

Domestic Violence Funding Key Requests FY 2015-16



Funding for services to help victims of intimate partner violence break free of abusive relationships is an investment in the safety and health of our families, our communities, and especially our children. Governor Wolf's proposed \$1.5 million increase to the state budget line item for domestic violence services in FY 2015-2016 is a crucial step toward stabilizing funds serving victims in every Pennsylvania county. \$2.2 million would retain vital civil legal services across the state.

KEY BUDGET REQUESTS:

- 1. Pass a budget that at least includes Governor Wolf's proposed expansion of \$1.5 million to domestic violence services and add an additional \$700,000 for civil legal representation for a total of \$2.2 million.**
 - The proposed state budget line item of \$16.9 million specifically funds: civil legal representation for victims; medical advocacy for victims; victim relocation; and safe housing and shelter.
 - The procurement of civil legal representation with limited funds left many current Civil Legal Representation sites without funding for FY 2015-16.
- 2. The prevalence of domestic violence and increased public awareness has created a need that is far greater than the proposed expansion.**
 - Media attention to the issue of domestic violence following cases in the NFL and other sports teams has fortunately raised awareness of services but has also increased demand.
 - Immediately following the release of the Ray Rice video in September 2014, the National Domestic Violence Hotline's call volume increased by 84%.
 - In Pennsylvania, waiting times for hotline response and shelter space have increased.
 - In 2014, there were 6,152 unmet requests for shelter in Pennsylvania due to a lack of resources.
- 3. A stable and predictable funding source must be created by the General Assembly to combat instability caused by inflationary growth.**
 - PCADV has historically pursued an increase in marriage license and divorce filing fees (current rate of \$10 with a proposed increase to \$35).
 - The existing \$10 fee for marriage licenses has never been raised since it was established in 1990.

PCADV and representatives of our member centers are working with the Victim Services Advisory Committee of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency on a plan to recommend for the Commonwealth distribution of the Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) funds.

Action Requested:

Make family safety a priority by supporting Governor Wolf's proposed \$1.5 million for additional domestic violence services in FY 2015-16 and adding an additional \$700,000 for civil legal representation.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's network of 60 community-based centers serving all 67 counties provides lifesaving services every day. Since the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence became the nation's first statewide coalition in 1976, our centers have served nearly 3 million victims and their children.

IN ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER 2014, PA's DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS:

- Helped approximately 2,500 victims of domestic violence survive by providing them with shelter, legal representation, housing and counseling support
- Answered over 700 hotline calls for support and safety planning, equaling over 29 calls per hour.
- There were over 200 unmet requests for services by victims who needed shelter or housing that day because there were not enough resources to assist them on this same day.

PA's 60 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS ARE RESOURCEFUL AND EFFICIENT:

- Supplementing staff with 265,526 volunteer hours to serve more than 85,000 victims per year
- Weaving together more than 30 state, federal and local funding streams to keep services operating
- Raising more than 38% of operating costs locally

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS ARE DIRE. IN 2014:

- Nearly 400,000 hours of counseling were conducted with adult victims and their children to heal the emotional and psychological wounds of violence
- 253,738 nights of shelter were provided to offer safety and security
- PA's 60 programs reported a total of 6,152 unmet requests for shelter
- Civil legal representation offered to 4,815 new clients seeking help

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THESE UNMET REQUESTS?

In cases where programs do not have the resources to serve a victim, our programs report that 60% of these victims are forced to return to their abuser, 32% become homeless, and 8% are forced to live in their cars.

HOMICIDE IS THE ULTIMATE COST OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- In 2014, there were 141 domestic violence fatalities in Pennsylvania
- 97 of those deaths were victims (4 children), and 44 were perpetrators
- The victims included women and men, the elderly and children, and members of all socioeconomic classes