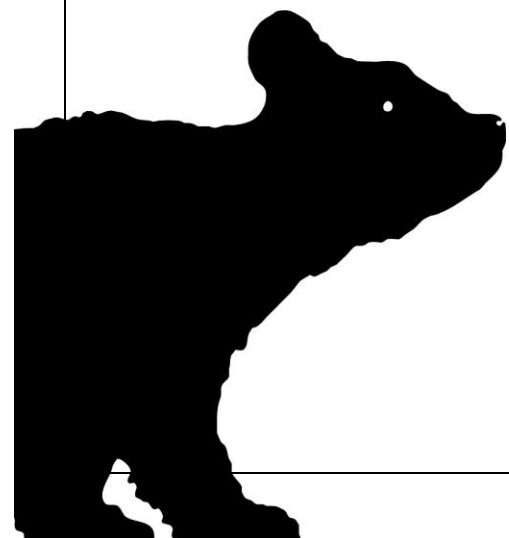


# STATUS REPORT OF THE CUB CONNECTS PROJECT

Submitted to the Oregon Public Utility Commission  
by the CITIZENS' UTILITY BOARD OF OREGON  
in compliance with the Framework Agreement for the Oregon  
Telecommunications Consumer Information Center

August 21, 2012



This CUB Connects Report is intended to comply with Section 4(A) of the Framework Agreement for the Oregon Telecommunications Consumer Information Center, which was acknowledged by the OPUC in Order No. 10-215. The Oregon Telecommunications Consumer Information Center operated as CUB Connects as of September 2010. May 31, 2012 marked the completion of the second year of the project, and this report aims to outline the activities and accomplishments of CUB Connects as well as illustrate how the funding associated with this project was allocated.

Section 4(A) of the Framework Agreement dictates that CUB, as the project manager of CUB Connects, is required to periodically report budget documents to the OPUC for updating and acknowledgment purposes. Such documents will include budget reports detailing how monies are spent, reports detailing CUB Connects' staff time allocations, copies of consultant invoices, and a copy of the annual independent audit of the supervising organization<sup>1</sup>.

## **Project Updates**

The CUB Connects project has three major components: the website ([www.cubconnects.org](http://www.cubconnects.org)), the toll-free helpline (855-892-4314) and outreach. In addition to updates about these major aspects of the project, we've included information about promotion of the project and opportunities moving forward.

