



**IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**
BUILDING NEW BEGINNINGS

*10301 NE Glisan Street
Portland, Oregon 97220
www.irco.org*

MAIN OFFICE

AFRICA HOUSE

EASTERN OREGON

**GREATER MIDDLE EAST
CENTER**

**PACIFIC ISLANDER &
ASIAN FAMILY CENTER**

**SLAVIC AND EASTERN
EUROPEAN CENTER**

March 29, 2023

RE: IRCO's Support of SB 918 in continued funding.

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee,

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization ("IRCO") would like to show its strong support for SB 918, the initial proposals, and the recommendation from the HB 2100 Task Force in continuity of funding.

IRCO is committed to supporting community based efforts and impactful interventions to tackle homelessness and housing instability.

In support of SB 918, IRCO would like to encourage the members of the committee and the legislature to consider the impacts of continued support for culturally specific homeless service providers through community-based organizations. For IRCO, our programming now has had tremendous impact on addressing homelessness and housing instability. Through the support of OHCS and the funds we received from them for 2021-23, our cultural specific wrap around services have been able to:

A. Provide rental assistance, eviction prevention assistance to over 2,259 individuals, assist 212 individuals with other basic needs, provide legal support to over 394 individuals and field over 11,567 calls on our housing and other emergency economic support hotline; culminating in, with other programming, 14,432 community members receiving some service in stabilized housing across all our services in combination or alone; and

B. These programs have helped address some of the disparities that our refugee and immigrant communities face - especially following the pandemic. We know that these disparities are heightened for those who come from communities of color, immigrant, and refugee backgrounds, and often represent long term challenges to finding stability.

Our OHCS funded programs have helped many members of our community find the path toward stability.

We know that, as OHCS continues to review and address findings by the Task Force, that we continue to bridge gaps with community based solutions. IRCO's most recent Community Needs Assessment shows that our immigrant and refugee communities continue to face steep challenges and barriers in - and having housing and services to create stability for families and individuals is but one part of the tools needed to provide that support.



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We encourage the committee and members of the Oregon State Legislature to consider supporting SB 918 as submitted.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Po Cha".

Lee Po Cha,
Executive Director