

May 2nd, 2023  
Governor Tina Kotek  
Senate President Rob Wagner  
Speaker Dan Rayfield  
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner  
Co-Chair Representative Tawna Sanchez  
Joint Ways & Means Committee  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek and Legislative Leaders::  
RE: Business Oregon Culturally Specific Technical Assistance

We ask that you fully fund Business Oregon's Technical Assistance program. We are APANO Communities United Fund, an Asian and Pacific Islander culturally specific organization whose mission is to build power, develop leaders and advance equity in our communities. We do that in part through economic empowerment by providing support to small businesses within our community development work.

As the state's leadership with the power to determine how best to budget public funds, we ask that you restore \$4 million in funding to Business Oregon's Governor's Recommended Budget from \$5 million to \$9 million. This request can be accomplished through a Christmas allocation or restoration in Business Oregon's budget bill.

Culturally specific community based organizations like APANO CUF will use these funds to assist their community members with economic development and wealth creation which can be tied to small business stabilization and growth, often gained through technical assistance.

This kind of help for the API communities is unprecedented in the counties outside of Multnomah county. Over the past two years, with the Business Oregon funding, APANO CUF's business advising program began reaching out to businesses outside of Portland. As the leader of APANO's business advising program, and at present time, the only small business advisor dedicated to the API community, I have been able to focus only on the API small business population in Washington County.

In the past two months, I hosted 60 API-owned small businesses at two networking events and provided direct service to nine businesses. I also co-hosted a one-day small business legal clinic in Beaverton with another Business Oregon provider and worked on developing a concept and business model for a culturally specific retail accelerator also in Beaverton. Asian populations have increased 48% in the 2020 Census report, from 186,281 in 2010 to 275,296. We are the fastest growing demographic in Oregon and one of the most underserved groups at this time.

As demonstrated above, the first iteration of the Technical Assistance program enhanced our efforts and impact on underrepresented and under resourced communities. We hope the program can continue to serve small businesses at its current capacity by restoring the funding levels for the program.

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

*Grace Pae Henricks*

**Grace Pae Henricks**  
**Small Business Advisor Manager**  
**APANO CUF**