

Education

M.S. Urban Studies, Cleveland State University

B.A. Humanities, Brigham Young University

Years at ECONorthwest: 12

Years in Industry: 12

Areas of Expertise:

Social policy

Education

Melissa Rowe, Senior Project Manager

Melissa manages a wide variety of projects related to economic opportunity, education, workforce development, and state and regional economic conditions. She collaborates with foundations, state and local agencies, business organizations, and non-profit service providers to assess prevailing conditions, evaluate programs and policies, and develop evidence-based recommendations. Prior to joining ECONorthwest in 2010, Melissa was the managing editor of *Economic Development Quarterly*, a peer-reviewed journal focused on the intersection of theory and practice in U.S. economic revitalization.

REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS

Melissa has served as Project Manager on the following projects, unless otherwise noted:

- **Postsecondary Attainment Modeling—Nationwide (Ongoing).** Working with quantitative scenario models and data visualization tools that estimate and display national and state-level postsecondary outcomes through 2030 and support strategic planning for the Lumina Foundation.
- **Analytic Support for The Ford Family Foundation—Statewide, OR (Ongoing).** Providing analysis for Ford Family Foundation initiatives, including Oregon Voices, postsecondary success and scholarship programs, and information on economic conditions across the state.
- **AVID ROI—Statewide, OR (2016–Ongoing).** Estimating AVID’s return on investment by comparing educational outcomes (e.g., net improvement in high school graduation or postsecondary enrollment) to the cost of providing the program.
- **Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality Evaluation Services—Statewide, OR (2013–Ongoing).** Evaluating impacts on student outcomes for two programs (Educa e Inspira and Leyendo Avanzamos) for the Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality.

- **Oregon Talent Assessment—Statewide, OR (2022).** Developed statewide Talent Assessments in 2018 and 2022, an update in 2020, and studies of COVID-19's effects on Oregon's leisure/hospitality and healthcare workforces for the Workforce and Talent Development Board. Represented the voice of business and industry to identify in-demand jobs and skills and prioritize investment in workforce and talent development.
- **Portland Business Alliance Value of Jobs Update—Portland, OR (2021-2022).** Provided an annual update on the Portland Metro's economy.
- **Analysis of Oregon Manufacturing Sector—Statewide, OR (2021).** Prepared a report that gives Oregon policymakers and business leaders a clear picture of the sector's work, a profile of the manufacturing workforce, and a description of how manufacturing drives demand in other industries and supports the provision of public services.
- **Funding Allocation Evaluation—Portland region, OR (2021).** Evaluated the method for allocating funds to local governments to implement a regional waste plan. Developed recommendations for a funding approach that supports implementation of plan goals and actions.
- **Childcare Facility Feasibility Study—Grant County, OR (2021).** Completed a feasibility study examining prototype models for a child care center in John Day, Oregon, for children ages 0-5. (Project Advisor)
- **Report on Post-Recession Rebuilding—Portland, OR (2021).** Provided Prosper Portland with an economic analysis and report on recession recovery, "Rebuilding Portland: The Role for Economic Development." The report explores the economic effects of the pandemic, with a focus on business and labor perspective, strategy for traded sector, and comparisons to other cities/regions. ECONorthwest presented to the Economic Recovery Task Force, including the Mayor and the Portland City Council.
- **Analysis of American Rescue Plan Act Funding for Portland; Report on Post-Recession Rebuilding—Portland, OR (2021).** Analyzed ARPA funding streams for Prosper Portland. Provided economic analysis and a report focused on effects of COVID-19 on Portland's economy, downtown business district, and traded-sector industries.
- **Portland Community College Facilities Plan—Portland, OR (2020–2021).** Provided demographic analysis, enrollment projections, and spatial analysis to inform Portland Community College's assessment of facilities and space needs.
- **Oregon Opportunity Agenda—Statewide, OR (2013-2021).** Provided policy concept and analytical support for the Oregon Business Plan's vision for shared prosperity. Managed a research partnership between Oregon leaders and Harvard University-based Opportunity Insights.

