



Oregon's Poverty Fighting Network



February 8, 2022

Senate Committee on Labor & Business

Support for Senate Bill 1579

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO), we respectfully ask you to support Senate Bill 1579. This bill creates and invests in an Economic Equity Investment Program within Business Oregon to award grants to qualified organizations that provide culturally responsive services to disadvantaged Oregonians and support paths to homeownership, workforce development and entrepreneurship.

Each Community Action Agency uses a community-based needs assessment to develop advocacy and service priorities to provide the most relevant, most effective services for its own community. Serving every county in Oregon, our network offers geographic coverage and a wide array of programs that serve low-income children, families, and seniors. This community-based approach creates a unique and effective system for fighting poverty in Oregon. In this endeavor, we partner locally with hundreds of culturally responsive, culturally specific, and community-based organizations.

Senate Bill 1579 is a critical step to strengthening equity and providing critical services for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities across Oregon. This will help create long term investments and strategies such as ownership of land, entrepreneurship, business development and intergenerational wealth building, important components of any asset and wealth building program. Our network is especially supportive of the effort to establish a funding stream that could extend homeownership counseling and financial counseling statewide. Currently, most agencies within our network do not offer these services because there is no steady and reliable funding, which this legislation would address.

Please join us in supporting this critical bill that will stabilize funding necessary to enhance efforts to build assets, lift barriers to homeownership and workforce development, and invest in historically underserved communities throughout Oregon.

We urge your support of Senate Bill 1579.