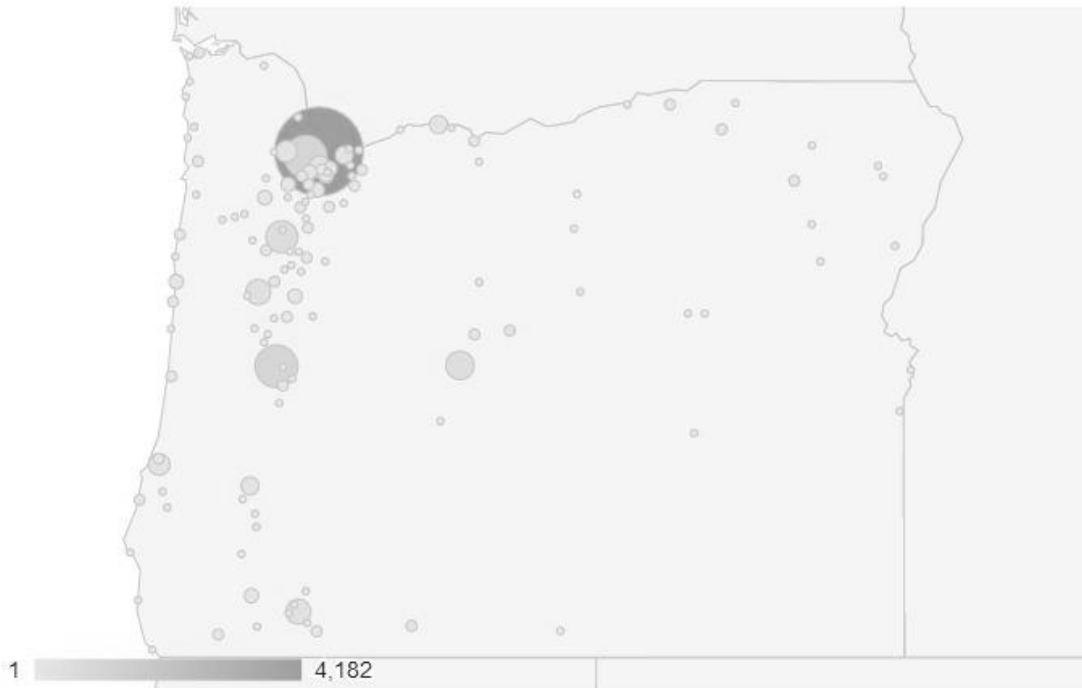
### ***Website***

The website launched in April 2011 and in its first year has proven, based on visitors to the site and feedback from community partners, to be a resource that has value for Oregonians.

- Since the site has launched, we have had 15,845 total visitors, with 13,202 of those being unique (non-repeat) visitors to the site.
- Each visitor spends an average of 3 minutes and 55 seconds on the site.
- The below map shows the locations of visitors to the site (in Oregon only):

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<sup>1</sup> CUB's independent audit of 2011 is not finished and will be submitted after it is completed.



- There are 132 people signed up for the site. This feature is not required to use the website or searchable database but allows for the saving and sharing of plans found on the website.
- Four service providers have signed up to update their own plan information on the site.
- We have received 73 legitimate (non-spam) communications through the contact form.

These statistics show that the site is being used and that the average visitor spends a significant amount of time on the site. Of course, there are also areas for improvement. As expected, the majority of the users are in the Portland metro area with others mostly along the I-5 corridor. This shows that after one year, we have spread the word about CUB Connects but need to now focus on extending our outreach outside of the Portland Metro Area. The fact that only 4 service providers have signed up on the site means that CUB staff is the only source of updates for the plans on the website, provided after significant research. CUB staff presented to the Oregon Telecommunications Association at their 2011 annual marketing meeting, inviting their members to make use of the ability to keep their information updated, and we've also communicated with those same service providers via email and individual contact. Unfortunately, the providers don't seem to see the maintenance of their plan information as necessary. This is an area where further attention is needed.

Now that the website has been up for a year and has received a number of visitors we are planning to evaluate the usability and functionality of the website to determine areas for improvement. This will be an internal process done in conjunction with a consultant on the usability of websites to help highlight and refine the user experience while determining ways to drive additional traffic with high times of average site use to the website and database.

### ***Helpline***

The toll-free helpline number was activated in April 2011. We are using a free customer relationship manager (CRM) through Google Apps that allows us to track the calls to the helpline. Originally, the CUB Connects proposal with Delaris, LLC included a custom CRM but the cost of such a tool and other website priorities forced us to find an alternative. The CRM is free, but its tracking and reporting abilities are limited.

We have received 75 calls total to the helpline - 31 of those calls (44%) were received in October 2011 after CUB Connects was featured in the AARP Bulletin. Before the Bulletin, we had only received 9 total calls. The average call lasts 12.5 minutes. We have record of 65 calls and estimate that 10 calls were not recorded in the CRM.

The most common call reasons that we have recorded are:

1. Looking for service provider/Want to change service providers
2. Bill help/Looking for cheaper option
3. Website – was on website and called

The helpline is a great resource for individuals that either aren't online savvy or simply want to talk to a person that is an independent third party. The limitation in keeping this type of interaction with clients frequent and consistent is the promotion of the helpline, as we have seen huge spikes in calls received when we promote the service through another organization or community group.

### ***Outreach***

At the onset, we did a number of informational presentations to community and governmental groups including but not limited to the Association of Oregon Counties, the Broadband Mapping Committee, the Oregon Telecommunications Association, a group of legislators and staffers at the state Capitol and others. These presentations put CUB Connects'

name out among our colleagues who work in communities throughout Oregon. These events were always well attended and the project was well-received. No official evaluation or action items came out of these meetings, as they were designed to raise general awareness of CUB Connects.

