

## **Sophorn Cheang - Our Agency has Well-Developed Partnerships All Over the State**

So before I started and give the specific example of the Canada success story, I do wanted to kind of just really lay out a little bit about who we are as a state here in Oregon.

Like many, many states, but particularly here in Oregon, we are a collection of unique regional economies with unique strain challenges and opportunities.

So our local community leaders need partnership from the state and our presence in their communities.

And currently, we have 4 regional development officers throughout the state here in Oregon that we have 36 counties.

So that model that we are working on as a regional development team throughout the state because they are the not just need to bridge and the liaison and representative but they also serve as a gateway to our services, our programs and help develop trusted relationship between the local, regional or the state government community, diverse communities here across the state and also the tribal communities.

Now before the pandemic and especially during this time or more than ever, we recognize that the future of the future of economic development in Oregon requires A meaningful engagement in all Oregon communities.

Our our agency has well developed partnership all across the state and has shown our ability to react shiftly and creatively such as stand up new programs to get millions of dollars out the door to serve communities in the pandemic, especially small businesses.

As a state economic development agency, our missions in in our mission is to invest not just me in Oregon businesses and and community but people to promote a globally competitive, diverse and inclusive economy.

And our vision is prosperity for all Oregonians and for me, I believe that when we talk about prosperity, the share prosperity is more than a catch face for us.

It is a guiding principle.

And why I'm saying that because as a state government agency, we continue to look at who is accessing to our programs and services and also the resources.

So as an ongoing effort, we continue to assess how how we design, how we deliver our services and and programs and resources and also how we listen to the of these communities across the state and also bring them to the table to code, develop better solutions.

And with that we we know that we we have to do more right because we recognize that there is a

systemic racism and racist practice that need to be addressed.

So as here as a as a state economic development agency, we are committed and work towards transparencies and accountability.

With that we have been very intentional in pushing our agency resources out to our historically and and currently underserved and under resourced communities.

So one of the stories that I wanted to to highlight it is that our technical assistance programs, it is a program to not only to be a capacity in the community but it also provide the resources to where it needs in the community to for them for many of the services providers to directly reach and support our small businesses that where they are in, in their community especially small business of color and the tribal communities.

This this year is the second round Business Oregon awarded grants to 33 organizations that provide technical assistance to historically and currently under so and under resource small businesses across the state.

The total of the grant is 8 points, \$8.75 million is for the 33 organization to expand their reach and scale up their assistance to provide services to to businesses and also entrepreneurs by offering not just needed, casually competent but linguistically appropriate and geographically aligned resources to support those businesses, to be successful and also to help them not just need to retain, but it also to grow as well.