



410 NE 18th Ave
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LatinoNetwork

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To: Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Valderrama and all the members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

Re: Support HB 5525

Date: 3/23/2023

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 37 and 42-50. We support the \$100M Oregon Health Authority (OHA) request for Public Health Modernization funding directly to community-based organizations.

The Public Health division of the OHA is requesting \$289M for a wide range of public health initiatives across all counties, including \$100M for community based organizations. This \$100M request will be able to support ongoing work and expand services for public health initiatives. Currently, Latino Network and OHA are partnering to deliver programs like tobacco cessation, adolescent health awareness and interventions (including school-based programs), mental health engagement and workforce development for bilingual/bicultural community health workers. All but the tobacco cessation programs could start winding down as soon as June, without ongoing investments.

We need to learn our lessons from the COVID experience. We built new public health infrastructure within community based organizations because our communities, particularly the Latino community, were suffering due to a lack of connection to health care services and information. Information segregation, distrust and disconnections from health services and health education grew over time, long before COVID. But when resources and political will became available to resolve these gaps, our community responded swiftly by setting up new connections and interventions to save lives and share critical information. To suggest we don't need to maintain any of this work after everything we have experienced is intentionally not learning our lessons. COVID did not create these gaps and vulnerabilities, it exposed them. And now is our opportunity to ensure we don't repeat old mistakes, but rather move forward more prepared to address crisis and emergency situations both large and small.



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We stand with our partners across the state as part of the Community Health Equity Coalition made up of more than 80 community-based organizations who are collectively responding to the public health needs of more than 500,000 Oregonians.

Please fund \$100M for community based organizations in public health modernization.