



FUNDING TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FY 20 FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

The National Network to End Domestic Violence urges Congress to increase essential funding for all domestic violence programs in fiscal year (FY) 20. Domestic violence is a pervasive and life-threatening crime that impacts millions of victims each year. Our nation has made phenomenal progress in significantly reducing the incidence of these crimes and increasing safety for victims as a result of Congress's **national, ongoing, annual investment**. Congress must build on this foundation and make it a national priority to provide federal investments in services that save lives, hold perpetrators accountable, and work to end domestic violence.

Despite this phenomenal progress in reducing domestic violence, a lack of funding for vital programs has left many victims in life-threatening situations, without support, and with nowhere to turn for help. We are experiencing a watershed moment in our country as survivors of gender-based violence are speaking out after living in the shadows for years, even decades. Our message to survivors must be clear: when you come forward for help and support, it will be available. Many programs are struggling to meet the needs of victims. Congress can affirm its commitment to end domestic violence and sexual assault by increasing the investments in these vital federal programs.

Fund targeted investments for the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (\$200 million) and related key programs at HHS: The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funds emergency shelters, crisis lines, counseling, victim assistance, and other vital services for over one million domestic violence victims and their children each year. FVPSA funding has remained relatively stagnant, resulting in too few services available for victims in need. As the only dedicated federal funding source for domestic violence services, FVPSA should be funded at \$200 million to meet the growing demand for services. Additional programs at HHS that work to address and prevent domestic violence and sexual assault, such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline, DELTA prevention grants, and the Rape Prevention and Education program must be fully funded.

Release additional funds from the Victims of Crime Act Fund (VOCA): The VOCA Fund for victim services is created out of fines and penalties paid by federal criminals, rather than taxpayer dollars. Thousands of agencies rely on VOCA to provide services to nearly four million crime victims annually. We urge Congress to release \$2.6 billion from the VOCA Fund for those agencies and establish a tribal funding stream to address the gap in available services. We object to any transfer from VOCA to other DOJ programs.

Fund targeted investments in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): VAWA programs at the U.S. Department of Justice are at the heart of our nation's response to domestic violence. Each of these programs is critical to ensuring that victims are safe, that offenders are held accountable, and that our communities are more secure. These programs should be funded at their full authorization levels. Key programs within VAWA include:

- The Sexual Assault Services Program: serves as the federal government's only funding source dedicated to sexual assault services and rape crisis centers in every state;
- The STOP program: improves the criminal justice and wider community response by allowing states and communities to develop coordinated community responses;
- The Civil Legal Services program: provides practical legal solutions and long-term stability for victims and their children;
- The Services for Rural Victims program: enables communities to meet the unique needs of rural victims;
- The Transitional Housing grant program: provides an essential continuum between emergency shelter and permanent safe housing for survivors fleeing violence; and
- The Improving Criminal Justice Response program: designed to increase offender accountability and reduce homicide.

Labor, Health and Human Services – Department of Health and Human Services

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) – \$200 million funding request

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funds emergency shelters, crisis lines, counseling, advocacy, and other vital services for over one million domestic violence victims and their children each year. Administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, FVPSA is the only federal funding source dedicated to domestic violence programs and should be funded at \$200 million to meet the growing demand for services.

A recent multi-state study, funded by the National Institute of Justice, shows conclusively that the nation's domestic violence shelters are addressing both the urgent safety needs and long-term needs of victims, including economic stability. Despite FVPSA's great promise, community-based domestic violence programs report that at current funding levels, they cannot meet the overwhelming demand for services. The 13th annual DV Counts Census, conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), found that in one single day in 2018, 74,823 victims of domestic violence received services at the 1,608 local programs that participated in the Census. Unfortunately, the phenomenal work of those programs was undermined by a lack of resources. Over 9,000 requests for services made on that same day in 2018 could not be met due to a lack of funding. Of those requests, 76% were for safe housing. **We urge you to request \$200 million for FVPSA to address this dangerous gap in services.**

Rape Prevention and Education (CDC) – \$75 million funding request

The Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) formula grants, administered by the CDC Injury Center, provide essential funding to states and territories to support rape prevention and education programs that are conducted by rape crisis centers, state sexual assault coalitions, and other public agencies and private nonprofit entities. CDC data of RPE-funded programs shows that in 2013, some 160,000 professionals were trained in sexual violence issues and more than two million young people participated in rape prevention programs. The RPE program prepares everyday people to become heroes, getting involved in the fight against sexual violence and creating safer communities by engaging boys and men as partners; supporting multidisciplinary research collaborations; fostering cross-cultural approaches to prevention; and promoting healthy, non-violent social norms, attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices.