In addition, we have been tabling at community events<sup>2</sup>, to spread the word about CUB Connects and give community members a chance to talk one-on-one with a CUB staffer. These events help us reach demographics that can benefit from the CUB Connects project components. In addition to information about CUB Connects we provide information about Lifeline and OTAP services as well as CenturyLink's Internet Basic's program and Comcast's Internet Essential program. Both of these internet programs provide discounted internet services for qualified individuals or families. We have worked with both CenturyLink and Comcast to understand and provide accurate information about these programs and continue to participate in Broadband Adoption meetings and discussions. For example, we attended the 2011 Oregon Connections Conference that focused specifically on *Oregon Broadband: The Power of Adoption* and CUB Executive Director Bob Jenks participated on a panel about the Universal Service Fund and how it may relate to broadband adoption. Additionally, we participated in the Broadband Adoption Summit at Portland City Hall on April 6, 2012 which was hosted by the Portland Office for Community Technology, included presentations by CenturyLink and Comcast as well as a discussion from various community groups and organizations working in this arena.

In early 2012 we ran a pilot program for educational workshops through the Multnomah County library system. A full report of the pilot program is attached (Appendix I) ; this was originally presented to the CUB Board of Governors at the 2012 organizational retreat in April. Some important points to highlight are: Over the series of 6 workshops we had 23 total attendees, which is an average of 3.8 attendees per workshop. Ten out of the 11 attendees that filled out evaluation forms called the workshops "Very Helpful" and the other attendee selected "Helpful". The majority (8 out of 11) of the attendees found out about the workshop through the library.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Portland hosts a series of Fix-it Fairs to connect Portland residents to information and resources that can help them save money and be healthy at home. The fairs are free and open to the public.

Moving forward, we are looking for other avenues to do educational workshops in the community and will continue to provide informational presentations to organizations that work throughout Oregon, attend community events and participate in discussions around the issues of telecommunications services and adoption.

### **Project Promotion**

The CUB Connects website and helpline are featured in the 211 database (online at [ww.211.org](http://ww.211.org) or by phone at 2-1-1). This is an important, comprehensive list of community resources in the state and 211 heavily promotes its service throughout the state. CUB Connects is honored to be included.

For online promotion, we run ads on Google based on search terms that a user enters. We started this online promotion on September 1, 2011 and have received 2087 click-throughs to the site during this time, showing that online users are in fact searching for the keywords we've targeted and that the ads are effective at getting visitors to the site. Google was chosen as the primary method of online promotion after we ran an online promotion test with Oregon Public Broadcasting, Facebook and Google. Additionally, CUBConnects.org is a resource on both the OPUC website and the Oregon Broadband Map website. To supplement the online promotion, we have created simple outreach materials that we distribute at events and presentations and provide to other organizations to share with their members. Digital copies of the helpline card, postcard and brochure are attached (Appendix II)

### **Project Budget**

CUB has been able to manage the CUB Connects project conservatively. In the first year of operation (June 1, 2010 – May 31, 2011), the total funds spent were \$196,468.22. A detailed expense report was outlined in the 2011 Status Report submitted to the OPUC. During the second reporting year (June 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012), the project continued to be managed vigilantly and the total funds spent were \$180,736.87. Over the first two years of operation, the CUB Connects project has cost \$377,205.09.

For further examination of the financial management of the project, Table 1 outlines how 91% of the project funds in this reporting period have been dedicated to program cost while just 9% have gone towards administrative activities. A complete detailed expense sheet for the

current reporting period (June 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012) is outlined in Table 2 divided by administrative and program costs.

Additionally, Table 3 compares the 2011 budget versus actual expenditures to the 2012 operating budget in order to demonstrate expected annual operating expenses as we move forward with the CUB Connects project. Both this status report and the previous one submitted in 2011 took into consideration larger costs associated with project initiation. Please note, the difference in the Special Project Expense from the 2011 projected and actual budget corresponds to the creation of a unique login capability for service providers. The complete 2012 project budget adds up to \$162,590.00, demonstrating a typical project operating year moving forward.

