

# Help Families File Taxes (HB 2991)

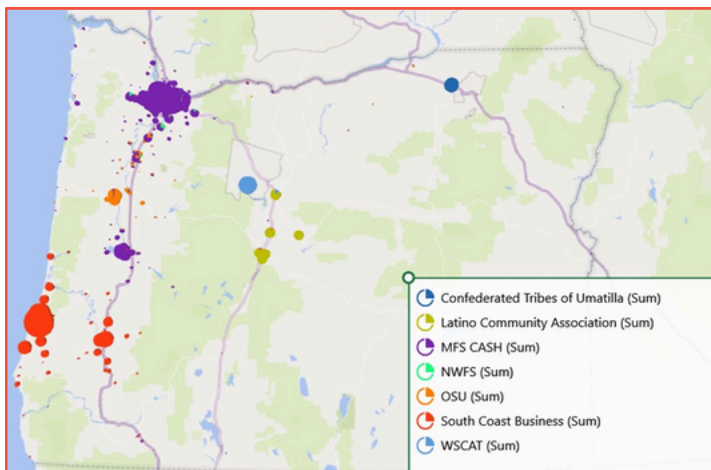
The tax code is complex. Technology, language access, and complicated filing situations make it difficult for families to file taxes. Free expert tax assistance is crucial for underserved families to file and get what they're owed.

By increasing the investment from \$4 million to \$11 million per year in its Tax Infrastructure Grant program, Oregon can assist more families in claiming tax credits, helping them make ends meet and pumping millions into local economies.

## Tax credits only work if families claim them

Tax credits are a key anti-poverty strategy. The federal EITC alone lifts about 68,000 Oregonians, including 34,000 children, out of poverty. Oregon boosts this with its EITC and the new Oregon Kids' Credit. Yet, tens of thousands of eligible families fail to claim them. Failure to claim the federal EITC leaves about \$100 million per year of federal dollars on the table. The primary reason is the difficulty of filing taxes.

## The Tax Infrastructure Grant program is a key solution



The Tax Infrastructure Grant program, in the Oregon Department of Human Services, provides resources to help people file their taxes. Currently, 13 organizations and 11 high schools receive the support, including culturally specific organizations, tribes, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.

Communities served by Tax Infrastructure Grant\*

\* United Way of Jackson County and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) are not shown on the map but each helped hundreds of families in communities including Portland, Medford, and Ontario.



# HB 2991 expands the Tax Infrastructure Grant program

House Bill 2991 would expand investment in the Tax Infrastructure Grant program to \$11 million per year, an increase of \$7 million per year. This would:

- **Help more working families make ends meet.** The expansion would help many more families claim the tax credits they are eligible for, resources that will help them get caught up on rent, fix their car, and meet other basic needs.
- **Boost local small businesses.** The infusion of millions of additional federal dollars will boost local small businesses. Low-income families tend to spend money in their communities, helping Oregon's broader economy.
- **Expand further into rural Oregon.** The program currently serves areas across the state, but the majority of the capacity is in places with greater population density. Additional resources will enable the program to expand to rural areas.
- **Save families money.** Tax assistance could save families hundreds of dollars in tax preparation fees. ODHS estimates \$25 million in fees would be avoided.
- **Develop the workforce.** Oregon requires people who assist with tax filing to be certified, but Oregon has a shortage of certified tax preparers. The Tax Infrastructure Grant program can expand the pool of certified tax preparers through innovative partnerships with high schools and universities.

## 2024 Tax Year Grantee Data



14,200 tax returns filed



\$4 million Federal EITC



Average income of \$27,800



\$4 million Federal Child Tax Credit



20 different languages



\$15 million Federal Refunds

## Tax assistance can make a big difference in people's lives

There are countless stories of Oregonians helped by these services: mothers fleeing abusive relationships who were able to access thousands of dollars, houseless people who used the money to stabilize their housing, and many more. The Tax Infrastructure Grant program is a bridge to economic security. Oregon needs to expand this service.



For more information, contact Daniel Hauser (503) 970-4614 | [dhauser@ocpp.org](mailto:dhauser@ocpp.org)