



May 12, 2021

The Honorable Representative Maxine Dexter, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Cedric Hayden, Vice-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Winsvey Campos  
The Honorable Representative Raquel Moore-Green  
The Honorable Representative Andrea Salinas  
House Committee on Health Care Subcommittee on COVID-19  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

SUBJECT: Vaccine Opportunities for Refugee Populations

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the House Committee on Health Care Subcommittee on COVID-19 and on vaccines on May 5, 2021. Representative Moore-Green asked about vaccine opportunities for refugee populations in Oregon.

The following activities represent both past and current efforts specifically aimed at the refugee population:

**African Women's Coalition**

- OHA grant allowed more rapid response to community safety net needs including:
  - Assisting many immigrant and refugee community members with filling out documents and applying for services with DHS
  - Finding support for mental health issues
  - Helping with utility bills
  - Providing more care and help to elderly and children with disabilities

**AYCO African Youth & Community Organization**

- Focus on faith communities; Families; Immigrant and refugee communities; Low income; Older adults; People experiencing mental health issues; People with disabilities; Youth outreach and education with African Refugee (focus on Somali community), Middle Eastern, North African, and the Black community.
- Youth empowerment and youth engagement and training.

**Angolan Community Organization of Oregon**

Families; Immigrant and refugee communities; LGBTQIA+; Low income; Older adults; People with disabilities; Undocumented; Youth African American/Black

- Language support to community members in Lingala; Portuguese; Swahili; and Umbundu
- The support and the funding provided much needed help to a community that is a minority in every sense: size, language, racial distinction.
- Without OHA's funding, most members of the community would not have access to updated and verified information regarding the pandemic.

### **Rockwood CDC**

- Serving the African American/Black; Asian; Latino/a/x, Hispanic or other peoples from Mexico, Central or South American and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean; Middle Eastern and North African; Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian; Slavic/Eastern European communities.
- Rockwood CDC was able to leverage its OHA COVID-19 response experience to launch an East County Community Health (ECCH) Response Unit in underserved East County. The formation of ECCH is supported by our local community partners as well as Providence Community Health, HealthShare Oregon, and Trillium. Rockwood CDC is rapidly gaining traction as a CHW based responsive team. They are quickly expanding into housing, ongoing rent assistance, vaccine site consideration, and culturally specific outreach work because of our previous success in responding to 350+ household (representing 870 individuals) with emergency relief funds.
- Our impact in Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview and Wood Village has been galvanized by the funding we received from OHA and allowed us to build a nimble, skilled, and responsive community health unit, dedicated to the role of Community Health Workers.

### **Oasis of Praise**

- One of many faith houses that is a part of the Coalition of Pastors. This church serves a diverse community including large outreach with the French, Swahili, and Lingala-speaking community.
- Recently partnered with Portland City Blessings Church to co-host a community-driven vaccine event. Portland City Blessings Church serves a diverse community, including a large Indonesian and Vietnamese congregation.

Please let us know if we can address any other questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Allen  
Director



Dean E. Sidelinger, MD MEd  
Health Officer and State Epidemiologist