



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DATE: February 6, 2024

TO: Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan,
and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director
Oregon Department of Justice

SUBJECT: Support for HB 4140 – Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services,
Survivor Housing, and Child Advocacy Center Funding

This testimony is presented in support of HB 4140, which will clarify that investments made by the 2021 and 2023 legislatures in Children’s Advocacy Center Funding, Survivor Housing Funding, and Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Funding, are considered current service level, not one-time funding.

Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) and Survivor Housing Funds

In 2021 and 2023, this legislature made crucial, one-time investments of \$6 million in funding for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) and \$6 million to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with housing needs.

These funds are essential for providing safety and assistance to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The funding, administered by DOJ’s Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD), will include homelessness prevention, housing search assistance, tenant education and funding for rent, utilities, moving costs, deposits, application fees and safe emergency housing. It will also promote advocacy interventions to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault through grants to sixty non-profit organizations and Tribal Nations victim services programs that provide advocacy services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Continuing these investments in housing assistance and OSDVS will provide the resources to further develop capacity and build a statewide infrastructure designed for sustainability and equity in domestic and sexual violence advocacy services. This will also add strength to and expand the network of organizations that provide culturally specific advocacy services to survivors.

One-time funding only temporarily addresses the chronic challenges faced by these community-based organizations. A permanent increase is necessary to meet the rising and ever-present demand for advocacy services, to offer wages comparable to government and business sectors, and to recruit and retain skilled workers and administrators.

Child Advocacy Center Funds

Oregon's Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) provide services critical to the effective response to child abuse. Unlike other nonprofit victim service providers, CACs' services include provision of medical assessments, which require the expertise of highly qualified professionals including child forensic interviewers and physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants with ongoing, specialized training in responding to child abuse.

Oregon law (ORS 418.780) requires that all children have access to a skilled, competent and medically sound Medical Assessment completed at a CAC regardless of ability to pay, yet ongoing state funding makes up only 17% of CAC budgets. To ensure the availability of these services for every child in the state who may need them, CACs must continuously seek funding from a variety of sources to supplement the limited state funds.

Access to CAC professionals is crucial. Recognizing this critical need, in 2021, the Legislature invested \$6 million in CACs. That one-time funding was renewed for an additional biennium in 2023. Oregon Department of Justice's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) is proud to administer these funds through grants to Oregon CACs.

One time funding, while helpful, poses challenges to meeting the greatest resource need of CACs, staff. On-going funding will allow for program planning, development and execution. HB 4140 will protect the vital and critical capacity that was realized with the Legislature's 2021 and 2023 investments by making these allocations permanent.