

In Support of SB 271-1 Housing Navigator Funds

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee,

My name is Marlina Campos and I am a Bilingual Housing Advocate at the Center for Hope & Safety. The Center for Hope & Safety (CHS) is a nonprofit advocacy program providing services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. In the 47 years of operation, CHS has helped thousands of survivors find safety through crisis intervention services on our hotline; sheltering services at our confidential, safe shelter; community education and outreach; and much more. Our mission is to provide survivors with options so they can make the best decision for themselves and their families on their way to finding a life free of violence.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

I have worked at the Center for Hope & Safety for five years and I have seen the difference flexible housing funds can make for survivors of violence. Before the Housing Navigator funds became available... Since receiving the Housing Navigator funds in 2019, I have seen hopefulness increase among clients and my peer workers by seeing these families succeed despite the overwhelming number of barriers survivors face. And when working with minorities like women of color the barriers are even more so being able to get them in to safe affordable housing is very rewarding.

I believe it is critical the Housing Navigator funds continue, and I encourage your support of Senate Bill 271-1. The Housing Navigator Funds, will help Tribal Nations, Culturally Specific, and community-based programs like ours, to address the ongoing crises of the last year. At the beginning of the pandemic, after shelter-in-place orders took effect, our agency was acutely aware that violence in the home would escalate or worsen. **In March of 2020, we saw an 83% increase in calls to our hotline and requests for safe, emergency shelter. In April of 2020, CHS saw a 53% increase over the last year. At one point during those months, we were sheltering 14 families in addition to the families residing in our safe shelter.**

The need for emergency shelter is only one step in a survivor's journey to find safety. With the growing housing crisis in our region and across the state, finding and keeping stable housing is only made more difficult when coupled with the barriers faced by survivors of interpersonal violence. In 2019, both the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women and the National Network to End Domestic Violence found housing stability to be the greatest issue and unmet need facing survivors in Oregon. The Survivor Housing Funds changed this for so many survivors our agency supported. For example, **with the flexible housing funds – at the height of the pandemic – we were able to successfully house a survivor in permanent housing in two days.**

The barriers caused by lack of housing, coupled with the dynamics of abuse, create insurmountable barriers to safety, health and wellness, and economic self-sufficiency. **In the last year, 45% of the survivors and families the Center for Hope & Safety assisted with housing needs identify as from BIPOC communities.** The Housing Navigator Program allows culturally-specific programs, Oregon Tribal Nations, and community-based domestic and sexual violence programs to serve survivors who are facing housing instability. Through this program, advocates are able to offer individualized, trauma-informed expert housing placement assistance for those who may need to move to be safe, or who need help with landlord negotiations and housing searches, application processes, and

tenant education. We are asking for a \$5 million investment in these services to address the exponential need during this pandemic recovery period.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the importance of the Housing Navigator funds to change the lives of survivors in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Marlina Campos
Bilingual Housing Advocate

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marlina Campos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Marlina" on top and "Campos" below it, both starting with a capital letter.

SURVIVOR HOUSING FUNDS

Support \$5 million in funding in the DOJ Budget to assist survivors with emergency housing needs, HB 3327, SB 271-1, and the DOJ Budget Bill 5014.

The following numbers reflect the impact of the Survivor Housing Funds **within one year** (December 2019—December 2020). In that year, survivors, and community-based domestic violence programs alike, faced challenges due to the pandemic, wildfires, and a growing housing crisis.



87%

87% of survivors stating that having stable housing has helped them: keep a job, get a job, attend school, receive medical/mental health services, or manage child custody.

84% percent of survivors still have safe housing three months after receiving housing assistance.

86% of survivors with children report their children are more safe and stable.



91%

91% of survivors reported they feel better off than they did prior to receiving housing assistance.



1823

1823 survivors were assisted by grant-funded staff in one year.



848

848 survivors were provided financial assistance in the form of rent, deposits, or utilities to maintain or gain safe housing.

