

District 3: Ways & Means Committee Testimony



On behalf of the Portland community and the Save Portland Children's Museum & Opal School organizers, I respectfully request the District 3 Ways & Means Committee **allocate \$1.5 million* in funding** from the American Rescue Plan Act and state budget to save Portland Children's Museum & Opal School and sustain operations through the COVID-19 shutdown and reopening.

Oregon's 3rd congressional district includes the Portland Children's Museum and Opal School.

The Portland Children's Museum and Opal School:

- **Serves over 250,000 visitors annually.** It is a State of Oregon top ten cultural attraction preceded by Oregon Trail Center, Oregon Zoo, OMSI, Portland Japanese Garden, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Portland Art Museum.
- **Generates \$13.4 million in economic activity** according to an American Alliance of Museums 2018 study funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- **Provides an immersive learning experience** designed especially for all children, their families and care providers.
- **Offers affordable entry** including many free and low-cost admission and student group visit opportunities.
- **Designed accessible spaces and learning experiences** for children with disabilities, developmental delays and neurodivergent children.
- **The Opal School**, founded on the principles of Reggio Emilia, fosters an environment of creativity, curiosity and wonder of learning for 125 students and 35 preschoolers. The school acts as a laboratory to teach educators new ways of working with students. It was recently recertified for 10 years by Portland Public Schools with plans to double enrollment to 250 students.
- **The Center for Teaching & Learning** brought local, national and international educators to conferences at the museum with Opal School educators. The Center offered educators lessons on methodology in practice and real-time classroom observation to learn how to implement the School's principles within their own curriculum and classrooms.

Save Portland Children's Museum & Opal School

This essential \$1.5 million funding request ensures a future for Portland's children that includes a Children's Museum and the Opal School.

- **Keeps Opal School operational through end of 2021-22 school year.**
- **Facilitates reopening the museum** at reduced capacity, timed admission as well as new, virtual activities. Supports museum and school management and revenue generating staff positions through June 2022.
- **Replaces future lost operating revenue** resulting from the continued pandemic shutdown and reduced capacity operations.
- **Ensures COVID-19 safety protocols are met** to accommodate partial reopening including facility and ventilation system updates.

In February 2021, the Board of Directors reported \$500,000 was needed by June 2021 to sustain the Children's Museum and Opal School at its current level including facility updates for in-person learning at the Opal School through December 2021. In March 2021, they stated that crisis funding need increased to \$1 million.

Our estimate builds on these goals to ensure continuity through the end of the 2021-22 fiscal year. The museum will utilize the **time to undergo a significant matching fundraising campaign with a goal of \$1.5 million** to provide sufficient cash on hand at the conclusion of fiscal year 2021-22 in anticipation of the museum and school returning to normal operations.



Use of Funds	Estimated Need*
Opal School Operations	\$600,000
Facility Safety Protocols & Updates	\$400,000
Lost Revenue on Reduced Capacity	\$500,000

*Estimated using 2018/19 Operating Expenses as outlined in Annual Report

Thank you For Your Consideration!



Let's Keep Portland Curious Together.