### **Conclusion**

The CUB Connects project has proved that it is a valuable resource for Oregonians. The project needs to continue to grow to reach people throughout the state and to enhance the website usability and general effectiveness. In this current program year, we are in conversations with Elders in Action to evaluate the online tool as it relates to usability for seniors and provide joint workshops at senior centers, working with Home Forward (formerly the Housing Authority of Portland) to distribute our information to low-income citizens in Multnomah County and are having internal discussions regarding the best way to enhance the user experience online. In addition, we are finalizing a procedural manual that will ensure that the maintenance of the online database, website information and helpline services are optimized and can sustain the growth of the project.

CUB appreciates the opportunity to submit this report as required by the Framework Agreement entered into by Qwest and CUB under acknowledgement of the OPUC. CUB is happy to supply additional information and answer questions that Commissioners or Staff may have about this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Crosby  
Program Manager

cc. PUC Staff: Bryan Conway, Celeste Hari, Phil Boyle, Diane Davis  
CenturyLink: Ron Trullinger and Mark Reynolds

**Table 1: Distribution of CUB Connects Funding (June 1, 2011 – May 31, 2012)**

Category	Actual Funds Spent	Percent of Total Spent
Program	<b>\$164,983.32</b>	<b>91%</b>
Administrative	<b>\$15,753.55</b>	9%
Total	<b>\$180,736.87</b>	-

**Table 2: CUB Connects Detailed Expense Report June 1, 2011-May 31, 2012**

Expense Description		Administrative	Program	Total
<b>1</b>	Rent Expense	\$534.60	\$13,226.97	\$13,761.57
<b>2</b>	Consulting Fee Expense	0.00	\$626.00	\$626.00
<b>3</b>	Special Projects Expense	0	\$69.27	\$69.27
<b>4</b>	Insurance Expense	0	\$1,122.00	\$1,122.00
<b>5</b>	Bookkeeping Expense	\$90.65	0	\$90.65
<b>6</b>	Telephone & Internet Expense	\$95.94	\$1,846.68	\$1,942.62
<b>7</b>	Office Supplies Expense	\$104.02	\$995.85	\$1,099.87
<b>8</b>	Website/Online Expense	0	\$12,275.49	\$12,275.49
<b>9</b>	License & Permit Expenses	\$100.00	\$294.00	\$394.00
<b>10</b>	Promotion & Marketing Expense	0	\$9,138.83	\$9,138.83
<b>11</b>	Conference Expense	0	\$408.14	\$408.14
<b>12</b>	IT Consulting Expense	0	\$1,956.47	\$1,956.47
<b>13</b>	Equipment Expense	0	\$589.00	\$589.00
<b>14</b>	Hiring Expense	0	0	0
<b>15</b>	Reimbursement Expenses	0	\$1,615.39	\$1,615.39
<b>16</b>	Payroll Expenses	\$14,828.34	\$120,819.23	\$135,647.57
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>\$15,753.55</b>	<b>\$164,983.32</b>	<b>\$180,736.87</b>



