

Dear House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

I would like the following submission to be posted and made public on the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) for review at the Public Hearing of HB 2508 on Wednesday 27, 2019 at 1PM in Room HR 50 of the Oregon State Capitol. We would also like the following testimony read at the hearing.

While this HB 2508 is an extraordinary step forward for the health and well-being of refugee communities in Oregon, it is concerning how the definition of eligible agency limits grant funding to only the largest organizations who "provide initial resettlement and case management services to refugees." There are many excellent smaller organizations in the state that provide wraparound or additional services outside of resettlement and individual case management, which encourage leadership development, community building and organizing, an increase in refugee voices across Oregon, and civic empowerment toward citizenship. Based on the definition of "eligible agency", it seems that these smaller organizations will be left out of the ability to apply for grant funding during a time when refugees are in need of a more holistic approach to services.

I would like to see an amendment to this bill that includes organizations that provide wraparound services and community building programs as "eligible agencies". I would also like to see that amendment define how grant reporting could be structured for small volunteer-based organizations in such a way that does not wipe out their volunteer and small staff hours with disproportionate bureaucracy.

Please support a more creative and holistic approach to servicing the refugee communities and allowing for Oregon to be a true sanctuary state.

Thank you,
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