

March 2, 2023

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

**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 YWCA of Greater Portland, I am pleased to submit testimony urging support for 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 amounts were allocated as one-time funding during the pandemic, and YWCA seeks continuation of these programs as on-going and stable services designed to meet critical need.

**YWCA is the largest and oldest multi-racial women's organization in the world and makes up the largest network of domestic violence service providers in the United States. In Oregon, since the spring of 2020, YWCA of Greater Portland provided 363 survivors of domestic and sexual violence (and their kids) with safe, long-term housing and education using ODSVS and SHF funds.**

ODSVS and Survivor Housing Funds are 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 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, like YWCA of Greater Portland, support children and adult survivors with wide-ranging crisis intervention and long-term supportive services including emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, legal advocacy, emergency and long-term safety-planning, counseling, support groups and children's programs. Organizations also provide prevention education in schools as well as training and education statewide.

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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 systems.

**Demand for Survivor services and supports continues to outpace available resources – increasing ODSVS and SHF funds will enable YWCA of Greater Portland to meet this unmet need by moving more survivors into safe housing and diverting pressure from the homeless continuum of care.**

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 like YWCA of Greater Portland 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,



Heather Hoell  
Interim Executive Director

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