SUCCESS STORIES

Tides of Changes – Tillamook County

ToC assisted a single mother who could afford to stay in her own home and support herself while going through a divorce; however, due to financial abuse she was past due on her electric bill. ToC was able to assist her in paying that bill which reduced her anxiety and she no longer had to choose between groceries and bills. This survivor shared that this assistance helped her feel freed from her past and able to plan for the future of her family.

Project DOVE – Malheur County

Survivor "C" has the care of a minor child with special needs. Project DOVE assisted with maintaining stable, safe housing so the survivor could also remain employed. This survivor has been housed in one of Project Dove's Survivor Housing Funds designated units, while pursuing long term housing. The dependent child has been able to remain in the local school system with the same teacher and Project DOVE has been able to provide required technology to accommodate remote learning.

Raphael House – Multnomah County

One participant who benefitted from emergency client assistance support is a single mother experiencing serious health challenges that have prevented her from working full time and being able to pay her full rent. Advocates had been helping her explore all of the potential community housing resources, however, the county she lives in did not have many financial support resources available. At the time, Raphael House did have some available emergency rental assistance, but it was restricted to residents of Multnomah County. The participant let the advocates know that she had received a 72-hour notice of eviction in January. Raphael House's Survivor Housing Funds came through on the last day of the 72-hour period. This allowed the program to pay the overdue rent and late fees, ensuring that the survivor kept her housing and was able to continue focusing on medical treatment and parenting her young child.

Lake County Crisis Center – Lake County

LCCC assisted an older, non-English speaking female, a domestic violence victim, with financial assistance using these funds. The funds paid the RV space rent to the property owner/landlord which made it possible for our client to leave her abusive husband of several years and to move into the trailer located on the space. It was only necessary to help this client one time and that's all she needed to get on her feet and start her new life free of abuse.

Womenspace – Lane County

Womenspace supported a mother of three who had fled to a nearby Oregon town. After a few months of working to reestablish herself and her kids, in the middle of a pandemic, the abuser found them. Scared for her children and her life, she called Womenspace, hoping Eugene would be a place her abuser would never think to look. At this time, wildfires had begun raging throughout our state, forcing Womenspace to shelter this family in a hotel outside of Eugene. Finally feeling safer, the family started the process of trying to rebuild once again. During this time, the mom and her children worked through the new challenges of living in a hotel outside the city, all during the COVID-19 pandemic. After a month of living in the hotel and searching for a job, the mom was able to start working again. After that, the family was approved to move into a new apartment in Eugene and the kids were enrolled in a new school.

Clackamas Women's Services – Clackamas County

A survivor had fled from her abuser and was accessing domestic violence support services, safety planning and support from CWS. She was able to secure an apartment in a community nearby for herself and her 2 small children. However, just as she settled into her new home, she tested positive for Covid19 and was unable to work for one month. Though she fortunately stayed relatively healthy and well, her financial stability was severely jeopardized. With these funds, CWS was able to assist her with rent and utilities to stay safely housed during this time, preventing what could have been a disruption that would have cost her housing or put her so far behind, she wouldn't have been able to catch up.

Domestic Violence Services – Umatilla and Morrow Counties

DVS helped a mother of four who sought assistance with finding and obtaining housing after fleeing domestic violence and stalking. In addition, she needed assistance with finding employment. She was able to secure employment at a livable wage. DVS assisted her by communicating with the property management and she was placed in a suitable rental unit. The program helped the survivor create a budget that reflected her employment and the DHS DV grant. DVS then was able to effectively provide financial assistance to secure the housing. This survivor and her children are now living in safe housing.

Center for Hope & Safety – Marion County

An older adult came to work with CHS after escalated abuse led to the abuser being removed from the home by a protective order. Several stresses, including financial, had the survivor considering suicide. When the survivor connected with CHS, she was considering returning to abuser. The survivor was connected to resources to help her manage stress, find employment, and housing funds were used to pay the housing costs.

**THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING SURVIVORS!**

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