

Dear Co-Chair Holvey and all Committee members,

Thank you for the important work you all are doing. I am based at FolkTime, Inc. which operates mostly out Multnomah and Clackamas counties in Oregon. My organization is a peer-run organization, which means all of our employees identify as people with histories of mental health and/or addictions challenges. All of our workers are registered as Traditional Health Workers as Peer Support Specialists and I personally have trained and certified nearly 500 people in this industry in the last two years. I also serve on the Oregon Consumer Advisory Council which advises Oregon Health Authority.

My organization, like many others, has shut down our programs and supported everyone to work from home in the response to COVID-19. We are an organization under 30 people and our monthly payroll takes about \$85,000 to uphold. We are currently trying to decide how to move forward and I have been listening all day to your special committee meeting and agree with many points that have been made. I would like to ask for the following things to be considered:

- As people with previous mental health/addiction challenges, we have lived experience with navigating the current challenges that the majority of our population is currently facing. ***We can be mobilized to reach out to folks and connect over phones, share updated information concerning this crisis, and support people who are navigating anxiety, depression, hopelessness, fear, etc. As survivors, we have navigated these things feelings and can be an invaluable resources in the times to come.***
 - I appreciate Hayward asking about peer to peer workers and I am very happy to hear OHA has opened a code for us to be able to bill. This ensures we can work if the infrastructure allows.
- Mobilization of the peer workforce would keep our population from returning to/or becoming unemployed, which would undoubtedly negatively impact preexisting health conditions and add to houselessness. This would cost the state more in the long term.
- Making loans available to our small organizations would allow us to keep people employed over the next few weeks and lessen the demand on the unemployment office. \$250,000 would allow us to stay afloat for the next three months.

PERSONALLY – I used everything I had in savings and bought my first home last September and the mortgage is half of my income. I brought a roommate in to help me with the costs and she **was** a waitress. I am looking at potential unemployment myself and will default on my mortgage in one month's time.

- PLEASE also consider a pause on mortgage payments and/or interests, similar to what has been passed for renters.
- Please do not do the equivalent of bailing out banks again and focus on the people and the implications this has on us all directly.

With gratitude,

Danielle Grondin

Director of Training & Consulting

FolkTime

Phone: 971.271.9966

dgrondin@folktime.org

www.folktime.org

