



**OREGON COALITION
AGAINST DOMESTIC AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

December 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence Coalition (OCADSV) is a statewide sexual and domestic violence coalition that promotes equity and social change to end violence for all communities. OCADSV supports 54 member programs that include, 6 culturally specific programs and four Tribal Nations programs of the Siletz Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, as well as affiliate partners that serve survivors. OCADSV is also available to assist non-members with technical assistance and resources through multiple funding sources. In collaboration with our membership, we improve statewide systems responses to survivors and offer technical assistance, training, and expertise to build the capacity of member programs to enhance services to survivors.

Each state receiving funds from the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (OFVPS), a dedicated federal funding stream for family violence services, must develop a statewide assessment detailing the needs of sexual and domestic violence survivors, with an emphasis on underserved areas and populations. The needs assessment is created every three years and informs the state plan for FVPSA resources and funding priorities for the growth of resources and services available statewide.

This OCADSV Needs Assessment Report analyzes data sets from several assessments and surveys together with the 2024 Statewide Needs Assessment survey data to show the existing service needs and systemic gaps. The additional assessments and surveys analyzed include: the OCADSV's 2023 Salary Survey; OCADSV's Statewide Violence Prevention Assessment; Oregon Alliance to End Gender Based Violence's 2024 Priority Survey Findings; and the Oregon data from the national ReStorytion Project (see Appendix for key findings).

DATA LIMITATIONS

The lack of a unified research design and outreach strategy ensuring participation from survivors with lived expertise; Black, Indigenous, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities; and those working in culturally specific, Tribal, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and LGBTQIA2s+ communities limits the report data. The participation of DV/SA advocates, survivors, and respondents from communities of color and marginalized communities in the 2024 Needs Assessment is lower than expected. This may be a result of frequent staff turnover and field-wide burnout in member programs post the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced in the Salary Survey, ReStorytion report, and Prevention Assessment data.

2024 STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

METHODOLOGY

In 2024, OCADSV assessed the statewide domestic and sexual violence system response throughout Oregon, as required by the OFVPS Grant. The purpose of the needs assessment was to better understand the current service response system; identify existing strengths; identify gaps in services and field-wide challenges; and set future priorities for advancing system improvement efforts across Oregon. The needs assessment included five distinct planning phases: 1) assessment design and feedback solicited for questions; 2) outreach and data distribution methods; 3) data and information gathering; 4) synthesizing data collected; and 5) review and report writing.

OCADSV conducted outreach to ensure engagement from survivors, advocates from mainstream programs, Tribal, and culturally specific programs, executive leadership, and community partners in information-gathering activities. OCADSV conducted one in-person listening session with member programs and their 12 advocates and staff from Region 7(Eastern Oregon); and two other virtual listening sessions with leadership from member programs including representatives from Sexual Assault Resource Center in Washington County, Call to Safety in Multnomah County, YWCA of Multnomah County, VOA Home Free of Multnomah County, Domestic Violence Services, Inc of Umatilla and Morrow Counties and Tides of Change in Tillamook County.

OCADSV staff also conducted stake-holder interviews with representatives from: Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF), Oregon Law Center, Victims' Rights Law Center, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Public Health Division, Oregon Department of Human Services (SHP, COLO, and TADVS Teams), National Crime Victims' Law Institute, The Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde Warriors of Hope Program, and, Women's Foundation of Oregon.

In addition, OCADSV gathered information from 17 advocates, Tribal communities, funders, organizational leadership, and key OCADSV staff through an online survey.

SCOPE OF INQUIRY: GUIDING QUESTIONS

OCADSV worked with key partners to identify the scope of inquiry and overarching questions to guide information collection:

2024 NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Regarding Coalition member programs' capacity:



1. Statewide Collaboration is essential to our work.

- What is needed to support meaningful collaboration in the Oregon DV/SA system?
- What is working?
- What challenges have you identified?



2. We are assessing training needs throughout our system. In regards to onboarding new staff; continuing education of existing staff; 40-hour core; training board members, managers, directors, and fiscal staff:

- What is working in the following content areas?

Regarding survivors' needs:



3. Our goal is to support equitable access to robust voluntary services throughout Oregon.

- How are you ensuring that survivors inform your services?
- What barriers to equitable access have you identified?
- What is working?



