



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

## Lives are on the Line

### Congress must not cut VOCA by \$700 million in FY24

The Victims of Crime Act's (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund (CVF) supports thousands of victim services providers **servicing millions of victims annually. It is facing a \$700 million, or 40%, cut in federal fiscal year 2024.**

When survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence reach out for help, it is often due to life-threatening violence. Survivors must be able to access services at these times—yet the VOCA cuts jeopardize victim services and put survivors in grave danger.

#### If VOCA is cut by \$700 million...



**In Arizona:** The Arizona Child & Family Advocacy Center shared, "Cuts to VOCA funding will decrease my victim advocacy center staffing by half. We will no longer be able to provide 24/7 crisis support to crime victims. In addition, money for specialized follow-up trauma counseling services will be eliminated and money for relocation, emergency shelter, and basic needs will be removed."



**In California:** According to a statewide California survey of VOCA-funded victim service providers, 56% of all surveyed organizations—and 67% of organizations serving communities of color, tribal communities, and LGBTQ+ people—revealed that funding cuts would result in a loss or significant reduction (more than 50%) in housing services including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and housing first. Cuts to VOCA funding will reduce the ability to provide services victims of crime. Sexual violence is often linked to short-term and long-term mental health outcomes, like post-traumatic stress disorder. 70% of total surveyed organizations—and 67% of culturally specific organizations—said that there would be a loss or significant reduction (more than 50%) in direct services to people experiencing sexual and domestic violence, including counseling and/or support groups. Most rape crisis centers have less than one full-time therapist on staff, creating long wait times to access counseling services. Funding cuts would increase wait times and decrease access.



**In Connecticut:** The VOCA-funded statewide domestic violence hotline would be eliminated, meaning the more than 12,000 victims that contact it annually will lose the timely, 24/7 crisis response, information, risk assessment, safety planning, counseling, and referrals to 18 domestic violence programs. Civil court advocates layoffs would drastically reduce victims' access to civil restraining orders, family court guidance, employment, and immigration issues. Cuts to criminal advocates would be absolutely devastating, as there are over 30,000 individual victims assisted annually with criminal court advocacy. Reductions in VOCA could jeopardize the lifesaving Lethality Assessment Program that connects survivors facing high lethality risk with VOCA-funded advocates to devise a safety plan and connect with services to escape domestic violence.



**In Illinois:** A 40% decrease on top of 50% cuts last year will decimate domestic violence and sexual assault services. One Illinois rape crisis center shared, "Direct services to survivors like 24-hour medical advocacy, legal advocacy, crisis intervention, and ongoing counseling or trauma therapy are currently significantly delayed or have been halted altogether without adequate funding. These cuts mean fewer advocates and therapists available to provide support, information, and options in the aftermath of sexual violence."



**In Iowa:** An estimated 22,386 Iowa crime victims could lose access to services if Congress fails to prevent a 40% cut to VOCA funding. A 40% cut in VOCA would hit rural communities the hardest, as well as communities served by smaller agencies who serve victims disproportionately impacted by violence.



**In Kentucky:** A sexual assault program shared, "The severity of decreases in a short amount of time, and cuts looming in the foreseeable future, has our agency questioning our financial viability. Over the past five years, we have grown considerably to meet the demands of the victims in our community, and we have very positive momentum. However, our agency will not only lose the momentum, but will have to scale back services considerably, which is a very problematic concern for our communities."

Meanwhile, domestic violence programs across Kentucky report that a cut to VOCA would force them to reduce services and lay off vital staff. Layoffs would mean that remaining staff would have to take on multiple roles leading to an increased wait-time for lifesaving services for survivors. One program shared, "A reduction in VOCA funding would require our center to layoff two VOCA-funded advocates, and cease

prevention and education efforts in five of our eight rural counties. Ultimately, this reduction would substantially harm this center's efforts to prevent and address violence in our rural communities, decrease the number of survivors reached by our efforts, and cut the financial and other resources provided by our Center to survivors."



**In Louisiana:** The VOCA cuts have already been devastating and an additional 40% cut will be nearly impossible to overcome. The cut will lead to layoffs of: legal advocates who help survivors get protection orders; shelter staff who provide support services 24/7 (leading to fewer people getting safe emergency shelter when they are in crisis); and staff attorneys in North Louisiana, and maybe other places in the state. Additionally, cuts will force outreach offices in rural parishes to close, leaving survivors without physical points of access to domestic violence services.



**In Maine:** The victim response system would be severely impacted, as it is heavily reliant on VOCA funds. When the perpetrator of the Lewiston shootings was found, what was needed in the immediate aftermath was a victim services response. The entirety of the victim services response that showed up in Lewiston to support victims and families in the immediate aftermath of the shooting was entirely VOCA funded. VOCA-funded advocates and attorneys continue to be the primary supports.



**In New Hampshire:** Cuts to VOCA-funded services will have an immediate and profound impact on the state's response to crime and on public safety overall. If VOCA-funded services are reduced, the reality is that more people will be harmed or killed by family members, more people will be raped, and those individuals will not have access to the care and services needed to heal.



**In New York:** Years of cuts and anticipated cuts mean that victims seeking mental health services, counseling, or participation in support groups have been placed on months-long waiting lists (one provider has 1,000 crime victims on their waiting list). Providers have laid off staff, leading to fewer survivors served. Victims have lost access to housing and public benefit advocacy and legal representation and advocacy, impacting their stability and safety. Children who have been ordered by New York's courts to supervised visitation with an abusive parent have been forced to attend such visits alone because advocates aren't available.



**In Ohio:** Catastrophic cuts would compound previous cuts resulting in layoffs and reduced or eliminated services. Ohio's victim services programs cannot sustain another year of substantial VOCA cuts. One program shared, "We continue to see a rise in clients needing our services, yet the availability in funding is not keeping up with the required staff (paid for with a living wage!) to keep up with client demand. VOCA is one of the few sources that truly allows us to use the funds for general direct services, not specialized projects and associated staff. Though we have worked hard to diversify our funding, the staff for our core services continues to be at risk and further cuts would be devastating to the agency and the clients who need our services."



**In Pennsylvania:** A Pennsylvania rape crisis center said, "This will be devastating for us. We will definitely be looking at a staff reduction. We are currently stretched to the max. We have looked at alternative things to cut, and there is very little left that we are able to cut back on."



**In South Carolina:** A program serving sexual assault victims in five counties would have to lay off half their staff and serve 50% fewer victims. Another sexual assault and child advocacy program covering two counties would have to lay off at least four staff, leading to 30 to 40% decrease in the number of survivors they can serve.



**In Texas:** An estimated 30,458 Texas victims of rape, human trafficking, child abuse, stalking, or domestic violence would have decreased access to the following services: crisis intervention, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, victim and family advocacy, counseling and mental health, forensic services, specialized investigation and prosecution, case management and care coordination, and criminal justice advocacy.



**In Washington State:** Amid a documented escalating demand for children's advocacy, domestic violence, sexual assault, and legal services, cuts would widen the existing gap in services.

**Given the dire potential consequences, on behalf of the victims and survivors we all serve, we ask that Congress invest adequate funding for VOCA in the final FY24 Appropriations budget.**

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