

NARROWING THE GAP

A report from the Oregon Worker Relief Coalition after a year of pandemic

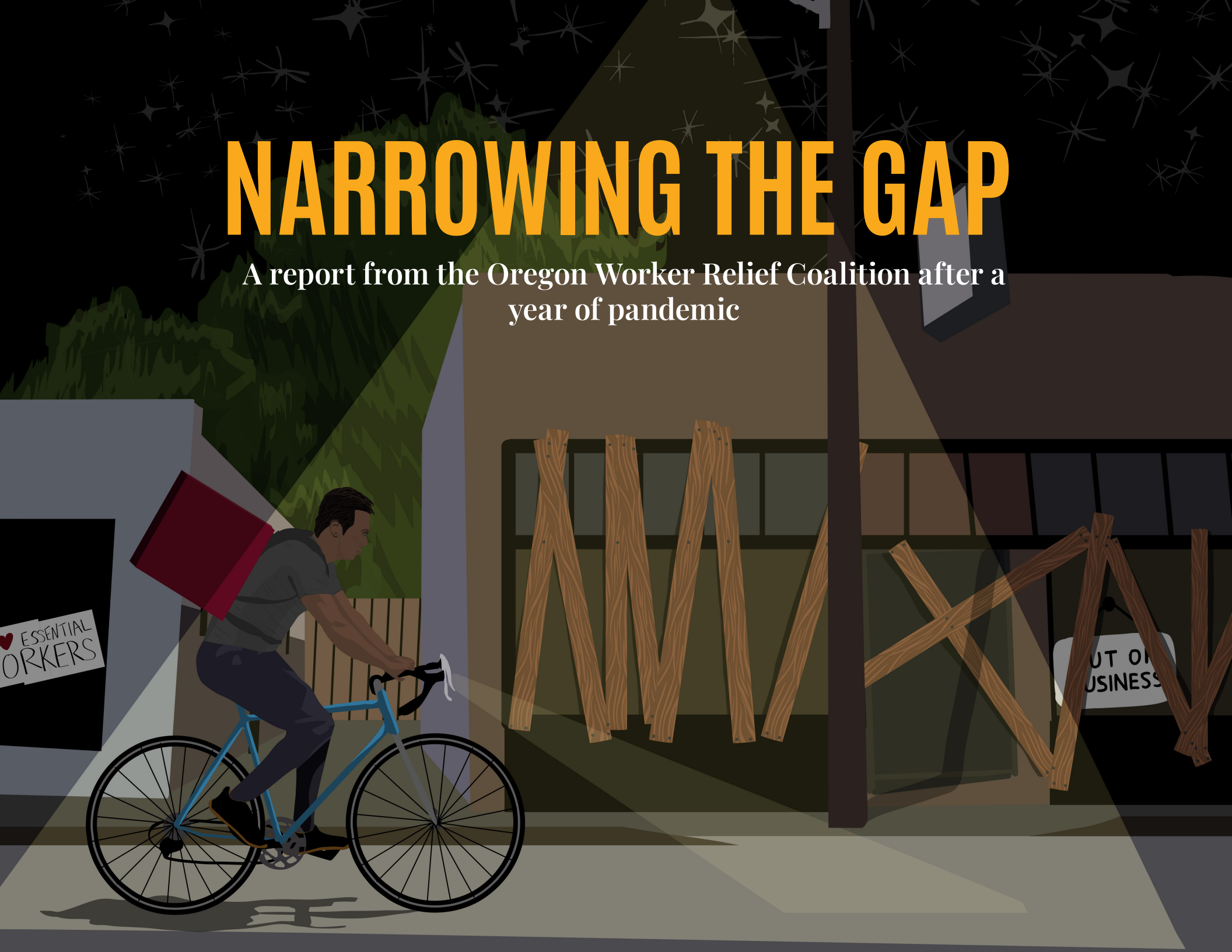


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OREGON WORKER RELIEF

Under a racialized immigration system designed to exploit people and push them out beyond the margins of society, the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare and exacerbated dangerous inequities for immigrant Oregonians. However, community members and organizations from across the state quickly organized to create Oregon Worker Relief to distribute critical cash assistance for workers ineligible for unemployment insurance—workers excluded from the systems of mutual care meant to sustain Oregonians through crises like COVID-19.

Designed and implemented by the community and for the community, Oregon Worker Relief has shown that when those most proximate to the problem—the true protagonists—get to create, shape, and implement the solution, it works.

Oregon Worker Relief has proven powerful and successful, having disbursed a total of more than \$60 million to more than 37,000 individuals in Oregon's immigrant communities as of today.

The pandemic has demonstrated the need to design more permanent systems of care to address the fundamental inequities that plagued our society long before the pandemic and will continue long after the pandemic has passed. The keys to the success of Oregon Worker Relief—fostering deep coalition partnerships, utilizing community-led design, and building and sharing powerful in-house technology skills—can be replicated across domains and jurisdictions, transforming diverse systems to be more equitable, inclusive, and effective.



THE STORY OF S-

By the time the coronavirus pandemic swept into Oregon, she realized that her sistema was not capable of sustaining her in such a crisis.

The way S- explained it made one's heart break. She lived in Central Oregon and she was making it work. A social scientist might call it grit. Another would describe it as resilience. She called it her sistema, or "system." Her sistema was a sort of calibrated response to the larger forces sweeping around her and through

Central Oregon at the time. She was navigating the spaces.

She kept the early mornings free to get her kids off to school. Then she would move to her house-keeping job at a motel and then in the evenings she would take her shift at a local restaurant. There was a rhythm to the pattern of texts from her kids as they checked in after school when they made it back home.

She had a home—rented—and a car. She had some savings but not much. She had overcome hunger, uncertainty, exhaustion, and discrimination. Her "system" was creaky and prone to

breaking, like the car, but she could make it work. She always had.

S- is one of the first applicants to the Oregon Worker Relief Fund. By the time the coronavirus pandemic swept into Oregon, she realized that her sistema was not capable of sustaining her in such a crisis. The motel shut down. The restaurant shut down. The schools shut down.

Although she paid taxes, there was no stimulus for her. Although she worked hard and contributed, there was no unemployment for her and there was no severance, either. A racialized immigration system excluded her.

She had no access to the financial system—she is what the finance industry calls the "under-banked." In April 2020, she found herself having to decide between hunger or internet: Do I buy food for everyone or pay for Wi-Fi? The decision was important because Wi-Fi was the means by which her kids would access school—their education having moved online in the pandemic era. No Wi-Fi meant no school. No school meant no education. No education meant no advancement. No advancement meant that her sistema—and the sacrifices borne from it—was no system at all. But the flip side was hunger. And hunger was the same track.

