

Submitter: Eric Janoski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2735

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Housing Authority of Jackson County and Low Income Families and Individuals in Jackson County to urge you to support HB 2735, with the -1 amendment. Please "Fix the Funding" for IDAs!

In 1999 the Legislature created Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). This matched-savings program provides participants with education and individualized support to reach their financial goals, including homeownership, home repair, higher education, purchasing a vehicle, starting a business, and retirement. The state matches participants' own savings up to 5-to-1 to make their dreams a reality. Over 19,000 Oregonians have participated in this life-changing program over the past 25 years.

However, the state tax credit that funds IDAs has not kept pace with inflation. While the credit has been capped at \$7.5M per year since 2009, the cost of everything that IDA participants save for has increased precipitously. Each saver needs more funds from the program in order to be successful, yet the total funding has remained stagnant. If the Legislature does not act this year, the program will shrink by 50% and will only enroll fewer than 500 people each year going forward.

In the last year alone, we were able to award \$110,000 in IDA funds to nearly two dozen families and individuals who were also receiving Housing Choice Voucher Assistance. Our friends and neighbors in Jackson County were able to use funds for debt repayment, vehicle repair, small businesses, emergency savings, and toward home purchase. These funds directly impact Oregonians by allowing them to remove barriers, improve their health and happiness, create stability, and even reduce dependence on government assistance from local, state, and federal programs. We all do better when more Oregonians are having direct financial gains in their lives.

By passing HB 2735 -1, the Legislature can "Fix the Funding" and return the IDA program to solid financial footing. I urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Eric Janoski  
Family Self-Sufficiency and Homeownership Coordinator  
IDA Provider

Housing Authority of Jackson County