4. Survivors' needs for resources, such as housing, childcare, legal services, and medical care, are ever-changing and complex. Considering the resources in your community:

- What resources need to be included?
- What needs are emerging?
- What is working well?



5. We would like to better understand our member program's training and technical assistance needs in the following areas of Human resources; IT; Financial management and reporting; Best practices in DV/SA intervention response; Best practices in DV/SA prevention.

- What questions do you have?
- What gaps can you identify?
- What works well?

KEY THEMES AND FINDINGS

Key findings from the 2024 Needs Assessment data highlight the current capacity of Oregon's DV and SA member programs to meet the complexity of survivors' needs, and the current barriers and challenges survivors face in accessing safety. Many of these themes resonate with findings in the other assessments and surveys mentioned above, amplifying the following system-wide challenges:

1) High turnover at the executive leadership level and low retention rates for advocate and case-worker staff. The lack of competitive compensation for DV/SA staff, coupled with the myriad impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the wellbeing of DV/SA staff, results in historically low staff retention rates. As of December 2024, 20 of the 54 member programs have executive directors who have been in their roles for three years or less. Reasons impacting staff retention are reflected in the Salary Survey and ReStoryation data and include high levels of staff burnout compounded by increased workloads as programs struggle to fill vacancies. Funding to provide competitive salaries to retain staff is limited in rural and frontier communities, for those co-located advocates within the Department of Human Services and for culturally specific and smaller grassroots providers. Survey feedback also shows advocate frustration with a lack of job development and advancement opportunities within DV/SA organizations.

2) Lack of organizational capacity. Due to high staff turnover, DV/SA programs struggle to maintain the institutional knowledge and expertise needed to provide consistent services. This impacts the ability of organizations to meet funder requirements and apply for and manage grants necessary to provide services and maintain organizational operations. As a result of these factors, there was a closure of a rural/frontier program, and two rural programs are no longer receiving Crime Victim and Survivors Services Division (CVSSD)/ DHS funding. Respondents shared concerns about these program closures leaving rural survivors with even fewer options and a desire to quickly fill this existing gap.

3) Inadequate funding for survivor services. As the American Rescue Plan Act and other COVID-19 resources cycle out, available funding levels are not enough to meet the increasing level of need. Respondents expressed the need for investments in creative and flexible services for survivors in culturally-specific and historically underserved programs, as well as for single survivors without children. The OCADSV Statewide Violence Prevention Assessment (2024) findings reflect similar needs, with respondents citing the funding to pursue violence prevention strategies is inadequate and often structured in a way that presents additional barriers, such as short timelines, unnecessary use restrictions, and burdensome reporting and compliance processes. In 2024, the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women (the Alliance), of which OCADSV is a member, surveyed 223 community-based, culturally-specific, and other agencies serving survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Respondents identified flexible funding and services for survivors, legal and criminal justice services, and funding for prevention and community education as top needs for survivors. Other areas of service needs identified included: mental health services, SANE and other medical services, and identity-specific services.

4) Gaps in services for immigrant survivors, Tribal, Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, and other historically underserved populations. The gaps in services for immigrant survivors, and those from historically underserved communities are echoed across several assessments. Respondents talked about a lack of legal services, especially in rural areas, and tensions between Tribes and dominant culture programs located within the same geographic areas that result in survivors falling through the gaps.

5) The lack of emergency and long-term housing options, including hotel and motel options and rental vouchers, is a pervasive and overarching need. As a result of violence and economic abuse, survivors face a range of barriers to accessing and maintaining housing. These barriers are compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the downsizing of communal shelters and the increase in already high housing costs. The Alliance's survey identified housing resources as a top need for survivors, and the need for a range of creative and flexible housing options across the spectrum was identified in the 2024 Needs Assessment, with respondents stating survivors need more emergency hotel and motel vouchers, flexible funding, rental vouchers, and permanent housing.

6) The need for survivor-centered planning, feedback, and incorporation of best practices within agencies. Respondents talked about the lack of survivor expertise in state-wide planning and evaluation activities resulting in inadequate survivor-driven policies and programs.

