



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund

FY 17 Request: Release \$2.6 billion from the Crime Victims Fund. Fund tribal services. No additional transfers or earmarks.

The Crime Victims Fund was created by Congress in 1984 to provide grants to state and local programs that assist victims of crime. The Fund is derived entirely from fines and penalties paid by federal criminal offenders, *not taxpayer revenues*.

From FY 2010 through FY 2014, the Crime Victims Fund collected an average of \$2 billion each year, but disbursed only an average of \$700 million per year. The remaining \$6.5 billion difference was used as a budgetary offset.

Congress raised the cap to \$3.04 billion for FY16. After transfers, \$2.6 billion was available for the states. **Congress should fund the cap at \$2.6 billion in FY 17 which is the average of the past 3 years' deposits into the Fund**—the same approach advocates have asked for in VOCA legislation.

While NAESV supports funding tribal victim services from the Crime Victims Fund, we oppose any other earmarks or transfers from the fund.

Rape crisis centers rely on VOCA funds to provide direct services like crisis intervention, counseling, and court accompaniment to victims of sexual assault. Over 4,000 agencies, including over 1000 rape crisis centers, rely on VOCA assistance grants to provide critical direct services for over 3.4 million victims a year.

A 2015 NAESV survey of rape crisis centers revealed that:

- Almost ½ of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services; and
- Over 1/3 lost staffing in the past year.

From a rape crisis center in California:

“Prior to the increase in VOCA this year, staff had not received raises in 7 years and we had been operating with 4 staff vacancies for 2 years. We were beginning to see an exodus of well trained and experienced staff. If our funding levels go down again, I am scared as to what that will bring for our agency.”

From a rape crisis center in West Virginia:

“Sexual assault is finally beginning to be understood as a serious societal issue - the different disciplines of the criminal justice system are beginning to work with rape crisis centers as a team to create a victim-centered response. It is the advocacy piece that leads this effort. Without VOCA funds, advocacy needs would be unmet and the reporting rate would continue to decrease leaving sex offenders free to commit the crime over and over again.”

From a rape crisis center in Texas:

“We work at full capacity 24/7/365. This work is never done. We could double our staff right now and put everyone to work fulltime if we had the resources to do so. The good news is we are here to help. The bad news is we need more resources to provide victim assistance and help with violence prevention.”

Distributing \$2.6 billion to states from the VOCA fund in FY 17 will allow rape crisis centers to reach survivors of campus and military rape, eliminate waiting lists, improve trauma-informed responses, and assist more survivors to heal and thrive.

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

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