

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: New York State Budget FY '20 –'21

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I am writing to you today as a/an {advocate, program director, executive director, etc.} at {your organization}.

Thank you for acknowledging in your FY'20-'21 Executive Budget that there is a need for a new flexible funding model for New York's domestic violence service providers so we can better assist and empower domestic violence survivors and their families. Transforming New York's antiquated domestic violence service delivery system is critical to ensuring victims and their families receive the support they need immediately and without conditions. I support your \$5 million allocation for a flexible funding model pilot program and am urging the Assembly and Senate to maintain this funding in their one-house budget resolutions.

More funding is needed, however, to ensure that no one who is asking for shelter or other domestic violence services is ever turned away. I also urge you to support:

1) Increases in Funding for Non-Residential DV Services

New York State has the highest demand for domestic violence services in the country. According to the National Domestic Violence Counts Census, on one day in 2018 in New York State, 7,518 survivors of domestic violence were served. On that same day, there were 801 unmet requests for services, primarily due to a critical shortage of funds to assist victims. Non-residential DV services, such as telephone hotlines, information and referral services, counseling, legal advocacy and financial empowerment, are essential for supporting the safety of survivors. Yet funding for non-residential DV services in the State Budget is at the same level it was 20 years ago when it was first proposed.

Request: Increase Funding for Non-Residential Services for Domestic Violence Victims to \$6 Million

2) Expanding Supports for DV Victims by Enhancing Innovation within DV Agencies

Domestic violence is a serious, widespread public health issue. In fact, for every 20 New Yorkers, five women and three men will experience or have already experienced domestic violence.

Statewide domestic violence coalitions like the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) provide education, support and technical assistance to domestic violence service providers so we can establish and maintain shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Each year, NYSCADV offers multiple training opportunities and technical assistance on topics such as trauma-informed, victim-centered service provision and program development; laws and regulations and their impact on service provision; cultural competency; analysis of special considerations for historically marginalized communities; community collaboration; and housing options for survivors.

Request: Provide \$150,000 in the State Budget to Support NYSCADV's Training and Technical Assistance for New York's DV Service Providers

3) Implement Statewide Primary Prevention Programming

The Governor's DV Task Force concluded, "Through the implementation of primary and secondary prevention strategies and programs that are community based, culturally responsive and evidence-based, fewer women and men will be victims of domestic violence... Prevention must begin with children as young as toddlers, and carried out through adulthood. Programs aimed at enhancing awareness and developing healthy relationships, recognizing that domestic violence impacts all genders, income levels, ethnicities and ages, are the first step in primary prevention."

Primary prevention offers strategic solutions toward fostering healthy, thriving futures for families and communities – futures where domestic violence does not occur. Primary prevention programs create lasting change by re-setting the conditions in a community that allow domestic violence to thrive. Unfortunately, the FY'20-'21 Executive Budget does not allocate funding for primary prevention efforts.

Request: Allocate \$4 Million to Support the Work of Domestic Violence Advocates and Launch Domestic Violence Prevention Initiatives Across New York State.

If you would like more information, I can be reached at **{phone number}**, or you can contact Joan Gerhardt, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at NYSCADV, at 518-482-5465.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

{Your name and title}