

SECRETARY OF STATE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Breaking the Cycle: A Comprehensive Statewide Strategy Would Benefit
Domestic Violence Victims, Survivors, and Advocates

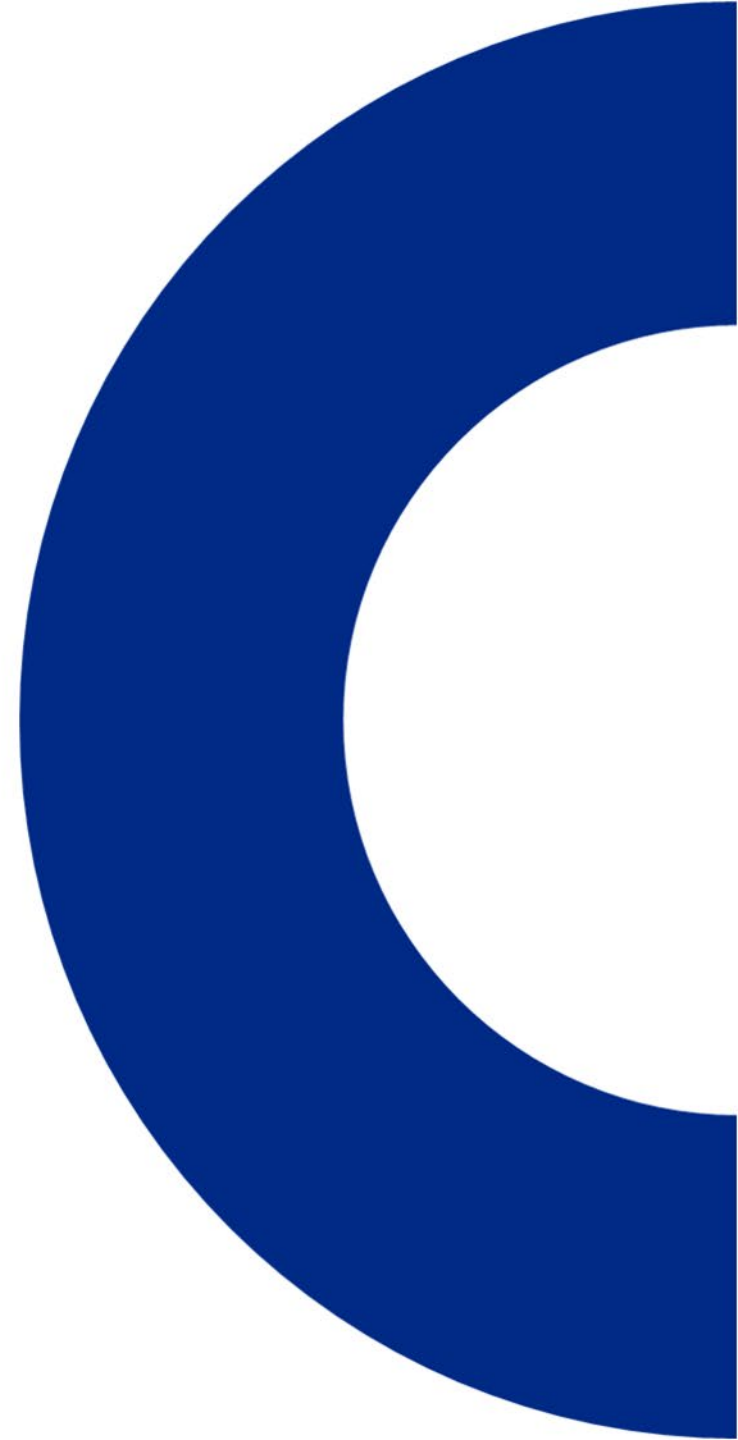
Report 2023-31

OUR APPROACH

Unlike a traditional audit, this project was a high-level look at the state's response to domestic violence. Our suggested actions are directed at state policy makers, including legislators. Many agencies have roles to play addressing domestic violence, including:

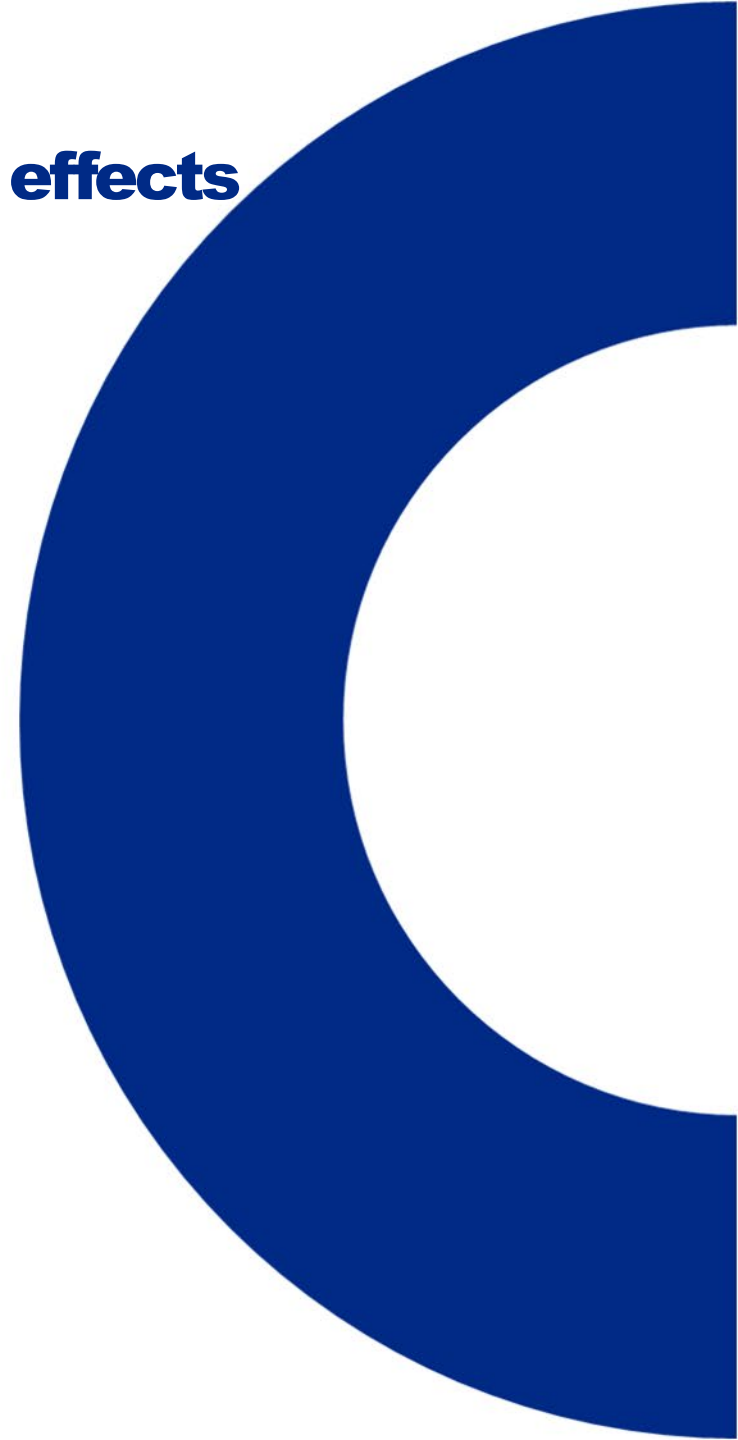
- Oregon Department of Justice, and their Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division
- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Oregon Judicial Department
- Oregon State Police
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Housing and Community Services Department
- Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

