



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Administrative Services

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

155 Cottage Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

PHONE: 503-378-3104

FAX: 503-373-7643

July 14, 2020

Senate President Peter Courtney  
House Speaker Tina Kotek  
Co-chairs Joint Emergency Board  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301

## **RE: Emergency Relief Checks**

I am writing in response to the legislative proposal to distribute one time emergency relief checks to Oregon workers who have been impacted by job-related income loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an emergency board item scheduled for today, June 14, 2020, that authorizes \$35,000,000 in federal funds limitation to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS.) The proposal directs DAS to work with financial institutions to develop a simple process for workers to apply for and receive the emergency relief payment.

It is important for me to note that DAS understands and appreciates the very legitimate need for emergency assistance to desperate Oregonians. The anger felt by many Oregonians is very real and immediate relief is critical.

It is DAS's intention to work closely with the legislature to mutually develop the structure of the program. There are several outstanding questions that need to be answered before DAS can enter into contracts with financial institutions who will administer the program. DAS will look to legislative guidance on clearly identifying the qualifications of who is eligible for the one time payments as well as other program parameters. One critical program element will be determining how to minimize fraudulent applications and payments. Implementing a program like this in a short period of time will undoubtedly lead to some level of fraud, however it is difficult for DAS to quantify an amount.

Once the program structure has been developed, DAS will need to negotiate contracts with the financial institutions who will administer the program outlining the criteria as well as reporting and audit requirements. The State Treasury will need to be involved in these discussions. We certainly understand the importance of developing and implementing this program as quickly and efficiently as possible. However, I need to clearly state for the record that I believe a fast track process for jointly developing program structure with the legislature, defining clear eligibility criteria, entering into contracts with financial institutions and ultimately getting checks into the hands of Oregon workers will take at least six weeks if not longer.

DAS is committed to working with the legislature as quickly and efficiently as possible to jointly develop an emergency relief program for Oregon workers impacted by job-related income loss due to the pandemic.

Thank you,

Katy Coba  
Chief Operating Office | DAS Director