



Call for Action

The Safe Kids Coalition for Clackamas County ensures critical services - providing safety, promoting healing and improving well-being - are available and accessible to the more than 80,000 children who live in our county. The incidences of trauma and the dramatic increase in social, emotional and physical health and economic challenges our children are now facing is beyond alarming. We call on all elected officials and candidates at the local, county, state, and federal level to aggressively address the unprecedented challenges facing Clackamas children and youth.

Prior to the pandemic, Oregon ranked near the bottom of the nation in education outcomes, mental healthcare access, low graduation rates and tragically high teen suicide rates. COVID 19 only deepened these crises with increases in abuse, food insecurity, severe trauma, and untreated mental health and substance use needs.

Currently, nearly 15 percent of Clackamas County's children have unmet mental health care needs, 13 percent live with food insecurity, and over 50% live in families that are struggling to keep their housing due to the unsustainable cost of rent.¹ Nearly 3,000 children in the County are suspected of experiencing abuse each year. Currently, Clackamas reports a higher rate of suspected child sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation than any other county in Oregon, per capita.²

We must - and can - do better.

As the election draws closer we implore candidates of all parties and backgrounds to protect and invest in our future with substantial resources and services and strong policies to help mitigate the impact of trauma on our county's children, youth and their families. We believe that failure to act now will be catastrophic for the future of our local communities - particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas and on black, indigenous and people of color. With strong investments in proven prevention strategies, we can change this trajectory and provide safe, healing communities for all.

Through our continued work as a coalition, and with the support of elected officials and stakeholders, we believe that a safe home, access to healthcare, food security, educational opportunities, freedom from trauma, and healthy communities do not have to be exceptions but rather the common experience of our youth. The time for action is now. The Safe Kids Coalition stands ready to work hand in hand with our community so that all children are thriving.

1. Oregon KIDS COUNT Data Card, 2022

2. Safety Compass, 2022