THE SCOPE OF THE CHALLENGE



Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

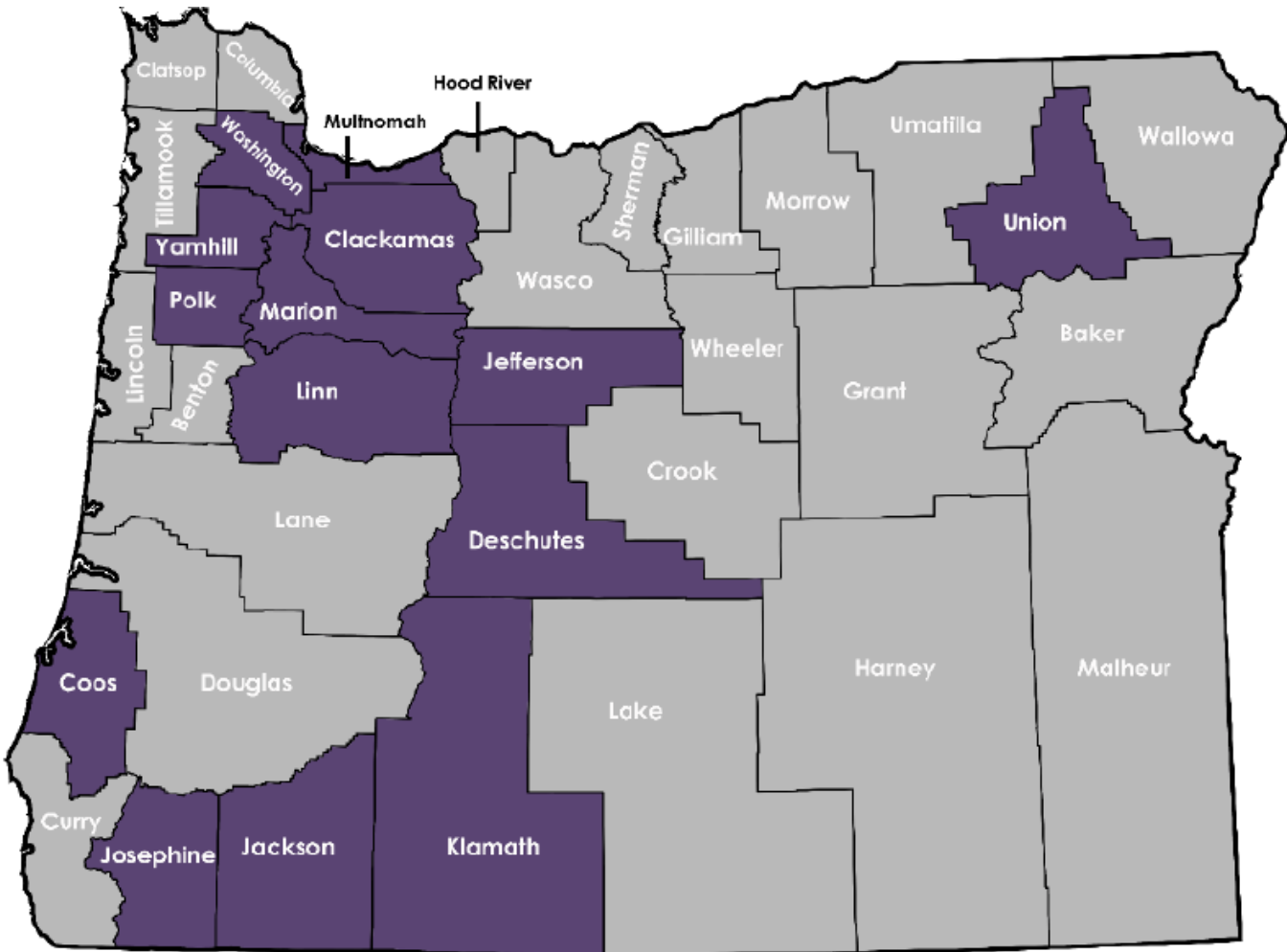
- Over a third of adults in Oregon experience domestic violence in their lifetimes, and intimate partners are responsible for approximately one in five homicides nationwide. From 2009 through 2019, Oregon's 393 fatal domestic violence incidents resulted in 532 deaths.





Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

In 2019, 15 out of 36 Oregon counties had at least one fatal domestic violence incident



Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

Domestic violence is cyclical, damaging, and difficult to escape

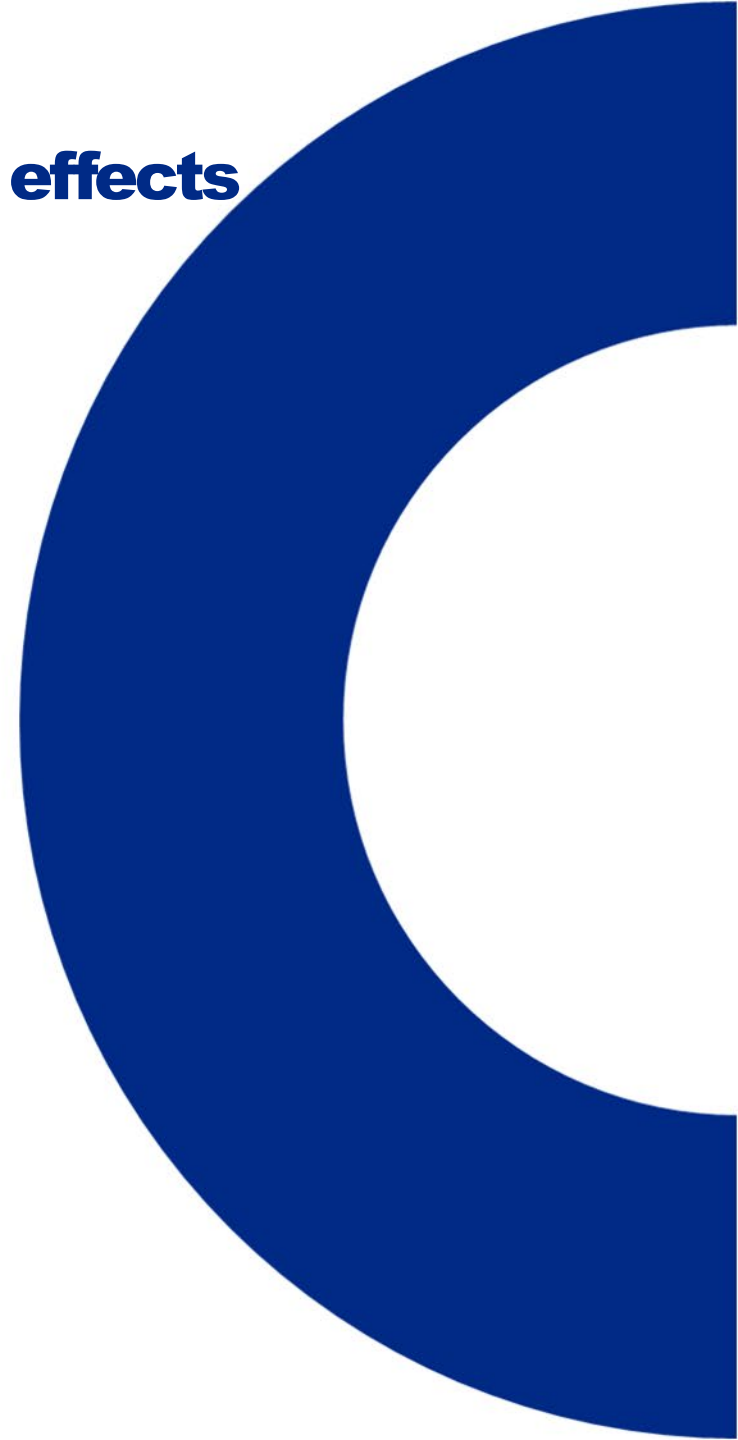
Research shows that victims of interpersonal violence:

- Take an average of five to seven attempts to leave their abusers permanently.
- Return to their abusers at a rate of up to 50%.
- Cite lack of housing, income, and childcare options as major barriers to leaving.



Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

- In 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated that at least 32% of adults in families with children in surveyed homeless shelters were survivors of domestic violence, and 15% were currently fleeing unsafe situations.



Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

Domestic violence is part of a network of social issues

CAUSE & EFFECT: The Interconnection of Social Issues and Domestic Violence

One in three women will experience domestic violence (DV) in her lifetime. DV does not occur in isolation; pathways exist to and from a whole spectrum of social issues. Individuals, families and communities experience these issues as deeply entwined and simultaneous, which calls for an integrated approach to addressing DV. The graphic below depicts three pathways from a much broader set of social issues.



Broader structural factors, such as discriminatory policies and cultural norms, shape the expression of these social issues and their relationship with DV. This results in disparities and inequities based on race, ethnicity, geography, socio-economic status, sexual identity, among many others. **It's time for leaders from multiple sectors to look at the whole picture and work together to develop bold response strategies that account for the complexity and scale of the issues.**



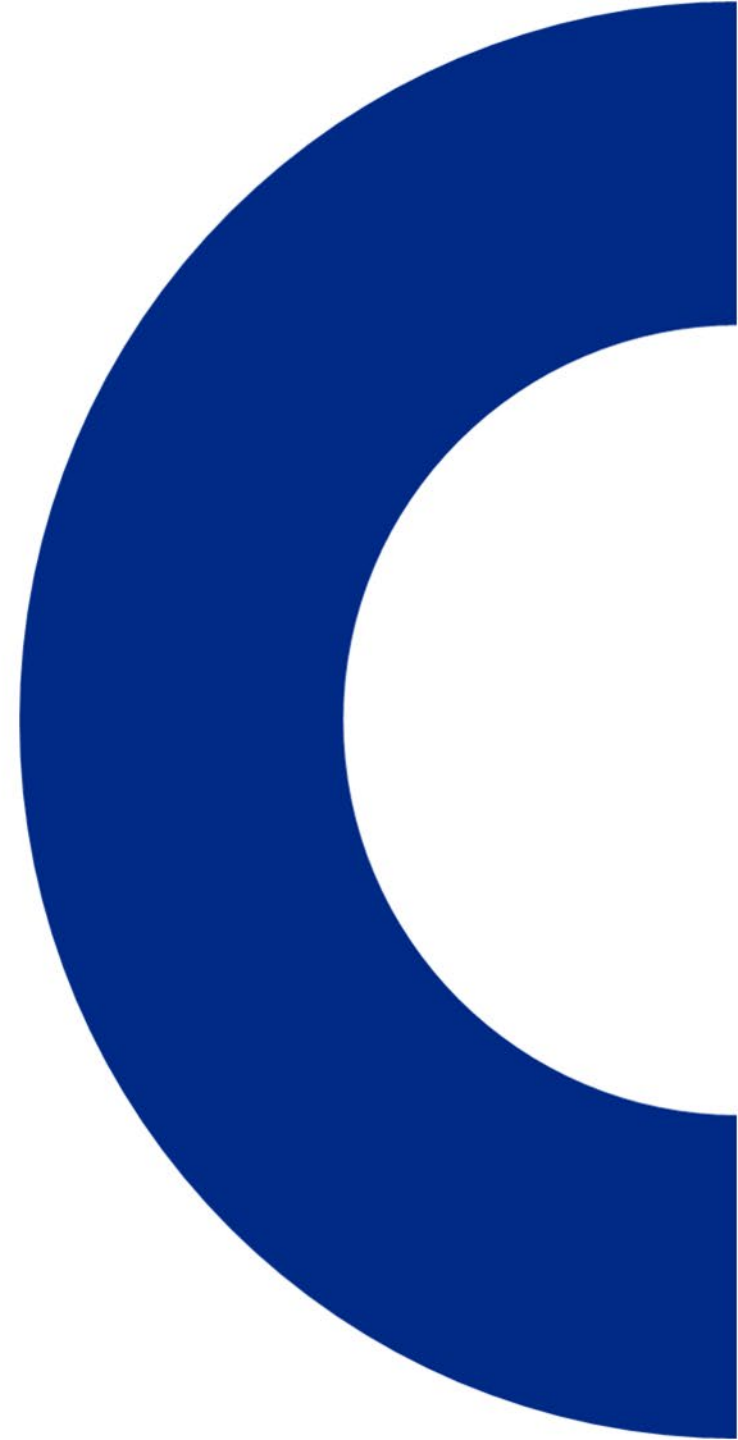
Made possible with support from
Blue Shield of California Foundation.

