

Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Statewide Violence Prevention Assessment

June 2024



Assessment facilitated by:



Rooting Movements

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OCADSV staff were deeply involved in the planning, design, and facilitation of the assessment.

This assessment could not take place without participation from violence prevention practitioners across Oregon. It is Rooting Movements' and OCADSV's priority to ensure that the limited and valuable time that was invested in this process results in improvements in violence prevention work across Oregon.

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Program description

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) is a member-based coalition with a 45+ year history of domestic and sexual violence prevention and advocacy work in Oregon. In 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 purpose of the assessment was to better understand the current role and existing strengths of OCADSV's primary prevention efforts in Oregon and identify unmet community needs and priorities for advancing prevention efforts across the state and into the future. The assessment involved engaging community partners and practitioners across multiple disciplines and utilizing a data-driven approach to establish recommendations and action steps. While the focus of the assessment was the primary prevention of sexual violence, the more generic term "violence prevention" was used in conducting the assessment in order to recognize and speak to a wider array of health equity and anti-oppression approaches than are integral to sexual violence prevention.

Planning and design

The assessment began with a planning and design phase led by Rooting Movements and OCADSV staff members. This included a document review focused on OCADSV's involvement with violence prevention initiatives and programs implemented in Oregon beginning with the 2006 publication *Recommendations to Prevent Sexual Violence in Oregon: A Plan of Action* to the present. The document review focused on OCADSV's engagement in violence prevention work since 2006 as reflected in strategic plans, white papers, practice guides, and other written materials. It also reviewed OCADSV's statewide policy advocacy activities, including a review of legislation pushed by the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women, a policy advocacy group that OCADSV is a founding member of. A list of exemplary documents reviewed as part of this process are included in the appendix (Item A). Building on this initial review, Rooting Movements and OCADSV staff members worked together to determine key questions to address gaps in existing knowledge and inform the assessment. Community partners and stakeholders were identified and invited to engage in the assessment process. Participants include prevention educators, survivor advocates, leadership in OCADSV member agencies, public and private funders, statewide training and technical assistance providers, and employees of state government agencies involved in violence prevention.

Engagement Strategies

The assessment process involved engaging partner agencies and practitioners through listening sessions, confidential interviews, and an anonymous online survey. The approach for each strategy is briefly described below.

Listening Sessions

Rooting Movements and OCADSV staff members recruited participants and facilitated four in-person regional listening sessions. The locations of these listening sessions were selected with a goal of maximizing geographic access and ensuring the representation of partners working in rural settings. The listening session schedule and guiding questions are included in the appendix (Items B and C). To reduce barriers and increase access, attendees had the option of mileage reimbursement and a per diem to offset the cost associated with attendance. Listening sessions were each 120 minutes and facilitated by Darin J. Dorsey with support from OCADSV staff members. Discussions were recorded through participatory note taking (e.g. facilitator white board notes), a process in which participants help to ensure the accuracy of their contributions, which were documented and transcribed. Additionally, a two hour virtual listening session was held with practitioners working in a statewide capacity. Detailed notes from this virtual listening session were recorded by a designated OCADSV staff member.

Interviews

Confidential interviews were conducted over Zoom in May and June 2024. Interviews focused on gathering in-depth perspectives from long-term preventionists, including their perceptions and engagement with OCADSV and opportunities for OCADSV to address unmet needs and effectively expand its work. Each interview lasted between 14-31 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview schedule and guiding questions are included in the appendix (Items D and E).

Anonymous Survey

An anonymous survey was conducted online. The survey included a brief demographic questionnaire and questions related to participants' engagement in violence prevention work in Oregon, perceptions and engagement with OCADSV's support for violence prevention work, and opportunities for addressing unmet needs and expanding impact. The survey took an estimated 15-20 minutes for participants to complete. Question types included multi-response selections, qualitative text entry, and a numerical ranking. The survey was distributed through OCADSV listservs, provided to listening sessions attendees, and sent to interview participants. The outreach emails sent through OCADSV listservs and the survey questionnaire are included in the appendix (Items F and G).

