2020 NYSCADV VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE DAY OF ACTION (VLDA) TOOLKIT

Talking Points for Legislative Meetings

- For years, New York State led the country in its demand for domestic violence services.
  - In 2018, NY’s DV shelter and community-based programs served more than 50,000 adults and children.
  - That same year, more than 24,000 adults and children were denied shelter.
  - In 2019, according to the NNEDV DV Counts annual census, more than 5,800 domestic violence survivors were served in one day. More important, 791 requests could not be met. Most of these requests were for housing.

- New York’s demand for DV services was outpacing New York’s investment in DV services, which has remained flat for years.
  - New York funds DV programs based on a decades-old funding model based on the number of survivors in shelter each night (e.g., a per diem reimbursement model). Unlike 30 years ago, when most DV survivors wanted to leave their home and enter emergency shelter, many DV survivors today seek a range of non-residential services, including information and referral, legal services, counseling, children’s services, etc.
  - Nearly all of the funding that is provided to NY’s DV programs is federal funding, not funding allocated by New York State. Over the last two years, one of the most significant federal funding streams that support NY’s DV services – the Victims of Crime Award grant – has been dramatically reduced, prompting New York to inform local DV service providers that existing contracts may have to be modified.

- Now, DV service providers are struggling to re-direct what little funding they get to provide critical services to DV survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - DV programs, as essential service providers, are pivoting to offer remote advocacy services to those unwilling to come into shelter, and enhancing social distancing and isolation protocols for residents already in shelter.
  - DV survivors are avoiding communal living situations as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
  - Because NY’s DV programs receive funding when DV survivors are in shelter, funding for DV services is decreasing, just as the demand for DV services is increasing.
  - Many local DV programs have had to cancel fund-raising events due to NY’s social distancing protocols. Further, monetary donations, as well as donations of food and supplies, have dramatically declined.

- NY’s DV programs need your help to continue supporting DV survivors and their families.
  - We must allocate significant state-originating dollars directly to local DV programs to ensure victims receive the assistance they need to stay safe and protect their families.
  - DV programs should receive flexible emergency funding to enable them to provide economic stability grants directly to survivors.
  - Additional funding must be available for DV programs to purchase personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, food services, and remote technologies; to modify buildings to enhance social distancing, and to provide staff with enhanced compensation and benefits.