

To all Oregon Senators and Representatives,

The upcoming special session proposing an additional \$90 million rent assistance is of grave concern. As the Director of an Oregon non-profit, I have watched the negative effects of the Federal “assistance” program due to its **lack of oversight**.

The Federal government program had only one so-called requirement for receiving this money which was to say, “I was affected by Covid.” No one had to declare how they were affected and why, let alone document it.

I spoke with several administrators of these funds who were frustrated that they were **not allowed to ask questions** as per the regulations of distribution. To think that our politicians are looking at continuing the fiasco of indiscriminately handing out money to anyone who asks is unacceptable.

Handing out money without accountability is the epitome of disregard for the hard-earned money of your constituents.

On top of this, it was given away so quickly, in such large quantities per household that many who may really have needed it, couldn’t receive it because it wasn’t spread around – largely due to the fast time frame required for spending the funds, rather than parceling it out as truly needed in smaller amounts per household.

We have screened multitudes of potential clients, disqualifying them for our assistance because they literally chose not to pay any rent for 12 months or more simply because they didn’t have to even when they had the ability to pay it. They turned around and have all of their back rents paid off. Hundreds of them had the complete ability to pay their rent but chose not to because “free money” was available.

Our agency looks at tax returns and paystubs and ability to pay. I have worked tirelessly with my team through this pandemic to walk with people living on the edge of displacement to strategize stability and self-sufficiency *while* working hard.

The Federal rent assistance program has had the unintended consequence of impeding our efforts (and those of many other non-profits) to bridge a gap while helping people discover their own abilities to solve the problems they are facing.

PLEASE DO NOT FURTHER THE CRIPPLING OF OREGON'S ECONOMY
BY PAYING CITIZENS TO STAY AT HOME INSTEAD OF GETTING TO
WORK.

Thank you for listening to those you serve.

Sincerely,

Carol Fiddler

Executive Director