



March 1, 2023

Re: \$16 Million in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514) for:

- *\$10 Million to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (HB 2933) for confidential safety and support services*
- *\$6 Million to the Survivor Housing Fund (HB 3018) for housing assistance for survivors*

Co-Chairs Sollman and Evans, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,

On behalf of Tides of Change, we are pleased to submit testimony in support of funding in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514) of \$10 million to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) Fund for confidential safety planning and support services for survivors and \$6 million to the Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) for housing assistance for survivors. Both of these amounts were allocated as one-time funding during the pandemic, and we seek continuation of these programs as on-going and stable services designed to meet critical need.

Tides of Change has been serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Tillamook County since 1982. Throughout the last 40 years, we have assisted survivors in rebuilding their lives while they seek safety, which often involved providing critical lifesaving resources including housing support. Since the pandemic we have continued to see the need for our services rise, and the amount of support and resources each survivor needs continues to increase.

ODSVS and Survivor Housing Funds are crucial for our agency to continue to assist survivors in achieving safety and stability.

\$10 Million to Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) in the CVSSD Budget (This funding is also requested in a bipartisan stand-alone bill, HB 2933)

The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) has been essential for our agency to provide confidential advocacy services. These funds have supported our Bilingual Advocate for many years, which has led to our agency growing from having only 1 Bilingual advocate to now 50% of our agency being Bilingual and Bicultural. Had we not been able to prioritize and use ODSVS funds to hire our first Bilingual advocate we never would be in the place that we are now where 30% of survivors served by Tides of Change are from the Latinx community.

Our long-term bilingual advocate began working with a young woman and her 2 children about 10 years ago when she was fleeing domestic violence. This woman resided in our shelter and has been supported over the last decade through court cases, divorce and custody, and in applying for a U Visa, which would give her temporary status in the United States. After a long wait she received her visa this year. She told her advocate that she cannot imagine where she would be in her life had she



not received services from Tides of Change and had all the support she needed over the years to become stable. She is now fully employed and has been able to maintain her own home with her children. Having the on-going support from ODSVS ensures that we can continue to provide consistent crisis and long-term supports to all survivors in our community.

ODSVS is the only state general fund source of support for these critical services. The need for these supportive services continues to grow and the burden of essential service provision is challenged by staffing shortages, lack of funding, and other obstacles. We are in support of investing \$10 million for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund to help programs across the state continue to provide necessary and lifesaving services.

\$6 Million in Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) in the CVSSD Budget (This funding is also requested in a bipartisan stand-alone bill, HB 3018)

The Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to facilitate access to safe and stable housing for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. Survivor Housing Funds are a crucial component of the efforts to assist survivors in their journey towards stable permanent housing. Survivors often face episodes of homelessness due to the violence, safety issues, and/or isolation caused by the abuser. They often have few or no resources available when fleeing.

Prior to Survivor Housing Funds, our ability to help survivors financially with their housing needs was minimal to nonexistent. These funds have drastically changed our ability to support survivors and allows agencies like ours to provide emergency assistance funds not only in supporting survivors that are moving in new housing, but also to sustain survivors in their current housing. Being able to help survivors maintain their stability and to avoid becoming homeless and entering shelter has been truly impactful and cost effective.

One of our advocates was working with a young woman with 2 children, who was still living with her abusive husband. This woman had been able to find stable employment and was creating a plan to move-out of her home into a new apartment. When the woman was successful in obtaining an apartment she soon learned that her husband was able to drain her bank account and take her entire paycheck and the little savings that she was going to use to move-in to her new place. While we assisted her with obtaining the OR DHS Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors Grant her move-in costs exceeded the grant amount. These survivor housing funds allowed up to help pay her remaining move-in costs while assisting her in opening a new bank account. If we did not have the availability of these funds this survivor would likely have had to lose her chance at this new apartment, and face the difficult decision to stay in her current unsafe and abusive home or to become homeless.

Oregon Survivor Housing Funds (SHF) have been instrumental in supporting survivors and their families in finding safe and permanent housing in the midst of a statewide housing shortage, rise in rent costs, and current inflation. The SHF funds supported 23 survivors in Tillamook County in



maintaining or accessing new housing. The SHF supports survivors by providing supportive services and the financial assistance resources necessary to address barriers in accessing housing. This may include moving assistance, application fees, security deposits, and other non-rent move-in costs. These critical and flexible funds help survivors begin this new stage in their lives on solid footing.

Another family that we assisted with Survivor Housing Funds was a survivor with a disabled child, who had been referred to our agency by law enforcement after an incident with her partner. This survivor had been living in her own place; however, her partner had been taking her money and not paying their bills. Their power had recently been turned off after being past due for 3 months. This survivor originally believed she would have to give up her home and move into a shelter. We were able to pay her past due electric bill and get her power turned back on in her home, and provide her with safety planning and legal advocacy so that she could safely return to her home. These funds made it possible to prevent this family from becoming homeless and losing their long-term housing.

We support an investment of \$6 million in Oregon Survivor Housing Funds to end housing instability for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking and human trafficking. As we continue to see the need for housing support and the impact of the continued housing crisis we know that now more than ever the continued support of Survivor Housing Funds is absolutely vital in supporting the health and safety of survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

In closing, \$16 million in long-term stable funding for ODSVS (\$10 million) and SHF (\$6 million) funding, administered by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD), will provide programs with the resources to further develop capacity and build a statewide infrastructure designed for sustainability and equity in meeting the needs of survivors. Continuation of this one-time funding is necessary to stabilize programs, meet the rising need for safety services, and offer wages designed to recruit and retain skilled workers and administrators.

For the above reasons, we hope you will support an ongoing investment of a \$10 million increase in ODSVS funds and a continuation of \$6 million in Survivor Housing Funds in the CVSSD Budget. Full funding of these services is essential to support crime victims and survivors in Oregon and the organizations and providers who serve them. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Bundy", with a long, sweeping underline.

Valerie Bundy, MA LPC NCC

Executive Director