

Testimony for the Continued funding of RJGP

Dear Co-Chair, Sollman, Co-Chair Evans, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Wemimo Ayannubi, A Restorative Justice Practitioner, I am the Community Resource Advocacy Coordinator for Conflict Artistry LLC, and I am writing to support the continued funding of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program. RJ (Restorative Justice) Practice provides an alternative to the current Judicial system, and it is centered around healing, transformation, accountability, and re-integration.

The community has expressed its need for programs like this that are intentional about the people's needs and encourage accountability across. The Restorative Justice programs are equipped with trained community facilitators that understand the need to assess, address and agree. Assess the needs, and barriers to dialogue, address the needs, dialogue, and agree on solutions to meet the needs, work towards these agreements, and finally hold ourselves accountable for making this work.

The heart of a community functioning as intentionally as I should is rooted in Love, and we can only achieve this love when we interact with one another, communicate with one another so that we can build that intentionality with one another and therefore achieve a circle of healing, accountability as well as transformation. And this can be achieved with Restorative Justice practices/programs.

This practice is survivor focused and community rooted, the three stages that most Restorative Justice Programs practice encompass these values. The healing-centered approach commences with an intake that allows participants to learn more about what the dialogue process entails and to explore what it will be. Then it is proceeded by the dialogue, which consists of the event (which gives the participants, either together or separately, a chance to talk about what happened), then Impact- which comprises of a reflection on what impacts were experienced, the effects of the event, and finally the Reparations- agreements, accountability measures agreed upon during the dialogue. This Practice is committed to Equity and inclusion of the community, and this is what the community needs to experience growth, unity, and intentional accountability.

The CJC funded Restorative Justice Programs have been working diligently to divert cases from convictions and improve the communities. As a practitioner, I have seen firsthand the effect a transformative dialogue process like RJ has on individuals and the community. I have witnessed people heal, and the willingness to be intentional as a community member. I therefore urge the Legislature to fund the Criminal Justice Commissions Restorative Justice Programs to reflect the legislature's commitment to Public Safety.

Sincerely,

Wemimo Ayannubi Community Resource Advocate Conflict Artistry LLC