

Submitter: Maresa Moore
On Behalf Of: LBHA FSS and LBCC STEP CASA
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3809

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of myself, my family and my community to urge you to support HB 3809, 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.

This program is great because it allowed me to purchase a vehicle using match funds after saving for 7 months. I am a single mom after leaving an abusive situation. I worked full-time and I also volunteered at Vina Moses to help out my community and gain more office skills to get a better job to make ends meet. If this program was not available I would not have been able to get a vehicle because it would have taken me years to save up. These match funds are incredibly helpful for reaching our goals to be more self sufficient. It also gave me opportunity to take classes and learn better ways to save money and set goals. I am now in college for medical billing and coding. I am a strait A student with a 4.0 GPA. I have one more term to go. When I graduate the program and get my certification I would like to find a job here in Corvallis or surrounding area and utilize the IDA program to save for a down payment on a home. With this programs help I know I can reach that goal. I am forever grateful for programs like these.

HB 3809 -1 is needed because the state tax credit that funds IDAs has not kept pace with inflation. While the program's tax credit revenue has been stagnant since 2009, the cost of everything that IDA participants save for has increased significantly – especially the two most common savings goals of higher education and homeownership. Each saver needs more of the program's limited funds in order to be successful. If the Legislature does not act this year, the IDA program will shrink by 50% and will enroll fewer than 500 people each year going forward.

By passing HB 3809 -1, the Legislature can “Fix the Funding” and return the IDA program to solid financial footing, ensuring that your constituents can continue reaching their goals of higher education, purchasing a home, starting a business and beyond. I urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Maresa Moore

Linn Benton Housing authority FSS program. LBCC STEP Program. IDA savings match funds. CASA