

ALLOCATE ONE-TIME FUNDING TO MAINTAIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

THE ASK

We are requesting a total of **\$7.5 MILLION in ONE-TIME STATE FUNDING** over FY23 and FY24 to maintain critical domestic violence crisis response, short- and long-term counseling, and victim advocacy services across Connecticut. This funding will protect these essential services from a reduction due to a **TEMPORARY 50% CUT IN FEDERAL FUNDING** and ensure that advocates will continue to be available across the state to meet the increasingly complex needs of survivors as they grapple with the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

THE PROBLEM - ONGOING IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC & TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN FEDERAL FUNDING

CCADV, our 18 member organizations and Safe Connect are facing a convergence of **two significant issues** - first is the **ongoing impact of the pandemic** on survivors of domestic violence and the consistent increase in need for services; and second is a **temporary, but substantial, cut to vital federal funding** that supports these services.

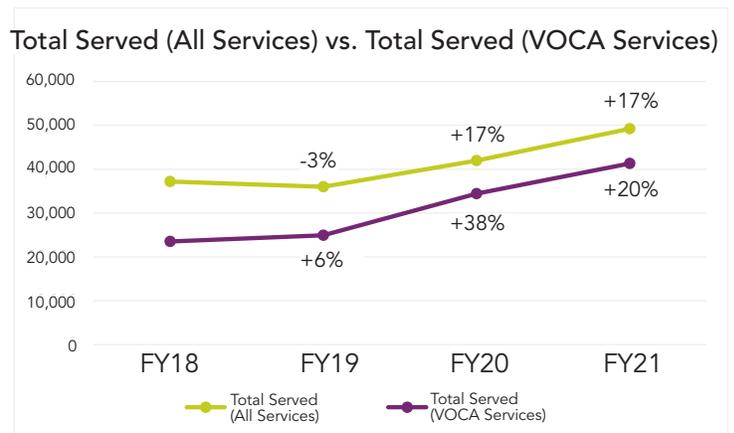
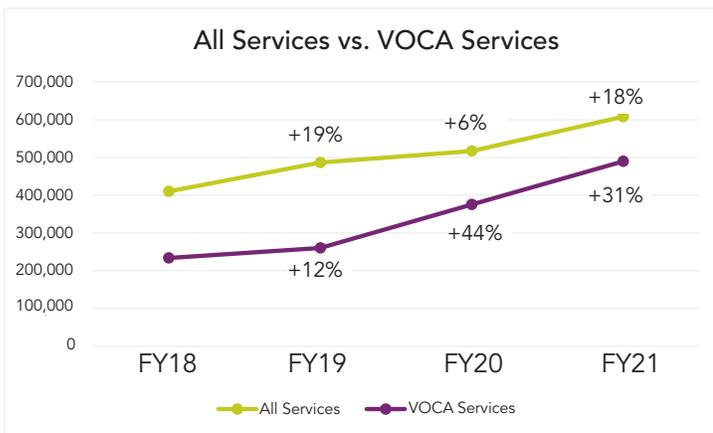
ONGOING IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Throughout the pandemic we have seen an increase in the complexity of issues facing survivors. Many aspects of an abusive relationship are compounded by the dynamics of a global pandemic. A pandemic limits options for everyone, but this can be felt even more acutely by victims and survivors who are already dealing with control and limited options in their lives.

While we had already begun to see increases in many areas of our work over the past few years, the pandemic has certainly magnified those increases. This is particularly true in the area of services funded by the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). **VOCA-funding is key to delivering critical services to survivors across the state including crisis response and triage, court-based advocacy, advocacy around basic needs, and advocacy with law enforcement.**

During the pandemic, survivors have needed additional advocacy related to:

 <p>HOUSING Advocacy with landlords related to past due rent and evictions.</p>	 <p>ECONOMIC Advocacy with creditors and employers.</p>	 <p>COURT Advocacy navigating the backlog and increased safety planning.</p>
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**In November 2019, CCADV launched Safe Connect as a new VOCA-funded project. This resulted in the statewide domestic violence hotline falling under VOCA funding whereas it had previously been accounted for under other limited funding sources.*

TEMPORARY CUT IN FEDERAL VOCA FUNDING

At the same time we are seeing increases in requests for services, CCADV is, along with coalitions across the country, bracing for a temporary, but significant, cut to federal VOCA funding. VOCA funding, which is generated from federal criminal fines and fees, has reached an all-time low due to a federal issue that redirected those fines and fees to the General Treasury for the past few years. In July, President Biden signed into law a measure that will correct this problem, and national experts expect that with the fix in place, the VOCA Fund should replenish in approximately two years. But until then, states have been informed that grants will be reduced. Connecticut's grant funds several victim services organizations in the state, including CCADV and our 18 member organizations, and is facing a 50% reduction for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

State of Connecticut Full Federal VOCA Grant	FFY16	FFY17	FFY18	FFY19	FFY20	FFY21
	\$24,699,013	\$20,404,499	\$36,452,243	\$24,540,595	\$18,131,939	\$11,785,760

In Connecticut, VOCA funds pass through the Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services via a competitive grant process. The Judicial Branch estimates that a 50% reduction in available federal VOCA funds will result in a \$3,772,000 cut to the funding provided to CCADV and our 18 member organizations in each of the fiscal years 2023 and 2024. This means a total cut of \$7,544,000 to CCADV's funding over the two year period.

ALLOCATE FUNDING TO SUPPORT CRITICAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

We anticipate that many of the service increases we've seen will only continue to grow as we emerge from the pandemic. This is particularly true with respect to interventions with employers, creditors, and landlords and with survivors needing assistance to leave their relationship and possibly their home. One-time state funding to fill the gap created at the federal level will help us maintain our VOCA-funded programs to provide essential crisis response and victim advocacy services while the federal VOCA Fund replenishes. We urge you to provide the one-time funding needed to ensure that Connecticut's domestic violence service system can meet the ongoing needs of survivors.

OUR MEMBERS

Our members, the state's 18 domestic violence organizations, provide critical services to survivors across the state 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Services include:

- Individual counseling and support groups
- Emergency shelter, transitional housing and rapid rehousing
- Advocacy to access basic needs
- Court-based advocacy in criminal and civil court
- Age-appropriate advocacy and support services for children & teens
- Community education

