

Innovia Foundation
818 W. Riverside Ave., Suite 650
Spokane, WA 99201
www.innovia.org



Contact:

Molly Sanchez, Chief Community Investment Officer
509-624-2606; msanchez@innovia.org

Innovia Foundation Announces Community Heart & Soul Program

Spokane, Wash. – Innovia Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of the Community Heart & Soul Program throughout its 20-county service area in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. Community Heart & Soul will provide funding and program support to rural communities with a population under 30,000 to initiate a resident-driven process to engage the entire community in identifying what they love most about their community, what they want for the future and how to achieve it.

The program will be officially launched at Innovia's upcoming Community Leadership Summit on March 18 – 19, 2024. Communities interested in the program must have one or more representatives at the summit to learn more and be eligible for funding. Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and local governments. Grant applications will be accepted this summer, and up to ten selected communities will be awarded a two-year grant.

Grant funding provided through Innovia will support community-based project coordinators in the selected communities for up to two years and provide them with program training and other resources to include an assigned coach. Seed money will also be provided to support actions and activities identified in the community's plan.

"With all of the growth and changes we are seeing in our rural communities across the region, it is more important than ever that community members come together to design their future by protecting and preserving what matters most to them and support the development and growth of things they want and are good for the community," said Shelly O'Quinn, Innovia CEO. "Our communities are recognizing that need and we are proud to bring the tool and funding resources to the table to help them."

Innovia's Community Heart & Soul Program is based on a successful model first implemented by The Orton Family Foundation over twenty years ago. The program is founded on three powerful principles – involve everyone, focus on what matters most, and play the long game. By bringing residents together through a non-partisan process, differences fade, trust is built, and the things they care most about replace the differences. A grant from the Orton Family Foundation will provide some of the seed funding and program support to Innovia. Since its inception, Community Heart & Soul has served as a proven model for community building and development for hundreds of small cities and towns across the country.

Registration for Innova's Community Leadership Summit is now open and available online at www.innovia.org/summit. Innova volunteers and members of its ten regional Leadership Councils are free.

Innova is a community foundation serving twenty counties and six tribes, both urban and rural, in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. Since 1974, Innova has been connecting donors with the region's most pressing causes and greatest opportunities. Its mission is to ignite generosity that transforms lives and communities. Through its work, Innova improves access to education, promotes health and wellbeing, supports arts and culture, creates economic opportunity, and enhances quality of life.

Innova partners with organizations and people that share in the vision for vibrant and sustainable communities where every person has the opportunity to thrive. With assets of over \$220 million, Innova distributes more than \$10 million grants and scholarships annually.

About Innova Foundation

As the community foundation for Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we partner with people who want to improve their communities and make the world better. We work together to identify and respond to our region's greatest opportunities, help those in need, and leave a lasting impact. Our mission is to ignite generosity that transforms lives and communities. We envision vibrant and sustainable communities where every person has the opportunity to thrive. Each year, Innova Foundation invests over \$10 million into our communities through grants and scholarships.

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