

THE ASK

CCADV is joining with over 30 other VOCA-funded victim service providers to call on Governor Lamont and the General Assembly to allocate funding in the amount of **\$13.175 MILLION in FY24 and \$20 MILLION in FY25 to address CUTS IN FEDERAL VOCA FUNDS**. According to the Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services, Connecticut’s VOCA state administrator, this is the amount of funding needed to keep victim services, including domestic violence services, flat-funded across the state through state fiscal year 2025.

THE PROBLEM - FEDERAL VOCA FUNDING IS DECREASING AND SHOWING SIGNS OF INSTABILITY

For years Connecticut, like many other states, has relied heavily on federal funding available through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund to support a variety of victim services. Critical domestic violence services in both court-based and community-based settings have been funded by VOCA grants, as well as the entire statewide domestic violence hotline. Unfortunately, it appears as though VOCA is no longer a stable funding source for the foreseeable future.

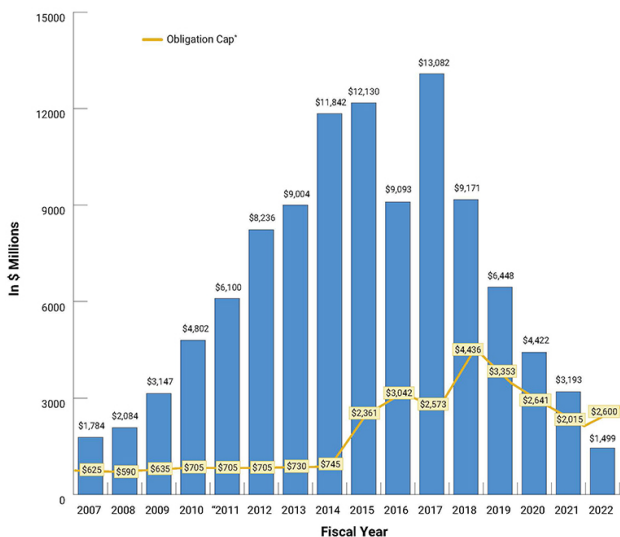
In 2021, Congress passed the “VOCA Fix Act” which was intended to address dwindling VOCA Fund deposits. The VOCA Fund contains non-taxpayer fines and fees resulting from federal criminal prosecutions, largely of white-collar crimes. The previous federal administration heavily utilized deferred prosecution which in turn meant those fines and fees were deposited into the General Treasury, resulting in the VOCA Fund reaching an all-time low. While the “VOCA Fix Act” corrected that practice, federal criminal prosecutions have simply not occurred at the level needed to restore the VOCA Fund, resulting in smaller grants to the states.

In 2022, Governor Lamont and the General Assembly approved one-time funding for state fiscal year 2023 in the amount of \$14.8 million from the state’s allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to address the first year of an anticipated two-year 50% reduction in VOCA funding. While states did receive a slight increase in federal fiscal year 2022 over FFY21, FFY23 is projected to be flat with FFY22 and, based on Fund deposits, another cut is expected in FFY24.

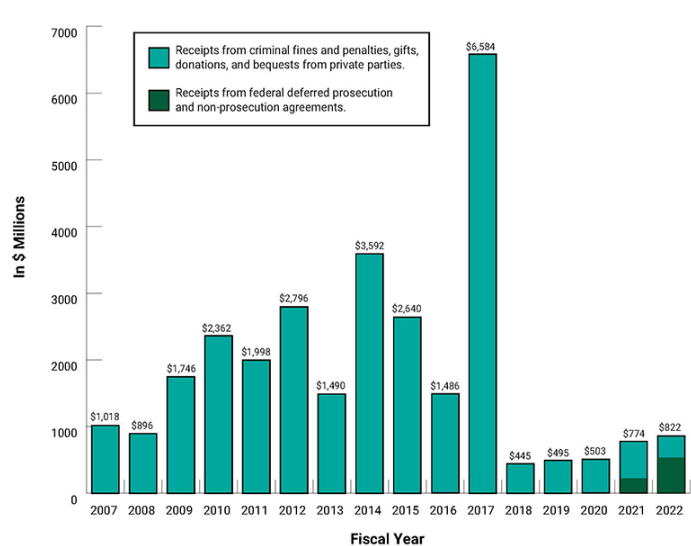
Even with the slight increase in FFY22, the charts below indicate that after hitting its peak in 2017 (2018 grant cycle), the VOCA Fund balance has been steadily decreasing and annual receipts have reached their lowest in the past fifteen years.

