

RE: Department of Human Services Budget Bill (HB 5026)

Co-Chairs Campos, Valderrama, and members of the Joint Subcommittee on Human Services,

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports HB5026, specifically the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self Sufficiency Programs. This program, which launched in 2022, includes \$3.6M per year for Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Tribal Governments, and Rural Communities. The program ensures low-income Oregonians, especially those with barriers to filing their taxes, have access to free tax support so they can access the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

Oregon historically ranks near the bottom for uptake of the EITC nationally. The maximum EITC is almost \$7000 for 2022. The maximum Oregon EITC is nearly \$700. And the Federal Child Tax Credit is refundable up to \$1500 per child. These are significant dollars that could support families on the path to self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

The Tax Infrastructure Grant Program provides critical investments in culturally relevant and specific tax support programs and services. There are well-established providers and emerging providers that offer effective tax support services that benefit from this program. Ongoing investments are needed to ensure initial investments in these programs are sustained and meet the demand for free tax support that far outweighs our current supply.

The proposed budget bill funds the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program in ODHS's Self Sufficiency Program at Current Service Level. Funding this program will help strengthen the current tax support network and provide new opportunities for tax providers and navigation partners to reach Oregon's most vulnerable families.

Specifically, the program will continue to:

- Strengthen the current network of culturally specific, culturally responsive, tribal governments, and rural providers.
- Fund new infrastructure through capacity grants in geographically diverse communities to deliver tax preparation and tax navigation services to expand access to benefits.
- Significantly improve recruitment and retention of qualified tax preparers, both volunteer and paid.
- Strengthen the technology and training systems for delivering tax preparation.
- Strengthen taxpayer outreach, education, and connection to communities by culturally specific, culturally responsive, tribal governments and rural communities.

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports HB 5026, specifically investments in the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program under Self Sufficiency Programs so low-income Oregonians can better access the EITC and CTC.

This is why we urge your yes vote on HB5026. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Oregon's EITC and CTC Coalition