7) A more cohesive statewide shared vision for Oregon. OCADSV and the Sexual Assault Task Force, together with the Oregon Department of Human Services; Department of Justice, CVSSD; and the Health Authority, are leading various statewide efforts to improve intervention and prevention efforts statewide. There is a need for streamlining and expanding systems level advocacy roles to be more collaborative and effective. Member programs expressed role clarity on who leads statewide collaboration planning and implementation activities. With staffing turnover at member organizations and in statewide organizational leadership roles, the shared vision is continually being redefined and changing based on revolving positions within statewide leadership roles.

8) Increased language access. There is a lack of comprehensive and linguistically specific Deaf/HoH access for survivors. Organizations receiving federal funds are required to provide meaningful access with a language plan for how the agency will provide interpretation and translation services. In the metro areas, the culturally specific funded DV/SA agencies that provide increased language access for survivors remain underfunded and underresourced. In rural and frontier areas, there are few culturally specific providers with language access capabilities. Many survivors cannot receive services in their spoken language or from within their community. Without language access or services for or by the community, survivors are unable to engage in services and are disconnected within shelter and outreach programs.

9) Lack of comprehensive wrap-around services with system partners, especially in rural and Tribal areas. The data illuminates pronounced service gaps in rural, Tribal, and historically underserved communities. Respondents expressed the challenges when attempting to access multiple systems of care for survivors, including legal, mental health, recovery treatment, criminal

justice, and SANE healthcare support. In both rural and urban areas, there is a lack of attorney representation for family law and housing and eviction-related cases. The few lawyers that exist are often not taking on new clients. SANE nurses are limited in rural regions and are not adequately compensated for their unique skill sets. Respondents also talked about a need for primary aggressor and bias training for criminal justice and law enforcement professionals.

10) The lack of standardized privacy, confidentiality, and advocate privilege training. Due to staff turnover and long-time historical knowledge leaving the field, there is a lack of standardized implementation of privacy and confidentiality policy. In addition to FVPSA and VAWA protections, Oregon has advocate privilege. State advocates cannot share any personally identifiable information with Federal, Tribal, or State grant programs. They must also keep all survivor information confidential and are subject to losing their advocate privilege certification if they violate or disclose survivor information. In rural and frontier communities where “everyone knows everybody”, there is an expectation from system partners who mandate services (i.e. child welfare and law enforcement) to share information that could endanger the survivor and their advocate. Additional feedback was given related to aggregate data collection improvements needed within the statewide database.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The OCADSV Needs Assessment Report highlights the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the landscape of sexual and domestic violence services in Oregon. As a proven statewide leader and convener, OCADSV offers recommendations to improve services for survivors. These recommendations, which are focused on improving inclusion, capacity, and sustainability within the domestic and sexual violence system in Oregon, are the building blocks to an effective plan. This Needs Assessment Report represents just one stage of an ongoing effort to develop, assess, and evaluate a range of DV/SA prevention and response strategies in Oregon. Some of the challenges highlighted in this process are specific to Oregon, but many reflect problems that are present nationwide and even globally. There are many opportunities to collaborate with survivors and organizations within and outside of Oregon to take a collective approach in pursuing the recommendations provided below:

Provide training and technical assistance (TTA) and funding resources to build and strengthen DV/SA organizational capacity. Creating capacity in organizations that have lost significant expertise, while shoring up staff resources and preventing further turnover, is a top priority for the sustainability of Oregon’s DV/SA field. This entails a range of TTA interventions coupled with a plan to raise staff compensation to competitive levels. Accessible and ongoing TTA must include: fiscal management, grants management, board development, and leadership training for new executive directors, leadership development for advocate staff, BIPOC leaders, and program administrators; succession planning for executive directors cycling out of their role; core advocacy and anti-oppression training for advocacy staff; and ongoing education on best practices.

Invest in the DV/SA system to meet survivor requests for services. OCADSV can continue to work with state funders, membership, and policymakers to meet state funding formula recommendations for increasing survivor services. As many states and local jurisdictions face funding challenges post the COVID-19 pandemic, additional investments are needed for local programs to be sustainable.

Increase diverse housing options for survivors. A survivor-led housing assessment process should be a primary action to inform housing interventions and funding streams needed for addressing the various survivors' housing needs in Oregon. The assessment should include recommendations for housing and service models, with a lens toward culturally specific strategies that respond to the needs of the survivors most often marginalized by mainstream housing systems. Advocates and housing providers must also be well-versed in the housing protections VAWA provides to ensure programs are in compliance and survivors' housing rights are protected.

Co-create services and systems with survivors. Ensure survivors with lived expertise are leading or co-leading all efforts to evaluate and improve services and systems. This requires fairly compensating survivors for their time; ensuring language access; providing onboarding training so survivors can participate; and equally valuing lived expertise, work experience, and education credentials.

Increase prevention efforts. Increase funding for violence prevention strategies, with a focus on flexible reporting and low-barrier compliance processes, and strengthening the role of practitioners from marginalized communities.

Ensure and increase language access. Prioritize language access for survivors through hiring bicultural and bilingual and Deaf/HoH staff; funding technology, interpretation and translation services; and formalize partnerships with Tribal and culturally specific programs and mainstream providers. Fund, support, and create Deaf/HoH, and culturally specific for and by organizations that survivors can access within their communities.

Support comprehensive wrap-around services with system partners, especially in rural and Tribal areas. Increase primary prevention and early intervention services, mental health, and criminal and legal services, along with medical/SANE programs. Statewide and federal investments are needed to address the gaps in frontier, rural, Tribal, and historically underserved communities. Formal partnerships are necessary to provide on-going training and systems support to address biases and understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual violence.

Create a cohesive foundation to standardize privacy, confidentiality, and advocate privilege training. Implement standardized training for new advocates, leadership, board of directors and community partners on advocate privilege, privacy and confidentiality for survivors. Oregon has some of the strongest protections in the country between survivors and their advocates with advocate privilege. On-going training addressing formal system partnership expectations on what information can be shared will benefit the survivor and positive working relationships in communities, particularly in small and rural communities.

A statewide shared vision for Oregon. A shared vision will support the effective implementation of the above mentioned recommendations. Coordinating and communicating at the state level will support local victim service providers in improving services to survivors in any county or Tribal Nation in Oregon.

Further Inquiry

Given the limitations of this Need Assessment Report, the next needs assessment process would benefit from a longer timeline with significant investment in relationship building, and a specific focus on engaging with Tribal communities, collaborating with survivors, rural and frontier communities, and individuals and communities that are underrepresented in this assessment. There were significant changes in the global, national, and statewide landscapes due to the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted the victim services field in Oregon. Since the last needs assessment report, there has been significant field-wide staff turnover nationwide and in Oregon, with organizational transition turnover in half of OCADSV member programs. OCSADSV is only beginning to understand the impact this disruption has on the sector and the survivors. Future assessments will seek to better understand this impact to inform more precise and tailored recommendations for effectively responding to the multiple levels of impact.

“The DV/SA system is under-resourced, which creates a scarcity mindset and makes organizational leaders feel more competitive about available funding. This undermines collaboration and feelings of solidarity that “we are all in it together.”

This report and its findings will be shared with OCADSV staff, board, and its member programs, community partners, the Oregon Department of Human Services State FVPSA Administrator, the federal OFVPS office, and will be posted for the public on the www.ocadsv.org website.

APPENDIX:

OCADSV Salary Survey Report (2023)

From December 2022 through May 2023, OCADSV employed interviews and surveys to collect quantitative and qualitative data about the salary scales and benefits offered at member programs. This included online surveys about benefits and wages distributed to HR staff; online surveys asking about job responsibilities, salary, and benefits distributed to advocate staff; and Interviews conducted with Program Directors about the salary and benefit determination process. Based on feedback from 111 advocates, and data from 23 of the 53 (in 2023 OCADSV had 53 member programs in 2024 we added one for 54 total at time of writing)OCADSV member and tribal programs, high level findings for OCADSV's salary survey report include:

- While member programs pay similar or higher wages than in neighboring Washington State, Oregon community-based advocacy wages fall below similarly situated positions in both the non-profit and government sectors nationwide.
- Salaries remain low for direct service advocates in Oregon community-based DV/SA agencies, even though they have a multitude of job responsibilities that are compounded by the high staff turnover rates.
- As of January 1, 2024, OCADSV has documented 22 new Executive Directors in the 54 member programs over the last three years. Turnover has caused losses in historical memory and expertise in both direct services and leadership in programs.
- On average, Executive Directors in OCADSV's member programs earn over \$40,000 less per year than executive directors and CEOs in other Oregon non-profits.
- Most advocates surveyed reported valuing the opportunity to connect with survivors, their colleagues, and the community through their work, and received robust PTO, opportunities for debriefing and support, and access to mental health benefits.
- Almost all of the advocates surveyed noted that higher wages would make their jobs more sustainable. Many responded that low wages are the hardest part of their jobs.

