

On behalf of Metropolitan Family Service, I am writing to support HB 4157. This legislation will support Oregon's economic recovery and lift up communities across the state by providing one-time payments to over 260,000 low-wage earners to support working individuals and families. Provision of one-time **\$600 Cost of Living Support** direct payments to Oregonians eligible for the EITC will serve as an effective tool for helping working families meet their basic needs, recover from economic losses sustained during the pandemic, and improve their lives.

Metropolitan Family Service is a community-based organization partnering with 18,000 people across the lifespan. Our mission is to help people move past the limitations of poverty, inequity and social isolation. In working with community members living on limited incomes, we have found that cash support is a core transformational support that addresses essential needs, including food, healthcare, transportation and housing.

This type of support is particularly needed at a time when the pandemic has created additional demands on many community members. We have witnessed firsthand the dramatic impact of the pandemic on our program participants, and the changes that occur when they can access economic support. Providing a one-time cost of living support payment of \$600 will help families catch up on bills, purchase or repair a car, or invest in activities that enrich their children's lives. In fact, one of the mothers who was able to access Earned Income Tax Credits through our services this past year told us she was finally able to purchase mattresses for her children as a result of that one time cash she received.

Low-wage workers and communities play an essential role in ensuring Oregon's success. But the cost of living for these workers remains high. The wealth gap has widened since the beginning of the pandemic. Rents continue to rise, childcare remains unaffordable and inaccessible, and healthcare costs remain high throughout this pandemic. We know that these factors disproportionately affect the BIPOC community and those who are older as well as those of all ages who experience disabilities.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 4157 to provide critical support for Oregonians who live on limited incomes in this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Judy Strand, CEO