

SB 442 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 4/1, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the COFA Shared Services Office within the Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to assist Compact of Free Association (COFA) citizens in accessing federal and local social support benefits.

Detailed Summary:

- Establishes the COFA Shared Services Office within ODHS and OHA to coordinate services for COFA citizens. Creates staffing positions to include a director, innovator agent, community ambassador, and three outreach specialists.
- Directs the COFA Shared Services Office to assist COFA Citizens in applying for and accessing federal, state, and local benefits. These include medical, housing, nutritional programs, employment, legal, and immigration services.
- Appropriates funding for grants to community organizations to provide culturally specific services and enhance access to benefits and services.
- Provides incentives to recruit and retain Traditional Health Workers who are qualified to serve COFA citizens.
- Requires the COFA Shared Services Office to report annually the office's progress to the Legislative Assembly.

Becomes operative January 1, 2026. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

Fiscal impact: Fiscal impact issued.

Revenue impact: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Compacts of Free Association are a series of treaties between the United States, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) allowing its citizens to freely travel, live, and work in the United States without visas or time constraints. Oregon has the third-largest COFA citizen population on the mainland (about 4,300), according to [Census Bureau data](#). COFA citizens became eligible for Oregon Health Plan benefits under a [federal law change](#) in March 2021. They also qualify for SNAP benefits as part of the [eligible non-citizen group](#), provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Senate Bill 442 establishes the COFA Shared Services Office to coordinate services for COFA citizens in accessing federal and social support benefits.

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