



Portland is Better Together Campaign Spring Update

The Portland is Better Together Campaign

As Portland navigates the economic downturn, the fabric of our community is strongest when we are helping each other. Launched January 15, 2009 at the Oregon Food Bank, the Better Together campaign showcases how the City and organizations around the community are stepping up to provide assistance, promoting practical steps each of us can take to help.

The Better Together campaign highlights resources and opportunities around the Portland-metro region where people can GIVE HELP, GET HELP, and CHOOSE LOCAL. It represents a partnership between community members, both government and residents, to care for those in our community who are struggling during this time. The primary avenue of information and resources is the Better Together website, located at www.portlandisbettertogether.com. This website is supplemented by banners recently hung on Portland bridges and overpasses.

Give Help

Mayor Adams accepted a check for \$100,000 from the Palau Association to kick off the Season of Service during the months of February through April in partnership with local faith and community organizations. The Better Together campaign collaborates with Hands On Greater Portland to connect individuals to service in Portland's communities through work projects and volunteer opportunities.

Other Give Help highlights and feature stories have included:

- The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's Oregon Food Bank silent auction which raised over \$3,000;
- A Dress for Success clothing drive organized by the City of Portland Women's Affinity Group that resulted in 600 articles of donated clothing. Dress for Success provides free clothing as well as hair and makeup tips to prepare women for the workplace.
- Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler's challenge to government employees and the public to help replenish the food supplies, winter clothing, and other essentials of local non-profit organizations.

Get Help

The Better Together campaign partners with 211 Info and the City/County Information & Referral line as primary resources for services and information for those in need of help. Resources related to

housing, credit counseling, health insurance, and business assistance are just a sampling of the resources provided.

Choose Local

The Better Together campaign partners with the Sustainable Business Network's Local First and the Choose Local campaigns to make it easy for Portlanders to frequent local businesses.

Community Response

A review of the Better Together website hits is at least one way we can quantify community interest in the initiative. Better Together had a robust start in January, and the higher number of page views (7,585) is probably explained by City Council volunteer participation at the Oregon Food Bank. Unfortunately, page views fell in February to 2,129 as program visibility declined. Page views have increased steadily since February with the addition of new content and weekly bulletins. However, page views will not increase substantially without elevated participation from City Council.

We have received very positive responses from community organizations that are already or are interested in participating in the campaign, including:

- Umpqua Bank
- Hands on Greater Portland
- Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force
- The Palau Foundation
- ChangeXchange
- SOLV
- 211 Info
- Multnomah County
- WorkSource Oregon
- WorkSystems Inc.
- Chooselocal.com
- Local First

The Better Together team is looking forward to leveraging the interest of our partners to bring more attention to the campaign.

Note of Appreciation:

Portland is Better Together is a result of the efforts of many across the city, both internally and externally. A core team that spans over six bureaus, PDC and the Mayor's office has contributed significant time and effort to this initiative. All our previously mentioned partners have been very generous with their time and assistance.

Next Steps:

- Coordination with the local Corporate Challenge throughout May and June
- Re-hanging banners at community centers, fire stations, police precincts, and City Hall
- Local advertising in collaboration with Tri-Met
- Increasing visibility of City Council volunteer efforts on the website
- Media outreach

Recommendations:

- Place a Better Together web banner on every Commissioner's website
- Place a Better Together web banner on every City bureau's website
- Ask City employees to place a link to the Better Together website on email signatures
- Consider the use of social media tools to drive people to website