

From: [Olga Johnson](#)
To: [LRO](#)
Cc: [Rep Nathanson](#); [Sen Hass](#)
Subject: Mercy Corps Testimony on SB 2164 for 6-14-2019
Date: Friday, June 14, 2019 12:33:11 PM

Dear Chair Nathanson and Chair Hass, and members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures

I am asking you to take action to ensure that Individual Development Accounts remain available to Oregonians who need them. Please include the provisions of SB 790 in HB 2164.

My name is Olga Johnson, I am IDA Program coordinator, immigrant from Russia. I work directly with IDA program participants: families, who have experienced systematic disadvantages and generational poverty, refugees, immigrants - communities that need it the most. IDA Program is my people's hope for a better future for them and their families. Our clients share their stories all the time: homeless person of colour (lived on the street while participating in the program) who started their auto detailing business, single mom starting her successful face painting business, refugee from Iraq starting successful catering business, previously incarcerated young man launching his construction business and many more. They were to achieve their goals because of their hard work and IDA program in their life.

With IDA program our underserved community become resilient, financially healthy and inspired for a better future.

We have a huge demand, our last application period was closed in 4 hours. We have over 2,000 qualifying individuals who expressed their interest in applying for the IDA Program.

We need the Legislature to take action to keep the Oregon IDA Initiative working in our communities, and we need to expand the reach of IDAs to more people.

Thank you for all of your hard work this session, and thank you for your attention to keeping IDAs available.

Olga Johnson
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My pronouns are she/her/hers.

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