



Written Testimony in Support of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Wemi Ayannubi, and I am the Community Resource Advocate and Coordinator, with Conflict Artistry LLC. I write today in strong support of the Criminal Justice Commission's (CJC) Restorative Justice Grant Program, urging this committee to allocate \$8 million for the next biennium to sustain and expand this essential initiative.

The CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program provides critical funding to community-based restorative justice programs across Oregon. These programs prioritize the needs of crime survivors while addressing the root causes of harmful behavior. By fostering real accountability, offering meaningful healing opportunities for survivors, and promoting safer communities, restorative justice represents an evidence-based alternative to traditional criminal justice responses.

The Importance of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice offers numerous benefits to survivors, individuals responsible for harm, and the broader community. Continued funding for this program is essential because:

- **Restorative justice provides victims and survivors with a valuable option for healing and accountability.** Many survivors express a desire for justice that includes acknowledgment, repair, and meaningful dialogue rather than solely punitive measures.
- **It strengthens public safety and community integration.** Research indicates that restorative justice approaches lead to lower recidivism rates, reducing repeat offenses and fostering long-term safety.
- **Oregon needs more approaches to harm that do not rely on incarceration or conviction.** Expanding restorative justice ensures that justice remains accessible, equitable, and focused on rehabilitation.
- **Restorative justice is cost-effective.** Community-based alternatives to prosecution are significantly less expensive than traditional criminal justice proceedings. They also reduce the burden on an already overwhelmed court system.



- **It promotes true accountability.** By engaging in dialogue, taking responsibility, and working to repair harm, individuals who have caused harm experience a deeper, more transformative sense of accountability.

Impact of Previous Investments

Since its inception, the Oregon Legislature has invested \$8 million to support 15 restorative justice programs, spanning 17 counties. These programs provide essential services and continue to expand access to restorative justice statewide. In 2024, the Legislature allocated \$4 million for one year of funding, with an option for extension. This funding was divided between seven existing programs (\$2.7 million) and eight new programs (\$1.3 million). However, to sustain these initiatives and allow pilot programs to develop into fully operational restorative justice models, increased funding is essential.

Call to Action

To ensure the continued success and expansion of restorative justice in Oregon, I respectfully urge this committee to allocate \$8 million to the CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program and to incorporate it into the CJC's current service level budget. This investment will help Oregon remain a leader in restorative approaches to harm, fostering healing, safety, and justice for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to transformative justice and public safety.

Sincerely,
Wemi Ayannubi