

New York's high demand for domestic violence services has outpaced New York's investment in such services. That's because funding for domestic violence programs in New York State has remained flat for years. To address DV victims' critical needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic, emergency funding is needed now.

On May 12, 2020, domestic violence victim advocates, survivors, allies and community members from across the state will join together for the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence's (NYSCADV's) annual "Virtual" Legislative Day of Action.

With the use of remote technologies and social media platforms, we will send a resounding message to state lawmakers: **Legislators must allocate emergency funding for New York's domestic violence agencies** who are struggling to provide critical services to domestic violence victims during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

According to the DV Counts nationwide survey performed each year by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, **New York State has one of the highest demands for domestic violence services in the country.** Data from the most recent Census indicate that, on one day alone in New York last year, nearly 6,000 victims of domestic violence received services. On that same day, nearly 800 requests for domestic violence services went unmet in New York because of critical funding and staffing shortages.

Even before the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, **funding for domestic violence services was not sufficient to keep up with DV victims' needs.** That's because New York's method for dispersing funding to DV agencies is antiquated, having been established more than 30 years ago when most DV victims sought emergency shelter. Today, on the other hand, more and more DV survivors want to stay in their homes, or with family or friends, while they obtain non-residential DV services such as counseling, legal services, child care, housing assistance, etc. New York's funding model must evolve in light of this new reality.

The pitfalls of the existing funding model have become painfully clear during the current COVID-19 Pandemic. As frontline, essential workers, New York's DV advocates transitioned quickly to remote advocacy services. Significant resources were re-directed for the purchase of personal protective equipment for staff and shelter residents, cleaning supplies, paper goods, non-communal food service provision, computers, phones, remote technologies, etc. But because fewer DV victims are seeking emergency shelter, and because some shelter beds must remain open to comply with social distancing protocols, DV agencies are receiving less funding than before the Pandemic. Further, many DV programs have had to cancel significant fundraising events and donor activities which, for some programs, dramatically supplements available government funding.

NYSCADV urges the New York State Legislature to allocate significant state-originating dollars to:

- (1) ensure DV victims continue to receive the assistance they need to stay safe and protect their families;
- (2) enhance remote and mobile advocacy DV services;
- (3) enable DV agencies to provide economic stability grants to DV victims based on their individualized needs; and
- (4) assure DV agencies have the financial means to purchase personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, food services and remote technologies so DV victims can continue to obtain critical services during this crisis.

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