



Oregon Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

January 17, 2023

**SUBJECT: Survivor Housing Funds**

To the Co-Chair Steiner and Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

To the Co-Chair Sollman and Co-Chair Evans and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

Hello! This letter is intended to provide public education and increase awareness of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians. For so many years, this language and culturally marginalized group have been denied access to information, goods, and services in the State of Oregon. The final report in 2016 of the [Community-based Needs Assessment \(CNA\) of Oregon's Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) communities conducted by the Research & Resource Center on Deaf communities at Western Oregon University as this was funded by the 2015 Oregon Legislature, we were able to learn countless challenges and barriers. Despite the assessment's findings, legislators did not pass proposed legislation in 2017 that would have met critical community needs, prompting the establishment of Bridges Oregon.

Bridges Oregon, Inc. is a nonprofit organization serving Oregonians who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing or face other communication barriers. It is in our mission to facilitate equity and inclusiveness and to provide a bridge to opportunities through advocacy, education and communication.

Some examples of data from the CNA report on housing:

- 29.4% reported annual household income is under \$25,000.
- 24.7% reported the housing costs too much, my does not pay enough.
- 20.6% reported not able to qualify for affordable housing program.
- 20.5% says they worry or stress over having enough money to pay their housing.
- 5.6% reported not able to understand the application procedure for affordable housing program.

We have couple of small funding from Oregon Department of Justice (ODOJ) Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) and the Fair Housing Council

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of Oregon (FHCO). Altogether, we were funded \$26,000 in 2022. Due to the size of funding, Bridges Oregon was unable to create a culturally specific and linguistically responsive staff position to 100% focus on housing crisis among our Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Oregonians.

With these limited funding, we were able to:

- Provided a few nights at a motel due to the delay in section-8 application process so the client avoided not living on the street while in the transition from one apartment to a new apartment, covered the moving costs, gas and provided items for the new apartment.
- A BIPOC Deaf man has section 8 and wanted his new landlord to provide a visual and smoke alarm, the landlord denied his request for two alarm devices, and will only provide one. We provided an additional accommodation equipment.
- Older adult Deaf gentleman has a flashing light system in place, he needed one more light to be added so this way he would know when someone is at the door from his bedroom.
- An older adult Deaf female succeeded in locating an apartment and is no longer houseless and currently living in an apartment after we covered the start-up costs. She resided in her vehicle for the past 5 years and was unable to afford deposit, first month rent, and pro-rated rent which is cost prohibitive. Bridges stepped in and made it possible for her to have a place to call a home.
- A Deaf family was placed in a motel for two weeks while in transition from one place to a new place. This family was evicted from their friends' home and they had nowhere to live so their arranged temporary place got disrupted and they could not afford to stay in a motel and make deposits with their new place. We discussed and decided it was best for Bridges Oregon to cover their motel stay so they could be able to afford to move into a new place. Now they are in a stabilized apartment and feeling safe once again.
- Two elderly wheelchair bound DeafBlind female and DeafDisabled with memory issue male got helped by the movers (unloader/loader) to move things from storage into their home which belongs to the male individual as his wife passed away, he relocated to be with his family. When Bridges confirmed we would help with the mover, they became really emotional and thanked Bridges for their ability to help them out at a very last minute notice.

Please visit a testimonial comment from one of our constituents, please visit <https://youtu.be/pEo3v8CucnA>. The video is voice interpreted and captioned.

I beseech you to recognize the need in addressing the housing crisis in our community and especially to those culturally specific and linguistically responsive nonprofit organizations.

Sincerely,

Chad A. Ludwig, MSW, ADAC, OHCI, CDI  
Executive Director