



Oregon Black Brown Indigenous
Advocacy Coalition

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the members of the Oregon Black Brown Indigenous Advocacy Coalition (OBBIAC), write to express our concern about the lack of support and guidance the Oregon Health Authority has given to the Oversight and Accountability Council throughout the Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN) grant process. The OBBIAC is a coalition of Black, Brown, and Indigenous providers of substance use disorder/mental health services. Our purpose is to build the power of people and communities most negatively impacted by the failed “War on Drugs” and to uphold and support organizations of Black, Brown, Indigenous communities. Many of us have experience as state trainers, local agency practitioners, executive directors, and writers of Oregon Administrative Rules. We’ve sat on hiring committees, state-level task forces, and coalitions. We’ve watched the evolution of this state’s prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery infrastructure.

Regarding the implementation of Ballot Measure 110, we are troubled over the appalling lack of organizational capacity within the OHA to partner with the OAC in distributing the promised funding to set up the BHRNs and begin delivering much-needed services. These delays in adhering to funding timelines have resulted in preventable deaths in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

We urge the OHA/OAC to have an open discussion of each proposal, including its compliance with or failure to meet criteria. Additionally, we ask that a clear and concise explanation for any determination accompany the responses to each organization.

We urge that while you are navigating this process you prioritize the release of funding to agencies who were approved as that will prevent more Black, Brown, and Indigenous people who have been most impacted by the failed war on drugs from dying. To that end we urge the follow action be taken to expedite the process:

- Starting with culturally and linguistically specific organizations that support Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities who have been most impacted by the failed war on drugs, fully fund each budget as written.

- Work backwards from culturally and linguistically specific organizations to programs within existing organizations that support Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities and approve those budgets
- Distribute funds to organizations immediately once a budget has been approved and put off the MOU process until later in the year,
- Dedicate at least one full time staff member from the OHA to serve as the project manager and administrative support for the OAC.

Lack of transparency perpetuates the racism and traditions of neglect and health disparities characteristic of the system and its war on drugs in this country and Oregon. It is time to change the environment where White people receive services, and Black, Brown, and Indigenous people get criminal justice involvement and no treatment or health care.

We are here to support the Oversight and Accountability Council. We call upon the Oregon Health Authority to commit to the success of the OAC and implementation of Measure 110 and to ensure full accounting and justification for aspects of the funding process for those who have been most impacted by the failed war on drugs

Sincerely, OBBIAC