

MULTNOMAH COUNTY FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Abuse Recovery Ministry & Services, Allies in Change, Bradley-Angle House, CASA For Children, Cascadia, Catholic Charities' El Programa Hispano-Project UNICA, ChangePoint, Choices Domestic Violence Intervention Program, City of Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Communities Against Domestic Violence, Gresham Police Department, IRCO, Legal Aid Services of Oregon-Multnomah County Office, Lewis & Clark Legal Clinic, Lifeworks NW, Listen to Kids, Men's Resource Center/Women's Counseling Center, Metropolitan Public Defenders, Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, Multnomah County Circuit Court, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Multnomah County Family Court Services, Multnomah County Health Department, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Native American Family Healing Circle, Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon Medical Association, Portland Health Institute, Portland Police Bureau, Portland Women's Crisis Line, Raphael House of Portland, Russian Oregon Social Services, SAWERA, SoValTI Family Services, The Salvation Army West Women's & Children's Shelter, Volunteers of America Home Free, YWCA of Greater Portland, 211Info

April 19, 2010

Chair Jeff Cogen
Multnomah County
501 SE Hawthorne
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Chair Cogen

As you are aware, domestic violence remains a serious, life-threatening problem in Multnomah County. It remains the highest contributor to violent crime in our community, accounting for at 40% of all reported violent crime, and for a high proportion of deaths. At least six people so far this year have died because of domestic violence in our county. This represents a significant increase compared to 2007, 2008 and 2009: in each of those years there were six or fewer domestic-violence related deaths.

Clearly, it is important that we not only continue our current efforts to intervene in and prevent domestic violence, but expand those efforts. The number of deaths and the devastating impact of domestic violence on victims/survivors, their children and our communities requires a well-coordinated comprehensive response. We know that the existing services available are already less than the need; for example, the victim services system received 17,000 requests for shelter in the last year for which they were unable to provide shelter.

The Family Violence Coordinating Council Budget Committee has analyzed the current program offers related to domestic violence intervention and recommends the following prioritization of funding. Although we have prioritized some program offers over others, it is our belief that all of the program offers are needed to fully respond to and prevent domestic violence. The attached table provides an overview of each of the offers.

The highest priority is to maintain the existing capacity. The following program offers would fund existing capacity:

- Department of County Human Services (DCHS) -- 25040A
- Department of Community Justice (DCJ) -- 50040, 50040B and 50051
- District Attorney's Office DA -- 15015A, 15015B and 15019A.

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The second level of priority is to backfill projects for which grant funding will be ending in 2011 and to increase the number of DA victim assistance advocates found in the following offers:

- DCHS -- 25040B, Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT)
- DCHS -- 25040C, Safe Start Collaboration
- MCSO -- 60076A, DVERT deputy
- DA -- 15019B, Victim Assistance Advocates

The third level of priority is to expand capacity of the victim services system. We are creating new access points for victims through the Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Services and training for other social service providers to identify victims. It will be essential that the victim services system be expanded to meet that growing need. **DCHS 25043A** will increase county general funds to existing victim services contractors by 25%, and will be the first significant increase in county funding since 1999. Since that time, the cost of living/staffing has increased by 30-35% and median rent has risen by 25-40%.

The fourth priority level is to fund the DCHS program offers which increase victim services and fund school-based prevention services. All of these additions address critical identified needs, align with the Community-Based Victim Services Plan adopted by the Board in 2002 and will be needed to not only the current but the projected numbers of victims seeking services.

- 25042, increases capacity to implement recommendations of the Fatality Review and to gather, analyze and use data to improve our outcomes,
- 25043B provides additional emergency and transitional housing capacity,
- 25043C adds capacity to serve emerging populations of victims, such as people with disabilities, African immigrants and older victims,
- 25043D increases the number of sites at which advocates can be located to assist victims who are unlikely to seek out domestic violence services, and
- 25044 provides dating violence prevention and healthy relationships education and services for dating violence victims at the six SUN high schools in the county.

We understand that you are faced with yet another year of budget cuts. At the same time, our data force us to recommend allocating the full \$3.6 million additional funding for domestic violence intervention and prevention. We believe that without significant additional resources, there will be continued deaths and increasing levels of domestic violence. Only with additional resources can we address one of the most damaging and widespread problems in our county, save lives and reduce the impact of violence on children.

Thank you for all of your support for victims in the past. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you in person.

Sincerely



Teri Lorenzen, Chair
Multnomah County Family Violence Coordinating Council