Civic life was rupturing around S- and her family. She was in free fall. And none of the existing social safety systems were going to stop her fall.

Because she was an excluded worker.

EXCLUSION IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Nearly every aspect of life in Oregon was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Like people all around the world, Oregonians gained perspective on the interconnectedness of our communities. The pandemic made clear that our health and prosperity are inextricably linked with the health and prosperity of our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family members. But it was also quickly apparent that the pandemic was worsening existing inequities for immigrant Oregonians, particularly those who are people of color, those without immigration status, and immigrants who live in pover-

ty. Like S-, many Oregonians were in untenable positions due to the frayed or non-existent safety nets in our society.

The systems of civic life—the interlocking sets of policies, laws and practices, and the logistics and implementation of them—normally hum in the background, and ought to increase our collective well-being over time. However, the pandemic illustrated that these systems fall far short of this goal, particularly for immigrant workers, who have been excluded from systems of mutual care historically, despite their profound contributions to Oregon life.

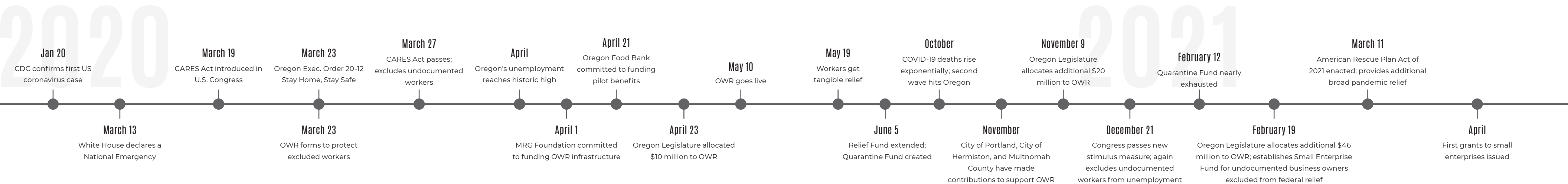
Community organizers knew that they needed to do something different, and they needed to do it quickly.

As the pandemic took hold in Oregon, people like S- were left on their own. Low-wage workers without sick time could not afford to take time off to quarantine themselves if they believed they had been exposed to someone with COVID-19, and outbreaks were frequently traced back to food-packing and agriculture worksites, where people must live or work in close proximity

Working families also had to navigate remote schooling for their children. Many low-wage workers who lost their jobs, but weren't covered

by Unemployment Insurance (UI), found themselves in an impossible situation. There was no indication that help was on the way.

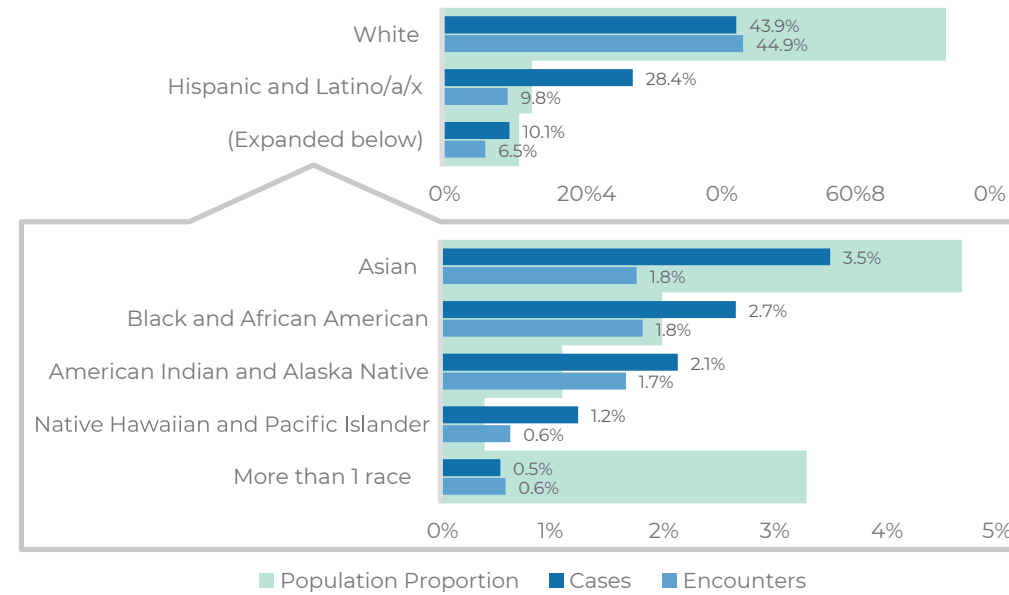
Community organizers knew that they needed to do something different, and they needed to do it quickly. Fast mobilization was critical to keeping people in their homes, food in their cupboards, and their children on Wi-Fi to attend school. Organizers realized at the outset that a new system was needed. Yet how could we create a new system? And what would that system look like?



RACIAL DISPARITIES WITH COVID-19

There are racial disparities in Oregon with COVID-19 for Black and African American people, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic and Latinx people, according to the Oregon Health Authority. Racial disparities with COVID-19 are mirrored in many parts of the country, though Oregon and Washington are tied for the worst disparities between white and Latinx people in the nation.

Latinx people in Oregon make up more than 34 percent of the COVID-19 cases despite representing about 13 percent of Oregon's total population. Vaccination rates among Latinx Oregonians have also been disproportionately low, with only six percent of Hispanic people in Oregon vaccinated.



COVID-19 REALD Report, Oregon Health Authority, 2/19/21

MASSIVELY SCALED MUTUAL AID: OREGON WORKER RELIEF

Confronting the phenomenon of the excluded worker is what social planners and design thinkers may call a “wicked problem” - a problem that defies clear formulation, has no stopping point, and has no bounded set of possible solutions. Such problems can only be tackled through community-led collaboration that seeks first to deeply understand the problem and then iterates one solution after another, producing better outcomes each time.

By positioning the community-based organizations to distribute the emergency aid, we are able to efficiently reach Oregonians who were excluded from other relief. And by filling this vital role in ensuring Oregonians were not left behind during the pandemic, these organizations have also strengthened their ties in the community. Our state is enriched by strong bonds between neighbors, which are an integral part of vibrant and thriving communities.

\$4.2 BILLION

Immigrant tax contributions to Oregon

26,000

Immigrant small business & entrepreneurs in Oregon

14.6%

Essential workers supporting Oregon society

\$595.5 MILLION

Immigrant business income & development

\$11 BILLION

Immigrant spending power in Oregon

OREGON IS HOME

Oregon is home to over 400,000 immigrants, meaning that one in 10 Oregon residents is an immigrant. Immigrants thus play a key role in Oregon family structures, with nearly a quarter of Oregonian children having at least one parent who is an immigrant. Close to 90,000 U.S. citizens in Oregon live with one or more undocumented family members, and these undocumented Oregonians are generally not eligible for government-run unemployment insurance (UI) programs. This means that when crises like COVID-19 take hold, these Oregon families will be at far greater risk for housing and food insecurity, and the ensuing long-term effects.