RPE is working. For example, building on the success of the innovative Green Dot bystander intervention campaign on campuses, Kentucky RPE programs expanded into high schools. A five-year randomized intervention trial funded by the CDC found a reduction of more than 50% in the self-reported frequency of sexual violence perpetration by students at schools that received the Green Dot training. However, a 2018 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) revealed that 40% of rape crisis centers had a waiting list for prevention programs. Programs cannot meet the increased demand, especially from campuses. **If our children are to face a future that is free from sexual violence, RPE must be fully funded at \$75 million to meet the need and implement evidence-based strategies.**

DELTA (CDC) – \$10 million funding request

The Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements and Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) program at the CDC is the only dedicated federal funding source for the primary prevention of domestic violence. In approximately 50 communities across the nation, the DELTA program works to identify effective strategies for preventing first-time perpetration and first-time victimization of domestic violence. Through the use of evidence-supported initiatives, including social change and public health strategies, DELTA states have piloted and evaluated a range of programs that are designed to promote safety and respect across communities. The growing evidence base shows that such strategies have the potential to reduce multiple forms of violence.

Over the history of the program, 16 states have been able to participate as DELTA projects. Preliminary evaluation results show a growing body of evidence that supports this work, indicating that domestic violence and dating violence rates can be decreased over time with the implementation of DELTA programming. The work being done with multi-level strategies (individual, relationship, community, and societal strategies) focuses on changing social norms and promoting behaviors that support healthy relationships. An increase in funding will enable the DELTA

program to expand into additional states and communities, and will also provide opportunities for communities to leverage additional funding. **DELTA should be funded at \$10 million.**

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant – \$7 million for sexual assault prevention and services

The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant (PHHSBG) administered by the CDC allows states, territories and tribes to address their own unique public health challenges with innovative and community-driven methods. The Public Health Service Act of 2010 includes a guaranteed \$7 million minimum set-aside to support direct services to victims of sexual assault and to prevent rape. States and communities rely on the set-aside to fund critical sexual assault services and prevention work. **The PHHSBG should be funded with \$7 million to maintain services for victims.**

Remaining LHHS programs

Additionally, we urge you to request funding for the National Domestic Violence Hotline (ACF) and the Violence Against Women Health program (Office on Women's Health).

Commerce, Justice, Science – Department of Justice

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA) FUNDING

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) – \$2.6 billion release request

VOCA uses non-taxpayer money from the Crime Victims Fund for several programs that serve victims of crime, including state-formula victim assistance grants. These funds, which are generated by fines paid by federal criminals, support services to four million victims of all types of crimes annually through thousands of direct service agencies such as domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, and child abuse treatment programs. Sustained VOCA funds are critically needed to respond to the crisis caused by the dangerous lack of available services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The balance in the Crime Victims Fund is more than enough to maintain increased VOCA funding releases without jeopardizing the Fund's future sustainability. We urge you to request that the committee set the annual VOCA funding release level at no less than the average amount deposited into the Fund over the three previous fiscal years, which is approximately \$2.6 billion for fiscal year 2019.

The FY 17-19 appropriations bills transferred VOCA funds to pay for VAWA programs. **We oppose VOCA funds being transferred to other CJS accounts, as this reduces vital funding for direct victim services. We urge you to request \$2.6 billion from the VOCA Fund in FY 20 to address the urgent needs of victims of crime. We urge you to reject any efforts to transfer funds from VOCA to fund other programs within CJS.**

FY 18 and FY 19 appropriations included a 5% federal funding stream from VOCA for tribes. **We urge you to continue to provide a federal funding stream from VOCA for tribes.** Individuals on tribal lands experience disproportionately high rates of domestic and sexual violence, and tribes desperately need funding for victim services to meet the demand for help.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) and related programs

Federal policies have helped to significantly reduce violence against women and increase safety for victims. With the passage of VAWA, the infusion of federal funds fostered unprecedented coordination between frontline stakeholders responding to domestic violence and sexual assault crises, namely police officers, victim service providers, prosecutors, judges, and the criminal and civil justice systems. VAWA's national scope ensures that successes in individual communities continue to be replicated across the country. Additionally, federal VAWA funds encourage states to leverage local and state funds in the effort to end these pervasive crimes.

VAWA STOP program – \$222 million funding request

VAWA's Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) grant program, one of the most far-reaching VAWA programs, is at the core of effective coordinated community responses to domestic violence and sexual assault. These collaborative responses help thousands of victims find safety and receive services, while holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. As the foundational VAWA program, STOP funds are awarded to every state and territory through a formula-based system. States use STOP funding to train law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts in order to improve the system-wide response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Many states establish special units in law enforcement agencies and prosecutors' offices to address domestic and sexual violence. Victims benefit from services including advocacy, crisis intervention, local hotline advocacy, counseling and support, and victim-witness notification.

