

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

[MFS](#) has been part of the EITC and CTC Coalition and supports HB5026, specifically the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self Sufficiency Programs. This program, which launched in 2022, includes \$3.6M per year for Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Tribal Governments, and Rural Communities. The program 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).

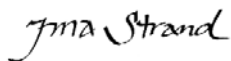
[MFS CASH](#) is grateful to be part of the Coalition and to have piloted a partnership model with ODHS District 2 in Multnomah County under the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program. ODHS support has helped MFS CASH stabilize our volunteer and paid tax preparation workforce as we emerged from the pandemic and tested important program innovations. Since our partnership began with ODHS and District 2 we wanted to highlight some of our results:

- Summary of 2022 Results
 - Total Tax Returns: 3897
 - Total Refund Value: \$6,871,126
 - % of ODHS Clients: 40%
- Summary of 2023 Results to date
 - Total Returns: 1048
 - Total Refund Value: ~\$2.7 Million
 - % ODHS clients: 40%

Overall about 75% of individuals completing tax returns identified as people of color with an average income of \$27,614. There is a broad range of languages spoken across the taxpayers that have accessed tax support services, which highlights the need for culturally responsive, language accessible support which has been built into MFS CASH services. Forty percent of MFS CASH service users were also enrolled in, or eligible for, ODHS programs. We have, in partnership with District 2, offered over 25 in person trainings attended by over 325 ODHS staff. This has resulted in increased referrals from ODHS and better access to free tax preparation services for ODHS eligible and low income people. ODHS support has enabled us to partner with several other culturally specific and culturally responsive community-based organizations to share our tax preparation program knowledge so that other organizations can become part of this important work.

We urge you to support HB 5026 and specifically support the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program. With investments from this ODHS grant program, we anticipate scaling our services and partnerships so that by June 2025, MFS CASH will complete approximately 22,000 tax returns. Given that the average return size is approximately \$1995 we will be able to help low income Oregonians claim nearly \$43 million dollars. We are grateful for ODHS' Statewide leadership and the potential for replicability around the State as we collectively build an equitable, durable and sustainable tax support system for low income Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Judy Strand, CEO
Metropolitan Family Service