*Table 3: CUB Connects Budget Comparison (2011 v 2012)\**

**2012 Annual Budget and 2011 Actuals Comparison**

	<b>Expense Description</b>	<b>2011 Budget</b>	<b>2011 Actuals</b>	<b>2012 Budget</b>
<b>1</b>	Audit Expense	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
<b>2</b>	Rent Expense	\$20,000.00	\$15,647.28	\$10,890.00
<b>3</b>	Consulting Fee Expense	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
<b>4</b>	Special Projects Expense	\$1,000.00	\$8,583.06	\$10,000.00
<b>5</b>	Repairs and Maintenance	-	-	\$1,460.00
<b>6</b>	Insurance Expense	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
<b>7</b>	Bookkeeping Expense	\$200.00	\$287.22	\$200.00
<b>8</b>	Telephone & Internet Expense	\$1,800.00	\$1,829.13	\$1,300.00
<b>9</b>	Postage and Delivery Expense	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
<b>10</b>	Printing & Reproduction Expense	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
<b>11</b>	Office Supplies Expense	\$1,250.00	\$1,218.00	\$750.00
<b>12</b>	Website/Online Expense	\$40,000.00	\$38,379.58	\$215.00
<b>13</b>	License & Permit Expenses	\$100.00	\$444.94	\$365.00
<b>14</b>	Promotion & Marketing Expense	\$20,000.00	\$15,017.51	\$7,000.00
<b>15</b>	Training Expense	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
<b>16</b>	Conference Expense	\$2,000.00	\$415.00	\$250.00
<b>17</b>	IT Consulting Expense	\$2,000.00	\$1,279.25	\$1,460.00
<b>18</b>	Equipment Expense	\$3,000.00	\$697.98	\$500.00
<b>19</b>	Reimbursement Expenses	\$3,250.00	\$1,765.95	\$750.00
<b>20</b>	Payroll Expenses	\$192,000.00	\$192,000.00	\$122,450.00
	<b>Total Expense</b>	\$294,600.00	\$278,064.90	\$162,590.00

\*Please note that the comparison budget in Table 3 uses the budget categories outlined in the Framework Agreement, not all categories are still in use in Table 2 above.

## **Appendix I – CUB Connects Spring 2012 Workshop Series Summary Report and Evaluation**

### **Overview**

During the spring of 2012 the CUB Connects team presented a series of workshops at public libraries in Multnomah County. The exact schedule is posted below. The workshops were set up through Multnomah County Library's event staff, who sends out a list of available workshops to all of the libraries in the network each quarter. We offered four different presentations:

- Choosing the Right Phone Plan
- Protecting Yourself from Scams
- Understanding Your Phone and Internet Bills
- Internet and Phone Safety Strategies.

Of the 4, all but the last topic--Phone and Safety Strategies--were selected. All of the workshops involved a presentation and a Q&A session with general and individual questions. We also provided a wide range of additional materials about the varying subjects. Of the 19 library branches, 6 selected a CUB Connects workshop for their clientele. The workshops were promoted through the library's regional notices, branch specific materials, and through CUB's newsletter, e-newsletter and websites.

### **Spring Workshop Schedule**

***Understanding Your Phone and Internet Bill at Troutdale Library***

Friday, March 2, 2012 - 11:00am - 12:00pm

***Choosing the Right Phone Plan at Capitol Hill Library***

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 6:30 pm

***Choosing the Right Phone Plan at Kenton Library***

Wednesday, March 21, 2012 - 6:30pm - 7:30pm

***Protecting Yourself from Scams at Midland Library***

Monday April 2, 2012 - 6:30pm - 7:30pm

***Understanding your Phone and Internet Bill at Woodstock Library***

Wednesday April 11, 2012 – 6:30pm – 7:30pm

***Choosing the Right Phone Plan at St Johns Library***

Sunday, April 15, 2012 -- 2:00pm-3:00pm

### **Evaluation**

Over the series of six workshops we had 23 total attendees, which is an average of 3.8 attendees per workshop. The majority of the workshops were held during the week, in the early evening, and the events after business hours had the highest number of attendees.

<b>Attendance by Location and Workshop Schedule</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b># Attendees</b>	<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>Time of Day</b>
Troutdale	2	Friday	Midday
Capitol Hill	7	Tuesday	Evening
Kenton	6	Wednesday	Evening
Midland	4	Monday	Evening
Woodstock	3	Wednesday	Evening
St Johns	1	Sunday	Afternoon

Attendees completed evaluation forms at 3 of the 6 workshops. The Capitol Hill workshop ran very long and the library was closing, so we weren't able to get evaluations from the attendees. The workshop ran long because participants were asking both general and specific questions which in and of itself is a positive evaluation, because we were able to answer a lot of questions after the presentation. Both the Troutdale and St Johns workshops had fewer than 3 people, and the focus of these was one-on-one assistance. No evaluation forms were filled out for these workshops.

In total 11 evaluation forms were completed for 3 different workshop topics. 10 out of the 11 attendees called the workshops "Very Helpful" and the other attendee selected "Helpful". One of the questions on the evaluation form asked if the participant would consider attending another CUB Connects workshop in the future. These are their responses:

- 7 of the 11 said they'd attend a workshop on a different topic;
- 3 said they would not;
- 1 said "maybe".

