

Sophorn Cheang - Offering Equitable Assistance During the Pandemic

So the first one I would say that as a success story around supporting the small businesses early and during the pandemic in 2020, late 2020 and early 2021, our first big grant package we offer to offset small businesses impacts from the pandemic was emergency small business grant program.

We knew that it's important that to connect to them and making sure that they get the support that they need because many of the small businesses had to close the door has to scale down has to lay off staff, but they need to make sure that their business continue to open.

So, this was approximately \$50 million in funding.

We issue over 7400 grants to small businesses through our Oregon that have suffered revenue losses and a couple of things that I do want to highlight that our debt out of debt amount and then the number of the grants that be provided.

25% of those grand recipients were minority owned businesses.

For comparison about 13% of all Oregon businesses are minority owned.

So, our grant program successfully reached almost double the percentage of minority owned businesses in Oregon.

And then 12% of the business that we see grant were Hispanic and Latino owned which double the rate of Oregon businesses that are Hispanic and Latino owned which is 6% and so.

So we saw that our outreach and meaningful partnership work and know that we can apply the same approach across the boards of all of our businesses because we asked the community we being really engaged we opened door to opportunity.

We translated our materials and what need to we wanted we wanted to make sure that our communications are inclusive and reach to the community where they at.

And so I that is the one part of the story that we have during the pandemic and I do wanted to share another story that that I believe that they are that's also important and it's kind of tie into to why is a partnership and why is uplifting the communities of color and partner with the with the culturally specific organizations and Business Association across the state is so important throughout that there are so many story success story that we have learned and how much we have directly impact those communities especially small business of color and our tribal communities.

Many look or here in Oregon the community based organizations such as immigrant and refugee community organization Hacienda CDC Oregon made the American Chambers of Commerce Urbanly.

Those are the few that I I just share have worked with the small businesses before but they never

really received the grant they have or they have had the the economic A program they or however they wanted to call a small businesses program but with the limit resources there.

There was so much they could do.

So, with the team, the technical assistance programs that we were able to to help them, they were able to utilize that to directly like provide services to the help many family and small business owner.

And while I'm talking about this technical assistance program assistant technical assistance providers, I do want to highlight it and recognize that there is this existing economic development and also small businesses development center that already exists in our system.

And some people might be wondering what the difference between the technical assistant program is, our SPDC.

So there is a difference because the majority of our technical assistant providers who are the community based organization, they provide a wraparound services, the holistic approach.

So there's some of the small business owners, especially business of color who are immigrants and refugee when they go there and need the support they could ask for like healthcare.

They also ask for housing support and access to other benefits as well.

So that wrap around support that they could receive that we see you, they could not find anywhere else.

But it's only within the community-based organization and also within the culturally response, cultural responsiveness as well.

One of the other kinds of just specific story that I want to share this gentleman, it's a more update.

He runs a medical transport company helping get clients to critical appointments.

When the pandemic started he was at the work of closing his company, but he felt that it was so hard to abandon to his customer who he has been serving.

And then also their lives are depending on on him to make sure that they get to to the appointment, they get into their medical care that they need.

So he was so committed to his client that he maxed out his credit card.

He took our second mortgage on his house in order to remain open.

With the technical assistant program he was able to connect and work closely with one of our black American Chambers of Commerce to develop the plan to remain open, to stop maxing out his credit card to be able to get access to some resources that available or that early on there is a PPP and then also the state and local grant because he didn't know any of those, he didn't know that there that he could just access or feel how to fill out the application.

So we saw that it worked when it come to support small businesses and back through the partnership with the trusted network and the trusted organization who they can walk through the doors and ask us a question.