Partner engagement

The assessment strategies were designed to reach a diversity of participants in terms of their geographic context, organizational and work settings, and focus of their

prevention work, as well as their personal history in the field and their social locations (e.g. age, racial or ethnic identities, gender identities, etc). This section describes the organizational partners and participants that engaged in the assessment process.

Organizational partners

OCADSV conducted outreach to statewide partners and member programs to invite their feedback and engagement in the assessment process. Table I indicates statewide partners and OCADSV member programs in which one or more executive leader and/or preventionist participated in a listening session, interview, and/or the survey.

Table I: Statewide partners and member programs engaged in the assessment	
Statewide partners	Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service, Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Law Center, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
OCADSV member organizations with staff or leadership participation	African Youth and Community Organization, Community Works, El Programa Hispana, Family Justice Center of Washington County, Helping Hands Oregon, Hope and Safety Alliance, Jackson County SART, Klamath Advocacy Center, New Avenues for Youth, Raphael House, Saving Grace, Sexual Assault Support Services, The Harbor

Participant demographics, roles, and experiences

The outreach and recruitment process sought to engage a diverse pool of prevention practitioners. Intended forms of diversity included demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, disability, language, geography, age), as well as job role, work settings, and the kinds of prevention practices participants engaged in. The assessment process was successful in achieving demographic diversity of participants in some areas, such as geography, disability, age, gender, and sexuality. For example, listening sessions and interviews were conducted with practitioners working in rural and frontier settings in Central, Eastern, and Southern Oregon, as well as those working in population centers (e.g. Portland, Eugene, Salem). Additionally, the majority of anonymous survey participants identified as having a disability (58%) and as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning or asexual (63%). The assessment was less successful in achieving racial diversity in participation. For example, survey participants were majority white and there was limited to no survey participation among prevention practitioners who identify as Black, Indigenous, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. While it would have been ideal to develop specific

outreach strategies to increase engagement of these communities in the assessment, the timeline of less than six months did not allow for a culturally inclusive and culturally informed community engagement process.

Lack of participation from these communities may reflect a lack of racial diversity within paid preventionist positions in Oregon, among other factors. Racial identity information was not formally tracked for listening sessions or interviews, however, several participants spoke about their involvement in and the importance of culturally-specific violence prevention work in Oregon and explicitly named Black, Indigenous, Latinx and LGBTQ-led work. Efforts to ensure that greater racial and cultural diversity of perspectives were included in the assessment process were inhibited by the timeline, which provided for less than six months of planning and implementation and limited the capacity to engage in meaningful relationship building and community-specific outreach.

Participants reflected diversity in terms of their years of experience, job roles, and their approaches and settings of their prevention work. Listening session and interviews participants ranged from those relatively new to prevention work to practitioners with more than three decades work in the field. They included people in direct service roles, management, and executive leadership positions. The work histories and job roles of interview participants are included in the appendix (Item D). The majority of anonymous survey participants had long-term investments in prevention work, while a third were relatively new to the field. Table 2 describes their roles and most common work settings and areas of focus.

Table 2: Roles, settings, and areas of focus among survey participants	
Roles of anonymous survey participants in relation to OSCADV	community based organizer and/or advocate, staff members of OCADSV member programs, staff members of OCADSV, OCADSV prevention program grantees, government agency employee, therapist/counselor, culturally-specific service provider, statewide technical assistance provider
Common work settings reported by survey participants	community-based settings, k-12 school settings, higher education settings, healthcare settings, youth-serving community-based settings, workplaces
Common areas of focus reported by survey participants (> 50%)	sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, teen dating violence, sexual harassment, racial equity, human/labor trafficking, sexual and reproductive health and rights, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer advocacy, advocacy for trans,

	non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, technology violence
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Analysis and Results

Data from the three processes of partner engagement (i.e., listening session notes, survey responses, interview transcripts) were reviewed and analyzed independently by the two authors (see Appendix Item H for author biographies).. Listening session notes and interview transcripts were read, organized, and analyzed using both a deductive and inductive analytical approach to identify frequent and salient themes and emerging constructs. Survey data were explored using descriptive analyses of numerical responses and categorization of text-based responses. The findings from the three data sources were triangulated along with the data from the preliminary document review to incorporate recent historical context. The results are presented below.

