



Re: Funding for Life-Saving Services for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors

- **Policy Option Package 327:** Continue funding levels for Tribal and community-based programs providing confidential emergency shelter and critical safety services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state (\$22 Million)
- **HB 3196:** Continue funding levels for interdisciplinary crime victim services programs at domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse programs across the state (\$18.5 Million)

Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kim Caplan, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Community Works in Jackson County, Oregon to urge support of funding for the specialized programs that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their children in the Department of Justice Budget's POP 327 and in HB 3196.

Community Works is the only organization in all of Jackson County, Oregon serving victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. Our mission is that we are here to bring hope, support, and empowerment to those impacted by violence. Our agency provides advocacy support, outreach, shelter, and housing to survivors across our county of over 220,000 people, where one out of every three people live in remote towns or unincorporated areas of the county without access to social services or transportation. We have the only shelter for victims fleeing abuse, and our shelter is open every hour of every day with 24/7 on-site Certified Advocates. Victims of domestic and sexual violence are scared, full of shame, and endure the most perpetrated and underreported crimes committed against them in the United States. Without our Dunn House Shelter and our services across the county, they would have nowhere to go and have to choose between abuse and homelessness for themselves and their children.

The Dunn House Shelter is the first step to safety. Community Works housing advocates work with every single victim to learn their housing needs, support them in navigating housing, and work alongside them to reduce the barriers to accessing housing that exist due to abuse. These barriers include poor rental and credit history, financial abuse, and no or very low income. We help with initial move-in costs and rent to ensure survivors can gain the income they need to maintain their housing over the long-term. Our model moves victims from crisis to stability to self-sustainability.

To mitigate the impact of the affordable housing crisis in Jackson County, Oregon, Community Works built housing. In the summer of 2024, our agency opened the doors to Mary's Haven – the first ever transitional housing for victims in our community. This 12-room apartment complex has on-site staff and supports victims transitioning from the Shelter to permanent housing of their own. They can live there for up to two years as they gain income, life skills, and heal. This project was 100% funded by our community and local foundations. And, because of its success, we have started a capital campaign and secured the land for a second apartment complex.

The prevalence of abuse and its impact are staggering:

- National surveys estimate that over a third of adults in Oregon experience domestic violence in their lifetimes, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that intimate partners are responsible for approximately one in five homicides nationwide.
- Oregon women and girls are raped and sexually assaulted at rates that far exceed the national average. Over 1 million women and girls in Oregon—more than half of the state's female population (Count Her In Report) have endured this violence.
- From 2009 through 2019, Oregon's Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team identified a total of 393 fatal domestic violence incidents that resulted in 532 deaths.
- Children witnessed violence in nearly 1 in 4 (22%) intimate partner violence cases filed in state courts.
- A recent study indicated that domestic violence was the cause for 49% of women experiencing homelessness in Oregon and Washington.

The two packages outlined below are of critical importance to the lives of survivors and their children:

Department of Justice Budget POP 327: ONGOING FUNDING TO STABILIZE CRITICAL SURVIVOR SERVICES PROGRAMS (\$22M)

Please ensure the inclusion of \$22 million in grant funding in the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) of the Department of Justice for Tribal, culturally specific, and community-based programs to continue providing confidential services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state. Without this investment into ongoing funding, programs will be forced to lay off staff and will have reduced capacity to provide critical life-saving safety and advocacy services for survivors and their children.

\$10 Million for ODSVS: These funds provide support for the network of confidential, trauma-informed, community-based and culturally-specific programs providing shelter, safety planning, hotline, and advocacy services for

survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) and their children across the state.

\$6 Million for the Survivor Housing Fund: Survivor Housing Funds allow DVSA service providers to empower survivors in the next step of accessing safety from violence. These funds increase the chances at long-term stability and safety for survivors and their children. As Oregon's housing affordability crisis continues to reach new peaks, the Survivor Housing Funds are necessary to make it possible for victims to escape the cycle of abuse, and to establish stability for themselves and their children.

\$6 Million for Children's Advocacy Centers: CACs are the state's mandated and unique resource for the assessment, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect and the associated trauma, in order to promote health and hope in children, youth, families, and communities.

These investments are necessary to continue current levels of survivor services that were finally brought up to baseline minimal access levels in 2019 through one-time investments. In 2024, the Legislature recognized the importance of this increased capacity and unanimously passed HB 4140, which stated that these funds are to be considered current service level moving forward. If these investments are not continued, survivor services in communities across the state will suffer significant cuts. POP #327 cements the continuation of these funds.

One-Time Funding to Prevent Cuts to Interdisciplinary Victim Services Programs (\$18.5 Million as in HB 3196)

The Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, attempted homicide, and other crimes. Oregon was notified of the 42% in federal funding cuts following the close of the 2024 short Session. We need a one-time investment to continue important partnerships between service providers, prosecutors, law enforcement, and others serving victims of crime in every county in the state.

Every year, Community Works answers 12,000 crisis calls, provides supportive services to 2,000 people in person, and provides shelter to 250 beating hearts, half of whom are children. Last year, 306 survivors received financial assistance to move into safe housing, with \$1,500 being the average amount one person or family needs to get started in their new home, after which they are able to be financially self-sustaining. None of this would be possible without these critical dollars.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Kim Caplan
Community Works