



January 7, 2021

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support for the proposed \$46 million OWRF (Oregon Worker Relief Fund) package to support immigrant workers across Oregon impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through OWRF Coalition's programming: \$30 million for the Oregon Worker Relief Fund, \$10 million for the Small Enterprise Fund and \$6 million for the Quarantine Fund.

The OWRF Coalition, [WorkerRelief.org](https://www.WorkerRelief.org), is a collaboration of more than 100 community partners established to provide disaster relief to Oregonians who have been excluded from other safety net programs during the pandemic. As of December 31st, 2020 with the support of 21 trusted community-based organizations across the state, the OWRF coalition has provided over \$40 million in disaster relief throughout Oregon's immigrant communities affected by COVID-19 via the Oregon Worker Relief Fund and the Quarantine Fund.

Oregon's economy and well-being lies in the strength of our immigrant communities. Often overlooked are small enterprises, including those operated by immigrant Oregonians, often family-owned, have likewise suffered because exclusionary immigration policy prevents them from accessing pandemic relief. For example, many ITIN-holders operate small enterprises and are ineligible for relief due to their immigration classification. Likewise, immigrant small enterprises may avoid pandemic relief operated through traditional systems because of systemic barriers. Many of these small enterprises are composed of essential workers who themselves are impacted by COVID-19.

The Oregon Worker Relief Fund's Small Enterprise Fund, a rapid, community-based relief fund for micro and very small enterprises who are unable to access other forms of relief because of exclusionary immigration policy is the solution. We anticipate that the need for a response like this will be significant. There are an estimated 28,000 immigrant-operated businesses in Oregon, all of whom contribute to the collective prosperity of the state. The fund would provide grants to support the survival of very small enterprises that are falling through the cracks during our current pandemic.



The Oregon Worker Relief Fund coalition would administer the fund using its statewide community collaboration model, centering community-based organizations trusted by the impacted individuals and enterprises. Applications would be vetted through a culturally responsive, expert advisory committee.

We ask that you show your full support to our communities to ensure that we are putting those most impacted at the forefront. We ask for your support of the approval of \$46 million for the Oregon Worker Relief Fund package to address the short and long term impacts on our low-income and working class families who have been affected and are at disproportionate risk of COVID-19 — regardless of their ability to pay for it or their immigration status.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Isa Peña, Causa Oregon
Duncan Hwang, APANO
David Martinez, Latino Network
Jenny Pool Radway, Consejo Hispano

Reyna Lopez, PCUN
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