

Submitter: Barbara Dallas
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Thank you for allowing me to address this committee. I am writing to urge you to renew Oregon's \$15 million Community Violence Intervention fund, administered by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division.

I was pleased when the legislature passed this appropriation last year because research based evidence shows these programs work to reduce community violence. Funding for this appropriation is set to expire in 2024. Commitment to reducing gun violence over the long term requires sustained engagement and funds to be successful and I very much believe in the value of Community Violence Prevention programs.

As a personal note, I'd like to share my experience in working with one of these violence intervention programs. I am a retired medical social worker and in 2010 I was proud to be on the launching committee for a program at my hospital in the Bay Area, called Beyond Violence. The program, which is still active, targets trauma patients between the ages of 15-25 who are victims of intentional injuries such as stabbings and gunshot wounds. Identified patients are referred to an Intervention Specialist from their community, who supports the patient and their family and friends in coping with the injury and its aftermath. Patients are assisted with follow up care and connected to community resources to promote healthy choices and avoid street violence.

An example of how the program can help is reflected in this sample case. The participant was assisted by the Intervention Specialist in locating additional services such as medical insurance, dental care, and mental health counseling. He was helped to apply for assistance from the Victims of Violent Crime program. Sometimes victims of violence, due to their already difficult personal circumstances, don't have a valid drivers license or official ID. Obtaining one, which to us might seem like a simple process, may be overwhelming to someone with limited resources and support. Interventionists can help with transportation and guidance through what may seem like a daunting task to someone already struggling with medical and psychosocial challenges.

Research has shown that programs like this are effective in reducing recidivism, retaliation and re-injury in other metropolitan areas such as Oakland, Chicago and Boston. Since its inception, the program has achieved significant success, with 98% of people participating remaining alive, avoiding arrest and avoiding re-injury after their initial hospitalization.

Renewing Oregon's Community Violence Intervention fund is critical to maintaining programs such as this which are instrumental in making our neighborhoods safe and reducing gun violence in our communities. I sincerely hope this appropriation for renewal of funds is approved. Thank you.