

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Tina Kotek, Co-Chair  
The Joint Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Letter in Support of The Oregon Cares Fund

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek and Members of the Committee:

We are writing today in support of The Oregon Cares Fund (TOCF), a fund for Black relief and resiliency to be funded by Coronavirus Relief Funds, allocated by the Emergency Board of the Oregon Legislature, in response to the demonstrated health and economic disparities of the Black community by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oregon's (and the country's) racist history has created a present in which Black Oregonians have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic. Black workers are working in sectors that place them on the frontline, exposing them to illness at high rates while being overrepresented in low-wage jobs and underrepresented in living wage jobs. Black-led organizations are not given the same funding and resources as their non-Black counterparts. Black-owned businesses have received fewer loans, and for smaller amounts, than non-Black small businesses.


The Oregon Cares Fund would address this disproportionate impact by providing direct funding to Black individuals and families, Black-led businesses, and Black-owned organizations. As we have seen from federal relief efforts, one-size-fits-all strategies do not address disproportionality. Rather, they exacerbate already existing inequities. Eliminating inequities requires targeted relief and focussed strategies.

The Oregon Cares Fund creates that targeted, focused effort. Managed by The Contingent, an organization that serves all 36 counties in Oregon and currently has a partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) for the Every Child foster family recruitment efforts, the Oregon Cares Fund would provide direct relief to the Black community -- economic relief for individuals and families, and a lifeline for small businesses and community-based organizations that are a vital source

of support and job opportunities in our communities' ecosystem.

We urge you to resource The Oregon Cares Fund.

Sincerely,



Deborah Kafoury  
Multnomah County Chair



Susheela Jayapal  
District 2 Commissioner



Sharon Meieran  
District 1 Commissioner



Jessica Vega Pederson  
District 3 Commissioner



Lori Stegmann  
District 4 Commissioner