Additionally, STOP-funded programs help survivors obtain orders of protection and promote the prosecution of domestic and sexual violence cases. In 2016, STOP grant-funded programs helped 362,172 victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking; funded 2,226 staff members, including victim advocates, law enforcement officers, counselors, and attorneys; and trained 252,795 criminal justice professionals. Increased investment in STOP will allow communities to expand life-saving homicide reduction efforts, continue to improve law enforcement and prosecution responses, and serve additional victims. **We urge you to request \$222 million to support the STOP grant program.**

Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) program – \$59 million funding request

Research indicates that the practical nature of legal services gives victims long-term alternatives to their abusive relationships. Legal services are also vital to support survivors of sexual assault in civil matters. However, the retainers or hourly fees for private legal representation are beyond the means of most victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Legal services are second only to medical services as the most-requested need of victims. Sadly, many survivors cannot afford to secure legal assistance in the aftermath of abuse or assault. The LAV program is the only federally-funded program designed to meet the legal needs of victims. Targeted increases to the LAV program are a sound investment in long-term solutions to violence. **We urge you to request \$59 million for the LAV program to support legal help for victims.**

Rural Grant program – \$50 million funding request

Victims in rural areas face unique barriers, including a lack of access to child care, legal services, and public transportation; under-resourced law enforcement; and a shortage of services. Funding for the Rural Grant program, which supports services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault living in rural and isolated areas, has either been cut or remained stagnant for the last several years despite the enormous need and despite a number of states becoming eligible through the most recent VAWA reauthorization. **We urge you to request \$50 million for the Rural Grant program.**

Transitional Housing program – \$42 million funding request

This vital VAWA program helps communities in every state give victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking a safe place to begin to rebuild their shattered lives. On just one day in 2018, 16,241 adults and children were housed in domestic violence transitional housing programs. On the same day, however, 6,972 requests for emergency shelter or transitional housing were denied due to a lack of capacity. The extreme dearth nationwide of affordable housing produces a situation where many victims of domestic violence must return to their abusers because they cannot find stable housing, while others are forced into homelessness. Increased investment in the Transitional Housing program will allow more communities to ensure that victims are not forced to make these unfathomable choices. **We urge you to request \$42 million for the Transitional Housing program.**

Improving Criminal Justice Response (ICJR) program – \$73 million funding request

The ICJR program encourages state, local, and tribal governments and courts to treat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking as serious violations of criminal law that require the coordinated involvement of the entire criminal justice system. The program supports homicide reduction initiatives designed to address the urgent problem of abuse victims being murdered, especially those in escalating domestic violence situations.

Additionally, the reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 increased ICJR's focus on improving the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault. **We urge you to request an increased investment in ICJR at \$73 million to allow communities to continue this life-saving work.**

Sexual Assault Services Program – \$50 million funding request

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) was authorized in VAWA 2005 as the first federal funding stream dedicated to the provision of direct services to victims of sexual violence. The most recent report to Congress found that 49,068 survivors of sexual assault had been served and 113,697 hotline calls were answered by SASP-funded advocates. Across the country, SASP funds support the critical services adult and child victims need most, including counseling, accompaniment through medical and legal processes, and support for underserved populations. Research shows these services increase prosecution and help victims recover. When advocates are present in the legal and medical proceedings following rape, victims fare better in both their short- and long-term recovery, experiencing less psychological distress, physical health struggles, sexual risk-taking behaviors, self-blame, guilt, and depression. However, current funding levels are woefully inadequate to meet the need. The nation's 1,500 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims' most basic needs. According to a 2018 survey by NAESV, half of these programs have a waiting list for counseling services and almost half (45%) do not have a therapist on staff. **We urge you to request \$50 million for SASP to support local rape crisis centers.**

Remaining VAWA and related programs – full funding (see included chart)

All VAWA and related programs work together to provide a comprehensive response to victims of violence. The services provided consist of life-saving services to underserved victims, including victims with disabilities and elderly victims; programs aimed at children, youth, and college students; projects addressing courts and visitation; responses to the epidemic of sexual assault and domestic violence on tribal lands; projects addressing violence in the workplace; and prevention programs and public health responses to violence and abuse. These programs must receive sustained or even increased funding to ensure that communities can build on our years of progress and meet the needs of all victims.

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development – Department of Housing and Urban Development

Victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault often flee unsafe circumstances and seek refuge through emergency shelter, transitional housing and rapid re-housing programs in order to avoid homelessness. Dedicated funds for survivor-specific housing resources, including rapid re-housing, offer a stable funding source for victim service providers to address the trauma-specific needs of survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The FY19 appropriations bill includes significant investments that preserve and increase housing assistance for the most vulnerable families, including a new \$50 million set-aside in the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) homelessness assistance program to fund housing for survivors of domestic violence. The funds support rapid re-housing projects and supportive services projects to assist survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. **We urge you to request \$50 million for housing for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.**