



State agency participation in the Carrousel of Information

“As Governor, and as a former state Supreme Court Justice and Attorney General, I strongly believe that the rule of law is the glue that holds together our democratic society. It is my policy that state agencies comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including laws regarding eligibility for social services.

“State agencies that participate in the information sessions coordinated by the Mexican consulate do not participate in order to provide benefits to individuals who do not qualify for such benefits. Rather, state agencies, along with local and non-profit agencies, participate in these sessions in order to serve a growing, underserved and vulnerable population – non-English-speaking immigrants from Latin American nations and their families. It would be wrong to assume that participants at these sessions are simply all undocumented persons; a great number of them are citizens and residents with legal immigrant status. They contribute to Oregon's economy and to the cultural diversity of our state. Unfortunately, such people are often the victims of discrimination, unfair employment practices, unsafe work conditions, mistreatment and fraud. As a State, we have a responsibility to ensure that all people in Oregon are aware of their rights and aware of opportunities to which they are legally entitled. With that in mind, the State of Oregon is engaged in various efforts to reach out to underserved communities in our state – including participation in the Carrousel of Information coordinated by the Mexican consulate. I intend to continue with such efforts because I believe it is the right thing to do for all Oregonians.”

– Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski

The Carrousel of Information is a joint effort of state, local, and federal agencies that provides program and service information to Spanish-speaking Oregon residents and workers. These events have taken place throughout Oregon since 2000, in cooperation with mobile office tours held by the Mexican Consulate.

What agencies offer at the Carrousel

Participation by state agencies at Carrousel events varies. In general, the agencies provide information about rights, responsibilities, and program resources verbally and through brochures, flyers, and other publications (see topic list on reverse side). Agencies share the same information with English-speaking Oregon residents through other events and outreach. Some publications are also available in other languages, such as Russian and Vietnamese.

What agencies do *not* offer at the Carrousel

State agencies do not offer services – other than information – at these events. No one can “sign up” or receive approval for benefits at the Carrousel. Agencies do not accept applications for programs or services, and agency representatives do not make decisions as to whether a person qualifies for a benefit or service. Anyone who receives information at the Carrousel and later decides to use one of the programs must contact the appropriate agency and meet eligibility requirements. Agencies enforce all applicable laws and rules to determine eligibility for a state service or benefit.

Why agencies participate in the Carrousel

State agencies must comply with a variety of federal and state laws that require them to conduct outreach activities toward migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with limited proficiency in English, and other vulnerable populations in the community. The Carrousel of Information allows agencies to make direct contact with the largest limited-English-proficiency community in Oregon.

In 2004, about 7,500 people attended Carrousel events throughout the state. In 2005 attendance was down (a final count is not yet available) because the Mexican Consulate began to require reservations, a decision that attests to the event's popularity. In many communities, such large crowds showed up that the consulate could not accommodate them. Even with reduced attendance, agencies are still able to connect with thousands of Spanish-speaking residents.

Agencies also use other avenues to reach Spanish-speaking Oregon residents and workers, including other community events, radio, television, and newspaper advertisements and articles, and ads in the Yellow Pages. No other event or forum, however, enables the state to make personal contact with so many people. The Carrousel is an effective outreach tool that improves efficiency in the use of state staff time and resources.

Fraud, unsafe workplaces, unlicensed and uninsured drivers, and discrimination against vulnerable residents all create costs that ultimately extend to all Oregonians. By educating vulnerable residents about their rights and responsibilities as workers, consumers, and residents, state agencies strive to mitigate those costs. This saves money, improves public health and safety, and improves the economic climate for all Oregon residents and businesses.

Topics

State agencies at the Carrousel provide information on the following topics, depending on the agencies participating in a given event:

- Taxes (preparing and filing Oregon and federal income tax returns)
- Workplace safety and health standards
- Workers' compensation (claims processes and employer, insurer, and worker responsibilities)
- Consumer protection (fraud, financial services, insurance)
- Building permits and licenses
- Health services
- Child services
- Employment services
- Unemployment insurance
- Oregon labor market information
- Child care
- Wage and hour requirements
- Civil rights
- Small business requirements
- Traffic safety laws
- Insured motorist requirements
- Driver's license requirements

Other agencies

In addition to state agencies, local government, non-profit, and federal agencies typically take part in Carrousel events. These include local police departments, social service organizations, the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, and other agencies.

For more information

Members of the general public

Governor's citizen message line, 503-378-4582

News media

Department of Administrative Services
Robert Kennedy, 503-378-2627