



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

## Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund

FY 22 Appropriation: \$2.6 billion

FY 23 Request:

- Release steady funding (\$2.65 billion) from the CVF that reflects deposits and fund levels.
- Fund tribal services.
- No additional transfers.

*“VOCA needs to be protected and secured at the federal level for years to come. The monies need to be available to pay staff living wages so that qualified, trained individuals can afford to stay on.”*

—an Ohio advocate

The Crime Victims Fund (CVF) 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*, and is the most essential and flexible source of funding for crime victim services across the nation.

From FY 2010 through FY 2014, the CVF collected an average of \$2 billion each year but disbursed only an average of \$700 million per year. Congress raised the cap significantly in FY 2016 and the next two years at the request of advocates and programs were able to invest in new staff and expanded services.

Tragically, these investments could not be sustained because deposits into the CVF had dipped to historically low levels. As a result of this trend, states experienced enormous cuts to their awards.

*“We are very concerned about a substantial decrease in VOCA funds to our state - projected at 24% for the 22-23 year. State funding is present, though the state departments are not expecting the substantial increases that would be needed to offset the VOCA cuts to be included in the next state funding biennium. We found that the VOCA Fix to waive the match requirement for VOCA funds during the pandemic very helpful.”* —a North Dakota advocate

### **Good news: The VOCA Fix Act is working.**

Congress passed the VOCA Fix Act in 2021 directing deposits from deferred prosecutions and non-prosecution agreements to the CVF resulting in increased deposits.

**While the fund is growing, states need a steady stream of funding that can be relied on consistently:** Large fluctuations in the cap do not benefit survivors or victim services providers.

**Funding Tribes:** NAESV fully supports funding tribal victim services from the CVF to meet the desperate needs of victims on tribal lands.

**Waiving match:** Many programs, especially those in rural areas, cannot apply for all the

funds they need because of the match requirement. Sufficient local funding is simply not available in many communities. While some states have a streamlined process for match waivers, others do not. The VOCA Fix Act helpfully required match waivers during the pandemic.

**Addressing red tape:** Long delays in reimbursement, complicated funding requirements and inflexible processes tie the hands of programs and may lead to funds being returned and/or staffing crises. States need more direction and support in creating processes that work efficiently to meet the needs of victims.

**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 1,000 rape crisis centers, rely on VOCA assistance grants to provide critical direct services for over 3.4 million victims a year.

**A 2021 NAESV survey of rape crisis centers revealed that a third have a waiting list for services; 45% don't have therapist on staff; and 76% of programs saw an increase in demand for services.**

**Biggest unmet needs according to programs:**

- Therapy
- Services for teens
- Transportation
- Housing
- Access to SANE nurses

**VOCA makes a difference.**

**Here's what rape crisis centers had to say about VOCA in our 2020 survey:**

*"Many survivors want/need therapy. I can provide counseling, support and resources but they need a good therapist - and we do not have one staffed at our agency doing therapy work." —an Iowa advocate*

*"Since we opened our SAFE Center, the number of rape victims coming forward for services has nearly doubled." --A Florida advocate*

*"VOCA is PAAR's largest funder at 40%. A significant decrease would result in layoffs and decreased services." — a Pennsylvania advocate*

*"The uncertainty of the funding is of grave concern especially when dealing with the pandemic and attempting to keep your organization running." —a West Virginia advocate*

*"The federal and state funding for the 20-21 year will not cover all the increases in expenses for our programs. This does NOT include the increase in expenses incurred due to COVID-related items. We may be forced to lay off people before the end of the fiscal year." — a California advocate*

*"...if its [VOCA] cut further, we will experience a decrease in services, especially in our small rural counties where access is crucial to survivors of sexual violence." -- a Florida advocate*

**Distributing steady funding to states from the VOCA fund in FY 2023 will allow rape crisis centers to continue providing essential services to survivors.**

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? Contact Terri Poore, [terri@endsexualviolence.org](mailto:terri@endsexualviolence.org).