Domestic violence has far-reaching health and societal effects

- Ease of access is critical for timely and effective domestic violence interventions. However, victims face multiple access barriers. Victims and survivors often face fear, isolation, shame, and stigma, as well as financial, mental health, and cultural challenges. Regional organizations play critical roles in providing services



WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Victims and survivors face multiple barriers to accessing community services and navigating the justice system.

- Victims and survivors may struggle to locate available support and crisis intervention services
- Systemic social welfare issues, such as the lack of available housing or access to services like childcare, mental health care, and legal assistance often translate to urgent unmet needs for domestic violence victims.
- Despite ongoing efforts, domestic violence services are not equitably available in all parts of the state or to victims and survivors of all backgrounds

WHAT WE FOUND

Oregon advocates report fragmented and under-resourced social services and complex criminal and civil justice systems contribute to access issues.

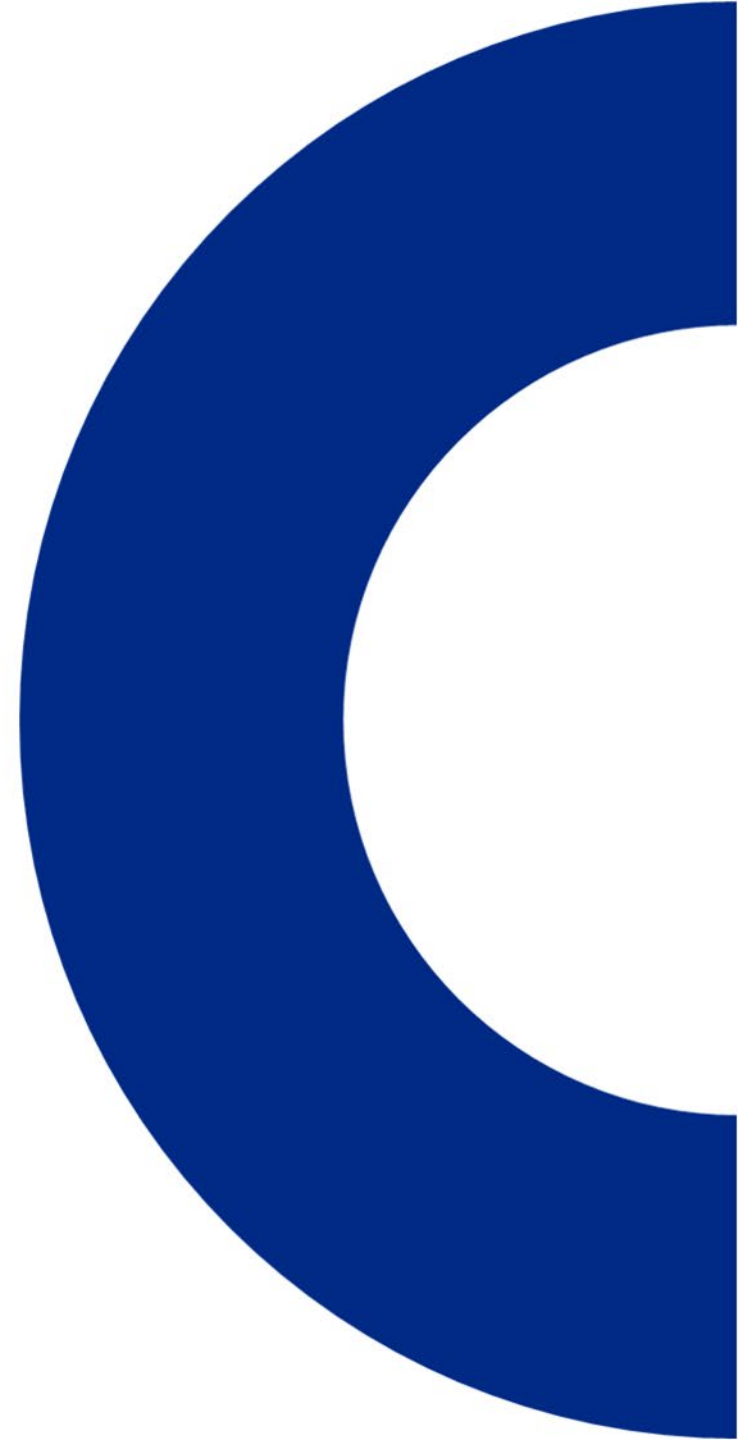
- Grant funding requirements create significant administrative barriers for community-based service providers and hinder efforts to address complex community needs
- In addition to high administrative burdens, domestic violence service providers face staffing issues and challenges expanding equitable outreach, prevention, and intervention services
- Civil justice interventions provide legal protections but are complex to acquire and may not be consistently enforced
- Successful criminal justice outcomes often require active victim and survivor participation, but limited victim supports exist

