



NNEDV

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NEW REPORT SHOWS LARGE DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES AND SHORT SUPPLY OF RESOURCES TO MEET VICTIMS' NEEDS

Cuts to core VAWA programs and VOCA threaten advocates' abilities to meet demand for services

(January 30, 2008) *Washington, DC* – In a single day, domestic violence programs served more than 53,000 adults and children in the United States. However, a significant number of requests – more than 7,700 -- went unmet because domestic violence agencies lacked the funding and staff to meet the demand. This data comes from the release of the National Network to End Domestic Violence's second *National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS)*.

Approximately 61% of unmet requests were for emergency shelter and transitional housing. With recent cuts to critical programs funded by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), domestic violence advocates worry about their ability to respond to all requests for help.

“Domestic violence programs are already struggling to meet the huge demand for shelter and advocacy services,” said Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. “Because of cuts in the 2008 federal budget, domestic violence programs will have even fewer resources to offer victims. When programs don't have adequate funding to operate, victims are left with no choice but to return to their abusers.”

The Fiscal Year 2008 federal budget:

- slashes \$35 million from the VOCA Fund, a key funding source which serves over 3 million crime victims each year;
- cuts \$2.1 million from the Legal Assistance to Victims program; and
- applies a 1.74% rescission to Labor Health and Human Services funding, creating a devastating \$2.2 million cut to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

“The more resources available to victims, the better chance they have to escape the violence,” added Else. “We hope this data, and the stories behind the numbers, inspire the President and Congress in creating a 2009 federal budget that includes adequate funding for domestic violence services.”

The NCDVS collected a national, unduplicated count of adults and children who received life-saving services from domestic violence programs on September 25, 2007. During the 24-hour survey period 53,203 adults and children received domestic violence services, including:

- more than 16,000 Americans who sought refuge in emergency shelters;
- over 8,600 who lived in transitional housing facilities; and
- nearly 28,000 who received non-residential services such as counseling, legal advocacy and children's support groups.

In addition, more than 20,000 calls were answered by local, state and national crisis hotlines on September 25th, amounting to more than 14 calls a minute.

Programs also invested a significant amount of time raising community awareness about domestic violence. During the survey period, domestic violence programs reached almost 30,000 Americans through more than 1,500 public awareness programs about domestic violence, available resources, and how individuals can prevent the violence.

All of these life-saving services were provided despite almost 70% of domestic violence programs operating with less than 20 paid staff.

“We face an overwhelming problem in our community around domestic violence,” said a participating program in Nevada. “Our shelters are over run, our counselors have an eight-week waiting list, and we have no room or funds to hire more staff.”

The NCDVS is the most recent data documenting the number of individuals served by domestic violence programs. More than 1,300 (69%) domestic violence programs from across the country participated in the census, giving advocates and researchers a glimpse into the number of individuals seeking services, the types of services requested and the number of service requests that went unmet due to a lack of resources. Participating programs logged an unduplicated count of adults and children requesting and accessing their services between 8 a.m. EDT on September 25, 2007 and 7:59 a.m. EDT on September 26, 2007. In addition to providing a national snapshot, the NCDVS report also includes state-level data.

The National Census of Domestic Violence Services is available online at <http://www.nnedv.org/census>.

About the National Network to End Domestic Violence

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a membership and advocacy organization representing the 54 state and U.S. territory domestic violence coalitions. NNEDV is the voice of these coalitions, their more than 2,000 local domestic violence member programs, and the millions of domestic violence survivors who turn to them for services. In 2000 and 2005, NNEDV members all across the country played a crucial role in the reauthorization of VAWA. Through its extensive state and grassroots network, NNEDV continues to mobilize a powerful constituency to make their voices heard in Congress. For more information, please visit www.nnedv.org.