



**To:** Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the  
House Committee On Human Services and Housing

**From:** Ryan Fisher, NW Public Affairs

**Date:** April 20, 2015

**RE:** TANF Reinvestment Proposal, HB 3535

The Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) and the Oregon Housing Authorities (OHA) support the TANF reinvestment proposal outlined in HB 3535.

Members from both associations participated in the detailed work performed during the interim to prioritize investments. These investments address many of the TANF Program shortcomings, caused by drastic cuts during the recession, and highlighted in a recent audit and report by the Secretary of State.

The TANF program provides critical support for families with kids living on extremely low incomes. As local partners, Housing Authorities and Community Action Agencies know that the local DHS office, alone, cannot help a family resolve the complicated and daunting challenges that poverty can cause a parent.

This piece of legislation gives DHS the ability to better leverage other local organizations and provide more powerful support to families facing those challenges. Organizations such as those represented in this letter, and others, like workforce investment boards, will be able to better align resources and provide a more positive impact to the families in Oregon that currently struggle the most. By providing more focus on local and regional partnerships, HB 3535 opens the door for deeper collaborations that won't look the same in every community, but will be developed to meet the unique needs that each community faces.

For families to find success, they must first be stable, they must know where they will sleep at night and know that they will be able to eat the next day. Only with stability can the more distant future come into focus, and goals for employment and career be set and met. Housing Authorities, Community Action Agencies, Workforce Investment Boards and local DHS offices each have unique tools that can help families find stability and success. Those tools become more powerful when they are designed to work together. HB 3535 moves Oregon in the right direction and gives our communities more flexible tools to support young families' success.