

Council Business Meeting

October 6, 2020

Agenda Item	Oregon Worker Relief Fund Discussion	
From	Adam Hanks	Interim City Administrator
Contact	adam@ashland.or.us ; (541) 488-6002	

SUMMARY

This item was originally on the August 18 Council meeting but had to be moved due to a lack of time. Councilors Graham and Akins requested that this item be added to the August 18 Council business meeting to discuss as a full Council supporting the Oregon Worker Relief Fund support.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Council was sent three emails calling to support the Oregon Worker Relief Fund. These emails can be found in Attachment 1.

FISCAL IMPACTS

To be determined based on Council discussion and direction.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff will take direction from Council based on the outcome of the discussion.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

As requested from the attached emails, options for Council action include, but are not limited to:

- Endorse the Oregon Worker Relief Fund
- Send a letter to the Governor, State Representatives and Senators urging them to further fund the OWRF
- Establish COVID-19 Immigrant Impact Task Force
- Use lobbying capacity to move the Oregon Worker Relief Fund forward when/if a special legislative session starts
- Provide additional funding to The Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Oregon Worker Relief Fund Emails

From: hannah Horn [mailto:hannah1@jeffnet.org]
Sent: Sunday, August 09, 2020 2:01 PM
To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Oregon Worker Relief Fund

August 7 2020

To Ashland City Council members,

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted Oregon in ways that have reshaped the economy and social construct of our state. I write to you today to share my concerns about the needs of immigrant Oregonians -- many of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and many of who have also been left out of the federal and state stimulus relief -- and to ask our County Commissioners and communities across the state to contribute to the **Oregon Worker Relief Fund**.

Oregon's Latinx population has been hit hard during this pandemic. Nationwide, the unemployment rate for Latinx workers has more than tripled - now at 18.9%. Immigrant laborers in industries such as food processing, farms, and senior care centers are also at the epicenter of new COVID-19 outbreaks.

One of every ten Oregon children live with a family member who is undocumented. For the estimated 74,000 undocumented Oregonians who work in our state, these challenges are compounded by having no access to a wage replacement program such as the federal Unemployment Insurance.

Causa, PCUN, Latino Network, APANO, Innovation Law Lab, and over 100 community partners from across the state have joined efforts and created **The Oregon Worker Relief Fund** for the purpose of filling these gaps by implementing a statewide system centered in communities, both rural and urban. The fund is managed by Oregon's most trusted culturally specific community-based organizations, and 100% of these funds will be disbursed to individuals who do not qualify for Unemployment Insurance benefits, who are essential immigrants in the state of Oregon, and who are being excluded from any sort of federal or state financial support. The state of Oregon has already appropriated \$20m to the Oregon Worker Relief Fund - a good start - but the reality is that the gaps remaining from federal inaction are far greater than this.

We request that Ashland City Council take the following steps:

- Endorse the Oregon Worker Relief Fund
- Send a letter to the Governor, State Representatives and Senators urging them to further fund the OWRF
- Establish COVID-19 Immigrant Impact Task Force
- Use lobbying capacity to move the Oregon Worker Relief Fund forward when/if a special legislative session starts
- Provide additional funding to The Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

By investing in Oregon workers left out of the federal stimulus, we can prevent tens of thousands of families from going into economic ruin during this global pandemic, and support the health and well-being of everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Hannah Horn
Ashland Congregational Church, UCC

From: Caren Caldwell [mailto:caren97520@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, August 09, 2020 7:22 PM
To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Oregon Worker Relief

August 9, 2020

Dear County Commissioners,

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted Oregon in ways that have reshaped the economy and social construct of our state. I write to you today to share my concerns about the needs of immigrant Oregonians – many of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and many of who have also been left out of the federal and state stimulus relief – and to ask the City of Ashland to contribute to the Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

Oregon's Latinx population has been hit hard during this pandemic. Nationwide, the unemployment rate for Latinx workers has more than tripled – now at 18.9%. Immigrant laborers in industries such as food processing, farms, and senior care centers are also at the epicenter of new COVID-19 outbreaks.

One of every ten Oregon children live with a family member who is undocumented. For the estimated 74,000 undocumented Oregonians who work in our state, these challenges are compounded by having no access to a wage replacement program such as the federal Unemployment Insurance.

Causa, PCUN, Latino Network, APANO, Innovation Law Lab, and over 100 community partners from across the state have joined efforts and created The Oregon Worker Relief Fund for the purpose of filling these gaps by implementing a statewide system centered in communities, both rural and urban. The fund is managed by Oregon's most trusted culturally specific community-based organizations, and 100% of these funds will be disbursed to individuals who do not qualify for Unemployment Insurance benefits, who are essential immigrants in the state of Oregon, and who are being excluded from any sort of federal or state financial support. The state of Oregon has already appropriated \$20m to the Oregon Worker Relief Fund – a good start – but the reality is that the gaps remaining from federal inaction are far greater than this.

I request that the City of Ashland take the following steps:

1. Endorse the Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

2. Send a letter to the Governor, State Representatives and Senators urging them to further fund the OWRF.
3. Establish COVID-19 Immigrant Impact Task Force.
4. Use lobbying capacity to move the Oregon Worker Relief Fund forward when the next special legislative session starts.
5. Donate to The Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

By investing in Oregon workers left out of the federal stimulus, we can prevent tens of thousands of families from going into economic ruin during this global pandemic, and support the health and well-being of everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Caren Caldwell
124 Ohio Street
Medford, OR 97520
caren97520@yahoo.com
541-621-0663

From: Ann Magill [mailto:magill819@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 3:31 PM
To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Oregon Workers Relief Fund

Dear Councilors,

Recently I took my first pandemic outing to help our economy. I traded in my car for a more recent used vehicle. I was in the Corvallis area and while driving my shiny new purchase through the backroads of that area, I couldn't help but notice a whole field of farmworkers preparing to pick blueberries. I noticed, though they were masked, that they couldn't help but work closely together. I know there have been numerous outbreaks of COVID-19 among those we call essential workers, those who harvest our crops, work in our meat-packing plants, care for our seniors, many of whom are undocumented but doing the best they can for their families. There is no federal stimulus for these good people. To lose a day's pay, to be injured or sick on a job, is often a matter of life and death.

As volunteer program coordinator for ASPIRE at Ashland High School, I came to know families like this in our own community. With one in ten Oregon children living with a family member who is undocumented, these straits affect a major portion of our state's population and the welfare of all of us. We all depend on workers like these. Yet their population, largely Latinx, is vulnerable in so many ways. Without adequate shelter and unemployment compensation the rest of us rely on, their susceptibility to this pandemic is much greater than for the rest of us. Umatilla County, where I was raised, is a hotspot for the pandemic. It shows how the pandemic affects farm laborers working in close proximity without the benefits the rest of us take for granted.

We cannot continue to ignore these neighbors. As a local leader, I urge you to endorse and help provide adequate funds for the **Oregon Workers Relief Fund**. Let's keep these valuable

workers and their families assured of relief. Without their input we are in dire straits indeed. We must keep them healthy and assured that their efforts are valued. We cannot deny the existence of the estimated 74,000 undocumented Oregonians from whose labor we all benefit.

Thanks for listening and for taking seriously a matter that affects us all.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Magill
1022 Eureka St
Ashland, OR 97520
541-708-0737