Oregon Community Foundation

March 2, 2023

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

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

The EITC and CTC Coalition support HB5026, specifically the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program in Self-Sufficiency Programs. This program, launched in 2022, ensures low-income Oregonians, especially those with barriers to filing their taxes, have access to free tax support to 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. 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.

Much of OCF's strategic work – from grants and loans to community partnerships and activity in the policy realm – focuses on addressing gaps in opportunity for Oregonians who have been most affected by historical disparities. We are deeply concerned that Oregon families are leaving millions of dollars on the table every year in benefits from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) – cash benefits that could help low-income households cope with rent, food, and other essential expenses, reduce stress and provide more stable day to day lives for their children. In the last year, OCF has provided grant support to nonprofit organizations that offer free tax navigation and filing services. Still, these organizations are receiving many more requests for assistance than they can respond to, and additional capacity and culturally responsive strategies are needed to reach eligible households.

In providing support for expanded, sustainable tax support infrastructure and services in culturally- and geographically-diverse communities, HB 5026 will help thousands of Oregon families.

Sincerely,

Maribel De Leon
Program Officer for Economic Vitality
Oregon Community Foundation