In addition to the profoundly important role that immigrants play in Oregon fam-

ilies, immigrants also make vital contributions to the Oregon economy. Immigrants make up over 13 percent of Oregon’s civilian work force as a whole. In 2019, immigrant households in Oregon contributed \$4.2 billion in taxes (including \$1.3 billion in state and local taxes and \$2.8 billion in federal taxes) and held a total spending power of \$11 billion. Moreover, Oregon is home to 26,140 immigrant entrepreneurs, driving job growth and generating a total business income of \$595.5 million throughout the state. And COVID-19 revealed even more clearly just how deeply Oregon society relies on the immigrants who account for 14.6 percent of the state’s essential workers, filling vital jobs that support the very fabric of our society.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL MODEL

Human-centered design is about cultivating deep empathy with the people for whom the system is intended. What do they want? What do they need? And, in the case of Oregon Worker Relief, what does the community want? What does the community need? Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation. It integrates the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for programmatic success. Human-centered design thinking enabled community organizers to find the sweet spot of feasibility, viability and desirability to rapidly serve—and scale—the real needs of people like S-

In March and April 2020, coalition members met and participated in a series of “design sprints” to develop this new system that put people like S- in the center. Particularly, the users that were

centered were the workers applying for relief (including both those with and without internet access), the community-based organizations (CBOs) that would be acting as navigators assisting the applicants in applying for relief, and the fiscal sponsors who would be charged with disbursing the funds.

The groups developed a proposal wherein cash assistance would be distributed directly into the hands of eligible immigrant Oregonians using CBOs as navigators, in order to build from the strength of culturally responsive, trusted contacts in communities across the state. The program would be managed by an Executive Committee composed of the executive directors and other leaders of CBOs from all over the state, such as Causa, Latino Network, PCUN, Innovation Law Lab, APANO, MRG Foundation, and Consejo His-

pano. To facilitate this, Innovation Law Lab would create a universal CBO-facing online clearing-house platform that could be used by the coalition for the entire process of applying for relief, reviewing applications, and disbursing funds.

Critically, the coalition received early support in April 2020 from the MRG Foundation, which enabled Innovation Law Lab to begin immediately building this software platform that would

process applications and distribute funds. Thus, by the time the coalition members brought the plan to the Oregon Legislature, they already had an online platform ready to go and over 100 non-profits signed on as supporters. All this bolstered the lawmakers' view of the coalition's credibility and Oregon Worker Relief's efficacy, paving the way for the Oregon Legislature's Emergency Board to allocate an initial \$10 million for the fund, to quickly get relief to Oregonians in crisis.

COMMUNITY-DESIGNED, COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Combining the human-centered, community-led design, coalition-building, big and small philanthropy and important public/private partnerships, a new system came online rapidly. In only a few short weeks, workers received tangible relief in May 2020.

The community-led design is critical to the program's success. Rather than a top-down process where government officials determine what is best, in community-led design the community is actually embedded in the design process. For Oregon Worker Relief, this created a foundation of trust among community members.

Flexibility is a key piece of the community-led, user-centered design methodology, which meant that through a series of iterations, OWR responded to evolving needs, not only to refine the process within the Oregon Worker Relief framework, but also to expand the system to other forms of relief for different groups in need.



THE POWER INSIDE THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

What has made Oregon Worker Relief successful is not a handful of well-meaning, powerful people at the top. Instead, the program's success can be attributed to the fact that it was designed for the community by the community, via a radically inclusive design process.

Systems of mutual care should be designed and implemented by the communities impacted most – in this case, immigrant workers.

While such efforts from governments and leaders to begin to create systems are a good first step, there is an opportunity to create an even more deeply inclusive system and to maximize impact.

It empowers results that provide better experiences, address problem points more thoroughly, and accounts for exigencies that community outsiders might not foresee.

WEAVING A SAFETY NET FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The stories of Oregonians weaving the missing safety net in real time for Oregonians in need is the essence of mutual care. The community network—organizations on the ground around the state connected together to serve—proved to be the critical element of OWR's success.

C- and her family were behind on the rent and were being threatened by their landlord to evict them if the rent wasn't paid shortly. Her husband is a farmworker, and she works in the hospitality industry. With COVID, both were out of work and saw no way out of their urgent situation. Then they applied for Oregon Worker Relief through Únete Oregon, a member of the network in Medford, Oregon. The checks arrived at her home just days before they were to be evicted. She contacted Únete Center for Farm Worker Advocacy's office to express the gratitude she felt for being able to receive this financial support, telling their director that she couldn't begin to describe the immense feeling of happiness and peace of mind that receiving this funding gave her.

P- is a single mother of three children, ages four to 10, and works in souvenir production. When the pandemic hit, her company was shut down for nearly two months, and when it did reopen, her hours were drastically reduced. She soon fell behind on paying her bills, but aid from Oregon Worker Relief enabled her to pay her rent and utilities and keep a roof over her family's head.

D- was a restaurant worker in Bend, Oregon, who lost her job as a prep cook in March. Though her husband maintained his construction job, D-'s income had been crucial to supporting them and their four-year-old son. "It was difficult to pay the rent, car expenses, and telephone," D- said. However, she learned of the aid for immigrant workers offered through the Latino Community Association, part of the Oregon Worker Relief network, in her community. She was able to apply for aid, and she received funding to pay for rent and to fix a smokey chimney in their mobile home.

VOICES — OF THE — NETWORK

“The communities we serve are incredibly resilient. They deserve this resource, and policy changes that create pathways for them to access educational and professional opportunities that empower them to do exactly what they want to do—contribute to society in a meaningful way, provide for their families, sustain a level of economic and financial stability that opens opportunities for them to purchase homes, invest in local businesses and other resources that facilitate quality of life, health and wellness. Creating such pathways would ultimately further contribute to our collective well-being and benefit all Oregonians.”

—Juan Franco, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

“Centro helped many, many people with the “Fund”. People who had nowhere to turn for assistance, had exhausted their savings, lost their jobs or had hours significantly cut. These funds were the bridge to their next day and next month. These funds inspired an additional community response with generous donations. OWR has inspired our organization to do more, plan for the next disaster, and always be prepared to help.”

—Debra Jones, Centro de Ayuda

“It was a breath of fresh air to be able to offer this support in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner with as few barriers as possible... It has also been a great opportunity to connect with the other organizations in the coalition. Most of all it has been exciting to be part of this movement to work for dignity and respect for our immigrant brothers and sisters and we applaud the thoughtful planning and implementation of this program. Adelante!!”

