



February 17, 2026

NeighborImpact

Supporting People, Strengthening Communities

Oregon House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony for HB 4136

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of NeighborImpact, I am pleased to submit this written testimony regarding House Bill 4136. This letter does not express support or opposition to the bill as introduced. Rather, we offer this testimony to speak to the demonstrated importance of down payment assistance as a tool for expanding homeownership access in Oregon, and to underscore why investment in this type of program has meaningful, lasting impact for working families across our state.

About NeighborImpact

NeighborImpact is a private nonprofit organization that serves Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, offering a broad range of services designed to meet basic needs, build economic security and self-sufficiency, and strengthen the community. Our programs span emergency food and energy assistance, early childhood services and childcare development, affordable housing and community development, and financial coaching and homeownership services.

NeighborImpact's homeownership program employs HUD-certified housing counselors with experience in real estate and finance who serve as impartial, trusted guides for Central Oregonians interested in purchasing a home. We provide one-on-one counseling, homebuyer education workshops, credit review, and guidance on available down payment assistance programs. We administer the Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) matched savings program that empowers lower-income households to build assets toward homeownership. In addition, NeighborImpact provides down payment assistance loans to middle- and lower-income first time homebuyers in Central Oregon.

The Homeownership Challenge in Central Oregon and Across the State

Oregon's housing market remains profoundly out of reach for many working families. As of early 2026, the statewide median home sale price is approximately \$488,900. In Central Oregon, the challenge is even more acute, with Bend's median home price reaching approximately \$679,000. Even in more affordable nearby communities, homes routinely list above \$400,000. However, Oregon's median household income is approximately \$82,220. Using standard affordability benchmarks, a household at

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that income level could comfortably afford a home priced at roughly \$308,000 — leaving a substantial gap between what typical working families can qualify for and what the market offers.

Compounding this challenge is the size of the upfront barrier. A 5% down payment on a \$489,000 home requires approximately \$24,450 in savings, before closing costs add another 2–5% of the purchase price. For a family earning the median income while paying rent and managing household expenses, accumulating that level of savings is often insurmountable — even when that family could comfortably sustain a monthly mortgage payment. It is precisely this gap that down payment assistance is designed to bridge.

Down Payment Assistance as a High-Return Investment

Down payment assistance is one of the most efficient and evidence-supported tools available for expanding access to homeownership among working families. The single greatest barrier to entry for first time home buyers is the upfront cash requirement. Down payment assistance programs allow families who are otherwise mortgage-ready to become homeowners years, or even decades, earlier than they could on their own. This is not merely a matter of housing comfort; homeownership is the primary vehicle through which American families build intergenerational wealth, and earlier access compounds that benefit substantially over time.

In our experience at NeighborImpact, even modest amounts of down payment assistance can be transformational. We regularly work with community members who have stable income, strong credit, and consistent payment histories who are fully capable of sustaining a mortgage, but simply cannot accumulate sufficient savings in a high-cost rental market to reach the purchase threshold. A targeted infusion of assistance at the point of purchase unlocks homeownership for these individuals and families, setting them on a path to long-term stability, equity accumulation, and financial resilience that renting cannot provide.

NeighborImpact appreciates the Committee's attention to this issue and its recognition that expanding homeownership opportunities for Oregon working families is a matter of both economic opportunity and community strength. We are proud to serve as a resource and partner in this work, and we welcome any questions the Committee may have about our programs or the homeownership landscape in Central Oregon.

Respectfully submitted,

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