusion, working to connect underserved audiences to impactful experiences in nature.

OUR VISION

A world in which kids are inspired by nature to become healthy individuals and create a sustainable future.

CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

- ❖ All children in Central Oregon can benefit from experiences in the natural world
- ❖ Accessible opportunities with nature must be provided for children of all abilities, backgrounds and ages
- ❖ Nature-based curriculum strengthens and diversifies core education programs
- ❖ Lifelong health and wellness habits are developed through engagement with nature-based programs, activities and experiences
- ❖ Leadership skills and possible future career paths for youth can be identified and encouraged through nature-based activities and learning opportunities
- ❖ Stewardship and sustainability are core ethics learned by children in Central Oregon through guidance by experienced adults and engagement with the natural world.
- ❖ Collaboration is essential to our success

ABOUT THE NETWORK

Any public, private, or nonprofit organization that shares a commitment to our mission and values is invited to be a partner in The Children's Forest of Central Oregon. Our job is to create a movement and we aim to be as inclusive as possible. We strive to follow a [collective impact model](#), and as such, have a common agenda, shared data tracking, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support (through Children's Forest staff). Some guidelines for our model include:

- ❖ Building the capacity of our partners. We only do work that requires collaboration, and everything else is left to our partners. The Children's Forest works to promote strategic partnerships, provide training, and bring additional resources to the great work of our partners.
- ❖ Focusing on key issues. We work with our partners and stakeholders to develop regional priorities and action plans that advance these initiatives.

- ❖ Creating a movement. We hope to inspire kids and families of all backgrounds and abilities to connect with nature on their own, and work to provide motivation, support, and inspiration to do so by elevating this conversation in our community.

PARTNER BENEFITS

Whether your organization joins the Children's Forest to network, create visibility, grow your programs, or connect with underserved audiences, there are many benefits of becoming a Children's Forest partner. In addition to being part of this incredible community, benefits include:

- ❖ Having a voice in important regional discussions
- ❖ Using the network as a platform to build partnerships with other organizations and agencies
- ❖ Taking advantage of key initiatives that help your organization build capacity and promote equity in our region
- ❖ Reaching broader audiences
- ❖ Promoting your organization through the Children's Forest's website, social media, blog, and awards
- ❖ Receiving training on key issues that strengthen your organization
- ❖ Inclusion in grants and other collaborative funding opportunities
- ❖ Access to special funding opportunities including through the U.S. Forest Service
- ❖ Contribute to and utilize regional data about outdoor access for students
- ❖ Stay up-to-date on regional happenings through the partner newsletter

PARTNER REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Commitment to the Children's Forest's mission and values
- ❖ Provide programs, services, sites, or influence in Central Oregon (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, and northern Klamath Counties)
- ❖ The Children's Forest does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, national origin, political or union affiliation, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected status recognized by local, state or federal law. Our partners must hold similar standards.
- ❖ For organizations providing programs, assurance that all staff and volunteers receive criminal history background checks.
- ❖ Serve as an ambassador of CFCO in the community
- ❖ Commit to advancing CFCO's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion for access to outdoor experiences

FUNDRAISING

The Children's Forest works to ensure that fundraising activities are collaborative, benefitting our partners and movement, rather than competitive. Joining the Children's Forest network is free for partners, so the Children's Forest relies on public and private funding to support our operating costs. The Children's Forest commits to:

- ❖ Provide an annual Fundraising Plan to all non-profit partners, allowing partners an opportunity to express any potential conflicts
- ❖ Honor existing relationships between partners and funders
- ❖ Seek and apply for grant opportunities that support collaborative projects with multiple partners. We prioritize regional and national grant opportunities, to minimize conflicts with local funders.
- ❖ Seek input from partners for small and large projects that are in alignment with our Strategic Plan, and jointly develop funding strategies for the projects.



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Partnership Application

Organization Information

Name of Organization: _____ Founded in: _____
Primary Contact: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Website: _____ Non-profit Government Private

NARRATIVE

Please use 1-2 pages to describe your organization including the following:

- How your organization's mission or activities align with the Children's Forest and its emphasis on outdoor learning, exploration, and play
- Population served
- What value you would bring to our efforts to reach *all* children through meaningful outdoor activities
- Why your organization is interested in joining the Children's Forest
- What steps your organization takes to guard against harm occurring to the youth you work with. Include a brief description of staff/volunteer screening, orientation/training, program/activity design, and risk management (if applicable).

ASSURANCES

Our organization:

- Adheres to a policy of non-discrimination
- Conducts criminal history background checks on staff and volunteers that are in contact with children
- Has current liability insurance
- Is not currently facing any litigation

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Partnership Applications can be submitted at any time to katie@childrensforestco.org. Feel free to include any additional attachments that tell us more about your organization. For questions contact Katie Chipko at (541) 383-5592.

REVIEW PROCESS

Partner applications are approved by a majority vote of the Children's Forest Board. The Board meets bi-monthly and will review and vote on partner applications received prior to the meeting. Applicants are invited to attend the meeting to provide information and answer questions.



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PARTNER ONBOARDING

Our goal is that all partners understand the mission, goals, and values of the Children's Forest, and understand the Children's Forest's role as a backbone organization for our movement. Additionally, our hope is that partners know how to connect with the network and our work, and have a vision for how being a part of the Children's Forest can advance their own organization's goals. Onboarding of new partners will include:

- ❖ Overview of our organizational structure, and how we function utilizing a collective impact model
- ❖ Overview of the Children's Forest's Strategic Plan
- ❖ Identifying priorities or initiatives partners want to engage in
- ❖ Providing and discussing the Partner Ambassador Toolkit
- ❖ Highlighting opportunities for cross-marketing programs
- ❖ Overview of Children's Forest fundraising efforts, identifying potential conflicts
- ❖ Adding partner logo and name to the Children's Forest's website and marketing materials
- ❖ Adding partner staff members to the Children's Forest Partner Listserv
- ❖ Identify desired committee and workgroup involvement (see below)

GETTING INVOLVED

There are many ways to get and stay involved with the Children's Forest, including:

- ❖ Children's Forest Partner Listserv – send and receive updates from the network of partners
- ❖ Committees or workgroups. Current opportunities include:
 - Program Committee
 - Health Committee
 - Equity Committee
 - Natural Resources Pathways (co-facilitated by the Central Oregon STEM Hub)
 - Marketing Committee
 - Fundraising Committee
 - Partner Development Workgroup
- ❖ Annual Partner Meeting (August)
- ❖ Bi-annual Children's Forest Awards Ceremony (June)
- ❖ Discover Nature Festival (September)
- ❖ Project development and collaborative grant proposals for various Children's Forest initiatives
- ❖ Host an intern – The Children's Forest has funding from the U.S Forest Service for partners to host high school or college interns that help to advance the Children's Forest's mission and provide work experience in the outdoors. The Children's Forest issues an RFP to partners each August.
- ❖ Apply for Youth Engagement Strategy Funds – The Children's Forest has funding from the U.S. Forest Service for partners to complete Youth Engagement Projects, focused on connecting underserved audiences with public lands. The Children's Forest will issue an RFP each winter, as funds are available.