WHAT WE FOUND

Oregon lacks a centralized, statewide response to domestic violence and does not strategically address risks across sectors through statewide data-informed prevention, mitigation, or intervention-related action.

- National and statewide data do not accurately quantify needs or impact of provided services
- Oregon could do more to coordinate strategies, share data, and effect change across otherwise siloed agency and organizational responses.

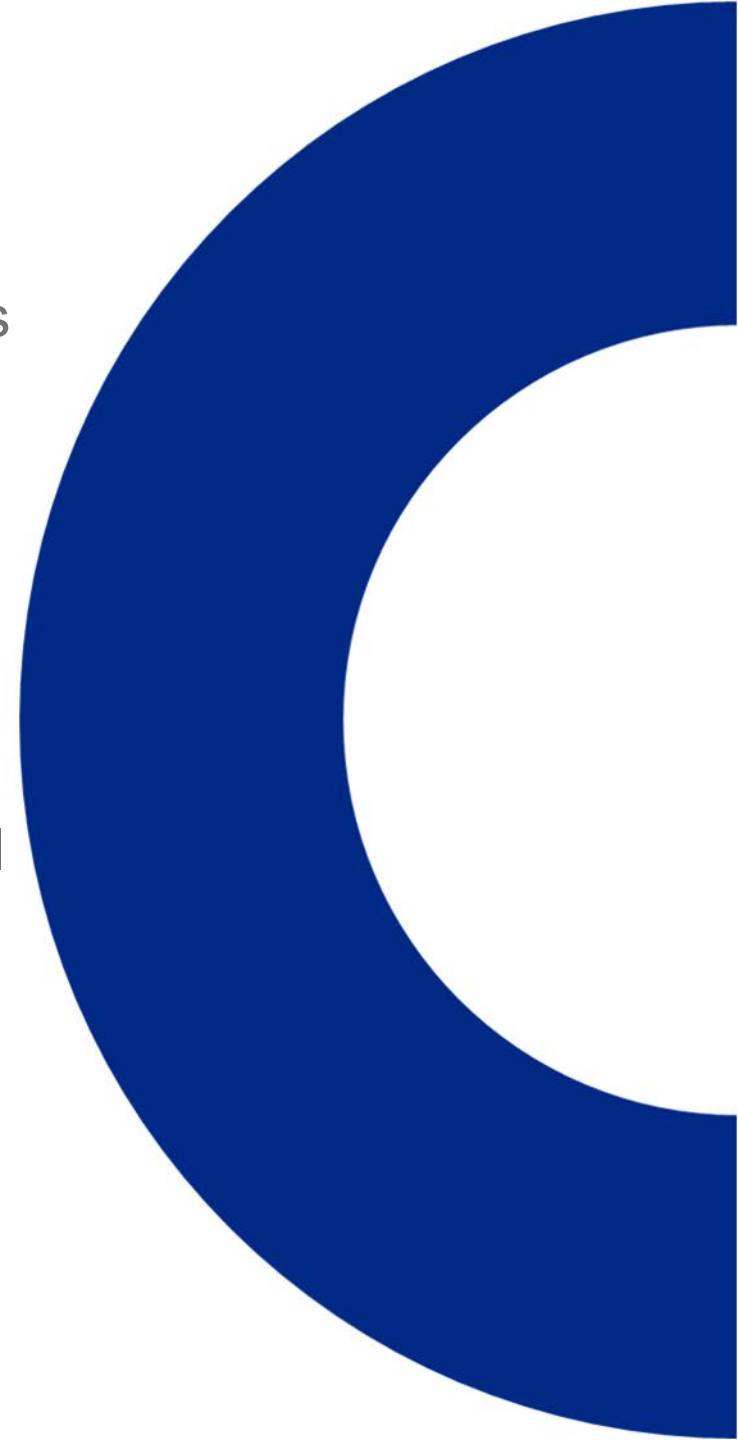
**SUGGESTED
ACTIONS FOR
STATE LEADERS**



POTENTIAL STATE ACTION

1. Develop a statewide strategy to align state efforts to address domestic violence and identify areas where additional state