The majority (8 out of 11) of the attendees found out about the workshop through the library. Just one came after seeing the schedule in the CUB newsletter. We were unaware until informed by an attendee that the SE Uplift Newsletter listed the workshops. For each of the workshops, we listed the main information categories and asked attendees what information was most useful, we included in this list "Time with a CUB staffer." 6 of the 11 attendees selected this option, some exclusively and some with other categories.

<b>Attendee Evaluation by Topic</b>			
<i>Attendees</i>	<i>How did you hear about the workshop?</i>	<i>How helpful was this workshop?</i>	<i>Would you attend other CUBConnects workshops?</i>
<i>Understanding your Phone and Internet Bill – Woodstock Library</i>			
1	CUB Newsletter	Very Helpful	Yes
2	Library Website	Very Helpful	No
3	SE Uplift Newsletter	Helpful	Maybe
<i>Choosing a Phone Plan – Kenton Library</i>			
1	Library Notice	Very Helpful	Yes
2	Library Notice	Very Helpful	Yes
3	Library Website	Very Helpful	Yes
4	Library Notice	Very Helpful	No
<i>Protecting Yourself from Scams – Midland Library</i>			
1	Library Notice	Very Helpful	Yes
2	Library Notice	Very Helpful	Yes
3	Community Center Flyer	Very Helpful	No
4	Library Notice	Very Helpful	Yes

**Conclusion**

As noted in the evaluation, all of the participants found the workshops helpful and a majority would consider attending another CUB Connects workshop in the future. Based on this, we can conclude that the workshops are providing people with useful information and are worth the participant’s time. The unfortunate reality is that only 23 consumers attended the workshops. This presents a dilemma for CUB as we consider continuing to provide educational workshops. On the one hand, we know they’re useful for attendees and fulfill the mission of CUB Connects. On the other hand, it’s difficult to confidently say that putting our limited resources into educational workshops that attract an average of 4 attendees is a worthwhile program. Maintaining quality evaluation and record of events is an important step to ensuring that CUB Connects resources are being used effectively.

Moving forward, we will develop and test other avenues for providing information to consumers. We will try doing workshops with other partners and have a wider pool of results. Such tests will allow us to determine a threshold for the workshops' effectiveness and usefulness, and help to determine if CUB Connects should put our resources into educational workshops and if so, which avenue will likely be most effective.

This spring workshop series was meant to be used as a pilot to test working with the library system to provide workshops in the community. In this sense, it was incredibly successful and provides CUB with a foundation from which to build and discuss other ideas and options. As CUB's first strategic direct service initiative, these CUB Connects workshops provide valuable insight into what the organization should prioritize and resource in the near and medium term.

## Appendix II – CUB Connects Promotional Materials

### *Helpline Card*

The helpline card is targeted to individuals who can benefit from the CUB Connects resources. They are distributed at outreach events and meant as a reminder of the toll-free number and website URL for individuals that already know about the project.

Helpline Card Front:



**Toll-free Helpline**  
**1-855-892-4314**

Helpline Card Back:



### *Postcard*

The postcard functions as a standalone mailing or as a great handout at outreach events. It is also targeted at individuals who may benefit from the CUB Connects resources. The postcard provides more information than the helpline cards and is good for individuals who may not know about CUB Connects at all or know very little about the project. This is the material that Home Forward is going to mail to its list in the coming months, as mentioned in the status report.

Postcard Front:



**Need help choosing the right phone or Internet plan?**

Cubconnects.org is the tool you need to make the right choice.

**Toll-free Helpline 1-855-892-4314**

Postcard Back:

**Quick Money Saving Tips**

Instead of paying \$2 a call for directory assistance, call 1-800-FREE-411 for residential and business listings.

Check your long distance call rate and consider purchasing a long distance plan – some local companies charge up to 10¢/min. for long-distance calls.

Look at the number of unused minutes on your cell phone bill and consider changing your plan.

