



May 3, 2023

Governor Tina Kotek
Senate President Rob Wagner
Speaker Dan Rayfield
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner
Representative Co-Chair Tawna Sánchez
Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek and Legislative Leaders:

RE: Business Oregon Culturally Specific Technical Assistance

We respectfully ask that you fully fund Business Oregon's Technical Assistance program up to its 2022 level. Hacienda is a culturally specific organization whose mission is to help strengthen families by providing affordable housing and economic advancement among low-income Latinos and communities of color.

As state leaders, with the ability to determine how best to budget public funds, we ask you to restore \$4 million in funding to Business Oregon Governor's Recommended Budget, from \$5 million to \$9 million. These funds are used by culturally specific organizations to help people stay in the community and grow their businesses, building assets and wealth for future generations. This request can be accomplished through a holiday appropriation or the restoration of the Business Oregon budget bill.

Both **Manuela and her husband Freddy** aspired to more and wanted to build something of their own for their family. Since moving to the United States many years ago, they always dreamed of starting their own business and fulfilling this desire. With a goal and ambition in mind, they started saving to pursue this lifelong dream. They soon found it difficult to navigate the many steps to starting a business alone. Hacienda's Empresario program supports small businesses by helping them raise capital to providing business advice and providing bilingual and bicultural technical support. Once Manuela and Freddy started the program themselves, they found clarity and a sense of direction to continue their journey and start their own business with confidence. In 2016 they opened Loncheria Los Mayas, a food cart in the Cully neighborhood inspired by Manuela and her husband's indigenous Mexican roots. This one-of-a-kind food cart can be found in NE Portland, where guests enjoy authentic regional foods, from a classic Yucatan Panucho to handmade tortillas. Each dish at Los Mayas celebrates their love for their home country and is a testament to their culture and dreams. Hacienda supports many facets of a person's life and reflects on the support said Manuela, "I feel like when you start something big it's like walking in the dark... Hacienda is like a light, a lighthouse, that appeared on the road.

Vanessa and Omar grew up in Mexico City and immigrated to Oregon in 2002. Their entrepreneurial spirit and past business experience eventually attracted them to Portland Market Entrepreneurship Programs. In March 2018, they launched "Xōcotl - Fresh & Natural", their first business in the United States, through Hacienda's Empresario Program.



Alejandra Kochanowski, from Argentina, came to Los Angeles, CA at the age of 29 with a dream of having her own Argentine food business. At age 13 she knew she wanted to be an entrepreneur and helped people in need through her cooking. After marriage and two children, she continued to cook for her church and private events with an increased focus to become an entrepreneur. Alejandra noted, “I am very grateful for the help of Hacienda CDC for providing me with the opportunity and support.”

As these examples demonstrate, the first iteration of the Technical Assistance program enhanced Hacienda’s efforts to deliver and provide underserved and under-resourced communities with much needed resources and technical assistance. We hope you understand the significance this funding has given to unserved communities and restore Business Oregon to its 2022 funding level so that they may continue serving small businesses and empowering community members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Ernesto Fonseca".

Ernesto Fonseca, CEO