



IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

BUILDING NEW BEGINNINGS

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Portland, Oregon 97220

www.irco.org

MAIN OFFICE

AFRICA HOUSE

EASTERN OREGON

GREATER MIDDLE EAST
CENTER

PACIFIC ISLANDER &
ASIAN FAMILY CENTER

SLAVIC AND EASTERN
EUROPEAN CENTER

April 11, 2023

RE: IRCO Support of Public University Support Fund and Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and Members of the Committee:

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (“IRCO”) strongly supports the important investment in public higher education through the Public University Support Fund (“PUSF”) and the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

IRCO is committed to uplifting our community through the opportunities and doors that education offers whether in youth academic services or building the necessary tools as a returning student later in life. For decades, our agency has committed to support our refugee and immigrant student. We have continued to build school-based and school-link programs, growing workforce development services, and tackling stabilization efforts to meet the needs of our communities.

At IRCO, we know that the mission and promise of public higher education is to uplift all in the opportunities that a post-secondary education offers. We know that mission and promise is often harder to access for those from our immigrant and refugee communities - whether they are preparing to graduate from high school or thinking about returning to earn new credentialing and academic pursuits. The Oregon Opportunity Grant is one of those tools that we know provides an affordable pathway to higher education.

In a time of economic uncertainty, we know that the investment in education is paramount to building strong, stable communities, grow generational wealth, and continue the resilience that we find in our immigrant and refugee communities in achieving an empowered life. Oregon should remain steadfast in the commitment to education from preschool, K-12, post-secondary, and higher education.

We strongly encourage our legislators to commit support to PUSF and to support Oregon’s students by investing in the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Respectfully,

Lee Po Cha

Executive Director