

February 6, 2018

The Honorable {Legislator's full name}
{Building / Street}
Albany, NY {ZIP}

Re: New York State Budget FY '18 –'19

Dear {Assembly member/Senator + last name},

Today is the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Budget Advocacy Day and I'm joining with hundreds of domestic violence advocates all over the state contacting our representatives to share a number of important issues regarding the New York State budget. I am writing on behalf of {name of organization} and the {number} of victims of domestic violence that we serve each year. We ask that you work with your fellow legislators and the governor to not only support survivors but also to invest in primary prevention so that we can prevent violence before it ever begins.

The 2016 New York State Domestic Violence Census¹ numbers are staggering. **New York State had the highest demand for domestic violence services in the country, for two years in a row.** Here are just a few of the numbers:

- In just **ONE** day in 2016, **6,868 victims** were served, of which **2,761** received non-residential services
- **1,390** requests for services went unmet because of critical funding and staffing shortages – an increase of 45% from 2015
- **199 local domestic violence program staff positions**, were reduced or eliminated between 2015 – 2016²

In light of these troubling numbers, we ask that you ensure the following items are prioritized in the final budget:

1. **Remove Firearms from Domestic Violence Offenders.** The connections between domestic violence, mass shootings, and gun violence are clear. In 90% of the deadliest mass shootings in United States history, the shooter had a history of committing domestic violence. When an abusive partner is permitted to access firearms, the risk that their partner will be killed also increases substantially. New York must do more to prevent homicides, and it is critical for the legislature to take a stand to remove firearms from domestic violence offenders.
2. **Fix existing problems in funding for local domestic violence programs across the state as a result of years of flat or reduced investments by:**
 - a. Accepting the FY2019 Executive Budget proposal for \$3 million in TANF funding for non-residential domestic violence services and add \$3 million from each house to the FY2019 Executive Budget proposal to address the needs of survivors of domestic violence; and
 - b. Providing at least a 3% increase in the domestic violence shelter per diem rate including an increase of approximately \$1.9 million in TANF funds.
3. **Create a domestic violence primary prevention funding stream by establishing a \$17.25 million fund in the public protection budget** that will be dispersed through coordinated support to NYSCADV and local domestic violence programs statewide. Research has shown the cost of a single homicide can be well over \$17.25 million - we are requesting funds at this level to demonstrate New York State's commitment to preventing far-reaching tragedies of domestic violence³.
4. **Restore, stabilize and increase funding for critical civil legal services for domestic violence victims statewide** in order to address the high demand for civil legal services by survivors of domestic violence.
5. **Provide funding for local domestic violence programs to collaborate with colleges and universities in implementing the Enough Is Enough mandates** for campuses across the state in order to adequately address dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. This support is intended to complement the \$4.5 million already provided in support for rape crisis programs for sexual assault prevention.

We urge both the Legislature and the Governor to continue your commitment to victims of domestic violence by incorporating these changes into the final state budget. Our statewide membership organization, the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV), can provide more information regarding these positions and provide suggestions for resolution - you can contact Jane Ni, Policy and Community Engagement Coordinator at 518-482-5465 or jni@nyscadv.org.

Sincerely,
{Name}
{Title}

¹ National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2016 Domestic Violence Counts: A 24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services DV Counts

² National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2015 Domestic Violence Counts: A 24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services DV Counts

³ Delisi, Kosloski, Sween, et. al. 2010. Murder by Numbers: Monetary Costs Imposed by a Sample of Homicide Offenders. The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology. 21(4). P 501-503.