



April 18, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez,

On behalf of REAP, Inc., we write in enthusiastic support of the University of Oregon's request for \$53.25 million in state bonding to construct the Child Behavioral Health Building—a transformational project that directly aligns with REAP's mission and deepens our growing partnership with the University.

As a youth leadership development organization dedicated to advancing educational attainment, mental wellness, and community leadership among Oregon's youth, REAP has long recognized the urgent need for expanded access to behavioral health services. Oregon's alarming rank—49th in Mental Health America's 2024 Youth Ranking—underscores what we see daily: too many young people are struggling, and too few resources exist to support them.

We believe the University of Oregon's vision for the Child Behavioral Health Building offers a bold, comprehensive solution to address these gaps. This 54,000-square-foot facility on the UO Portland campus will:

- Provide free, evidence-based behavioral health services to youth and families across Oregon;
- Expand access to care through a new telehealth center targeting underserved and rural communities;
- Train a new, diverse generation of behavioral health professionals prepared to serve in schools, clinics, and community spaces;
- Accelerate research and innovation to improve outcomes and systems statewide.

What makes this project particularly meaningful for REAP is the opportunity for deeper collaboration between our organization and the University of Oregon. Our Behavioral Health Program—anchored in culturally-responsive, school and community-based clinical care—shares common goals with the Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health and the Prevention Science Institute. These two institutes, housed in the new

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facility, are creating a national model that blends workforce development, applied research, and direct service.

Together, our partnership with the University of Oregon has the potential to:

- Expand clinical training pathways for REAP youth interested in behavioral health careers;
- Broaden access to care through integrated service delivery;
- Amplify the voice and experience of the diverse communities we serve.

The funding of this endeavor is not just an investment in bricks and mortar—it is an investment in a shared vision of healing, equity, and long-term impact. REAP and higher education institutions collaborate to address Oregon youth's behavioral health needs with care, innovation, and cultural humility.

We respectfully urge you to support this visionary project. Oregon's young people deserve nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

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