—Kathy Keesee, Únete Center for Farm Worker Advocacy

“Participation in the program has allowed us to reach hundreds of people. This has allowed us to expand the number of people we help and connect them with additional resources when needed. Doing so helps us build trust in the community and helps connect the community with greater resources both through our organization and others.”

—Kevin Alejandro, Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos

The OWR network has connected us with others like nothing before. We were able to work and communicate with people of various organizations with similar missions. Working collaboratively, we realized that obstacles that seemed impossible to surpass were possible when people of different skill-sets come together in one voice for the greater good.

—Aitor Porro, Consejo Hispano

“This pandemic forced our organization to close its doors to the public for the first time since its establishment in 1988. Being part of OWR allowed us to still feel connected to our community. Listening to the firsthand accounts of the struggles people were facing compelled us to reprioritize our work. The majority of our efforts are now being focused on providing ample, nutritious food and crucial resources to as many people as possible.”

—Ana Pena, Mano a Mano

“As an organization, we feel we have the ethical and moral responsibility to inspire African youths to learn about the difference between cultural adoptions and assimilation as a way of restoring the core African values back into our communities. Being a part of OWR has made us feel part of a larger immigrant organization. Certainly, it has taught our staff empathy and taught us how to be grateful and compassionate toward others. I could not have asked for a better job than this one.”

—Roseline Vakkai, De Rose Community Bridge & Holistic Wellness

“Latino Network has been participating with OWR since its inception. This project has helped the organization to increase capacity to continue serving thousands of members of the immigrant community. This program has helped us to detect the need for more services that are required to advance the rights and prosperity of all immigrants.”

—Antonio Ramirez, Latino Network

“In a national and global emergency, the undocumented community is left out, overlooked. In OWR I hear the stories, I hear the complexities—hope, restlessness, and challenges that people go through which are not new to them. We tell our applicants that they are essential in our community and there is a surprise at the other end of the phone line. This young man said, like others, “muchisimas gracias, se me cuida, que Dios me la bendiga” which is Spanish for “Thank you very much, take care of yourself, may God bless you” I think in OWR it is an honor to build trust with community members who have rarely felt they are prioritized because of immigration status in this country.”

—Cynthia De La Torre, Casa Latinos Unidos

“The story that I remember the most throughout this process, is the story of a man who had lost his job due to the pandemic. He was crying because he had no money to pay for food, rent or bills. He had diabetes and high blood pressure and needed \$47 to buy his medicine but he did not have that amount of money. That was heartbreaking. Our organization was able to connect him with resources and helped him with the navigation process for OWR. After he was approved for OWR, he called me and expressed a lot of gratitude for the help that made a big change in his life.”

—Elba Alegria, Pueblo Unido

“We are so thankful to be part of the Oregon Worker Relief Fund program and to be able to provide our neighbors with essential emergency assistance. We have been able to connect with community members and other Community Based Organizations in our region and beyond. To us, ORWF is community, collaboration, inclusivity and support.”

—Jordan Hitchcock, Unidos Bridging Community

“Participation in the OWR network has provided Centro Latino Americano with a meaningful opportunity to be part of and to help build a unique, responsive statewide coalition in service to local communities.”

—Katharine Gallagher, Centro Latino Americano

“We are happy to be able to help our communities in Oregon with the OWR and QR Funds during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We will continue to push forward alongside our communities and keep providing assistance and resources like these.”

—Roberto Gamboa, Euwalcree

“It is truly incredible what we as the community have done through OWR to help hundreds of people in need especially in times like these. This fund has allowed people to feel more stable and secure and not at risk of losing their homes.”

—Esmeralda Sanchez, Oregon Human Development Corporation

“ROP runs a twice-weekly food and hygiene supply distribution out of Cottage Grove for anyone who needs support. Thanks to OWR we were able to offer financial assistance to many of the people who come to pick up food, soap, and other basic items. This has made it possible for families to make ends meet through an incredibly challenging year.”

—Emma Ronai-Durning, Rural Organizing Project

INNOVATIONS FROM THE GORGE BY THE NEXT DOOR, INC.

Characterized by extremes, the Columbia River Gorge is home to bountiful orchards, soaring vistas, modern vacation homes - farm laborers, subsistence fishing, and deep wealth disparities. One in three people in the Gorge worry about running out of food, worry about where their next meal might come from, even though the area produces 225,000 tons of apples, pears, and cherries each year. Early on in the pandemic it was clear that the critical infrastructure - agricultural workers who live in and migrate to the Gorge - were at grave risk of contact and transmission of COVID-19. Multi-generational homes, timely communication with migrant worker camps, cultural and linguistic diversity, technology literacy, and a genuine lack of trust in sharing one's information were just some of the challenges Oregon Worker Relief (OWR) coalition member The Next Door Inc. faced.

For decades The Next Door has invited Gorge communities into conversations and partnerships, developing local services while challenging the laws and rules intended to keep people down. Like a trim tab on the rudder of a grain barge propelling up the Columbia River, The Next Door makes targeted and timely changes—through navigation services, education and training, and financial assistance—in support of the children, families and communities that decorate the 80 miles of shoreline from Portland to The Dalles. Their history, adaptability, and community-centered principles (like each of the OWR coalition members) helps to steer the worker relief system.

October 2020: In light of the local complexities, the Oregon Health Authority made available \$100,000 in disaster relief payments to the counties in the Gorge. By using the OWR's infra-

“This OWR system solves the problem because there is already community understanding of the guidelines and process.”

structure, The Next Door, Inc. was able to quickly and efficiently disburse the time-sensitive funds to community members who qualified. The OWR had already established a statewide system providing a means for identifying, navigating, adjudicating, and delivering pandemic relief to impacted communities. And The Next Door, Inc. had established community trust, trained navigators, and developed an outreach plan that included local health clinics, faith leaders, food banks, and Radio Tierra. It was an innovative pilot for OWR: decentralizing a fiscal agent while testing the system's ability to adapt and deliver bespoke clearinghouse services in an attempt to alleviate the pressures and, ultimately, cost of going it alone.

structure, The Next Door, Inc. was able to quickly and efficiently disburse the

“The problem is there are several community members we serve in the Gorge who are not eligible for traditional government stimulus that continue to be impacted by COVID-19, have lost wages and need assistance. Prior to the OWR, we successfully dispersed a small amount of financial assistance to community members. While this was successful, we learned quickly that setting up a system for rapid fund distribution is complex, and our agency does not have the capacity. This OWR system solves the problem because there is already community understanding of the guidelines and process. Also, there is a robust system in place for ensuring equitable distribution and legal protections for undocumented workers' information.”—Nik Portela, Health Program Services Program Manager, The Next Door, Inc.



