

FAIR SHOT 2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE JUSTICE

Everyone deserves to understand and be understood, especially during life's most difficult and important moments. It's critical to our collective prosperity that all Oregonians have access to interpretation services if and when they need them.

Our statewide systems must meet the needs of our communities and be available in languages that they understand in order to be truly effective. Increased access to interpretation services for Oregonians who speak Indigenous languages from present-day Mexico, Central America, and South America helps ensure that our communities can effectively interact with service providers and public entities, and participate in society visibly and fully. By centering the needs of those who have been most harmed by colonization and oppression, and who have the least access to our support systems, we make our systems stronger for all and begin to heal generations of harm.

Indigenous language interpreters have unique skill sets that are highly valuable to our communities and state as a whole. By investing in Indigenous language interpreters, we can continue to build a more equitable Oregon, where all of us have a fair shot.

30+

NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES FROM PRESENT-DAY MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND SOUTH AMERICA THAT ARE SPOKEN IN OREGON

35,000

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF OREGONIANS WHO SPEAK AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

BIG PICTURE OVERVIEW

Together, we will ensure that Oregonians who speak Indigenous languages from present-day Mexico, Central America, and South America experience the fundamental human right to understand and be understood.

Photo: Collective of Indigenous Language Interpreters of Oregon (CIIO) members at their December 2021 graduation ceremony for Indigenous interpreters, courtesy of Pueblo Unido PDX



ABOUT FAIR SHOT FOR ALL

Our work as a coalition is centered on ideas and input from those both historically and currently bearing the burden of Oregon's broken systems and the COVID-19 pandemic. Our ideas work for the state as a whole because they work for those of us who are most impacted.

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FAIR SHOT FOR ALL



THE PROBLEM

The ability to understand and be understood is a fundamental human right not currently being recognized in Oregon because Indigenous language interpreters are not paid adequately for their unique and highly valuable skills. They face unnecessary barriers to credentialing, thus limiting interpretation services for Indigenous communities.

Without adequate access to interpretation, Oregonians who speak Indigenous languages face tremendous barriers to participating in society and experience devastating human rights violations, including delay or denial of life-saving medical care, inaccessibility of critical services (e.g. safety, public benefits and social programs), wrongful imprisonment, and unjust deportation and family separation.

OUR SOLUTION

When anyone in our community is denied basic human rights, all of us suffer. We can strengthen our communities and state as a whole by ensuring that everyone can understand and be understood.

In 2023, state lawmakers must:

- Develop language proficiency evaluation mechanisms for Indigenous languages, so interpreters can demonstrate their language skills and obtain formal credentialing and recognition as competent interpreters
- Invest in Indigenous language interpretation to pay interpreters living wages and ensure that Indigenous language speakers don't have to pay for their own interpretation
- Establish a formal commission for Indigenous language speakers to have direct influence in policy and law solutions

WE BELIEVE

- Every worker who has a labor dispute should be able to seek legal redress.
- Every parent who needs access to support programs should be able to navigate the application process and obtain the resources they need.
- Every person seeking medical attention should be able to communicate their symptoms and receive a course of care in a timely manner.
- Every accused person should be able to understand the proceedings and communicate with their legal representative to ensure a fair trial and avoid wrongful conviction, imprisonment, or deportation.
- Every person in an unsafe situation should be able to communicate with a domestic violence advocate or law enforcement to seek protection from harm.

THIS PROPOSAL IS ESSENTIAL

...for persons who speak Indigenous languages to be provided health care according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1978 Patient's Bill of Rights.

...for the Oregon Judicial Department to guarantee due process and equal protection for speakers of Indigenous languages from present-day Mexico, Central America, and South America

...for community-based organizations and state agencies such as DMV, BOLI, and Employment Department to make their services, resources, and protections accessible.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared 2022-2032 the International Decade of Indigenous Languages to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion.