

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

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

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports HB5026, specifically the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program in Self Sufficiency Programs. 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 ranks near the bottom for uptake of the EITC nationally. 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, but only if families file their taxes and claim these benefits.

**The Tax Infrastructure Grant Program provided critical investments for South Coast Business VITA Program to build and scale its current capacity to provide free tax support.**

- ODHS's Tax Infrastructure Grant Program provided necessary funding for our organization to scale and sustain its programming to reach low-income tax filers in our service area that covers Coos and Douglas Counties: specifically the Coos Bay/North Bend, Roseburg, and Reedsport areas.
- With this funding, we were able to reach 471 filers in the month of February and anticipate over 1200 by the end of tax season resulting in \$1.5 million directly into the hands of Oregon families.

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

- Ongoing funding in the 2023/2025 biennium will help us sustain this work and scale to more low-income families in our service area.
- We hope to reach many more filers and innovate our services to include a remote Facilitated Self Assistance program to assist tax payers who are able to prepare their own return with help from one of our qualified tax support staff.

This is why we urge your yes vote on HB 5026. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel McAvoy – SCB VITA Tax Program