



clackamas women's services
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February 6, 2024

Re: Support for appropriating moneys to the Department of Justice to fund certain programs that assist victims of crime (HB 4140)

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

On behalf of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), we are pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 4140 which appropriates funding to the Department of Justice urgently needed to stabilize funding through the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS), the Survivor Housing Fund (SHF), and Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC).

The mission of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's first domestic violence shelter, CWS is a community-based organization providing comprehensive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services to survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, elder and vulnerable adult abuse, human trafficking, exploitation, and stalking.

ODSVS and SHF are each essential funding sources that allow Oregon's network of nonprofit, community-based, Tribal, and culturally-specific domestic and sexual violence service providers across the state to ensure that survivors have access to confidential, culturally-specific and trauma-informed support and assistance as they seek safety from abuse.

The following describes how CWS uses these funds to support survivors.

Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS)

The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific, and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to provide confidential trauma-informed services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking.

CWS utilizes these funds to support children and adult survivors with wide-ranging crisis intervention and long-term supportive services such as emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, legal advocacy, emergency and long-term safety planning, counseling, support groups, and children's programs. We also provide violence prevention education to over 25 schools as well as training and education throughout the community.

Community-based domestic and sexual violence programs intersect with many state systems, including the public health and public safety systems. In our community have built collaborations with law enforcement, healthcare providers, schools, the criminal justice system, social services agencies, and many other community partners, and offer critical support for survivors navigating these systems. CWS utilizes a portion of our OSDVS funds to support confidential advocates for survivors, deliver children and youth services such as art-based therapy, provide Latina/x Services and Promotoras programming,

and offer legal services at A Safe Place Family Justice Center, which brings together all of these system-based partners with community-based and culturally specific services.

ODSVS is the only state general fund source of support for these critical services. The need for these supportive services continues to grow and the burden of essential service provision is challenged by staffing shortages, lack of funding, and other obstacles. Ensuring this funding is ongoing and stable will allow service providers to address some of these obstacles that are hindered by uncertain funding, such as the ability to hire and address long-term staffing needs.

Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF)

The Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific, and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to facilitate access to safe and stable housing for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. Survivor Housing Funds are a crucial component of the efforts to assist survivors in their journey toward stable permanent housing. Survivors often face episodes of homelessness due to the violence, safety issues, and/or isolation caused by the abuser. They often have few or no resources available when fleeing.

Survivor Housing Funds awarded to CWS go to survivors with little or no income to address barriers in accessing housing. This may include moving assistance, application fees, security deposits, and other non-rent move-in costs. These critical and flexible funds help survivors begin this new stage in their lives on solid footing. **90% of survivors assisted in the last six months have maintained their safe housing at both 3 and 6 months of being housed and report feeling better off and more hopeful about the future.**

In closing, long-term stable funding for ODSVS and SHF funding, will provide programs with ongoing funding to further develop capacity and build a statewide infrastructure designed for sustainability and equity in meeting the needs of survivors. This funding is necessary to stabilize programs, meet the rising need for safety services, and offer wages designed to recruit and retain skilled workers and administrators.

For the above reasons, we urge you to support an ongoing investment in ODSVS and Survivor Housing Funds by passing HB 4140. Full funding of these services is essential to support crime victims and survivors in Oregon and the organizations and providers who serve them. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Melissa Erlbaum
Executive Director