



March 2, 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 the Family Justice Center of Washington County 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.

Rates of domestic and sexual violence in Oregon are higher than the national average. This is exactly why the Family Justice Center of Washington County was founded, and why we urge our legislators to support these bills.

The Family Justice Center of Washington County hosts collaboration of 17 agencies in our community in a single center to provide coordinated, holistic services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. Since opening our doors in 2018, we have provided services to over 16,000 survivors in our community, together.

ODSVS and Survivor Housing Funds are each essential funding sources that allow Oregon's network of nonprofit, community-based, Tribal, and culturally-specific domestic and sexual violence service providers across the state to ensure that survivors have access to confidential, culturally-specific and trauma-informed support and assistance as they seek safety from abuse.

\$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) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to



provide confidential trauma-informed services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. These community-based nonprofits support children and adult survivors with wide-ranging crisis intervention and long-term supportive services such as emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, legal advocacy, emergency and long-term safety-planning, counseling, support groups and children’s programs. These programs also provide prevention education in schools as well as training and education throughout the community. Community-based domestic and sexual violence programs intersect with many state systems, including the public health and public safety systems. These programs have built collaborations with law enforcement, healthcare providers, schools, the criminal justice system, social services agencies, and many other community partners, and offer critical support for survivors navigating these structures.

As a convener and provider of survivor services in Washington County, we see every day the impact that lacking safe housing, or capacity to assist all the needs a survivor has. Amongst our collaborative, safe housing for survivors is the biggest emergency we face. I will never forget one survivor saying to me that they were choosing to stay in their dangerous home “because it was better than being homeless.” The Family Justice Center of Washington County could not provide the breadth of services survivors in our community need without our three nonprofit DVSA providers, and it is paramount that we support them so they can continue to support others.

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.

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence 2021 Annual Domestic Violence Court Report, Oregon’s domestic and sexual violence hotline staff received 475 contacts,



averaging nearly 20 contacts per hour in the one-day count. During that time victims made 127 requests for services—including emergency shelter, housing, transportation, childcare, legal representation, and other support needs—that programs could not provide because they lacked the resources. Approximately 80% of these unmet requests were for housing and emergency shelter. Both in 2019 and 2021, the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women survivor priority survey found that permanent, affordable housing is the greatest need facing survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our state.

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 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.

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.

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,

Rachel Schutz, Executive Director

Together, we can end the cycles of violence and abuse.