



April 3, 2024

YWCA Kalamazoo
353 E. Michigan Ave
Kalamazoo, MI, 49007

Representative Christine Morse, Chair
Representative Jasper Martus, Majority Vice Chair
Representative Phil Green, Minority Vice Chair
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

RE: Public Comment in Support of \$30,000,000 for Crime Victim Services

Representative Christine Morse, Representative Jasper Martus, Representative Phil Green, and Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services:

YWCA Kalamazoo submits this public comment in support of continued state investment of \$30 million for survivors of violence.

Domestic violence and sexual assault remain pervasive public health issues throughout Michigan. However, federal funding to Michigan supporting survivors of violence and assault has **decreased 57%** since 2018, while domestic violence cases in Michigan have **increased 45%** over that same period. For domestic and sexual violence service providers and advocacy organizations across Michigan, funding shortfalls have resulted in increased waitlist times and over-burdened caseloads for critical services ranging from emergency shelter, trauma-informed therapy, and crisis assistance. Across the state of Michigan, 625 requests for services by survivors go unmet every day, despite increased demand for services in all forms.

Gaps in funding, because of projected federal losses, have negatively affected communities like Kalamazoo. YWCA Kalamazoo has seen an increase between 50-100% in caseloads served every year since 2020. However, resources available to our organization remain limited forcing YWCA Kalamazoo to turn away survivors every day, including a daily average of 1.2 requests for shelter. YWCA Kalamazoo is also consistently seeing our caseloads increase by hundreds each year and our staff and resources becoming overwhelmed with need. Stable and consistent state funding is critical to keep programs open and reduce strain on programming and staff to effectively and comprehensively meet survivors where they are in the aftermath of violence.

Last year, Michigan made an historic investment of \$30 million for survivors of violence via the crime victim rights sustaining grants budget item. YWCA Kalamazoo believes a continuation of this state funding is critical to not only its mission but also the well-being of survivors across the state. While this continued pledge is critical for hundreds of survivors across Michigan communities, we implore members of this subcommittee and this legislature to prioritize survivors in every budget moving forward and increase funding available to agencies like YWCA Kalamazoo and the many other providers across the state. **YWCA Kalamazoo encourages the legislature to sustain – if not increase – this critical \$30 million commitment to survivors.**

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Rosas".

Susan Rosas, CEO of YWCA Kalamazoo

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Kalamazoo

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