



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 El Programa Hispano Catolico, 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 within our Latine communities in Oregon.

EPHC is a culturally specific social service nonprofit serving over 20,000 people per year. Our services aim to support Latine communities within Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties to help address the social determinants of health that impact our communities. UNICA (Un Nuevo Inicio para Concluir el Abuso), our domestic and sexual violence department was created in direct response to needs identified by the Latine community. We have been providing services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence for over 30 years. Our 24/7 UNICA Crisis Line is the only 24-hour crisis line in the state to offer bilingual/bicultural services for Latine survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our comprehensive sexual and domestic violence services include crisis intervention, advocacy and case management, support groups, mental health services, housing support services, and primary prevention programming.

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 Director for UNICA at El Programa Hispano, I am aware of the institutional challenges and barriers that survivors face when attempting to access services. As a Latine survivor of childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence, I am personally aware of the barriers faced by many Latine and immigrant survivors. Neither my mother nor I obtained the support we desperately needed during these difficult times due to lack of proper support systems, language barriers, lack of financial resources, fear of separation and deportation, or basic understanding of legal rights. Assistance outside of legal agencies or government offices, such as DHS, simply aren't accessible to many survivors within Latine and immigrant communities in a way that feels safe due to these barriers and concerns. Culturally Specific community based organizations like UNICA provide a safe space where Latine and immigrant communities can obtain culturally specific support and services, as well as fact based information about their legal rights so that they can make informed decisions about engaging with legal and government agencies that can assist with obtaining legal support and justice.

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.



For many survivors, like in the case of my mother, financial stability is dependent on their abuser. Programs like Survivor Housing Funds assist survivors and their children flee from violent homes by providing assistance in securing safe and stable housing while they do the difficult work of healing from their trauma while developing financial stability.

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.

Attached is additional testimony from survivors who have obtained services with UNICA to share what those services have meant for them in their healing journey.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Perla Estrada'.

Perla Estrada, LCSW, MBA

Director of UNICA
El Programa Hispano Católico