

2023-2024 Public Policy Agenda

NYSCADV's policy agenda employs budgetary, legislative and systems change advocacy to support the needs of DV survivors, their families, and the programs that support them. We envision a world where basic human rights include the right to live healthy, stable and rewarding lives free from DV and all other forms of violence and oppression. This vision serves as the foundation for our work.

We also recognize that the systems victims and survivors need to navigate on their journey toward safety are inherently challenging and disproportionately stacked against survivors from historically excluded communities, specifically BIPOC, LGBTQ, immigrant, API, differently abled and those living at the intersection of multiple identities. Centering our work on these individuals and communities will improve outcomes for all who experience violence in their lives.

Funding for Domestic Violence Programs and Supportive Services

NYSCADV is committed to pursuing all avenues to increase stable, equitable and reliable funding for DV programs. New York's methodology for disbursing funding for DV services is antiquated, having not been updated in more than 30 years. Funding also comes with onerous restrictions on the use of such funds and requires cash-strapped DV programs to find and allocate unrestricted funds to "match" federal funds, a requirement that disproportionately impacts rural, culturally specific and under-resourced organizations.

Access to Safe, Stable and Affordable Housing

The intersection of DV, homelessness and housing insecurity is undeniable. Survivors often report a lack of safe and affordable housing as one of the primary barriers they face when trying to leave an abusive partner.

We support:

- ✓ Access to flexible funding
- ✓ Availability and affordability in housing
- ✓ Protections of victims' current housing should they wish to remain in their homes

We oppose:

- X Legislation that discriminates against victims of DV in their search for housing or other efforts to remain in current housing

Economic Justice and Self-Sufficiency

Economic abuse occurs in 99% of DV cases. This can include cutting off access to credit and bank accounts, keeping a victim's name off a lease or interfering with their ability to work. Studies indicate that one of the best predictors of whether a victim will be able to stay away from their abuser is their level of economic independence.

We support:

- ✓ Financial empowerment and equal pay initiatives
- ✓ Workplace protections and accommodations
- ✓ Access to public benefits, affordable healthcare and childcare

We oppose:

- X Policies that complicate getting financial and social supports

Ensuring Courts Understand the Needs of Domestic Violence Survivors

Judges play a crucial role in their courtroom and in their communities to help end violence against individuals. It is therefore critical for judges and court personnel to understand the dynamics of DV, the needs of DV survivors, and the harm courts may cause victims when DV or child abuse is minimized. NYSCADV continues to prioritize the need for trauma-informed judicial training to raise awareness about racial bias, cultural humility and coercive control. We also support policies that protect families by keeping children away from abusive parents.

We support:

- ✓ Access to, and funding for, supervised child visitation programs and safe child exchange programs
- ✓ Access to low-cost or free legal services and representation, including for all Family Court proceedings
- ✓ Expanding resources in Family Court to reduce crowded dockets and enhance safety for victims while in court
- ✓ Policies to prevent abusers from manipulating courts, CPS and other systems

Prevention and Ensuring Equity for All Domestic Violence Survivors

NYSCADV works to change and/or dismantle the systems of oppression that enable all forms of violence to occur. We are committed to elevating the experiences and voices of ALL survivors, knowing that systemic oppressions permeate our institutions, our schools and universities, our healthcare facilities, our courts and criminal justice system, our government and our workplaces. Many risk factors for DV stem from systemic oppression that lead to survivors' inequitable access to the systems and resources they need for safety and economic self-sufficiency.

We support:

- ✓ Policies that expand the accessibility of comprehensive healthcare
- ✓ Legislation that provides the economic supports families and communities need to thrive
- ✓ Legislation to create youth educational programming focused on healthy relationships and sex education
- ✓ Enhanced funding for prevention programs in local communities around the state

We oppose:

- X Legislation that over-criminalizes or leads to mass incarceration or fuels the school-to-prison pipeline
- X Discriminatory voting laws
- X Barriers to immigration and pathways to citizenship
- X Trans-exclusionary policies

Access to Reproductive Healthcare

Coercive control and reproductive coercion are tactics used regularly in DV situations, including contraceptive sabotage, knowingly exposing the victim to an STI, forcing sexual contact, and forcing a pregnant person to abort a pregnancy or carry it to term. The consequences of coercive control on reproductive and sexual health can be prevented if people are empowered to make decisions about emergency contraception and pregnancy termination – a decision that is often a critical component of finding safety and healing for victims.

We support:

- ✓ Policies that ensure bodily autonomy and access to reproductive healthcare services for New Yorkers and those traveling from restrictive states to New York
- ✓ Enhanced protections for providers, staff and volunteers providing reproductive healthcare services

We oppose:

- X Policies that limit a person's right to access sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including safe abortion care
- X Policies that promote or protect the spread of medical misinformation