

## Item 10: Oregon Business Development Department

### Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses

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**Analyst:** Steve Bender

**Request:** Establish a \$3,000,000 Other Funds expenditure limitation for funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund received by the Department of Administrative Services and transferred to the Oregon Business Development Department for business, innovation and trade, to establish a grant program to provide technical assistance to minority- and woman-owned businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Description:** Small businesses in Oregon face unprecedented challenges, owing to the economic conditions arising from actions to reduce the number and severity of COVID-19 infections. This request would support additional technical assistance services for businesses facing these challenges, specifically targeted to minority- and woman-owned businesses that traditionally have difficulty accessing technical assistance services. Assistance would focus on helping these businesses survive the current economic climate and facilitating new business development.

This request would provide \$3 million to increase technical assistance to underrepresented businesses through a competitive grant program, administered by the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD). Grants would be made available to organizations offering technical assistance to underrepresented businesses. OBDD would not provide technical assistance directly or distribute funds to individual businesses. Grant applications would be evaluated by criteria that would include how the applicant's work plan addresses assistance to new business start-ups, existing business support, mentoring, access to capital, operations, marketing, follow-up, target audience outreach strategy, and other factors.

Funds would be provided from the state's distribution of CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) monies. The Department of Administrative Services would transfer \$3 million of CRF funds to OBDD for this program. CRF funds are restricted to necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency related to COVID-19 during the period from March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020. Grant recipients would not receive payment for services provided after these dates.

**Recommendation:** The Co-Chairs of the Emergency Board recommend approval of establishing a \$3,000,000 Other Funds expenditure limitation for the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD), for funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund received by the Department of Administrative Services and transferred to OBDD for business, innovation and trade, for a grant program to provide technical assistance to minority- and woman-owned businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.