



April 3, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE,
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of the Restorative Justice Grant Program

Co-Chair's Broadman and Evans and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,

Our names are Carley Adams and Amy Watts-Padilla, and we work at the Center for Mediation and Dialogue at the City of Beaverton. We are writing in support of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program from a community that is currently benefiting from these funds. We are asking this committee to allocate \$8 million for the next biennium to this essential program.

The CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program provides critical funds for our and many other restorative justice programs across the state. These programs center the needs of crime survivors and keep the community safe by addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior, fostering real accountability for those who have caused harm, and meaningfully tending to the trauma crime survivors experience. It is important that this grant program has stable funding by being included in the Criminal Justice Commission's current service level budget.

At the Center for Mediation and Dialogue, we recently received the CJC's Restorative Justice planning grant. We are working with our city's municipal court to envision and craft action steps toward offering restorative justice diversion opportunities for adults. The planning grant has been critical in allowing us the time and funding to: 1) learn from other programs already doing this work, 2) convene a working group and advisory group with key voices for program and process decisions, and 3) provide training to prepare our volunteer facilitators for new referrals.

Funding restorative justice is important because:

- Restorative justice provides victims and survivors with a valuable option for healing and accountability.
- Restorative justice is an effective public safety approach that supports community integration.

- Oregon needs more approaches to harm that do not involve incarceration or conviction.
- Restorative justice promotes community, public safety, and healing for survivors of harm.
- There are strong benefits for everyone involved: the survivor, the person responsible for the harm, and the broader community.
- Community-based alternatives to prosecution are dramatically less expensive than the current system.
- Developing community-based alternatives is important for addressing the unrepresented crisis and reducing the burden on our court system.
- Restorative justice empowers people to acknowledge, take responsibility for, and work towards repairing the harm they caused. This leads to true accountability and reduced recidivism.
- There is a strong interest in restorative justice alternatives across the entire state of Oregon. Both urban and rural areas of Oregon are benefiting from the CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program.

To date, the Oregon legislature has invested \$8 million to support fifteen restorative justice programs. Approximately half of these programs have received funding since the Restorative Justice Grant Program's first application cycle in July of 2022. The other half are new programs, which received planning grants at the beginning of 2025 to develop the concept for their pilot programs. These 15 programs span a significant portion of the state, serving 17 different counties, with one program accepting cases from anywhere in the state.

In 2024, the legislature invested \$4 million in the CJC's Restorative Grant Program for a one-year period, with the possibility of a three-month extension for established programs. \$2.7 million went to continue the seven established programs, with \$1.3 million distributed to eight new programs seeking to expand access to restorative justice to other communities around the state. Based on these numbers, it is evident that an increased allocation is necessary to support the continued growth of the established programs and to provide an opportunity for the planning grant programs to move into their pilot stage. We request that you recognize the importance of these programs and the value they lend to Oregon's public safety system by allocating \$8 million to the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program and by including this grant program in the CJC's current service level budget.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please help Oregon maintain its place as a leader in restorative approaches to harm by investing \$8 million in these healing and transformative programs.

Sincerely,

Carley Adams, Program Manager, Center for Mediation and Dialogue

Amy Watts-Padilla, Program Coordinator, Center for Mediation and Dialogue