



Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Riccardo Waites and I am the founder of C.O.B.L.A which stands for Central Oregon Black Leaders Assembly. In lieu of the recent civil unrest over George Floyd and the unfair treatment of blacks, our organization has become a “safety net” for all people of color in Central Oregon. I’ve spoken at peaceful protests and have conducted interviews for TV, Radio & Print on the matter of racism in our community. The feedback received has been overwhelming support from the non-black community and I’ve been inspired to not to just articulate how it feels to be black in America & in Central Oregon, but to determine what reform looks like. After considerable thought, I decided that not having equal access to economic opportunities has been the part of racism that hurt us the most. We don’t need any more Rappers, NBA or NFL stars – we need more techies, website developers, paralegals, contractors, real estate agents, etc. In my opinion, it has been exclusion from the “good jobs & good salaries” that has caused so many difficulties for us. These economic disparities have made it hard for us to eat, and what do hungry people do? Just about anything to feed themselves and their children. Wouldn’t you? This desperate mindset is common amongst our people & has unfortunately led the majority of us straight to jail – or on criminal supervision.

Did you know that in 2020, there are more black men on criminal supervision in the United States, than there were black men in slavery in 1850?

So the question becomes – what will make black lives look different in 2021? The answer is jobs! Being black, for the most part, has been economically crippling; many times it feels like a handicap. So what do we do for handicapped community members? We build them a handicap entrance – a special entrance. One designed to assist them to entry. That’s what we need right now. We need a special entrance into careers where we have been snubbed. We have to lower the barrier of entry where systemic racism has hurt us the most – hiring. Can you help bridge-the-gap? Is there a position for us in your organization? It’s time to put pencil to paper & prove that black families in your community matter by supporting COBLA’s Paid Internship Program.



I, _____ pledge to offer a paid internship.

Signature _____ Phone ____ - ____ - ____ Email _____

For more information please contact me at 541-903-2706 or by email at riccardo@mycobla.com