SERVING OREGON'S WORKERS

Oregon Worker Relief has been wildly successful. Oregon Worker Relief's community-designed and implemented system manages more than \$100 million in pandemic relief through the Relief Fund, a Quarantine Fund to protect agricultural workers from exposure to COVID-19, and a new Small Enterprise Fund for immigrant-run small businesses impacted by the pandemic. To date, the program has disbursed a total of more than \$60 million to more than 37,000 individuals in Oregon's immigrant communities. The total contributions to date to each of the Oregon Worker Relief Funds is below. Contributions include public and private investment.

\$74,142,000

Relief Fund Contributions as of April 2021. Provides support to undocumented workers ineligible for federal UI-benefits who experienced a wage loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The maximum benefit is four weeks of assistance. Launched May 2020.

\$16,000,000

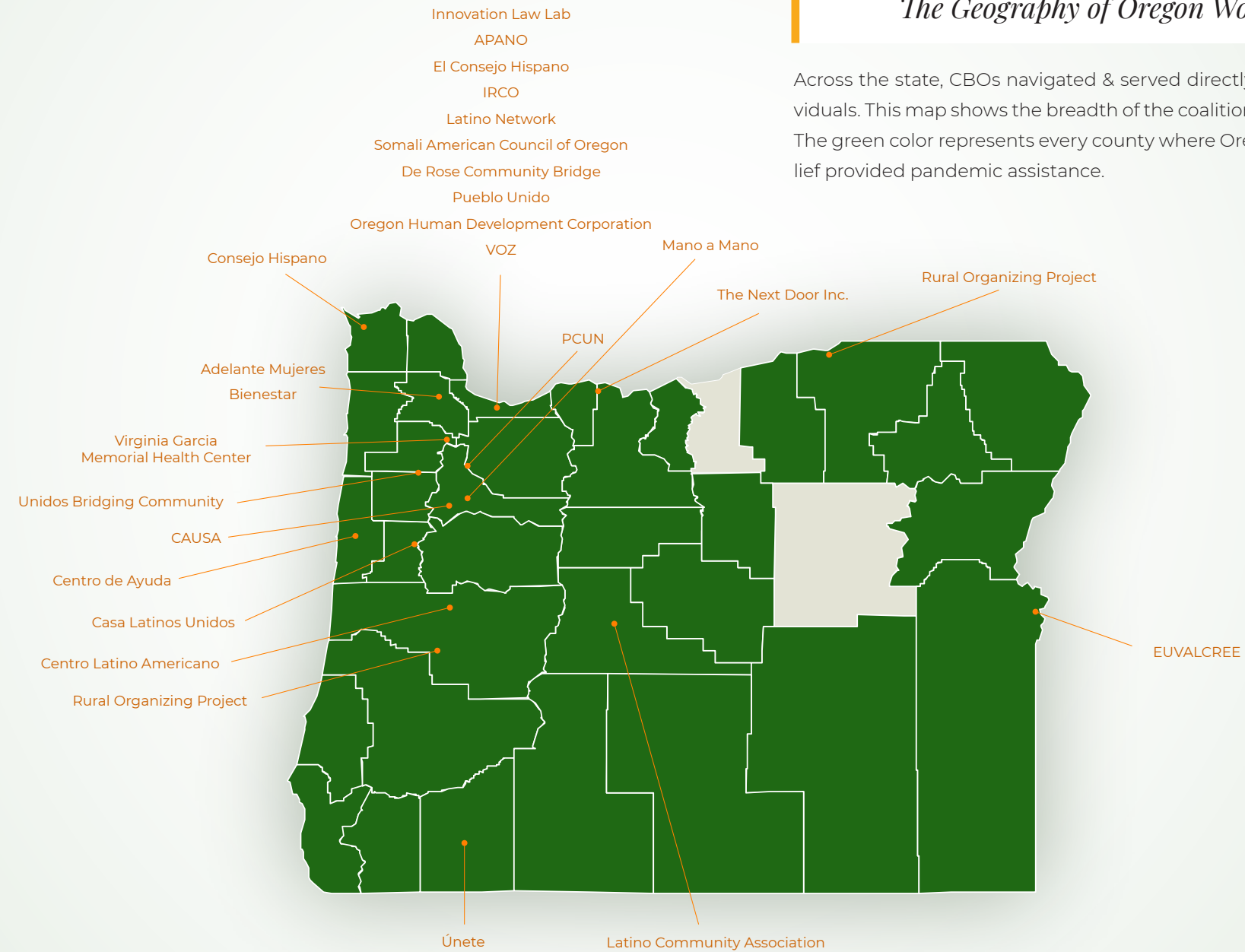
Quarantine Fund Contributions as of April 2021. A public health initiative to prevent spread & encourage agricultural workers to safely recover from COVID-19 exposure or illness. Launched June 2020, the maximum benefit is \$1,420 per exposure requiring quarantining.

\$10,000,000

Small Enterprise Fund provides recovery support to ITIN-business owners. Launched March 2021.

The Geography of Oregon Worker Relief

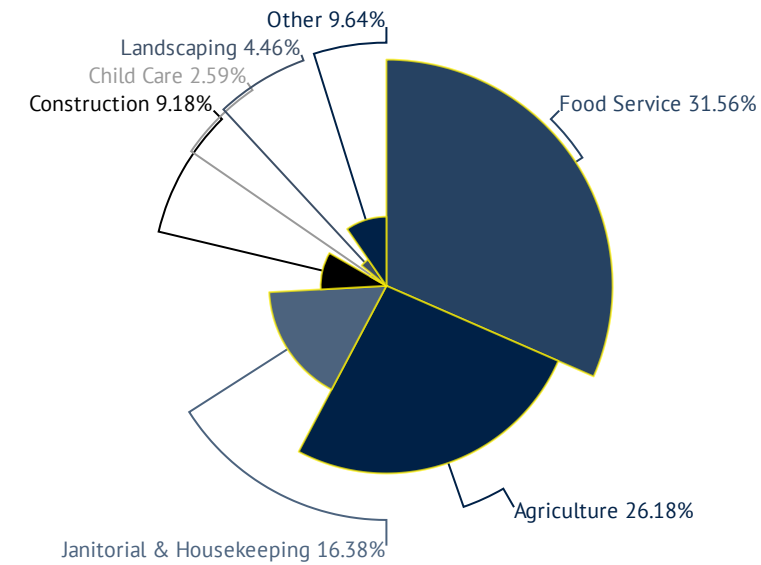
Across the state, CBOs navigated & served directly-impacted individuals. This map shows the breadth of the coalition, as of April 2021. The green color represents every county where Oregon Worker Relief provided pandemic assistance.



