

Re: Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

I am writing on behalf of Mt Hood Community College to urge you to “Fix the Funding” for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Without your action this year, this life-changing program will shrink by 50% and enroll fewer than 500 Oregonians per year.

In 1999 the Legislature created IDAs and established a state tax credit to fund them. This matched-savings program provides participants with education and individualized support to reach their financial goals, including homeownership, home repair, higher education, purchasing a vehicle, starting a business, and retirement. The state matches participants’ savings up to 5-to-1 to make their dreams a reality. Over 19,000 Oregonians have participated in this program over the past 25 years.

I am so thankful for the IDA Fund. Without it, I would not have had the funds to buy the necessary items to succeed in my classes. Items like a laptop and an e-reader which helped me as I completed my classes. Upon completing my degree at MHCC, I was able to utilize the leftover funds from my IDA to help pay my student loans down. This was a huge help as I was able to lessen my monthly payments. This was a huge help as I transitioned from school into the workforce.

The future of IDAs is at risk because the tax credit that funds them has not kept pace with inflation. While the credit has been capped at \$7.5M per year since 2009, the cost of everything that IDA participants save for has increased dramatically – especially IDA savers’ two most common goals: homeownership and higher education. Compared with 15 years ago, each saver needs more funds from the program to be successful, yet the total funding has remained stagnant.

There are two funding options available to you in the 2025 session: HB 2735 raises the cap on the existing tax credit, from \$7.5M to \$16.5M, to fully fund the program. Or, HB 3809 dedicates revenue from the state lottery to supplement the existing \$7.5M tax credit. Either option would return the IDA program to solid financial footing. Please incorporate one of these options into the 2025-2027 state budget and Fix the Funding for IDAs.

Sincerely,

Tia Clay, Mt. Hood Community College graduate