

August 31, 2022

Joint Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Home Ownership

Public Commentary



Hola, me llamo Martin Campos-Davis y soy el director ejecutivo de OHDC.

Hello, I'm Martin Campos-Davis and I'm the Executive Director of OHDC, Oregon Human Development Corporation.

Oregon Human Development Corporation is a non-profit and culturally specific community action agency that provides job training, housing assistance, and other resources to farmworkers all over Oregon. As the task force considers proposals to address disparities in rates of homeownership among Oregonians of color, I'd like to highlight some of the barriers Oregon's 86,000 farmworkers face in becoming homeowners and call your attention to three of the outlined proposals.

Despite being essential workers, farmworkers are among the lowest paid workers in the U.S., with an [average household income of \\$25,000 - \\$30,000 per year](#). Farmworkers often must choose which essential expenses to eliminate or reduce, which means saving for a down payment is a challenging prospect.

Farmworkers' financial challenges also present barriers when qualifying for a mortgage. Latinos overall are more likely than white people to be denied for a mortgage, with the most frequently cited reasons being their debt-to-income ratio and credit history, [according to Pew Research data from 2015](#). When they do qualify for mortgages, Latinos are [more likely to pay higher mortgage rates](#).

Finally, many farmworkers may not know about the various financing options for buying a home. Information about accessing public and private resources in health care, education, housing, and more that may seem basic to the general public may not reach farmworkers because of linguistic and cultural barriers. Even in our own work at Oregon Human Development Corporation, spreading the word about resources available to farmworkers is a key part of what we do. When it comes to buying a home, many farmworkers are not aware of options like qualifying for a mortgage with an ITIN, FHA loans, or down payment assistance programs.

Several of the proposals outlined by the task force would lessen some of the obstacles farmworkers and many other communities of color confront when trying to purchase a home.

Expanding access to [individual development accounts](#) would provide farmworkers opportunities to get more out of the savings they are able to put aside and help them realize dreams of saving for a down payment. Providing [linguistically and culturally relevant financial literacy resources](#) would also make farmworkers more aware of the various paths to homeownership and how to get there. Finally, a [special purpose credit program](#) targeted at farmworkers or low-income Latino families would make it more possible for farmworkers to buy and keep homes.

Thank you to the task force for taking on the important work of analyzing and addressing the many factors that so often put homeownership out of reach for Oregonians of color, and thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment and share how Oregon farmworkers would be impacted by these proposals.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin Campos-Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Martin Campos-Davis, Executive Director
OHDC – 500 NW 20th St, Suite 100
Gresham, OR 97030