support is needed. This may require conducting preliminary research, such as a survey of domestic violence victim's experiences with law enforcement, courts, child welfare, and social services systems.

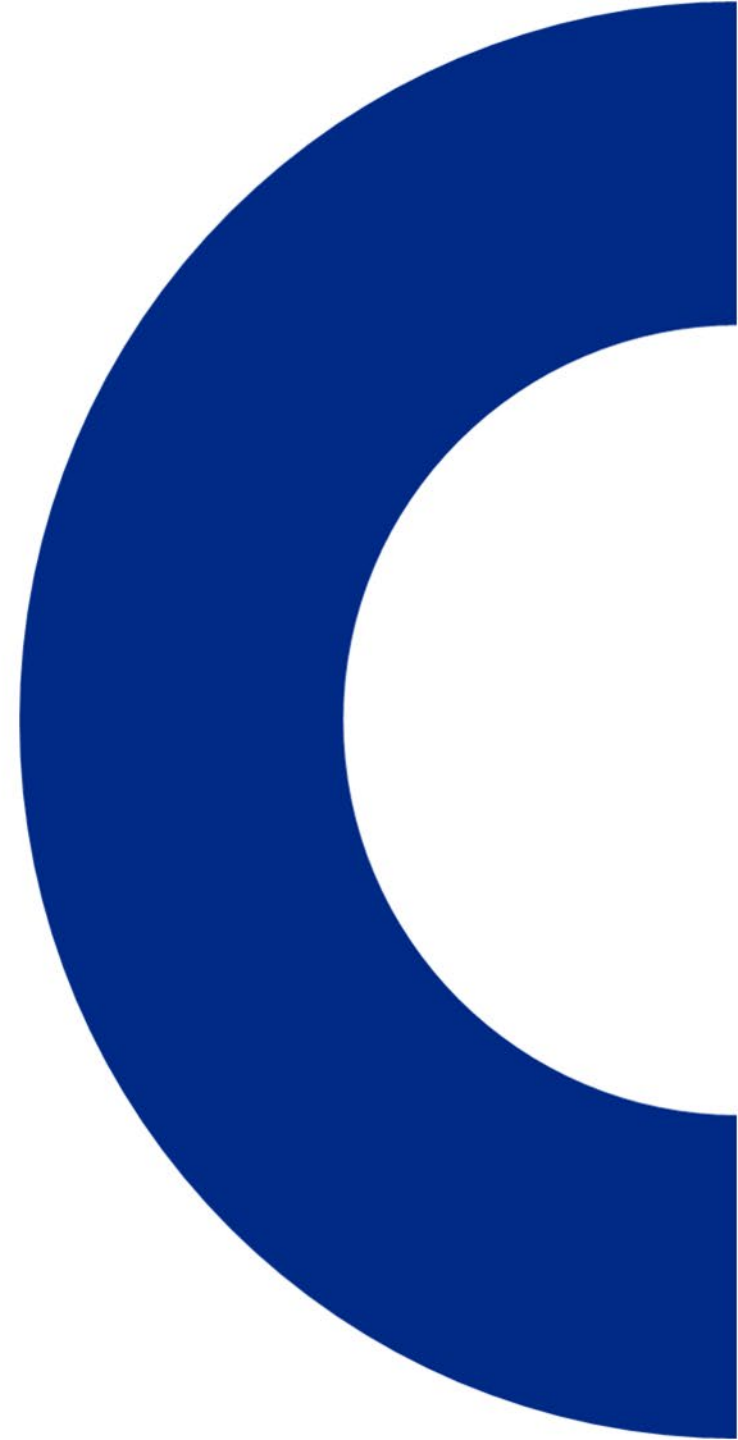
2. Consider implementing statewide strategies to address urgent domestic violence victim and survivor needs in all social service sectors. This could include working closely with the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence to run statewide initiatives addressing the specific needs of domestic violence victims and survivors, such as prioritizing housing needs and addressing economic justice for domestic violence victims and survivors.