ReStoryation National Data Report (2024)

OCADSV was one of 24 DV/SA coalitions representing states and territories in the ReStoryation Project, an effort to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the DV/SA workforce. As part of their participation, OCADSV disseminated a survey to their membership asking about emotional and physical health, strains on capacity, economic stability, sense of hope and optimism, and many other impacts of the pandemic resulting in systemwide fatigue. Feedback from 33 survey respondents resonates with findings from OCADSV's 2023 Salary Survey Report and sheds more light on the sense of instability and burnout providers are feeling.

Highlights from the data include:

- Providers stay in the work because they love their job, feel good about what they do, feel deep connection and passion from serving survivors, and are drawn to the organizational mission. Respondents mention positive work culture, flexibility, autonomy, and trauma-informed supervision as reasons why they stay.
- Providers also report that they are stretched thin, do not see the return in all the work they are asked to do (especially related to DEI activities), and see the negative impact on their overall health and well-being.
- Most respondents (69%) have been at their organizations five years or less, and feeling burnt out is pervasive, with 57% reporting feeling slightly to very “burned out” about their work. Only 27% of respondents reported “not likely” or “a little likely” that they will be working at their agency (even if in a different position) in five years.
- Almost half of the providers reported they were (48.5%) “more anxious” and that their physical and mental health are worse compared to before the pandemic.
- No respondent believes that their organization is adequately staffed, for reasons ranging from lack of financial resources to being unable to fill empty positions fast enough, to challenges finding qualified applicants.

Oregon Alliance to End Gender Based Violence Priority Survey Findings (2024)

OCADSV is a member of the The Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women (the Alliance), whose primary purpose is promoting legislation in Oregon designed to protect and to empower survivors of domestic and sexual violence. As part of their process for establishing priorities for the 2025 legislative session, the Alliance disseminated a survey to community-based, culturally-specific and other agencies serving survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Of the 223 responses, approximately half of the respondents live in the Metro area and half in other counties (Central Oregon - 11%; Eastern Oregon - 25%; Mid-Valley - 33%; Portland Metro area - 68%; North Coast - 11%; Southern Oregon - 13%). The top categories survey respondents self-identified as: Community-based confidential advocate: 58%; Survivor: 36%; and Culturally-specific advocate: 9%.

If funding was unlimited, survey respondents from survivor service programs identified the following things they would spend money on: housing; staff support and advocate retention; flexible funding and services for survivors; legal and criminal justice services, improvements and training; and prevention and community education.

Survey respondent identified the following as the greatest unmet needs of survivors in their community:

- Housing needs and barriers (shelter, vouchers, rent assistance, etc.).
- Lack of legal resources & insufficient criminal justice response.
- Need for additional flexible funding and services for survivors; funding is too restrictive to provide survivor needs.

- Lack of mental health services or providers.
- Lack of medical/SANE services.
- Need for identity-specific services.

OCADSV Statewide Violence Prevention Assessment (2024)

OCADSV engaged in a coalition capacity assessment process as part of a broader funding partnership through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Rape Prevention and Education program. The assessment informed the current role and existing strengths of OCADSV's sexual violence primary prevention efforts in Oregon and identified unmet community needs and priorities for advancing prevention efforts statewide and into the future. The assessment involved virtual and in-person listening sessions, interviews, and surveys to engage community partners and practitioners across multiple disciplines.

Key findings on the needs and barriers to effective prevention work in Oregon include:

- Preventionists report a lack of knowledge on how to connect with wider efforts and coalition activities, citing a lack of time, capacity, and funding to access these opportunities.
- Staff turnover is a major barrier to effective prevention. Participants attributed this problem to a range of factors, including uncompetitive compensation, short-term funding opportunities, isolation in their roles, and inadequate attention among organizational leaders and funders to practitioner wellbeing and work and life balance.
- Practitioners from marginalized communities are deterred from seeking out and persisting in prevention roles due to expectations to volunteer their time, accept low wages, and endure poor work conditions.
- Funding to pursue violence prevention strategies is inadequate and often presents additional barriers, such as short timelines, unnecessary use restrictions, and burdensome reporting and compliance processes.