

**Date: 5/6**

**RE: Support for SB 291**

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,100 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 12 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. **Our programs and properties span Senate Districts 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25; and House Districts 33, 36, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 50**

Our communities are safer when people have stable housing. Central City Concern provides low barrier screening criteria and works with many people who have had engagement with the criminal legal system. We have seen in our data, recidivism can be cut by more than half when someone has stable housing, where they are the rent-responsible adult on their lease.

SB 291 can help shift perspectives and understanding for landlords by requiring the supplemental information be seriously considered prior to denial of an application, giving a whole-person review. We ask you to vote “Yes” and support SB291.

#### **Comments from CCC staff:**

“Earlier this month eight of my clients completed the Rent Well tenant education course. The appeal process is one of the hardest discussions to have because most of them simply won't believe it works. Most of them have been denied before and struggle to face the possibility again. Every week at class, one particular client would express his doubt that his history could ever be overlooked enough to get housing. But he was in class every week, asking questions, engaging in discussion, and proving to me that he still has hope for his future. The steps are there, and the clients do the work. If considerations can be taken before a denial, I truly believe it will instill confidence for our clients to earnestly pursue and obtain housing. This in turn will give hope to incoming clients of the program, letting them know that these steps can work and stable housing is possible.” *Kira Hoerner, Housing Specialist*

“I am a psychiatric provider who works with a housing first, harm reduction team that addresses chronic homelessness and substance use disorder. Our clients have a harder time getting the housing they need to make improvements in their lives; this bill would support people who need stable housing as an integral part of their recovery journey!” *Tracy Winn, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner*



“Criminal history is exactly that...it's history. Let's create systems that highlight and support what is right with people instead of one that continues to try and find what's wrong with them!” *Gary Cobb, Community Outreach Coordinator*

“Passing this legislation would be a great step in the right direction especially when requiring landlords to consider other information before denying someone with a criminal background. Housing is a major hurdle for people coming from incarceration and who have a criminal background. A lot of people don't realize that even after you have been released and "served your debt to society" you are still punished by being denied adequate housing which can be vital for success and moving forward as a productive member of society. Even with rules in place such as a crime being 10 years or older will not disqualify you it still does. Most landlords use a third-party background check company and use them to deny you. Housing is vital to being successful and should not be withheld as a life-time punishment.” *Ryan Fisher, Program Operations and Support Manager in Supportive Housing*

“Safe housing is the foundation of any effort to bring about change in a person's life. It is hugely difficult, for many impossible, to become responsible, contributing members of society without a place to rest one's head at night. Improving access to housing is a huge win for all parties concerned.” *Ian Austin, Assistant Case Manager*

“There is so much need for so many that are homeless and in need for help. Passing this bill will give so many an option to live in a stable environment and not on the streets.” *Tori Hatter-Smith, Clinical Supervisor at Imani Center/ Culturally Specific IOP*

“We had a female client who was fleeing a domestic violence situation. She feared for her life, so she jumped into her boyfriend's car and drove away. She was charged with auto theft and spent time in jail. I helped her appeal her have it expunged from her record, but somehow it still caused her denial for housing. She is a disabled veteran, a mother, a grandmother, and an incredibly kind person. People like her should not be without a home for fleeing and for surviving threat to her life!” *Michaelle Robardey, Peer Support Specialist at with Veterans Gran Per Diem program*

“Please!” *Ryan, Community Mental Health Counselor*



## CENTRAL CITY CONCERN

HOMES HEALTH JOBS

### Additional CCC staff co-signers

Brianna Sustersic, Senior Medical Director of Primary Care, Old Town Clinic  
Chase Bissett, Project Manager, Project Management Office  
Lisa Greenfield, Peer Case Manager, Blackburn Recovery Housing Program  
Chris Colburn, Facility Manager, Blackburn  
Deidre Gordon, Mental Health Counselor, Old Town Recovery Center  
Cori McCrea, Office Manager, Housing Administration - Housing  
Veronica Hill, Accountant, Administration  
Kevin Shank, Substance Abuse Counselor II, CCC Recovery Center  
Kira Hoerner, Housing Specialist, Housing Rapid Response  
Cindy Ross, Office Manager, Puentes  
Amy Lopez, Care Team Manager, Old Town Clinic  
Kayla Carlson, Population Health Coordinator, Old Town Recovery Center  
Brenda Michel, Administrative Assistant, Administration  
Laura Recko, Assoc Director of Communications & Donor Relations, Administration  
Christina Schermerhorn, Health Information Manager, Health Services  
Kimberly Leathley, Health Services Executive, Health Services  
Anna Bryan, Health Assistant, Old Town Clinic  
Andrew Nelson, Health Coordinator, Old Town Clinic/SUMMIT  
Briana Stodola, Project Manager, Administration  
Linda Hudson, Director, Imani Center / Central City Concern  
Sarah Porter, HR Business Partner, Admin/HR  
Mary-Rain O'Meara, Director of Real Estate Development,  
Ryan, Community Mental Health Counselor, OTRC COREII  
Makyla Boone, Employment Specialist, EAC/OTRC  
Wayne Haddad, Chief IT Officer  
Jacquelyn, Chief Integration & Innovation Officer, Admin  
Tomecka Hill, Resident service Coordinator, Richard Harris/Ankeny square  
Michaelle Robardey, Peer Support Specialist, The Katherine Gray & The Henry/Veterans/Grant & Per Diem (GPD)  
Theo Pham, Clinical pharmacist, Old Town Clinic / Pharmacy  
Tori Hatter-Smith, Clinical Supervisor, Imani Center/ Culturally Specific IOP  
Gary Cobb, Community Outreach Coordinator, Public Policy  
Juliana Wallace, Senior Director of Mental Health and Culturally Specific Services  
Ryan Fisher, Program Operations and Support Manager, Supportive Housing  
David Lawrence, M.D., Associate Medical Director, Hooper Detoxification and Stabilization Center  
William Echols, Imani Center Employment and Housing Specialist  
Ian Austin, Assistant Case Manager, Golden West/ STS  
Malinda Brown, Mental Health Counselor, Old Town Recovery Center  
Mariam Admasu, Assistant Director of Equity & Inclusion, Org Development + Racial Equity  
Tracy Winn, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Old Town Clinic & Old Town Recovery Center