



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victim Fund (CVF)

FY 2023: \$1.9 billion released

FY 2024: \$1.3 billion released

FY 2025 Request: Provide steady funding for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund (CVF) at \$1.9 billion. If the CVF cannot sustain this level of funding, Congress must find other mechanisms to maintain steady funding for this vital program without cutting other victims services programs.

“VOCA funds are 90% of our rape crisis program funding. It will be devastating to our program to lose this funding. We will have to lay off approximately 50% of our staff.”

—California Rape Crisis Center

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 CVF is derived entirely from fines and penalties paid by federal criminal offenders and is the most essential and flexible source of funding for crime victim services across the nation. Deposits into the CVF have dipped to historically low levels creating a huge funding crisis for victim services. States are experiencing enormous cuts to their awards.

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 2023 NAESV survey of rape crisis centers revealed:

- Nearly 70% of programs have experienced an increased demand for their services.
- Over 50% of programs received a decrease in funding overall.
- 57% of programs have experienced a reduction in staffing.
- 48% of programs lack a full time mental health counselor or therapist on staff.
- Almost 50% of programs have a full time salary range for direct service staff that is 40K or less. Lack of competitive salaries was ranked as the biggest reason for high turnover followed by the stress of the job.

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.

—Illinois Rape Crisis Center

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.

*How will we handle the overall increase in demand for our services, the increase in salary demands and cost of living, and other pressures when funding is not only not keeping pace with the costs of delivering existing services, but is going down?--*Pennsylvania Rape Crisis Center

“We had to reduce sexual assault programming staff by four and there are more cuts to come next year.” –Florida Rape Crisis Center

Some Good news: The VOCA Fix Act is working but not sufficient. Congress passed the VOCA Fix Act in 2021 directing deposits from deferred prosecutions and non-prosecution agreements to the CVF resulting in increased deposits—over \$1 billion resulting from this change thus far. But this is not sufficient to fully restore the health of the CVF.

While we work to increase deposits into the fund, states need a consistent and reliable funding stream: Large fluctuations in the cap hurt survivors and victim services providers.

Advocates aren’t just waiting for the situation to get better. We’re advocating with the U.S. Department of Justice, to ensure U.S. Attorneys understand how important negotiated fines and

fees are to the health of the fund. Advocates are also working hard to ask states to help fill the gap in victim services and talking to federal prosecutors about the vital importance of the CVF.

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 eliminated the required match waiver during the pandemic.

VOCA makes a difference.

Our organization and dedicated staff played a crucial role in helping [a sexual assault survivor] reclaim self-control and rebuild confidence in her life. Completing her therapy treatment, she successfully received compensation for the crime through our assistance in applying via CVRC. Currently, she is progressing toward obtaining a U-Visa. –New Mexico Culturally Specific Program

Distributing steady funding to states in FY 2025 will allow rape crisis centers to continue providing essential services to survivors.

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? Contact Terri Poore, terri@endsexualviolence.org.