



TO: Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response
DA: March 23, 2020
RE: COVID-19 Response for Crime Survivors

Co-Chairs Roblan and Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

We thank you for your quick and direct leadership in this time as Oregonian's face the Covid-19 epidemic. We write to address the urgent needs of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and the programs that serve them in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and it's resulting disruptions.

As Oregonians are urged to stay home to prevent the spread of this disease, we are starkly reminded that "home" is typically an unsafe place for survivors and their children. When home is dangerous, the safety net of housing, economic, legal, healthcare and mental health supports should be there to protect survivors from further harm.

Unfortunately, for Oregon's domestic and sexual violence Advocates, the very act of meeting face to face with survivors can jeopardize the health of our most valuable resource. Through this all advocates keep pushing forward – committed to providing services to survivors who need assistance and support.

Yet, shelters and victim service organizations are now grappling with the unprecedented challenge of communally housing and providing services for survivors just as the public health crisis requires distance and separation.

Programs are moving to provide services virtually, but most program providers are not equipped to provide supports in this manner and have concerns about survivor confidentiality needs.

Additionally, those survivors who have been able to access safe housing face increased risks of being unable to maintain that housing due to increased economic instability resulting from the pandemic. Survivors' current extreme housing instability and increased economic insecurity is placing overwhelming demands on service providers.

Critical support for victim services is required to operate, serve, shelter and house survivors with increased, flexible resources. Domestic and sexual violence organizations must have funds to pay for operational accommodations: Technology to support remote and digital support services, cleaning supplies, staffing changes, on-demand language access, and more. Oregon needs continued services and staffing, as well as provide cash assistance, rental assistance and temporary accommodation in hotels or motels for survivors.

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence in collaboration with Oregon's Sexual Assault Task Force and Partnership for Safety and Justice ask for: **\$2 million to support vital services directed to flexible emergency funding for local domestic violence programs to remain open and ready to serve.**

OCADSV has a commitment to continue to work together and share what we are hearing globally, nationally and in our state. We will continue to share with you as we think, learn and notice what is needed across Oregon.



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**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**



Michele Roland-Schwartz
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