POTENTIAL STATE ACTION

3. Where possible, centralize resources and statewide information sharing, including improved data collection and use. Use data to support statewide and regional intervention and prevention strategies.

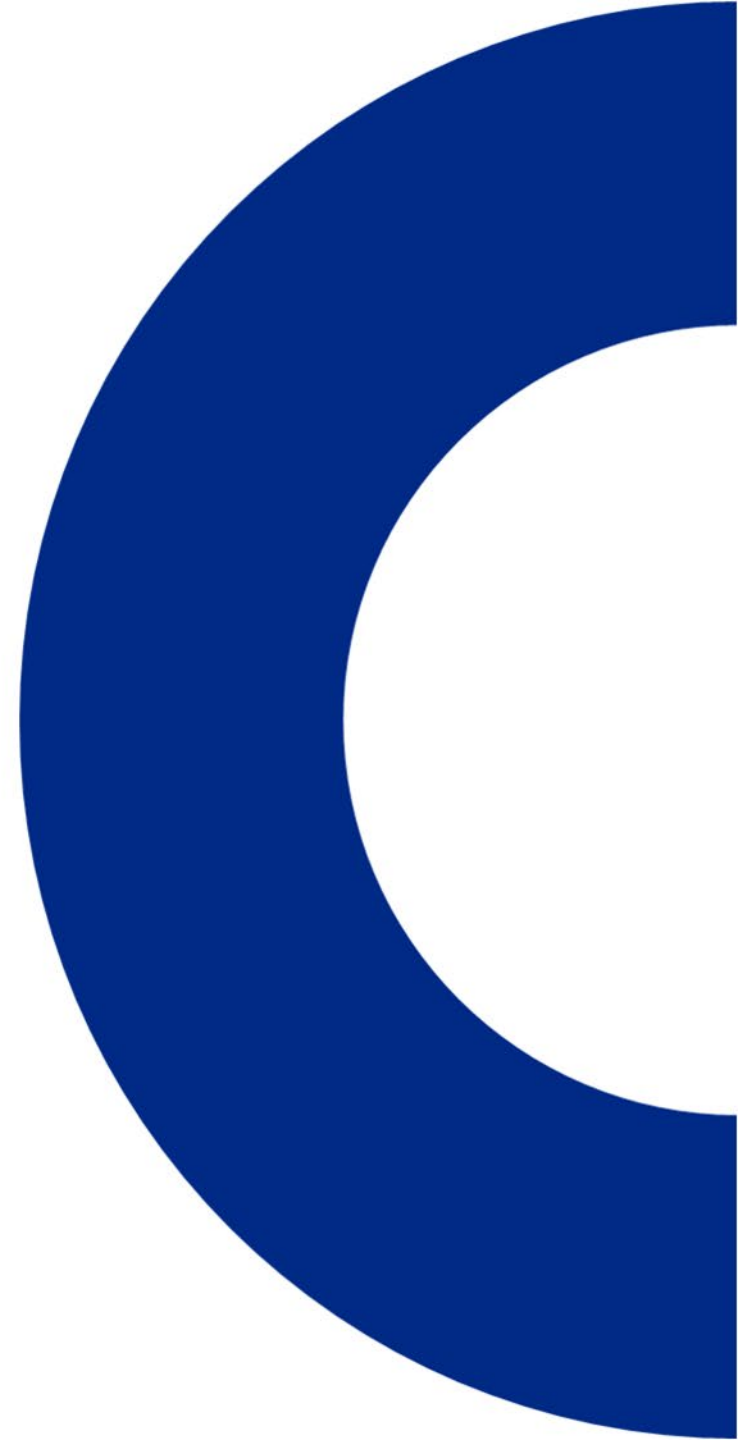
4. Legislators could add stability to nonprofit operations by making flexible state domestic violence funds permanent budget items with inflation adjustments, rather than addressing funding needs through one-time funding.



To read the full report on the Secretary of State's website, please visit:

<https://sos.oregon.gov/audits/Documents/2023-31.pdf>

Thank you!





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