- **Assessment of Options for a Low-Income Assistance Program—Multnomah County, OR (2020).** Developed and proposed short-term program options for lessening the impact of a vehicle registration fee increase on low-income vehicle owners and estimated the revenue impacts for Multnomah County.
- **Community Impact Report—Tulsa, OK (2020).** Supported the development of an annual update on education conditions in the Greater Tulsa metropolitan region for Impact Tulsa.
- **Tourism Workforce Development Study—Portland, OR (2019-2020).** Conducted a study of existing and anticipated workforce needs in Oregon’s tourism industry, including potential barriers affecting workforce development across the state, for Travel Oregon.
- **ACT NW Feasibility Study—Portland, OR (2019–2020).** Developed a feasibility/market analysis for Achieving Change Together Northwest (ACT NW), a substance use disorder treatment and recovery management program for adolescents.
- **Washington State Strategy Modeling—Seattle, WA (2015–2020).** Worked with a quantitative scenario model that estimates the impact of education investments in the Pacific Northwest and supports the strategy’s development for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- **West Virginia Attainment Goal Support—Statewide, WV (2019).** Developed an interactive Tableau visualization for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission to illustrate student pathways through West Virginia’s public postsecondary education system.
- **WSAC Financial Aid Program Analysis—Olympia, WA (2019).** Analyzed enrollment patterns and outcomes of State Need Grant (SNG) recipients for the Washington Student Achievement Council.
- **Integrated Data System Readiness Assessment—Various States (2019).** Surveyed and interviewed local state representatives in seven states on progress toward the development of integrated data systems for the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.
- **Oregon Credit Mobility Analysis—Statewide, OR (2019).** Analyzed postsecondary outcomes for students in Oregon’s public institutions of higher education, with a focus on students transferring from community colleges, for The Ford Family Foundation.
- **Scenario Planning Tools—Nationwide (2013–2019).** Worked with quantitative models to inform the strategies of three U.S.-based education initiatives (Early Learning, K12, Postsecondary Success) at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

- **North Carolina Postsecondary Analysis—Statewide, NC (2018).** Provided modeling and analytical support for a statewide postsecondary attainment goal-setting process for myFutureNC.
- **Oregon Recovery High School Feasibility Study—Portland, OR (2018).** Developed a feasibility/market analysis for Oregon Recovery High School Initiative, a non-profit that runs a charter high school for students affected by substance use disorders.
- **Black Student Achievement Research—Statewide, OR (2017).** Analyzed data about African American student achievement and opportunity gaps in Oregon’s K-12 system for the Chalkboard Project and KairosPDX.
- **College Futures Foundation Modeling—Statewide, CA (2017).** Worked with a scenario model to aid strategic development and implementation for California’s College Futures Foundation. CFF’s goal was to increase the rate of bachelor’s degree completion by C.A. students who are low-income and underrepresented in higher education.
- **I Have a Dream Foundation Evaluation Services—Portland, OR (2013–2017).** Analyzed educational outcomes and worked with a model that predicts dropout and college attendance probabilities for the I Have a Dream Foundation’s Oregon program.
- **Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Oregon—Statewide, OR (2016).** Developed a comprehensive statistical analysis of the condition of women and girls in Oregon for the Women’s Foundation of Oregon.
- **TeachOregon Evaluation—Statewide, OR (2016).** Conducted a process study and an impact study to evaluate the outcomes of TeachOregon, a five-site demonstration project supporting innovative and collaborative models to prepare the next generation of Oregon teachers for the Chalkboard Project.
- **Research for the Chalkboard Project—Statewide, OR (2015).** Provided policy research and white papers on taxation, teacher licensing fees, teacher compensation, and teacher time use for the Chalkboard Project.
- **Albertson Foundation Consulting—Statewide, ID (2014).** Developed fact books on K–12 education funding and employers’ needs in Idaho and analyzed the near-term supply of and demand for middle-skill/wage occupations for the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation.
- **Oregon Education Strategy—Statewide, OR (2014).** Prepared reports and presentations outlining Oregon’s strategies for achieving a unified education system that supports innovative teaching and learning for Oregon education commissions and boards.

- **South Shore School Evaluation—Seattle, WA (2013).** Conducted an evaluation of Seattle’s South Shore School (previously the New School) for the League of Education Voters.
- **Building Assets for Fathers and Families Demonstration Project—Nationwide (2012).** Provided technical support for a nationwide pilot program seeking to increase financial self-sufficiency among low-income families involved in the child support system for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Oregon Commission on Children and Families—Statewide, OR (2011).** Reviewed selected programs and activities and estimated the state’s return on investment for the Oregon Commission on Children and Families.
- **Federal Stimulus for Child Support Enforcement—Washington, DC (2011).** With MEF Associates, analyzed the effects of federal stimulus funding on state child support programs for the Office of Child Support Enforcement.
- **ARRA Program Impact Analysis—Statewide, OR (2011).** Analyzed the fiscal, economic, and social impacts of ARRA expenditures on workforce development programs, including youth employment programs, in Oregon for the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.
- **Child Support Electronic Referrals—Olympia, WA (2010).** Evaluated the impacts of staff training and improvements to the state’s electronic referral systems for Washington State’s Division of Child Support Enforcement.

REPRESENTATIVE PUBLICATIONS

Coauthored “Where the Ends Don’t Meet: Measuring Poverty and Self-Sufficiency Among Oregon’s Families,” Institute of Metropolitan Studies, Portland State University, January 2010.