RE: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Budget Road Show

Co-Chairs Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Representative Tawna Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

Metropolitan Family Service supports the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program, which is included in the current service level in the Governor's recommended budget for the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Self Sufficiency Program. 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 historically ranks near the bottom for uptake of the EITC nationally. Though our uptake numbers have improved in recent years, it's imperative that families get the support they need to file their taxes and claim these benefits. 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.

Your budget decisions are critical to the well-being of children and families, and include critical programs like the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program that help families access these credits.

- With this funding, MFS was able to reach and assist over 6,000 families file their taxes and anticipate this resulting in $8 million in refunds directly in the hands of Oregon families.
- This funding directly benefited families that on average make less than $27,000 and are targeted towards limited English proficient households.
- With this funding MFS was able to expand year round access to volunteer tax preparation available across the entire state of Oregon.

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

Sincerely,

Riley Eldredge Director of MFS CASH Oregon

Metropolitan Family Service