



Micro Enterprise Resources Initiatives & Training (MERIT)

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HB 2998: Language Access for Business Registration

Summary:

Removes requirement that documents related to business organizations that are submitted for filing to Secretary of State must be in English language. Amends ORS 58.400, 60.004, 62.025, 63.004, 65.004, 67.011 and 554.005

Changes Needed:

Non-English-speaking entrepreneurs in Oregon have less access to the mandatory forms required to operate a business. Amending these state statutes will allow the translation of these mandatory forms which will result in more equity and inclusion for business owners as well as increased business registration and compliance.

Key Points

1. The Secretary of State’s office estimates that the increased language access would increase business registration filing by over 17,000 businesses per biennium.
2. The Small Business Administration finds that that the average minority owned business in Oregon hires 7 employees¹

EMPLOYER BUSINESS OWNER DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 2: Oregon Employees per Business by Owner’s Demographic, 2015

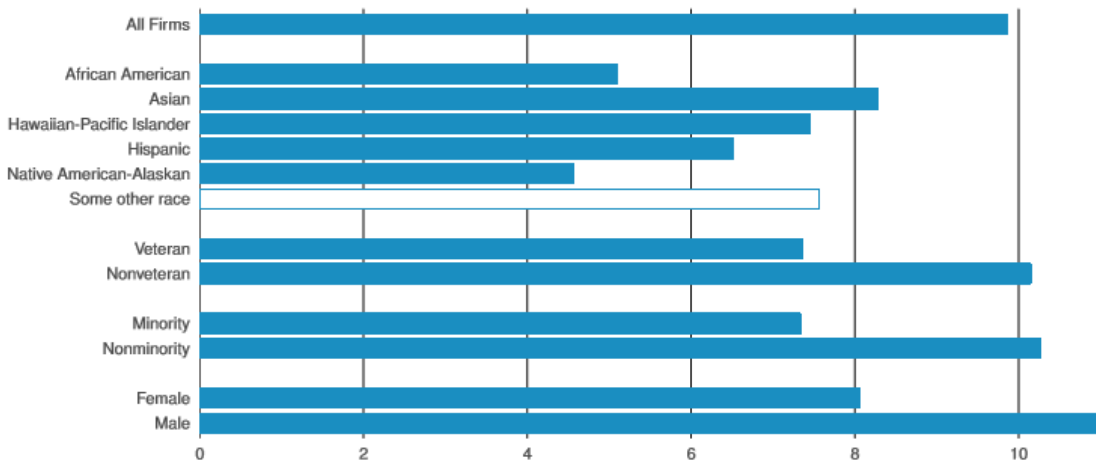


Figure 2 shows the average number of employees per employer business by owner’s demographic group according to the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE). Unshaded bars display US values; data were withheld because they do not meet Census Bureau publication standards or could disclose information regarding individual businesses.

Current Support

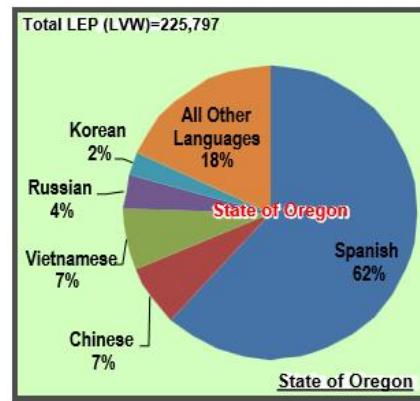
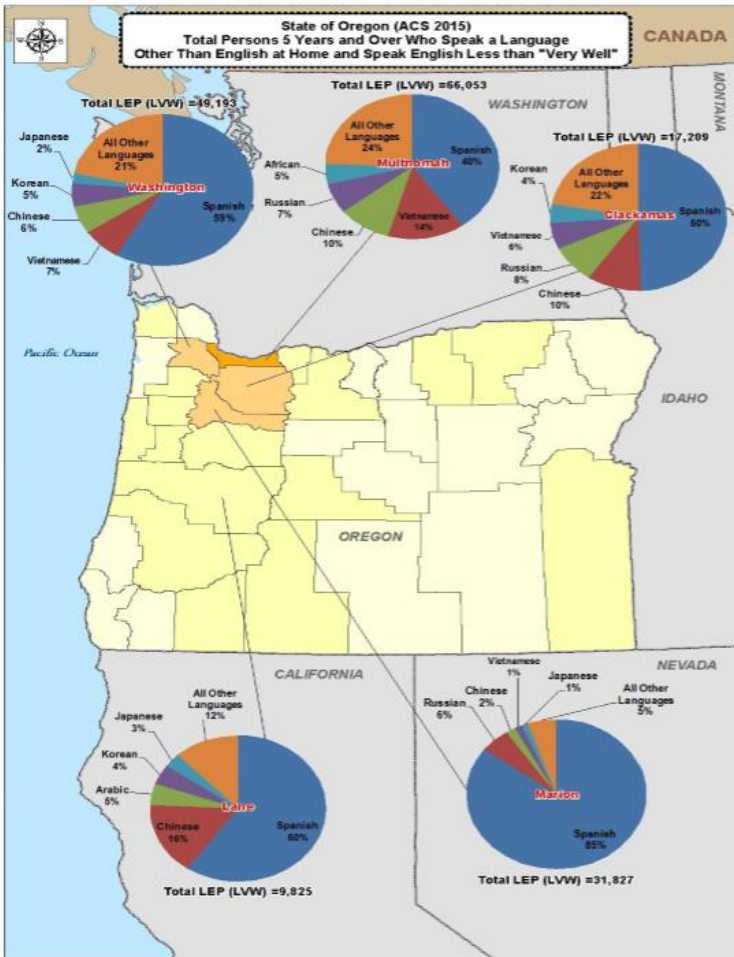
Supportive Legislators:

Rep. Alonso Member on House Committee on Health Care

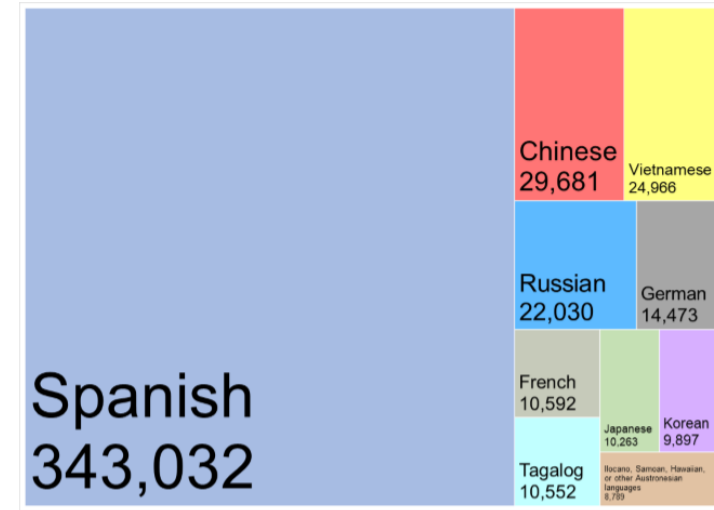
Community Support:

MERIT, Adelante Mujeres, Hacienda CDC, Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon (MESO), Neighborhood Partnerships, PCUN, Huerto de la Familia, Centro Latino Americano, SBDC-Linn Benton Community College

1.) U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. (2018). 2018 Small Business Profile: Oregon.

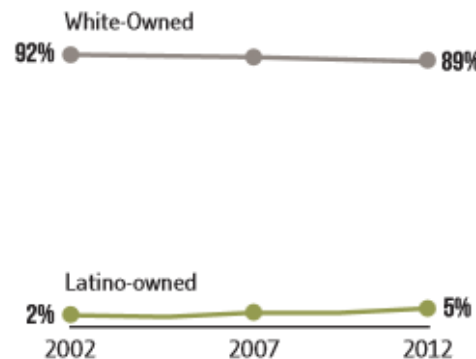


3. There are 225,797 individuals in Oregon with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).² The figure below from the State of Oregon Employment Department shows the number of Oregonians who speak languages other than English.⁴



4. The number of Latino owned businesses has increased by 250%, from around 6,000 in 2002 to almost 15,500 in 2012, outpacing the growth in the Latino population in Oregon.³ This figure only accounts for registered businesses, increasing accessibility for the Secretary of State filing process could increase the rate of entrepreneurship.

Figure 20. The number of Latino-owned businesses in Oregon is small but growing.



Percentage of businesses owned by white and Latino Oregonians, Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau

“The English only guides and materials were clearly an impediment to understand and participating in this Oregon economy. Removing this impediment would not only facilitate the inclusion of this vibrant economic force, it would also enrich the mainstream’s understanding of the benefits of diversity.”

- Jorge Navarro, Navarro’s Latin Creole Kitchen.

- 2.) U.S. Department of Justice – Civil Rights Division. (2015). 2015 Language Map App
- 3.) Oregon Community Foundation. (2016). Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a Changing State.
- 4.) State of Oregon Employment Department. (2019)