The State of Violence Prevention in Oregon

OCADSV has engaged in and supported gender-based violence prevention efforts in Oregon since its inception. The Coalition’s comprehensive approach to sexual violence prevention is reflected by its connections to and relationships with preventionists working in a wide array of practice settings and modalities. OCADSV’s formative *Prevention Through Liberation* white paper published in 2018, and its subsequent funding initiative, has further expanded the Coalition’s comprehensive perspective and reach by explicitly including anti-racism and anti-oppression organizing as a theory and practice of violence prevention. Today, OCADSV supports a range of violence prevention efforts with particular strengths in sexual and reproductive health, youth engagement work, and community-specific violence prevention strategies .

OCADSV has established its credibility and potential to coordinate a strong network of practitioners and statewide technical assistance providers working at the cutting-edge of sexual violence prevention efforts. Participants reached by OCADSV for the purposes of this assessment included seasoned leaders with more than three decades of prevention experience to those just entering the workforce. They were engaged in violence prevention in diverse settings ranging from public schools to healthcare facilities and from domestic violence shelters to local farms. Their work transected multiple state systems (e.g. child welfare, public health, criminal justice) and community-based settings. Their approaches were diverse, ranging from prevention education with youth (e.g., healthy relationships) and practitioners (e.g., DV 101, trafficking 101) to culturally-specific or community-specific community organizing. This range of experience presents an asset for capacity building with the potential to fortify

proven, long-term strategies, formalize mentorship networks and leadership pipelines, and invest in innovative and creative approaches.

Barriers, Unmet Needs, Challenges

There are significant barriers to effective violence prevention work in Oregon with most preventionists working in vastly under-resourced contexts and communities. This section describes some of the most frequent and salient challenges and unmet needs identified through partner engagement.

Working in isolation

One of the more significant challenges faced by Oregon violence prevention practitioners is a sense of isolation in their roles. Participants valued and desired opportunities to connect with each other, share experiences, deepen their knowledge, and collaborate. Many pointed to OCADSV as a valuable resource in creating these opportunities while citing lack of knowledge about how to get connected, as well as their limited time, capacity, and funding as barriers to accessing them.

Community-based prevention practitioners who participated in the assessment were infrequently involved in statewide coordination or policy advocacy efforts, which contributed to a sense of isolation. Policy advocacy efforts are often driven, organized, and led by statewide organizations. Our scan of documents and other materials indicated that statewide organizations made significant efforts to engage community-based practitioners in their policy work, however many practitioners did not feel that they had opportunities to shape and lead this work. This dynamic was particularly present for participants who worked in rural communities who suggested that statewide priorities for prevention policy were not relevant to their communities or their work.

Unsustainable working conditions and insufficient career pipelines

Participants cited staff turnover as a major barrier to effective prevention. Participants attributed this problem to a range of factors, especially uncompetitive compensation, short-term funding opportunities, isolation in their roles, and inadequate attention among organizational leaders and funders to practitioner wellbeing and work/life balance.

“Allow us to pay preventionists more. Overall we need folks to be able to thrive and sustain”

Listening session participant

Participants associated low wages and poor working conditions with an enduring expectation that people should volunteer their time to address gender based violence. .

Organizational leaders described hiring and retention of preventionists as a fundamental challenge and noted a pattern of losing experienced practitioners to higher paid positions within other community organizations and government agencies.

Exclusion and marginalization in the workforce

Mainstream domestic and sexual violence advocacy organizations have a history of excluding and deprioritizing the needs of marginalized communities. Practitioners from marginalized communities are especially deterred from seeking out and persisting in prevention roles due to expectations to volunteer their time, accept low wages, and endure poor work conditions. In one regional listening session, participants discussed this problem as reserving prevention roles, expertise, and long-term career growth for more socially and economically privileged colleagues (e.g., people who did not have rent or mortgage payments, did not have dependents, or had multiple sources of income within their household).. Across the assessment, participants referred to inadequate pay and isolation in the workplace as creating conditions in which formalized prevention work is less likely to be led by, relevant to, and informed by marginalized communities.

