



Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Salem, Oregon. 97301  
RE: CREF Slate 2023-25

Dear Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Black United Fund of Oregon (BUF-OR) and the thousands of Black and BIPOC Oregonians we support annually, I am writing to urge the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction to support the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon's (CACO) 2023 Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) slate of capital construction projects. BUF-OR appreciates the opportunity to advocate for the 16 endorsed projects to receive funding, as the project slate as a whole represents vital economic and social support for countless communities throughout Oregon. The slate includes allocation of \$900,000 from the Cultural Resource Economic Fund for The Building United Futures (B.U.F.) Complex, a comprehensive razing, rebuild, and renaissance of our current headquarters on Alberta Street in North/Northeast Portland.

As a 35,000 sq. ft., four story, new construction project, the new building will offer office, retail, event, and community space for 20-25 nonprofits and businesses, most which are Black or BIPOC-led and -serving, and many of which have been engaged for the past year in the planning and design of this building. The mission-aligned, co-locating partners for this Complex – with diverse focus areas ranging from dance and visual arts to mental health to economic development – are committed to economic prosperity, educational advancement, and promotion of the wellbeing, health, heritage, and healing of Black and BIPOC communities.

While the B.U.F. Complex will be open to all, BUF-OR's ability to be a visible, long-standing building and organization – one that has served North/Northeast Portland for 40 years – in a now gentrified area is essential to ensuring the preservation of Black presence in the neighborhood, standing as a testament to the resolve of the Black community and showcasing the investment many have already made in the future ability of Oregon's Black communities to thrive (with support to date from Meyer Memorial Trust, the Oregon Community Foundation, Rep. Bynum, Rep. Blumenauer, the Portland Clean Energy Fund, Walsh Construction, and many more).

Since its inception, BUF-OR has leveraged over \$50 million dollars to support the social and economic growth of Communities of Color. The B.U.F. Complex amplifies BUF's role as economic driver and valued resource for Black and BIPOC communities that has a transformational impact on the community, with a capital lender on the premises, energy efficiencies to reduce operational costs, and more space for BUF to provide below-market rental space for nonprofit and small for-profit businesses. The B.U.F. Complex will increase BUF-OR's capacity by over 200%, resulting in 4,000 individuals directly served (and 40,000 indirectly) each year through wealth building opportunities.



OUR PRESENCE HAS POWER



As BUF-OR is one of the last remaining Black-led and serving organization operating in the heavily gentrified Alberta area, the project represents a stalwart commitment to once again reviving what was a diverse area and funding for this project is represents increased equity and economic justice in our community. Defined as “unapologetically Black,” the B.U.F. Complex will be, as one partner shared, “like a homecoming” for the Black community.

BUF-OR respectfully asks the committee to fund the \$11M slate of CACO’s endorsed projects to increase equitable access to arts, culture, economic justice, heritage, and more in our communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. LM Alaiyo Foster

President & CEO