

## **RE: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Budget Road Show**

Co-Chairs Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Representative Tawna Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports SB 5506, specifically the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program, which is included in the current service level in the Governor's recommended budget for the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self Sufficiency Program. This program, which launched in 2022, 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. Though our uptake numbers have improved in recent years, it's imperative that families get the support they need to file their taxes and claim these benefits. The maximum EITC is almost \$7000 for 2022 and the maximum Oregon EITC is nearly \$700. 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.

**Your budget decisions are critical to the well-being of children and families, and include critical programs like the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program that help families access these credits.**

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.

**Sustainable investments in ODHS's Tax Infrastructure Grant Program is vital to the long term success of our efforts to reach low-income families.**

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports SB 5506, specifically investments in the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program under Self Sufficiency Programs at the Oregon Department of Human Services so low-income Oregonians can better access the EITC and CTC.

**This is why we urge you to continue to make investments now in Oregon's Tax Support Infrastructure at the Oregon Department of Human Services.** Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The EITC and CTC Coalition