Use **CUBConnects.org** to compare home phone, cell phone and Internet plan options and rates!

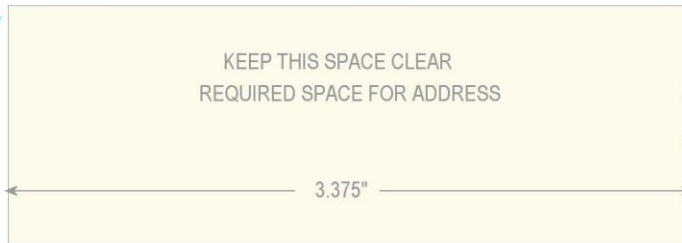


**CUB Connects**  
PO Box 6345  
Portland, OR 97208



**cubconnects.org**

*CUB Connects is a project of the CUB Policy Center.*



## Brochure

The brochure is targeted at organizations, groups and individuals who may help CUB reach out to more Oregonians or want to partner on outreach workshops or events. The brochure outlines all of the project components, including the workshops and is much more comprehensive than the helpline card and postcard.

Brochure Front:

Second set of brochures front panel design option 2

Research phone and internet services at



**CUB Connects.org**  
Oregon Telecommunications Made Easy

or call our toll-free helpline at  
1-855-892-4314

“After visiting your website and comparing my provider with their big competitor, I called my provider and pointed them to their competitor’s lower rates. In the end, I was able to get a \$25/month price reduction on my internet bill for 6 months!”

— Mark Adams  
Portland

Follow us for the latest news on Oregon telecom issues and services!

[facebook.com/cubconnects](https://facebook.com/cubconnects)  
[twitter.com/cubconnects](https://twitter.com/cubconnects)

“Choosing a phone used to be easy. You had one phone company and the only choice they gave you was whether the phone was on a wall or on your desk.

Now, we have lots of choices lots of companies and lots of salespeople trying to get us to buy something. What consumers need today is help evaluating these products, and services. CUB Connects provides that help.”

— Bob Jenks  
Executive Director  
CUB Policy Center

**CUBConnects.org** is a project of the CUB Policy Center, an independent non-partisan non-profit organization dedicated to consumer education.

This project strives to help Oregonians make informed decisions on how to best spend their money on the services they need. Because informed consumers are powerful consumers, and CUBconnects puts the power at their fingertips.





Tools to help Oregonians save money on phone and internet services



Oregon Telecommunications Made Easy



**We all are faced with tough choices about how to best spend our money on the services we need. With phone and Internet, the options are seemingly endless — and often endlessly confusing.**

CUBConnects.org simplifies the process of choosing phone and internet services and it's fast and easy:

- 1.** Go to [www.CUBConnects.org](http://www.CUBConnects.org)
- 2.** Select the service you need (Home Phone, Mobile, or Internet)
- 3.** Enter your ZIP code
- 4.** Click "Go" to view all options available in your area.
- 5.** Filter the plans by monthly charge or other features.
- 6.** Find the right plan for you!

Home Phone   Mobile   Internet

Zip Code:

Select from one of the three service types

**Go!**

Just go to [cubconnects.org](http://cubconnects.org) to select your service, then enter your zip code and hit "Go!" to see rates in your area!



For more information, please contact us at

[info@cubconnects.org](mailto:info@cubconnects.org)

or call our toll-free helpline

**1-855-892-4314**

CUB Connects staff is available for phone/Internet bill clinics and workshops on a variety of topics:

- Going Mobile?
- Internet Safety
- Assistance Programs
- Using CUB Connects

and other issues tailored towards your group.



Ofrecemos talleres en Español por solicitud

CUBConnects.org is a project of the CUB Policy Center.

## UM 1354 – CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that, on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2012, I served the foregoing **STATUS REPORT OF THE CUB CONNECTS PROJECT** in docket UM 1354 upon each party listed below by email and upon the Commission by email and by sending one original and one copy by U.S. mail, postage prepaid, to the Commission's Salem offices.

(W denotes waiver of paper service)

(C denotes service of Confidential material authorized)

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