

**Joint Committee on Ways and Means**

**Re: No Cuts to the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program**

Name: Mindy Vetter

City/County: North Bend/Coos and Roseburg/Douglas

Organization: Moneywise Oregon, Inc.

Role: COO, VITA Tax program Coordinator

Co-Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mindy Vetter, and I work for Moneywise Oregon, Inc., which provides free tax preparation services in Coos and Douglas counties, with a remote option statewide. I am writing to respectfully request that you maintain full funding for the Tax Infrastructure Grant program. The services we provide are desperately needed throughout the state and specifically in rural Oregon where few options are available and none are affordable.

Our Moneywise Oregon VITA tax program operates sites in Roseburg and North Bend/Coos Bay. Our clients come to our Coastal site from as far north as Florence and south from Brookings, near the California border with many others traveling to our Roseburg site from rural towns such as Myrtle Creek, Glide and Sutherlin.

Our program serves a demographic that is far behind the norm in terms of technological availability and understanding. Many of our clients have no computer, printer, internet or even a smart phone. Without our services, a majority of our clients would be unable to navigate the complex tax requirements and clients have continually expressed to us that they would simply cease to file because they can't afford to pay for tax prep services. These are the clients who need the Earned Income Tax Credit benefit the most, which is one of the most effective programs to help people who are living in poverty.

Additionally, our services help ensure on time tax filings and our assistance with taxpayer returns not only increases accuracy but it also helps to less the burden on the Oregon Dept of Revenue with decreased call volume for informational requests. We help year-round with verification letters and IP PIN retrieval, all barriers to tax filing that most of our clients don't understand, much less know how to navigate the systems to solve their tax issues. Every Oregon individual and family eligible for tax credits deserves access to free tax preparation and navigation resources so they can receive these credits and be in compliance with tax filing requirements, which is a major stressor to many of our clients. Please keep these tax programs fully funded so we can continue to grow our program and help even more underserved, financially struggling Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Mindy Vetter

Moneywise Oregon Inc. VITA Program