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Jayne Downing
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RE: Center for Hope and Safety HOPE Plaza Housing Project

To Whom It May Concern:

The Salem Housing Authority (SHA) is pleased to submit this letter of support for Center for Hope and Safety's application for the Hope Plaza Housing Project. Center for Hope and Safety's project is seeking funds to establish affordable housing units and wrap around services for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking in Marion County.

SHA has partnered with Center for Hope and Safety in a voucher lottery system for victims of domestic violence. This program provides up to five (5) vouchers per month (when funding allows) to domestic violence victims. Center for Hope and Safety screens and provides nominations to Salem Housing Authority and on the 5th of each month, SHA randomly draws five (5) names to receive a Housing Choice Voucher. This has been a successful partnership for many years.

SHA has already approved Project Based Vouchers for the HOPE Plaza Housing Project for 10 years once it is open. This will ensure long-term affordability for the HOPE Plaza units and make a significant difference for vulnerable families in our community. The expertise of the staff from Center of Hope and Safety will make this supportive housing achievable and successful in our community.

The State of Oregon was identified in HUD's 2019 Annual Report to Congress as the state with the ninth highest rate of unsheltered homeless in the nation. The 2019 Point in Time (PIT) Count identified 1,095 literally homeless individuals in the Salem area (Marion and Polk Counties), 356 of whom were chronically homeless. Marion and Polk counties combined have the third highest homeless population in the state, surpassed only by Portland/Multnomah County (4,015) and Eugene/Lane County (2,165).

Salem is facing an unprecedented crisis of homelessness and housing instability that must be mitigated for the health and wellbeing of all members of our community. The Center for Hope and Safety provides services in a compassionate, trauma-informed manner to individuals experiencing domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking and stalking in our community. They have a long record of working with the Salem Housing Authority and victims of domestic violence, assisting them to maintain permanent housing and ending the cycle. We strongly believe that Center for Hope and Safety is well suited to establish desperately needed affordable housing project in Marion County, and we look forward to seeing this very necessary project come to fruition.

Respectfully,

Nicole Utz
Housing Administrator
Salem Housing Authority