



Dear members of the Joint Committee of Ways and Means,

We, the Chambers of Clackamas County are writing to you as a collaborative group. The Clackamas County Business Recovery Centers, serving 10 Chamber cities, are asking for a \$25 million ARPA funding allocation to enhance, expand and complete the programs that we have initiated. We deliver countywide business services with vigilant focus and support to small businesses throughout all parts of Clackamas County.

The purpose of this communication is to illustrate the continued need in our community, to lay out the necessary resources the Chambers need to fulfill the mission of the BRC, and to clarify the outcomes that the BRCs will be able to accomplish with the continued support. In the short amount of time that we've been operating we've been able to contact nearly 23% of businesses within the County, from Mt. Hood to Wilsonville and Estacada to Lake Oswego. Our outreach efforts covered 25 incorporated cities, towns or census designated areas within 1,879 square miles.

We quickly discovered that the needs of small businesses throughout our community were diverse and urgent. If you then add the impact of the fall wildfires to the winter ice storm that mentally, physically and economically fatigued our business community to never before seen levels, we are seeing unprecedented levels of need in our local economies.

Utilizing our decades of established connections, our Chambers went to work. There is still so much more to do. We need predictable funding to do more. With our request we are looking at a higher investment level with extreme countywide impact. It will EXPAND the Business Recovery Centers offerings to include grants to speed up local recovery via rent and utility assistance, tuition assistance for business owners and employees in our low-income business areas, to help the Recovery Centers expand their multilingual offerings through the use of translation services and the hiring of bilingual outreach coordinators that will help to ensure that our women-owned, minority-owned businesses, and BiPOC communities are being well served throughout the region.

Ongoing viability is dependent on their ability to have good information, access to resources, and the ability to source good advice from professional consultants. This is the exact mission and capability the Business Recovery Centers provide. This is why the Business Recovery Centers have put together the following plan that will allow the BRCs to continue this important work for the rest of 2021. They are as follows:



Relationships:

- Build up our diverse cultural entities, provide information and support in their native tongue
- Contact every business in the Clackamas County region to make sure they are supported
- Utilize our trusted local businesses to provide resources and help in areas such as: PPP or EIDL Loan Support, e-commerce support, social media training, devising business plans, financial help, applying for grants, legal support, etc.
- Expanded outreach to our large rural and urban areas

Results:

- Advocating for these small businesses, ranging from tax issues to COVID requirements and more
- Recovery support from the immense wildfire, ice storm and pandemic loss
- Offering and delivering PPE directly to businesses

Revitalize:

- Offering accountability through business planning and strategies, focusing on individual needs case by case
- Connecting businesses to “Credit Building” classes
- Assisting business to close properly or restart as a new entity

Our Chambers of Commerce represent the voice of small businesses in our communities. We focus on advocacy, growth and economic development. Not receiving the recovery funds that other larger counties did was a staggering blow in our effort of support. Looking at the full picture before us, we know that our local businesses are at the forefront of the current crisis we face. By stabilizing small businesses within our county, we stabilize families, local economies, tax bases, and the character and integrity of our communities. Please help us continue this much needed effort we have begun. We appreciate your consideration and support.

Thank you for your time,

The Directors of Clackamas County Business Recovery Centers

Laura Edmonds, CEO, North Clackamas Chamber of Commerce

Liz Hartman, Executive Director, Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce

Khrys Jones, Executive Director, Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce

Shatrine Krake, Executive Director, West Linn Chamber of Commerce

Kyle Lang, Executive Director, Canby Area Chamber of Commerce

Victoria Meinig, CEO, Oregon City Chamber of Commerce

Kevin Ferrasci O'Malley, CEO, Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce