



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON LEGISLATIVE BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR (BIPOC) CAUCUS

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### **Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency Now Accepting Applications**

SALEM – [The Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency is now accepting applications.](#)

Black individuals and families, Black businesses, and Black community-based organizations statewide can now apply to receive funds to assist them in weathering the health and economic storm that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused. Applications for the fund, which is being administered by two non-profits, The Contingent and The Black United Fund, are [available here](#).

Rep. Akasha Lawrence Spence (D-Portland), one of the leading legislative proponents, applauded the tireless effort to stand up the fund.

“I am so grateful for the hundreds of hours that were put into making this fund a reality for Black Oregonians,” Rep. Lawrence Spence said. “From the dozens of Black leaders who showed up week after week to ensure our process was inclusive, the grassroots community support by Oregonians across the state, to the unrelenting advocacy from the BIPOC Caucus and The Contingent working in good faith around-the-clock for five weeks in preparation for launch, the resilience of our community is clear.

“Now it is time for our community to receive much needed resources and relief from the devastating impacts of the pandemic and the decades of underinvestment that have made us increasingly vulnerable to economic downturns. Black Oregonians are all too accustomed to surviving with less than they need and far less than they deserve. This fund is the remedial action incumbent on the state to do what is long overdue.”

Rep. Lawrence Spence began convening a group of Black leaders representing communities across Oregon to discuss unaddressed needs earlier this year. From this collaboration, over the course of many meetings, emerged the need for a targeted investment in Black people, Black owned businesses, and Black-led community-based

organizations. The Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency was born, a fund created by the Black community, for the Black community.

[On July 14, the Legislature's Emergency Board passed a \\$62 million allocation of federal coronavirus relief funding for The Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency.](#)

“The BIPOC Caucus is very familiar with the tremendous organizing required to bring something like The Oregon Cares Fund to life, but that does not mean it is a sustainable model,” said Rep. Lawrence Spence. “Communities of color have been left behind time and time again because our voices, our issues are not embedded in our state’s structures. The data on this is clear. The lived reality is painful. We need the entire state of Oregon, both public and private sectors, to do better.”

“Until there is robust representation of communities of color across all levels of government, self-advocacy is critical to ensure the needs of our communities are included in decision-making processes. said Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley) “BIPOC Oregonians have been in desperate need of targeted funding, even before this pandemic. We are grateful that our advocacy has brought some relief at a time when our statewide community is critically distressed.”

The members of the Legislature’s Black, Indigenous and People of Color Caucus (BIPOC) are Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn), Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley), Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland), Rep. Akasha Lawrence Spence (D-Portland), Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City), Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego), Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-Portland), Sen. Lew Frederick (D-Portland) and Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene).

### **About The Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency**

The Oregon Cares Fund for Black relief and resiliency provides cash relief to qualifying Black individuals and families, Black-owned businesses, and Black-led community-based organizations using grants. The distribution will be carried out by two nonprofits – The Contingent and The Black United Fund – and all funds must be disbursed by Dec. 30, 2020. The Council of Trust, composed of 11 Black leaders from across Oregon, is charged with guiding the fund.

Applicants must demonstrate economic harm caused by the pandemic and prove residency in Oregon. For more information or to apply, visit [thecontingent.org/oregon-cares](https://thecontingent.org/oregon-cares).

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