



May 10, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Senator Johnson, Senator Steiner Hayward, Representative Rayfield and Committee members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce and our 1,650 members through the Central Oregon region, thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter of support for the Shuttered Events Business grant proposal.

Following the leadership of the Live Events Industry of Oregon (LEIO), we are fully supportive of their proposal to appropriate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to create a grant program to aid struggling event businesses. While we are appreciative of the federal Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program, a large segment of the industry was unable to take advantage of the program due to the requirement for a physical venue space. Thus we support the proposal offered by Representatives Nosse and Lively to create a one-time grant program that can benefit the entire event industry.

One of Central Oregon's primary economic drivers is the tourism industry and related event-based tourism. Whether it is one of region's signature mountain bike or trail running race series or an outdoor sports festival, this segment of our economy has been particularly hard hit during the pandemic. The live event industry has been on a complete hiatus since 2020, and many of our local event producers and companies may not re-open. Not only are the events this industry produces part of the fabric of our community, but there are significant downstream economic benefits from sub contractors and vendors as well as the associated tourism spending.

The proposal laid out by LEIO is well vetted and thoughtfully prepared to maximize the investment for all sectors of the event industry. In a snapshot it includes:

- **Well-defined eligible businesses**, including General Events Industry Business Sectors such as Event Planning and Production, Audio-Visual, Lighting, and Staging Providers, Special Event Operators, and Amateur Sporting Event Operators among others. The list of eligible
- Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.

business would also include vertical market events such as concerts, sporting events, theatre, art and music events etc.

- **Focus on small business** with a cap of 150 employees or less
- **Rolling application periods to support the hardest hit businesses**, including priority access for entities with a 75% or larger drop in revenue from prior year; followed by 50% drop in revenue and so on.
- **Specific allowable uses for grant funding**, such as payroll costs, rent or other commercial building expenses, utilities, ordinary operating costs, existing business asset loan payments, and PPE.

**The proposal is for an allocation of one-time ARPA funds of \$108M in order to provide the broad reaching support to these struggling small business and sole proprietors across our state.** While this is a significant amount of funding, the one-time nature of a grant program is exactly what these federal funds are intended to accomplish.

Attached to this letter is a chart from LEIO highlighting three businesses in Oregon and the impact these funds would have on their ability to continue providing services to the community.

We appreciate your consideration of this important request for our community, and understand the difficult choices that lie ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight this key need in our community.

Best Regards,



Katy Brooks  
President + CEO  
Bend Chamber of Commerce

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.