RELIEF FUND BY THE NUMBERS

The namesake fund, Oregon Worker Relief Fund, has been extended four times. The OWR Network can deliver up to \$2.6 million a week throughout the state via mobile payment, mailed check, or pick-up at a designated CBO.

Employment Industry of Relief Recipients



\$46,605,683

Relief delivered as of 4/30/2021

26,026

Individuals who received aid

\$1,676

Average aid amount

12 DAYS

Average waiting period

87%

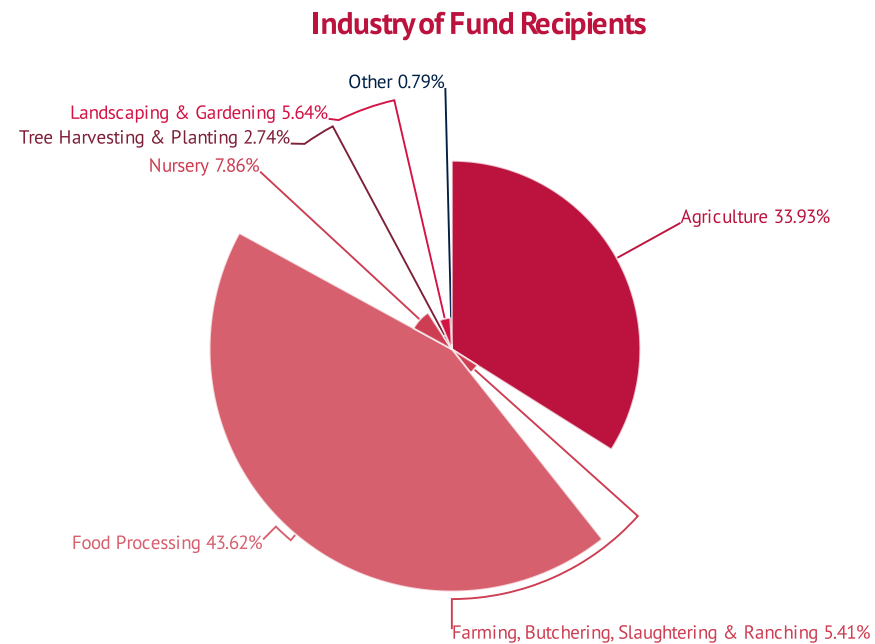
Applicants experiencing more than five weeks of hardship

82%

Applicants with at least one child; 63% with at least two or more

QUARANTINE FUND BY THE NUMBERS

The Quarantine Fund has been extended twice and is expected to be exhausted shortly. The Quarantine Fund has been an important public health measure for agricultural workers. During the summer wildfires of 2020, applications spiked because many people were exposed during evacuation or experienced higher distress because of the air quality.



\$14,277,965
Relief delivered as of 4/30/2021

11,075
Individuals who received aid

\$1,289
Average aid amount

14 DAYS
Average waiting period

54%
Applicants experiencing more than five weeks of hardship

80%
Applicants with at least one child;
61% with at least two or more

PERMANENT PATHWAYS FOR INCLUSION



It is not enough only to include marginalized communities in systems of care. Instead, these communities must be included in the entire process of designing and implementing these systems. Marginalized communities that have been perpetually excluded from economic resources have also been excluded from the very conversations that determine how collective resources are allocated. And without their vital input throughout the design process, well-meaning leaders risk missing key pieces of the puzzle and unintentionally perpetuating the exclusion of the very communities they sought to serve.

But with a community-led design approach, systems of mutual care can be designed and implemented in such a way that the people most impacted are centered in the entire planning process. Oregon Worker Relief is about shift-

ing power to people who have been kept at the margins and empowering them to lead the way in the development of the systems that impact them the most. And by so doing, the program has become an example of how inclusive, community-led systems maximize impacts that are responsive to community needs. But this must not be the end of the story. Instead, the success of Oregon Worker Relief must pave the way for a more fundamental transformation in which community-led coalitions build radically inclusive systems such that every member of Oregon society has equal access to the services and resources they need to thrive.

The Rights Architecture is a six-zone framework intended to foster open, collaborative innovations in building permanent pathways to immigrant inclusion. Oregon Worker Relief is a Zone 5 effort for Accountability, Redress & Inclusion.



Leading CBOs staffed the committees of Oregon Worker Relief to propel the coalition's success.

COMMUNICATIONS

Inter-organizational communications working group develops outreach and press materials

SYSTEM INTEGRITY

CBO-lead working group on process design, adjudications, outreach

STAND UP

(Mostly) short meetings for weekly alignment across all teams & components

SEF COMMITTEE

Business specialists oversee the Small Enterprise Fund

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Convenes weekly to guide OWR

FUNDING

Inter-organizational team tasked with developing funding strategies

FINANCE

Cross-organizational working group managing the finances

POLICY WORKING GROUP

Considers different issues common to community to formulate policy solutions

TEAM LEADS

CBO leadership convenes weekly to set OWR policy, iterate program design

NEXT STEPS

Though Oregon Worker Relief is a success story, it is an ongoing story. Civic safety systems failed for S-, and C-, and P- and D- because our civic society created exclusionary rules because they were immigrants - particularly immigrants of color. Mutuality failed because, as a whole, society excluded immigrants.

The problem of immigrant exclusion—which lays at the heart of the systemic civic failures that happened here—is a hard, multi-faceted problem rooted in white supremacy and concepts of racial exceptionalism. To truly tackle the wicked problem at its roots, we need to address white supremacist structures that cause exclusion in the immigration laws that keep people in a state of perpetual legal precarity, and financial systems that prevent people from accumulating wealth.

Traditional processes generally cannot resolve wicked problems because there are many causes, a constantly changing landscape, and a high degree of social complexity. Comprehensive immigration reforms are needed at the federal level, but there are still meaningful ways Oregon can address the immoral and unjust exclusion of immigrants from civic safety in our state. In the following, we make recommendations addressing these problems at the local and state level to build and ensure permanent pathways to immigrant inclusion, ensuring the collective prosperity of all members of society.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

FUND OREGON WORKER RELIEF TO NARROW THE RECOVERY GAP

An estimated 86 percent of excluded workers received only four weeks of recovery funds compared to 26 weeks for other workers.

MAKE A BOLD INVESTMENT IN LONG-TERM ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Develop public investment in universal basic income strategies to support prosperity

CREATE PATHWAYS FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Develop innovative frameworks such as a public bank, public wallets, and outreach to end the problem of the unbanked and underbanked to support efficient relief payments, personal wealth generation, and community development and investment.

CREATE A STATEWIDE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE POLICY

A statewide office would advance inclusive economic policy for immigrants and refugees

EXPAND OREGON'S SANCTUARY STATUS

Completing the disentanglement from ICE enforcement will support community engagement, trust, and civic participation

PROMOTE UNIVERSAL REPRESENTATION

Support for legalization and pathways to citizenship will improve stability throughout immigrant and refugee communities

FUND OREGON WORKER RELIEF TO NARROW THE RECOVERY GAP

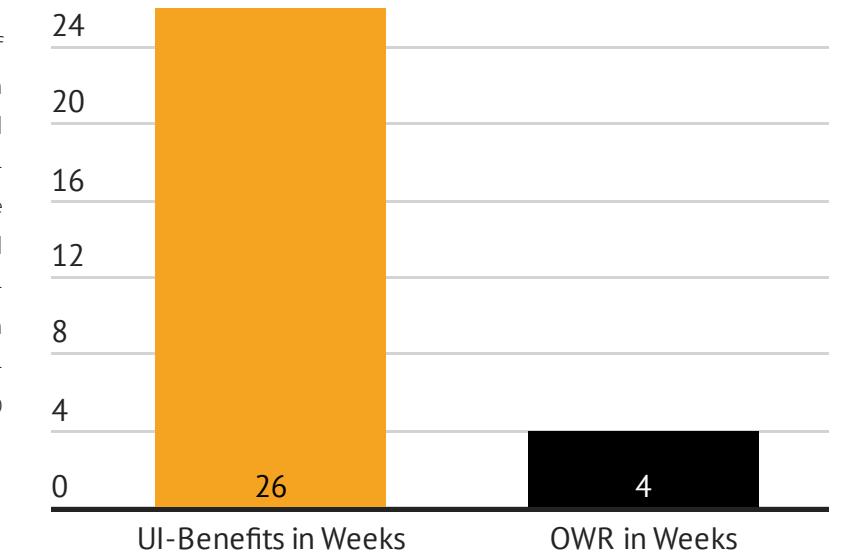
Worker Relief provided four weeks of disaster relief assistance. But the pandemic is still impacting Oregonians more than a year later.

Thousands of Oregonians who are undocumented or nontraditional workers, across the state, have suffered the injustice of being excluded from every federal and most state government relief programs. These Oregonians kept our state running through this crisis. Most lost income and relied on food pantries. Many put off basic needs like medicine and have mounting debts.

An estimated 70,000 workers will seek relief from Oregon Worker Relief. However, more than 85 percent of these workers have experienced hardship in excess of the four weeks of relief - \$1720. In contrast, other Oregonians who were unemployed throughout the pandemic year and received the average weekly unemployment insurance benefit would have received more than \$35,000 and, if still unemployed through September 2021, would receive more than \$50,000 in recovery assistance.

When workers gain, so do the communities where they live. Shops, grocery stores, gas stations, and local businesses in general will see an uptick in sales. Communities will thrive when we collectively prosper.

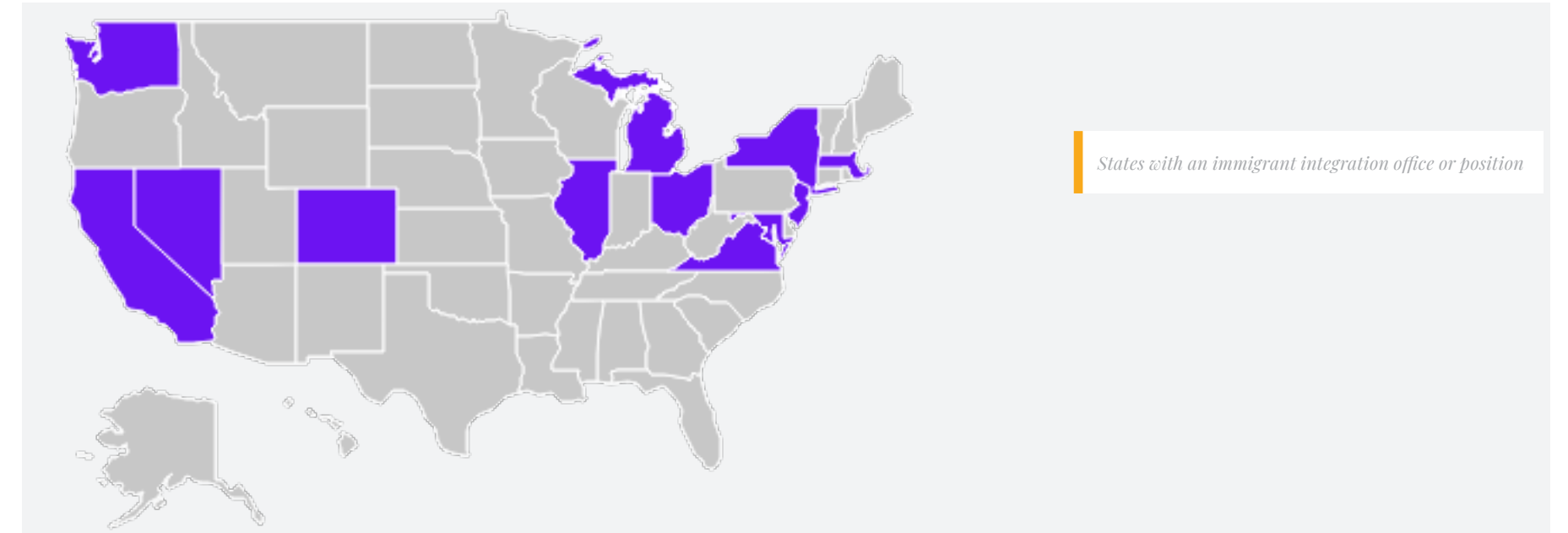
Our recommendation is to fully fund Oregon Worker Relief to narrow the recovery gap and provide impacted undocumented Oregonians a full 26 weeks of hardship assistance.



BUILD INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL PATHWAYS FOR UNBANKED COMMUNITIES

The way our financial system intersects with federal immigration status, language and culture, along with its long history of exclusionary practices, has created and perpetuated the phenomena of the unbanked and underbanked within immigrant communities. Many undocumented immigrants are excluded even from acquiring an interest-bearing bank account because they lack a social security number. They are also prevented from acquiring loans from the bank for things like cars or mortgages. This presents a huge barrier to accumulating wealth and stability. It also created enormous challenges to providing pandemic relief across a state as big and diverse as Oregon.

Oregon should consider creating new financial pathways such as chartering a public bank. A public bank could support all kinds of purposes, including funding social housing, community enterprises, green projects, and provide for efficient administrative payments to communities. Oregon could explore creating public digital wallets, improve access to existing credit unions, banks and other financial services.