However, these findings are provisional given the relatively limited engagement and representation from communities that have been historically excluded or underserved by violence prevention work in Oregon. The assessment does not contain enough data from Asian, Black, Indigenous, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals to meaningfully inform the findings. However, the lack of involvement and representation of these communities in this assessment process may support the conclusion that OSCADV's partner organizations and member programs are failing to recruit, advance, and retain practitioners from marginalized communities. While OCADSV provides support to organizations in creating organizational policy, culture, and practice to better recruit, retain and support employees from marginalized communities, only four of survey respondents indicated that they had utilized these services.

Funding does not meet the needs

Across the state and in nearly every setting, participants said there was inadequate funding to pursue violence prevention strategies effectively. Available funding is both insufficient and also structured in a way that presents additional barriers, such as short timelines, unnecessary use restrictions, and overly burdensome reporting and compliance processes.

I'd like to see the State really step up and give an amount of money that is equitable and real, and not have to be every year or every 5 years, or however they do their cycles. [...] It needs to just be there. [...] That takes the burden off, then real prevention can happen.”

Assessment Interview Participant

Participants stated that many of their funding streams fail to support activities that are foundational to effective violence prevention including relationship building, adequate compensation, and long term programming. While best practice in prevention work dictates that the work be flexible and responsive to the communities where it takes place, this assessment suggests that funding often restricts violence prevention practitioners in Oregon from adapting to community needs and designing effective strategies. Another element that complicates funding for prevention are the expansive resources needed for violence response. A vast majority of the organizations represented in this assessment engage in violence prevention *and* response work. Many participants experienced challenges in balancing these commitments and, in general, felt that violence response work was prioritized over prevention work.

OCADSV's role

Participants expressed an appreciation for and deep affinity with OCADSV's work and emphasized the organization's capacity to connect individuals and communities across the state, coordinate stakeholders, and advocate for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to violence prevention at the state level. Many opportunities to enhance OCADSV's work were identified throughout the assessment process, such as providing additional learning opportunities, convenings, and systems advocacy. At the same time many participants perceived OCADSV as lacking the staffing and resources to invest in this work.

“If we don't fund adequately those who are helping hold us together, then we individually will end up lost. We'll end up, you know, in silos that don't allow us to grow and have a united voice.”

Assessment Interview Participant

OCADSV's work to advance community specific violence prevention strategies was highlighted as a strength by assessment participants. Several explicitly named funding mechanisms and conceptual work tied to Prevention Through Liberation as

important resources for their prevention work. One participant summed up the impact of this work, stating:

“Prevention through Liberation has had a huge impact on how we all conceptualize prevention in Oregon.”

Participants also regarded OCADSV’s efforts to engage members in anti-oppression education as facilitating positive shifts in their own organizations and in the field. OCADSV training videos were viewed as an important resource, which one participant explained had supported their organization to “stay on track” with their root values and “getting to the why” of the work.

Participants envisioned an expanded leadership role for OCADSV in cultivating learning related to prevention, including embedding prevention into advocate training, developing toolkits and other written materials, and continuing to develop and support topic-specific learning communities. Educating leadership (e.g., Board of Directors, EDs, state leaders) about prevention and involving leadership as learners was mentioned several times.

Taken together, participants expressed a desired cultural shift where prevention work is valued; where a diversity of approaches are conceptually understood, honored, and practiced; and where structural and systemic barriers are faced collectively. As one participant summarized it:

“I feel like we are stuck in a place where we were not allowed to do prevention. [...] We are stuck in barely surviving the crisis of meeting direct service needs of survivors. How do we pivot to having a strong prevention program?”

Many participants felt unsure about how to participate in this shift, but envisioned a role for OCADSV, such as convening a statewide prevention plan, developing state-wide initiatives to share resources, supporting multi-agency collaborations, and other forms of coordination. Participants also spoke of opportunities to further amplify the Prevention Through Liberation framework as well as a need for policy advocacy and other strategies to address “political realities” such as the rise of a conservative agenda in public schools.

“It seems like the coalition is that central touchstone for lots of organizations in the state, particularly organizations that serve people of color. So yeah, it's just essential. It's a critical entity.”