FFY16	FFY17	FFY18	FFY19	FFY20	FFY21	FFY22	FFY23 Projected
\$24,699,013	\$20,404,499	\$36,452,243	\$24,540,595	\$18,131,939	\$11,785,760	\$15,626,659	\$15,626,659

FY 2007 – FY 2022 Crime Victims Fund End of Year Balance (\$ millions)
(as of 9/30/2022)



FY 2007 – FY 2022 Crime Victims Fund Annual Receipts (\$ millions)
(as of 9/30/2022)



To learn more about VOCA and view the full Fund balance & deposit sheets, please visit:
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/about/crime-victims-fund>

IMPACT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

The impact of a 50% cut on VOCA-funded domestic violence services in Connecticut would be devastating. It would mean a loss of **\$3,772,000 annually, or \$7,544,000 over the biennium, resulting in the REDUCTION OF STAFF and subsequently SERVICES TO VICTIMS.** In recent years we have seen an increased complexity in the challenges facing victims and their ability to achieve safety and stability for themselves and their children. The pandemic and its lasting economic implications continue to impact the choices available to victims, making their need for our services and advocacy even greater.

VOCA currently funds approximately **127 positions across CCADV and our 18 member organizations**, including:

Criminal and Civil Court Advocates – These advocates work for our member organizations across the state and provide support, information and advocacy designed to enhance the safety of victims, including in criminal cases from the time of arraignment through adjudication. Criminal court advocates are stationed in the court as part of the Family Violence Intervention Unit. Civil court advocates provide services such as assistance and support with restraining orders, divorce, custody, child support, housing, immigration, benefits, special education, and employment.

Adult Advocates – These advocates work for our member organizations across the state and are the first point of contact for new clients. They provide advocacy on the client's behalf with various state and community-based agencies, as well as provide one-on-one counseling and facilitate support groups.

Law Enforcement Advocates – These advocates work for our member organizations across the state and serve as a liaison between the domestic violence organization and the local police departments within their catchment area, supporting their response to domestic violence and assisting in planning and protocol evaluation for the statewide Lethality Assessment Program.

Safe Connect Advocates (statewide domestic violence hotline) – These advocates work for CCADV and provide 24/7 crisis response, information, risk assessment and safety planning, counseling, referrals to CCADV's 18 member organizations for ongoing, local support, and connections to other community-based resources. **VOCA is the sole source of funding for the statewide domestic violence hotline.**

IMPACT ON CONNECTICUT'S OVERALL VICTIM SERVICE SYSTEM

VOCA currently funds a number of services for victims of crime, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, human trafficking, child abuse and neglect, and families impacted by homicide. Most of these services are provided by community-based nonprofits.

In federal fiscal year 2021, Connecticut's VOCA Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program served a total of 104,366 victims of crime, 61% of whom had not previously received services. Nearly 13% of those served had experienced more than one type of victimization. Many individuals served also self-identified additional barriers to their overall safety – over 8,600 individuals had Limited English Proficiency, over 7,500 individuals were homeless, and over 6,200 were experiencing cognitive, physical, or mental disabilities. VOCA funded nearly 2 million staff hours of victim services during the year. A 50% reduction in this funding would shatter Connecticut's victim service system at a time when we know victims need more from us than ever.

ALLOCATE FUNDS TO MAINTAIN VICTIM SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

CCADV is joining with over 30 other VOCA-funded victim service providers to call on Governor Lamont and the General Assembly to allocate funding in the amount of **\$13.175 MILLION in FY24 and \$20 MILLION in FY25 to address CUTS IN FEDERAL VOCA FUNDS.** According to the Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services, Connecticut's VOCA state administrator, this is the amount of funding needed to keep victim services, including domestic violence services, flat-funded across the state through state fiscal year 2025.

When victims of crime do not receive the support they need, especially as children, the long-term effects of trauma manifest in various ways, including chronic physical and mental health issues, depression, suicide, substance use disorders, and difficulty maintaining employment. These issues, when not addressed, can have a greater economic burden on the state. By investing \$33.175 million in victim service organizations we can prioritize victims' needs, helping them to recover from trauma and improving their long-term health, safety, economic stability, and overall quality of life.