

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Human Services Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Amber Kern Johnson and I am the Executive Director at the Community for Positive Aging (CfPA) (founded as the Hollywood Senior Center), a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a healthier, more inclusive, and connected community for older adults in Oregon. Our work of 50+ years focuses on improving food security, health equity, disaster preparedness, and community resilience—particularly for low-income seniors, BIPOC communities, and those with disabilities.

Oregon's public health system relies on a strong network of state and local agencies, private organizations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) like ours. CfPA is proud to be one of the 195 CBOs receiving Public Health Modernization funding through the Oregon Health Authority. This support has enabled us to expand culturally inclusive food access and delivery, provide vital disaster preparedness resources, and strengthen social connection—critical factors in mitigating health disparities among older adults.

As trusted partners in public health, CBOs play a crucial role in reaching historically underserved communities. Through our programs, we have:

- **Increased access to healthy, culturally specific foods** for hundreds of older adults by expanding our Asian Food Pantry and gleaning efforts.
- **Delivered emergency food and supplies** to homebound seniors, ensuring their well-being during extreme weather events.
- **Developed community-driven disaster preparedness initiatives** that prioritize older adults and people with disabilities, equipping them with tools to navigate crises safely.

OHA's current Public Health Modernization Budget of \$110M is an essential investment in these efforts, supporting partnerships between Local Public Health Authorities, Tribal partners, and CBOs like CfPA. However, the demand for services continues to grow. The additional \$2M proposed in the Governor's recommended budget does not adequately address the scale of public health challenges we face.

We urge you to support an additional investment of \$25M in Public Health Modernization funding to ensure that Oregon's most vulnerable residents, especially older adults—receive the culturally responsive support they need to thrive. For example, many seniors in our community still lack reliable access to fresh food, transportation, and emergency preparedness resources, leaving them at heightened risk during public health crises.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial investment in Oregon's public health system. We appreciate the opportunity to share the work we are doing to build a healthier, more resilient future for all.

Sincerely,

Amber Kern Johnson

