



410 NE 18th Ave
Portland, OR 97232

LatinoNetwork

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To: Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and Members of the Committee
Re: Public University Support Fund (PUSF) at \$1.05 billion and increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) by \$200 million
Date: 3/14/2023

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 37 and 42-50.

We encourage you to support Oregon's students through robust investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) at \$1.05 billion and increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) by \$200 million. Oregon ranks 45th in the country for per-student, state funding of public universities and invests less than half the national average in financial aid per public university student. As Oregon's students and workforce continue to face lasting impacts from the pandemic, we must ensure that higher education is more attainable for every student.

At Latino Network we provide a range of services and programs meant to support the community, particularly school-age children and their families. We are working hard to ensure first generation college students have access to higher education and are able to thrive in a college environment. We are also working with adults who want to change career paths and go back to school to be educators, work in early childhood programs and join in the health care sector. All of this work requires collaboration and support from higher-education institutions to be successful, they need to have tools and resources available to be strong partners.

Funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities for all Oregon students, and it is more critical now than ever. After multiple years of pandemic-related challenges, students have greater needs than ever before. It is critical for the state to support wraparound services such as financial aid, academic support, career development, and basic needs support – including food



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and housing assistance through Benefits Navigators – to meet the growing needs of our increasingly diverse student bodies.

Oregon is facing critical workforce shortages. To address these shortages, the state must prioritize creating a highly skilled workforce to support essential industries. Oregon’s public universities are responding to industry needs despite limited state resources, creating a diverse pipeline of highly skilled workers to power our economy.

We appreciate you have a lot of difficult funding decisions to make and we want to thank you for prioritizing investments that support Oregon families, close opportunities and equity gaps.