



March 9, 2021

Re: Support for HB 2551

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2551. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations. Our mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

As a matched savings program, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are a critical tool for advancing economic justice and racial equity. For generations, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians have faced significant barriers to financial success, including inequities in education, employment discrimination, redlining and housing discrimination, and the racist structure of credit scores and access to capital. These factors compound and impact the next generation, meaning we need effective tools like IDAs to help mitigate the impact.

As we work to create more equitable systems, IDAs help close gaps in outcomes for BIPOC Oregonians. IDAs increase access to homeownership, higher education, entrepreneurship, and more. Housing, education, workforce, and small business ownership are major priorities for our members, and all can be advanced with IDAs. Education around financial systems and coaching are a major component of the program, and this ensures lifelong benefits for IDA savers, as well as intergenerational wealth that has been created as they achieve their unique goals. And in this time of crisis, IDAs have demonstrated their benefit as an efficient tool to meet urgent needs during the disasters of COVID and the wildfires and will support an equitable recovery by preventing savers from falling behind, and preparing them to move forward.

A number of CCC's member organizations provide IDAs, and we have seen the many success stories of those who were able to build the assets and gain the skills they needed to achieve their goals. The program is an outstanding example of how culturally-specific service providers can support BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee community members to achieve success and prosperity.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I ask that you support HB 2551 in renewing the IDA Initiative Tax Credit for the next six years. Without this renewal, the IDA Initiative will no longer be able to accept new savers. We hope you will look to their track record of advancing racial equity and continue this critical program.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee".

Jenny Lee
Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color