States with an immigrant integration office or position

ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE POLICY

Oregon has a robust statewide constellation of community-based organizations working to advance important policy and service goals for the state's immigrant and refugee communities.

To support these trail-blazing organizations and build prosperity within the immigrant and refugee community, Oregon should establish an immigrant and refugee affairs office to convene a broad range of local stakeholders—law enforcement and other state and city officials, nonprofit service providers, immigrant advocacy organizations, religious institutions, and businesses. These stakeholders would foster our collective

prosperity by stewarding the creation of a statewide network of immigrant and refugee services that provide both short-term resources to meet the immediate needs and long-term support for immigrant families, and analyze demographics and trends on the unique needs and disparities facing Oregon's diverse immigrant and refugee communities, including social inclusion, economic status, and health outcomes.

By establishing such an office, Oregon will intentionally invest in largely untapped immigrant communities that are critical to the economic and social well-being of Oregon as a whole.

EXPAND OREGON'S SANCTUARY STATUS TO PROMOTE SAFETY

To solve the problem of the excluded worker, Oregon must strengthen its sanctuary law to end the fear caused by immigration enforcement actions and ensure that Oregon communities are healthy and vibrant.

The former Trump administration actively sought to instill this fear in

communities of color by deploying arrest and deportation practices at critical community service sites such as hospitals, schools, and church homeless shelters. Immigration agents have arrested parents while their infant was hospitalized, removed a woman with a brain tumor from a hospital to a detention facility, and detained a ten-year-old

We should strengthen our sanctuary law by banning warrantless courthouse arrests, banning public and private immigration detention centers

with cerebral palsy after her emergency surgery. Sowing fear in every aspect of immigrants' lives, these destructive policies negatively impact the prosperity and cohesion of the local communities to which immigrants contribute.

In 2018, Oregon voters overwhelmingly voted in support of Oregon's sanctuary law to protect Oregon families and ensure that local police and resources would not be used for federal immigration enforcement. To make good on the promise

of the 34-year-old law, we should strengthen it by banning warrantless courthouse arrests, banning public and private immigration detention centers, and adding accountability measures for community members if the law is violated.



PROMOTE UNIVERSAL REPRESENTATION FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

There is powerful empirical evidence demonstrating that immigrant-inclusive practices not only improve community safety and the rule of law but also enhance civic engagement and raise the level of collective prosperity. Research shows that immigrant-inclusive policies correspond with a higher level of economic well-being. A recent study of 2,500 US counties found that immigrant-inclusive counties have higher median household incomes, higher labor force participation, lower poverty rates, and lower unemployment than their counterparts. Inclusive policies are also proven to enhance health and well-being at the community level.

For individuals facing deportation, legal representation in immigration court is often the most outcome-determinative factor in the success of their case. Without representation, a person in removal proceedings is 5.5 times more likely to lose her case and be ordered removed from the United States, regardless of the merits of her

case. Many people in removal proceedings have valid legal claims to remain in the country and continue to contribute to Oregon's communities, but no way to articulate these claims without the assistance of counsel.

When immigrant Oregonians are unjustly deported, our entire state suffers. If a family's breadwinner is deported, family members face housing and food insecurity. Children must cope with the incredible trauma of family separation, with long-lasting psychological impacts. Children's school attendance and performance are also negatively affected, increasing their likelihood of dropping out and earning significantly less as adults.

By building off the successful Equity Corps model in Multnomah County, Oregon should create a statewide Universal Representation program to increase access to community-based legal assistance and create permanent pathways to immigrant justice and inclusion.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One might describe Oregon Worker Relief as a nonprofit corporation, a collection of community-created recovery funds, a statewide network of community-based organizations advancing immigrant and refugee inclusion, or a private/public partnership with the State of Oregon, cities and counties. All of this is true. What is more true is that Oregon Worker Relief is a universe of people who came together to create a new way of solving problems and succeeded in spite of overwhelming challenges because it is rooted in community. The following are some of the organizations and people who built and sustain Oregon Worker Relief.



THE VAST UNIVERSE OF OREGON WORKER RELIEF

The organizations and people involved in Oregon Worker Relief created a space that let cooperation, friendship, respect and mutual caring flourish. It was and is an immense work of love that emerged from moments of pain. **OWR Network & Partners** Adelante Mujeres - APANO - Bienestar - Casa Latinos Unidos - Causa - Centro de Ayuda - Centro de Servicios - Centro Latino Americano - Consejo Hispano - De Rose Community Bridge & Holistic Wellness - El Programa Hispano Catolica - Euvalcree - Farmworker Housing Development Corporation - IRCO - Innovation Law Lab - Latino Community Association - Latino Network - Mano a Mano - Únete Center for Farm Worker Advocacy - NW Workers Justice Project - Oregon Human Development Corporation - PCUN - Pueblo Unido PDX - Rural Organizing Project - Somali American Council of Oregon - The Next Door Inc. - Unidos Bridging Community - Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation - Voz Workers Rights Education Project - **Foundations & Major Financial Contributors** Chicago Trust Fund - Collins Foundation - Ford Family Foundation - M. Hamann Donor Advised Fund - Meyer Memorial Trust - Momentum Grant - MRG Foundation - Naito Foundation - New

Seasons Market - NW Health Foundation - Northwest Area Foundation - Oregon Latinx Leadership Network - Oregon Food Bank - Oregon Community Foundation - Padosi Foundation - PGE Foundation - Twin Peaks Foundation **Government Partners** City of Hermiston - City of Portland - State of Oregon - Multnomah County - **Special Thanks to** OWR Executive Committee (past & present: Adriana Miranda, Ricardo Lujan, Isa Pena, Jenny Lee, Coua Xiong, Se-ah-dom Edmo, Ramon Valdez, Reyna Lopez, Martha Sonato, Maria Elena Guerra, Larry Kleinman, Jenny Pool Radway, Jessica Maravilla, Leland Baxter-Neal, Stephen Manning) - Governor Kate Brown & her team (Sophorn Cheang, Linda Roman, Amira Streeter, Chiaoyun Hsiao, among others)- Speaker Tina Kotek, Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon & Rep. Andrea Salinas among others - the amazing team from Oregon's Department of Administrative Services - the team at MRG Foundation (Se-ah-dom Edmo, Lindy Walsh, Jude Perez, Violeta Rubiani, Dena Zaldua, Samantha Bakall, Sierra Mora) - the team at FHDC (Tonya Kenyon, Larry Kleinman, Maria Elena Guerra (fiscal operations), Kay Sohl, Shelia Greenlaw-Fink, Monica Avila, Margaret Mahoney (Financial Adviso-

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