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Catholic Charities, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Lutheran Community Services NW and our Partners in Oregon's Refugee Resettlement Collaborative Applaud the Inclusion of Extended Case Management in Governor Kate Brown's Recommended Budget

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 8, 2020 – Catholic Charities of Oregon, [Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon](#), [Lutheran Community Services Northwest](#) and our partners in Oregon's Refugee Resettlement Collaborative applaud Governor Kate Brown for including Extended Case Management for refugees in the Governor's recommended budget and policy agenda for the 2021-23 biennium. In 2019, Oregon passed the Welcoming Refugees Bill, HB 2508, making Oregon one of the first states to adopt Extended Case Management, which provides refugees with case management services, such as employment services and supports to school aged children, over two years. These supports have been even more needed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If the Governor's recommended budget is passed, it includes an investment of \$2 million for those vital services and in Oregon's refugee communities and makes the Extended Case Management program permanent in Oregon. This gesture of solidarity for Oregon's newcomers is unprecedented and clearly demonstrates Oregon's commitment to helping refugees rebuild their lives.

"I am very proud of Catholic Charities' partnership with Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, [Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization](#) (IRCO), and [Unite Oregon](#) and the work we accomplished together to pass the 2019 Welcoming Refugees Bill. Including funding for this legislation in the Governor's recommended budget is a huge step forward for Oregon. The state is investing in long-term services for refugees and bringing awareness to what refugees need once they are resettled. And this investment is an investment in all of us," said Matthew Westerbeck, Director of Refugee Services at Catholic Charities of Oregon. "Extended Case Management allows us to invest in refugees from their first few years of arrival to the United States, which is a critical time for resettlement. This investment not only accelerates refugee's trajectory for success, but it stabilizes the resettlement process to ensure that refugees can reunite with their families, and that Oregon will remain a welcoming state for a group of people who bring immense contributions to the economy, diversity, and social fabric of our state."

"The inclusion of Extended Case Management in Governor Brown's recommended budget and policy agenda comes at a time that these services are most needed for refugees due to a drastic federal funding shortfall and the onset of COVID-19," said Salah Ansary, Lutheran Community Services Northwest Regional District Director. "These services are evermore crucial for our refugee community."

“Investing in refugees from their first few years of arrival accelerates their trajectory for success. With proper support and case management, refugees are more likely to find and maintain employment, support their children in school and contribute to the social fabric of our state,” said Jan Elfers, President of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. “Oregon plays a critical role in the global response to the refugee crisis. As the number of refugee families admitted to the United States has dwindled, our state has defended our country’s longstanding tradition of protecting the persecuted and ensuring that our nation remains a beacon of hope for decades to come.”

The 2019 Welcoming Refugees Bill provides refugees with Extended Case Management over two years and includes employment services (i.e. helping to place refugees in their first job and assisting adults in enrolling in ESL classes); supports school-aged children (i.e. connecting children with their local schools); ensures refugees are placed in safe and appropriate housing; and, ensures that all refugees receive cultural orientation and support navigating their new communities.

Refugees who receive Extended Case Management for two years are generally employed within six months and are significantly less likely to depend on public assistance long-term. When refugees are better equipped with support services and Extended Case Management, crisis situations are less common, thus saving taxpayer money going toward emergency responses, emergency room visits and public assistance.

Catholic Charities of Oregon, one of three refugee resettlement agencies in Oregon, has a [Refugee Services Program](#) that has assisted refugees since the early 1940s, helping more than 10,000 refugees, who had to leave their homelands due to the fear of persecution, make Oregon their new home. Catholic Charities provides refugees with critical services and resources to help navigate health, education, housing, public safety, financial systems and so much more. In the past twelve months, we have been able to provide effective, trauma-informed case management to more than 150 refugee families and provided nearly 4,000 hours of case management services to help our newest neighbors heal and thrive.

About Catholic Charities

Since 1933, Catholic Charities of Oregon has been a trusted ally of the most poor and marginalized, and a leader in finding innovative solutions to poverty and injustice. The agency is proud to serve all God’s Children as the Official Domestic Relief Agency of the Catholic Church in Oregon. Catholic Charities of Oregon is a member of Catholic Charities USA and of Caritas International, the global network of agencies that make up the charitable arm of the world-wide Catholic Church. The agency is headquartered in Portland at 2740 SE Powell Blvd. For more information call (503) 231-4866, or go to www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org.

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