



May 9<sup>th</sup> 2025

Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 5531 Letter of Support for Heart of Oregon Corps Central Campus

Dear Senator Girod, Representative Nosse and members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction:

Heart of Oregon Corps is a youth workforce development nonprofit that has served Central Oregon for 25 years. We powerfully engage local 16-24-year-old youth and young adults to transform their own lives while they transform their communities.

Heart of Oregon is seeking \$1M of state support to build a 3.4-acre Centralized Campus in Redmond. This request for state funding has bipartisan support from the Central Oregon delegation and local and county leaders.

This campus positions Heart of Oregon youth to be our homegrown solution to three of Oregon's greatest challenges: housing affordability, the childcare shortage, and wildfire risk. Through its workforce training programs Heart of Oregon delivers youth pre-apprenticeship job training in the trades, helping with the affordable housing crisis and training in wildland firefighting, helping with the wildfire crisis.

The campus will be a workforce hub for Central Oregon, providing technical training and supportive services to ensure youth success. Youth will gain job skills and certifications while they build affordable housing, restore public lands, reduce wildfire risks, and provide early childhood education in their own communities. But they urgently need this new campus to sustain and grow these opportunities.

The project is more than just "Shovel ready." The site is fully owned by Heart of Oregon and the existing buildings are operational from Phase I. Groundbreaking is THIS August, 2025 and the new 6,600 FT Campus Center and central courtyard will open its doors in July, 2026, fully expending this investment within 12 months of award. All project cost estimates were recently verified and are on-budget to the total \$7.3M budget. The \$1M investment is CRITICAL for the project being completed on time and on budget, to avoid costly construction bridge loan fees and interest, and ensure Heart of Oregon can focus on delivering workforce training vs managing construction loans, fees, and carrying debt. Please see our application for budget and fundraising details.

The compelling letters in our application demonstrate resounding community support for this project, including letters from participant alumni and affordable housing partners and construction trades employers who support the Campus because it helps fill our local workforce needs.

Sincerely  
Laura M Handy  
Executive Director