AOX1 promoters described herein can be used for efficient expression of operably linked coding sequences in *Pichia*, for example.

In one example, provided herein is a nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element includes a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can have one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 673-729 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 678-724 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 683-719 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 688-714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include five or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

In another example, provided herein is a nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include one or more mutations at a nucleotide position selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. In another aspect, the present disclosure provides a nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can include one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected

C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. In one aspect, the present disclosure provides a nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising one or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. In one aspect, the present disclosure provides a nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising the mutations T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can include one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include five or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include one or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include the mutations T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations of any of the nucleic acid constructs described herein can have one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can be an alcohol oxidase 1 promoter element. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can have at least 90%

sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can have at least 95% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28. The nucleic acid construct can further include a nucleotide sequence encoding a first protein, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding the first protein is operably linked to the first alcohol oxidase promoter element. The first protein can be exogenous to a methylotrophic yeast cell. The first protein can be heterologous to a methylotrophic yeast cell. The first protein can be selected from the group consisting of an antibody or fragment thereof, an enzyme, a regulatory protein, a peptide hormone, a blood clotting protein, a cytokine, a cytokine inhibitor, and a heme-binding protein. The first protein can be a heme-binding protein. The heme-binding protein can be selected from the group consisting of a globin, a cytochrome, a cytochrome c oxidase, a ligninase, a catalase, and a peroxidase. The heme-binding protein can be selected from the group consisting of an androglobin, a chlorocruorin, a cytoglobin, an erythrocruorin, a flavohemoglobin, a globin E, a globin X, a globin Y, a hemoglobin, a histoglobin, a leghemoglobin, a myoglobin, a neuroglobin, a non-symbiotic hemoglobin, a protoglobin, and a truncated hemoglobin. The heme-binding protein can be a non-symbiotic hemoglobin. The heme-binding protein can be a leghemoglobin. The heme-binding protein can include an amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of any of SEQ ID NOs: 1-27. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a recognition sequence for a transcription factor.

In one aspect, the present disclosure provides an expression vector comprising the nucleic acid construct described herein.

In one aspect, the present disclosure provides a cell comprising the nucleic acid construct described herein or the expression vector described herein. In another example, also provided herein is a methylotrophic yeast cell comprising a first nucleic acid construct, wherein the first nucleic acid construct is any nucleic acid construct described herein.

Implementations can have one or more of the following features. The methylotrophic yeast cell can be a *Pichia* cell, a *Candida* cell, a *Hansenula* cell, or a *Torulopsis* cell. The methylotrophic yeast cell can be a *Pichia methanolica* cell, a *Pichia pastoris* cell, a *Candida boidinii* cell, or a *Hansenula polymorpha* cell. The methylotrophic yeast cell can be a *Pichia pastoris* cell. The methylotrophic yeast cell can further include a second nucleic acid construct including a nucleotide sequence encoding a second protein, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding the second protein is operably linked to the first alcohol oxidase promoter element or to a second promoter element. The nucleotide sequence encoding the second protein can be operably linked to a second promoter element that has the same sequence as the first alcohol

oxidase promoter element. The second protein can be a transcription factor. The nucleotide sequence encoding the second protein can be operably linked to a second promoter element that can include a recognition sequence for the transcription factor. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a recognition sequence for the transcription factor. The second protein can be a protein involved in heme biosynthesis. The protein involved in heme biosynthesis can be selected from the group consisting of aminolevulinic acid synthase (ALAS), δ-aminolevulinic acid dehydratase (ALAD), porphogilinogen deaminase (PBGD), uroporphyrinogen III synthase (UPG3S), uroporphyrinogen III decarboxylase (UPG3D), coprotoporphyrinogen oxidase (COPROX), protoporphyrinogen IX oxidase (PROTOX), and ferrochelatase (FC).

In one aspect, the present disclosure provides a method of producing a protein, the method comprising culturing the cell described herein, wherein the nucleic acid construct encodes the protein.