Assessment Interview Participant

Recommendations

OCADSV is a capable convener, steward, and advocate for violence prevention in Oregon with potential to deepen and amplify existing work through bolder action for change. The following section identifies potential recommendations and action steps.

A. Build a statewide advocacy platform focused on increasing investments in violence prevention and reducing funding restrictions

1. Bring together existing partners, including within the Alliance to End Violence Against Women, to develop an advocacy plan focused on increased resources for violence prevention.
2. Develop a policy action fellowship program that provides training and meaningfully engages prevention practitioners in local and statewide public policy advocacy.
3. Collaborate with public funders to identify opportunities to adopt existing and/or develop new frameworks and best practices for funding violence prevention work.
4. Assess where existing violence response strategies can be innovated and/or adapted to be less resource intensive. For example, assessment participants attributed the need to answer crisis lines and be on-call as a major barrier to effective prevention work. OCADSV should work with its member programs to identify improvements and potential alternatives to the resource intensivenetwork of distinct and separate 24 hour crisis lines for sexual assault and/or domestic violence survivors in Oregon.

B. Holistic Support for Prevention Practitioners

1. Plan and implement opportunities for prevention practitioners to build their relationships, knowledge and skills (e.g., cohort programs, quarterly regional gatherings).
2. Utilize the *OCADSV Member Program Wages and Benefits Report 2023* and collaborate with a network of OCADSV member programs to develop guidelines and best practices for compensation and benefits.
3. Continue to facilitate multi-day in-person and/or hybrid learning opportunities, including advanced-level content and foundational or “101” content.
4. Increase responsiveness and support for school-based practitioners by e advocating for statewide enforcement of Oregon’s Comprehensive Sexuality Education Health Standards and tailor training and technical assistance for preventionists encountering non-compliance and other barriers.
5. Identify opportunities to provide technical support and training on the topic of recruiting, retaining, and supporting employees from marginalized communities.

6. Utilize this assessment and other resources to identify communities that are underrepresented in violence prevention work.
 - a. Develop resources and technical assistance materials to increase understanding of biases, microaggressions, and oppression experienced by the communities that are identified.
 - b. Develop leadership development programming for the communities that are identified.
 - c. Identify opportunities to improve connection to the communities that are identified through relationship building.

C. Advance community-specific, comprehensive prevention strategies

1. Continue to build on and steward Prevention Through Liberation as a theory of practice through educational opportunities, training and technical assistance, and funding programs focused on anti-oppression topic(s)
 2. Invest in culturally-specific and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-led organizations.
 3. Coordinate with statewide partners, member agencies, and the community of violence prevention practitioners in Oregon to develop an updated state action plan.
 4. Provide training and technical assistance to engage and support leaders (e.g. Executive Directors, Board of Directors) in increasing their knowledge about violence prevention.
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Conclusion

This assessment highlights OCADSV's strengths and opportunities for improvement within the landscape of violence prevention in Oregon. As a proven statewide leader and convener, OCADSV is well suited to actualize the recommendations listed above and amplify primary prevention efforts across the state. These recommendations, which are ultimately focused on improving inclusion, capacity, and sustainability within the community of violence prevention practitioners in Oregon, are the building blocks to an effective prevention plan.

Ideally, this assessment represents just one stage of an ongoing effort to develop, assess, and evaluate violence prevention strategies in Oregon. Given the limitations of this assessment, the next phase of this work would benefit from a longer timeline with significant investment in relationship building, and a specific focus on engaging with individuals and communities that are underrepresented in this assessment.

Some of the dynamics highlighted in this process are specific to Oregon, but many reflect problems that are present across the country and even globally. There are many opportunities to collaborate with organizations outside of Oregon to take a collective approach in pursuing the recommendations provided above and build connections across the broader movement to end violence.

Appendix

- A. List of documents reviewed
- B. Listening session schedule
- C. Listening session guiding questions
- D. Confidential interview schedule
- E. Confidential interview guiding questions
- F. Survey participant recruitment email
- G. Prevention assessment survey questionnaire
- H. About the authors