

**Written Testimony in Support of the Benefits Navigator Program  
Submitted by Kaylee Benitez Garcia, Part-Time Student at Blue Mountain Community College**

**To: Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and Members of the Committee**

**Date: April 25, 2025**

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kaylee Benitez Garcia, and I am a part-time student at Blue Mountain Community College. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of the Benefits Navigator program.

Like many community college students, I wear many hats—I'm a student, a student ambassador, an employee, and a young adult trying to build a future. Balancing all of these roles has not always been easy. There were times when I genuinely questioned whether I could continue my education. One of the key reasons I've been able to stay on track—and in college—has been the support I received from BMCC's Benefits Navigator.

Through this program, I was connected with food assistance, transportation resources, and guidance on how to access community support services. Just as important, I had a person I could go to—someone who truly understood the barriers students face and could help me navigate them with compassion and without judgment.

Having access to a Benefits Navigator meant I didn't have to choose between meeting my basic needs and showing up for class. That kind of support gave me stability during times when life outside the classroom felt overwhelming.

What I've learned through my journey is that succeeding in college takes more than just showing up. It takes support. It takes stability. When students are able to focus on learning instead of survival, we are far more likely to graduate, pursue meaningful careers, and give back to our communities.

I know I'm not alone in this experience. Across Oregon, there are countless students like me who would not be in college today without the Benefits Navigator program. It works. It makes a difference. And it helps build a more resilient, educated future for our state.

I respectfully urge you to continue funding the Benefits Navigator program. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued investment in Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

Kaylee Benitez Garcia

Part-Time Student, Blue Mountain Community College