



February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

*Re: Support for Victims of Crime Act grants (HB 3196)*

**Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,**

On behalf of Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI), we are submitting testimony in support of HB 3196, which appropriates money to the Department of Justice to backfill reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants.

The Anti-Domestic and Sexual Violence (ADSV) program at SEI has provided culturally specific wrap around support and extensive services to African American survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Multnomah County for over 15 years.

### **Background**

In 1984, Congress signed VOCA into law and created the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). VOCA funding (appropriated from the CVF) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse, and other crimes. It supports victims in some of the most high-risk scenarios who are experiencing strangulation, stalking, and an increased risk of serious injury and homicide. **It also matches 75% of eligible state victim compensation funding.**

### **Impact**

Programs across the state rely on VOCA funding to provide services, including Children's Advocacy Centers, District Attorney Victim Assistance Programs (DAVAPs), Community-based Nonprofit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Programs, and Campus Sexual Assault Programs. These grants fund vital services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, ranging from crisis intervention to long-term healing.

In Fiscal Year 2024 SEI provided a variety of prevention and intervention advocacy services to nearly 300 survivors, including adults, directly impacted children, and indirectly impacted children. SEI provides individual advocacy and safety planning, long term case management and coaching, and powerful survivor support groups. For youth and survivors ages 13-18, SEI provides preventative education, advocacy mentoring and coaching, and opportunities to express growth, struggle, and frustration through creative mediums like podcasting, writing, and visual art. For all survivors, both direct and indirect, SEI builds community, confidence, and meaningful relationships that lead to hope and resilience. The SEI ADSV program receives funding through multiple sources, but VOCA funding is significant for our program and without this funding being replaced somehow, we will see a massive negative impact in the community of survivors that we serve. And because the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence is



disproportionally high in the African American community, the impact of this projected reduction will affect our children and families disproportionately as well.

Bipartisan efforts are underway federally to create a long-term solution for the CVF, and your support in creating a bridge for organizations like ours to stabilize funding and our ability to offer life-saving services to survivors is essential. We know that supporting victims of crime is a nonpartisan issue, and these efforts will continue. There is a separate bill in the Oregon Senate to support a federal fix—[SJM 2 Urging Congress to fund VOCA](#).

For the above reasons, we urge you to support this request for bridge funding of VOCA grants by passing HB 3196. Crime victims and survivors in Oregon deserve the safety and well-being that these funds afford. Organizations like ours that provide these services cannot continue delivering them without your support. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Trent Aldridge

Chief Executive Officer

Self Enhancement, Inc.