In another example, provided herein is method of producing a protein in a methylotrophic yeast cell including expressing a nucleic acid construct including a nucleotide sequence encoding a first protein operably linked to a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element includes a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can include one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 673-729 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 678-724 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 683-719 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 688-714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first

alcohol oxidase promoter element can include five or more mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to any of nucleotide positions 668-734 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

In another example, also provided herein is a method of producing a protein in a methylotrophic yeast cell including expressing a nucleic acid construct including a nucleotide sequence encoding a first protein operably linked to a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element includes one or more mutations at a nucleotide position selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can include one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include five or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T617, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include one or more mutations at a nucleotide position selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to of T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to of T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations at nucleotide

positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to of T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations at nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of nucleotide positions corresponding to of T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 as compared to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include mutations at nucleotide positions corresponding to T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 as compared to SEQ ID NO: 28.

In another example, provided herein is a method of producing a protein in a methylotrophic yeast cell including expressing a nucleic acid construct including a nucleotide sequence encoding a first protein operably linked to a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element includes one or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

Implementations can include one or more of the following features. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include three or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include four or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include five or more mutations selected from the group consisting of mutations corresponding to T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28. The first alcohol oxidase promoter element can include two or more mutations selected from

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of T146, C154, T303, T426, A433, A435, T530, C572, T596, T688, A696, T702, A709, A712, T714, A790, A841, and T862 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

2. The nucleic acid construct of claim 1, wherein the first nucleotide sequence comprises a mutation at one or more nucleotide positions selected from the group consisting of T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

3. The nucleic acid construct of claim 1, wherein the first nucleotide sequence comprises a mutation at each of nucleotide positions T688, A696, T702, A712, and T714 relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

4. A nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising one or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T146C, C154T, T303C, T426A, A433T, A435G, T530A, C572T, T596C, T617C, T688C, A696T, T702C, A709G, A712G, T714G, A790G, A841T, and T862A relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

5. The nucleic acid construct of claim 4, wherein the first nucleotide sequence comprises one or more mutations selected from the group consisting of T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

6. A nucleic acid construct comprising a first alcohol oxidase promoter element, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a first nucleotide sequence comprising the mutations T688C, A696T, T702C, A712G, and T714G relative to SEQ ID NO: 28.

7. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-6, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element is an alcohol oxidase 1 (AOX1) promoter element.

8. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-7, wherein the first nucleotide sequence has at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28.

9. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-7, wherein the first nucleotide sequence has at least 95% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28.

10. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-7, wherein the first nucleotide sequence has at least 97% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28.

11. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-10, wherein the first alcohol oxidase promoter element comprises a recognition sequence for a transcription factor.

12. The nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-11, further comprising a second nucleotide sequence, wherein the second nucleotide sequence is operably linked to the first alcohol oxidase promoter element.

13. The nucleic acid construct of claim 12, wherein the second nucleotide sequence encodes a first protein.

14. The nucleic acid construct of claim 13, wherein the first protein is selected from the group consisting of an antibody or fragment thereof, an enzyme, a regulatory protein, a peptide hormone, a blood clotting protein, a cytokine, a cytokine inhibitor, and a heme-binding protein.

15. The nucleic acid construct of claim 13, wherein the first protein is a heme-binding protein.

16. The nucleic acid construct of claim 15, wherein the heme-binding protein comprises an amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-27.

17. An expression vector comprising the nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1 to 16.

18. A cell comprising the nucleic acid construct of any one of claims 1-16 or the expression vector of claim 17.

19. The cell of claim 18, further comprising (a) a second nucleic acid construct comprising a third nucleotide sequence, wherein the third nucleotide sequence is operably linked to the first alcohol oxidase promoter element or to a second promoter element, or (b) a second expression vector comprising the second nucleic acid construct.

20. The cell of claim 18 or 19, which is a yeast cell.

21. The cell of claim 18 or 19, which is a methylotrophic yeast cell.

22. The cell of claim 18 or 19, which is a *Pichia pastoris* cell.

23. A method of producing a protein, the method comprising culturing the cell of any one of claims 18-22, wherein the nucleic acid construct encodes the protein.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the method further comprises purifying the protein.

25. The method of claim 23 or 24, wherein the method is carried out in the absence of added methanol.