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Contact:

Zack Hall, DVA Advertising & PR, 541-876-6811, zack@dvaadv.com

Jacob Berns, SELCO, 541-338-3841, jberns@selco.org

**SELCO COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION LAUNCHES ‘SELCO STEPS UP,’ REIMAGINING AND EXPANDING ITS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS**

**With SELCO Steps Up, the Oregon-based credit union seeks to create positive, innovative, and lasting change through community giving, volunteerism, financial education, and student and educator support**

(SPRINGFIELD, Ore.) — SELCO Community Credit Union has reimagined and expanded its approach to community involvement with the launch of [SELCO Steps Up](https://www.selco.org/steps-up). SELCO’s new program aims to create positive, innovative, and lasting change through community giving, volunteerism, financial education, and student and educator support.

SELCO Steps Up not only significantly expands support for many of the credit union’s existing philanthropic efforts, but it also includes new programs and partnerships with a wide range of community organizations. Some new programs include funding for three regional classroom makeovers annually, a SELCO team member-directed giving initiative worth as much as $50,000 annually, and an expanded sponsorship and donation effort that includes crisis aid.

The Springfield-based credit union hopes SELCO Steps Up will serve as a model for how other businesses can implement a more focused and purpose-driven giving strategy in their communities.

“Through SELCO Steps Up, we are looking for ways to identify the changing needs of the communities we serve and find new and innovative methods that will leave a lasting impact,” said Olivia Sorensen, Senior Community Development Specialist for SELCO. “SELCO has nearly a century of history when it comes to helping our communities. With that experience, we know that it is not enough to simply write a check. Our goal is to uplift and empower while addressing key societal challenges with a focus on issues that we can do the most good, namely financial education, removing barriers to education, and supporting students and educators.”

SELCO Steps Up includes both new and existing—albeit expanded—programs. Those include:

* **SELCO Scholarships:** Now in its 30th year, SELCO Steps Up has expanded its [annual scholarship program](http://www.selco.org/scholarships), opening eligibility to vocational, continuing, and nontraditional students and increasing the total value of its scholarships by nearly 50%, to $77,500. The SELCO Scholarship application period is open now through March 31.
* **SPARK! Creative Learning Grants:** Designed for K-12 educators with creative classroom ideas but lacking funds to get those projects off the ground, [SPARK! Creative Learning Grants](https://www.selco.org/community-giving/spark-creative-learning-grants) will receive a significant boost under SELCO Steps Up. Individual grants will increase to as much as $2,500, up from $1,000 in previous years, to support larger and more impactful projects.
* **Regional Classroom Makeovers:** Beginning this year, SELCO Steps Up will support three classroom makeovers annually for as much as $15,000 each. Each year, SELCO members will help identify an educator in each of the three regions that SELCO serves: the Willamette Valley, Central and Eastern Oregon, and Northern Oregon.
* **Team Member-Directed Giving**: Another new initiative under SELCO Steps Up, SELCO has pledged as much as $50,000 to match any of its nearly 500 employees’ donations to a community nonprofit.
* **Sponsorships and Donations:** SELCO Steps Up will also expand its focus on sponsorships and donations to include crisis aid, such as wildfire relief. SELCO will continue seeking partnerships with programs and organizations that remove barriers to learning, particularly concerning youth and financial education, but the wider focus will help SELCO Steps Up address pressing community needs as they develop.

SELCO Steps Up officially launches on Tuesday, Feb. 20. To kick off the program, SELCO team members will nominate local nonprofits, and credit union members will then be invited to vote in person on how more than $10,000 is allocated across the regions SELCO serves. In addition, SELCO will decorate each branch and offer free local treats to celebrate the launch. And SELCO team members will wear Steps Up t-shirts and “I Step Up For” personalized buttons that share the causes they're passionate about.

“This is just the beginning for SELCO Steps Up, and we envision a long-term program that will continually evolve in what we view as an all-out effort to make a significant impact for years to come,” said Sorensen. “Our goal is to elevate those in need through contributions of our time, meaningful programs, and resources, and in doing so make positive and long-lasting change. That work will never truly be done.”

**About SELCO Steps Up:**

The SELCO Steps Up program aims to create positive, innovative, lasting change through volunteerism, resource support, and collaboration with community partners. In 2023 alone, SELCO reinvested more than $250,000 in the communities it serves through educator grants, scholarships, and impact-driven sponsorships. SELCO staff also committed a total of more than 1,000 volunteer hours in 2023. As a credit union founded by teachers, education is a cornerstone of these efforts, with a focus on removing barriers to financial literacy. By empowering individuals and families to achieve financial well-being, SELCO strives to build a strong foundation for all its members and neighbors. Learn more at [www.selco.org/steps-up](https://www.selco.org/steps-up).

**About SELCO Community Credit Union:**

Founded nearly 90 years ago by a group of fiscally minded teachers, Springfield-based SELCO Community Credit Union today serves more than 150,000 members as one of the largest and longest-standing Oregon-based credit unions. A not-for-profit, federally insured, member-driven financial cooperative with more than $2.7 billion in assets, SELCO provides its member-owners with exceptional rates and low fees on a full range of financial products and services, including banking, mortgages, personal and business loans, investments, and insurance. Membership is available to anyone who lives or works in one of the 27 Oregon or eight Washington counties SELCO serves. For more information or to become a member today, stop by one of SELCO’s 15 branches, visit [selco.org](https://www.selco.org/), or call 800-445-4483.

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