



KIDS Center

1375 NW Kingston Avenue, Bend, OR 97703

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April 3, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Public Safety,

My name is Gil Levy, and I am writing on behalf of KIDS Center, an accredited Children’s Advocacy Center serving Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Harney, Sherman, and Wheeler Counties, as well as, by request, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. We urgently ask the Legislature to provide funding for Children’s Advocacy Centers at the Current Service Level (CSL) this biennium.

Children’s Advocacy Centers, like KIDS Center, rely on state funding through the Oregon Department of Justice (ODOJ), Crime Victims and Survivors Services Division. We deeply appreciate the commitment of AG Rayfield and his team to victims of crime in Oregon. The ODOJ is an essential partner, enabling us to offer crucial services to our communities. However, all 24 of Oregon’s Children’s Advocacy Centers now face significant funding cuts that threaten children’s access to these vital services.

I respectfully request your support of the following two measures, which will help ensure Current Service Levels for KIDS Center and our fellow Children’s Advocacy Centers statewide:

1. HB 3196 - \$18.5M to Backfill Federal Cuts to Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding: Children’s Advocacy Centers receive federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which is being cut by 42%. After the close of the 2024 Session, Oregon was notified that this federal funding will be reduced, and without intervention, KIDS Center will lose over \$138,000. HB 3196 (2025) provides \$18.5M in one-time funding to backfill these cuts for VOCA grantees, as well as \$3M for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). This funding will support Children’s Advocacy Centers, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs, Campus Sexual Assault Programs, and District Attorney Victims Assistance Programs, all of which are facing the same 42% reduction.

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2. DOJ POP #327 - Stabilizing State Dollars for Children's Advocacy Centers: The 2021 and 2023 Legislatures allocated \$6M to help Children's Advocacy Centers increase our capacity. KIDS Center used these funds to serve 13% more children in 2023 and another 5% more in 2024. In 2025, we are on track to serve 10% more children than in 2024. These children are referred to us by law enforcement or ODOJ-Child Welfare during active investigations. DOJ POP #327 ensures this funding continues at the Current Service Level, enabling us to meet the growing need for services in our communities.

If these funds are not allocated, KIDS Center will face severe challenges in maintaining our ability to support victims of child abuse across our six-county service area. A loss of funding will result in fewer children receiving trauma-informed care and a coordinated response to abuse, leading to long-term psychological harm and a weakened justice system's ability to protect vulnerable children.

KIDS Center's services are essential to the health and safety of our communities. Without the Legislature's support to backfill federal funding cuts (HB 3196) and maintain CSL for state funding (DOJ POP #327), we will be forced to reduce staffing, increase wait times for access to services, and help fewer children at a time when the need is rising. These cuts will also lead to delays in child abuse investigations, further harming those who need help most.

Please give your strongest consideration to fulfilling this critical funding request for Children's Advocacy Centers during this Legislative Session.

Thank you for your service and commitment to the children of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gil Levy', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gil Levy
Executive Director
KIDS Center