

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC POLICY RESPONSE TO COVID-19 || UPDATE MARCH 18, 2020

With the order to close restaurants, a swift and targeted policy response is needed to protect the financial security of Oregon families and businesses. For the majority of Oregonians their financial security is connected to their employer's ability to stay open and provide goods and services. To be effective the immediate policy response must be comprehensive and provide both direct assistance to families and support businesses to keep employees working and reduce disruption to services and income. The City of Bend's Economic Development Department suggests the following targeted state policy changes.

State Assistance needed

- 1. Suspend the Waiting Week for Unemployment Insurance.**
This will get Unemployment Insurance funds to laid off workers as quickly as possible and allow employers to know that employees will be cared for if they have to be laid off. This is critical because local lodging operators have already laid off employees.
- 2. Suspend the Unemployment Insurance search for work requirement while the emergency order is in place.**
There are limited options to search for work when you are ordered to be at home.
- 3. Release State Funds to Oregon Trail cards.**
This will allow families to get out to stores now to get items for their families. We think that the immediate release should be 200 percent of the typical monthly allocation.
- 4. Allow a temporary (12 month) Unemployment Insurance Tax suspension.**
Employers keep their cash and can spend that cash on paying sick leave, paying vendors etc.
- 5. Let Small Business Administration know that City of Bend wants to participate in emergency funding programs.**
This releases emergency federal funds to Oregon businesses. City of Bend is willing to step up to help with allocations, triage, and other supports.
- 6. Release everything available in existing housing funds.**
This will allow more families to apply for and obtain emergency rental assistance and offer an option to homeless Oregonians to be housed in hotel rooms rather than in warming shelters where risk of contamination is high.
- 7. Allocate funds (\$10M+) to Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) network for rental assistance (our local agency is NeighborImpact).**



Using the existing network with established qualification criteria is essential to getting funds to the most vulnerable families.

8. Allocate funds (\$5M+) to Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) network for food assistance and logistics. This complements Oregon Trail allocation.

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9. Allocate funds (\$5M+) to Neighbor Works America network and/ or CDFIs (Craft3) for commercial (namely restaurants and bars) rental/mortgage assistance. It is vital that short term support is available while businesses prepare documentation that will allow them to request an SBA loan.

10. Allocate funds (\$5M+) to Oregon Health Authority.

These funds can be used to reimburse hotels for overnight stays for healthcare workers who are serving at hospitals but don't want to go home due to concern about infecting family members. This will also help maintain our overnight lodging operators.

11. Use Oregon Food Bank network to distribute sanitation supplies to low income households and to expand meal service delivery to older Oregonians.

OTHER STATE ACTIONS RELATED TO THE EMERGENCY

If a major disaster is declared by the Federal government, Oregon should:

- Ensure that a “direct public assistance” category is included in our request to the President. This will allow the public to apply for relief directly from the federal government.



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc. please contact Kathy Montgomery at kmontgomery@bendoregon.gov or 541-330-4010; Relay Users Dial 7-1-1, and 541-385-6676.

