

OUTLINE OF KEY TALKING POINTS FOR IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS 2017

IN ADVANCE

- To meet directly with your Representative or Senator, contact the scheduler in the district office in advance and follow up with an email making your request.
- It is perfectly acceptable to meet with staff. To set these meetings, call the district office directly, explain the purpose of your meeting and the names/number of people who will be coming with you, and ask for the names of the best staff to meet with.
- Gather your materials.
- Invite allies to join you. Set a prep meeting to go over talking points and flow.

AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY MEETING

- Introduce yourself: your name; name and location of your program; brief description of your program.
- Thank the person with whom you are meeting for the appointment and the Congressperson's work [include a tailored thank you based on the Member's record].

TALK ABOUT FEDERAL FUNDING AND HOW IT'S USED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Give the Representative, Senator, or staff member any supporting materials

General Talking Points on Federal Funding Issues:

- *Talk about your state and specifically the member's district. By sharing the needs in your community and the difficulties you face meeting those needs, you paint a picture of the critical need for funding. **Your story is the most important message you can share with a Member of Congress.***
- *While VAWA, VOCA, RPE and FVPSA have been extremely successful in our community and across the nation, many victims still have unmet needs and we must continue to improve our responses to address and prevent the crisis of violence in many communities. The demand for safety and services increases with high profile cases, national commentary, better outreach, improved response and increased awareness. Current funding levels cannot meet these increases in demand.*
- *Domestic violence and sexual assault services are critically under-funded, creating a dangerous gap between desperate need and adequate resources.*
- *According to the Office on Violence Against Women Report to Congress for the most recent 2-year reporting period, 40,000 survivors were served with funding from the Sexual Assault Services Program.*
- *A 2014 report to Congress revealed that the STOP grant program helped 431,244 victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking; funded over 2,200 staff; and provided professional training for over 200,000 individuals.*
- *FVPSA is the only dedicated funding source for domestic violence survivors, and funded programs served over 1 million victims a year.*
- *VOCA, a non-taxer payer fund, supports over 4 million victims across the nation each year.*
- *According to a 2016 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, over half of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services.*
- *According to a 2016 survey by NNEDV, survivors had 11,191 unmet needs on just one day in September.*
- *Local data points (Example: survivors served, waiting list, increased demand).*
- *We are deeply concerned about **sequestration**. In federal fiscal year 2018, without specific legislative action, sequestration will likely cut vital federal funding sources. Sequestration had a devastating impact on our community (include examples like programs closed, laid off staff, fewer victims were served).*



TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FOR SURVIVORS

General Talking Points on the Affordable Care Act:

- *ACA is vital for the health, safety, healing and recovery of survivors.*
- *Puts health care in reach of millions of people who didn't have it before, a majority of whom are women.*
- *Covers screening and brief counseling for victims of domestic and interpersonal violence.*
- *Requires almost all health plans to cover things like mental and behavioral health care, or maternity coverage.*
- *Prevents health insurers from denying coverage to people who have pre-existing conditions, including being a victim of domestic violence.*
- *Allows victims in an abusive relationship to get their own health insurance, without needing to go through their abuser.*

If you don't want to reference the ACA specifically, you can say:

Survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence often have health problems arising from victimization. They need affordable, comprehensive insurance coverage; protection from discrimination; and access to women's preventive health services.

ASK FOR A COMMITMENT: WILL YOU SUPPORT FUNDING IN THESE CRITICAL AREAS? WILL YOU OPPOSE ANY CUTS TO VAWA, VOCA, FVPSA, RPE? WILL YOU PRESERVE THE ACA?

(This may be considered lobbying. Non-profits can engage in a certain amount of lobbying but cannot use federal funds to do so. If you want to have an informational visit with no lobbying, do not make a specific ask.)

AT THE END OF EVERY MEETING:

- Thank the Member/staffer for her/his time.
- Ask if the Member/staffer has any additional questions.
- Make sure that you get the business card of the staffer(s) you meet. They are typically also at the receptionist's desk.
- Invite the Member/staffer to visit and tour your program and/or to speak at an upcoming event.
- Ask if the Member/staffer would like any follow-up information. If so, please make a note of this so that NAESV or NNEDV can follow-up with the Member/staffer.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Be sure to share your visit on social media! You can use twitter to thank your Member or post a photo to Facebook.
- For example: Thank you @SenatorABC for meeting with (insert program name) to talk about critical funding for survivors of DV & SA #endSA #endDV #BeAVoice

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND FEEDBACK FOR EVERY MEETING AND SUBMIT TO NAESV or NNEDV at info@endsexualviolence.org and advocacy@nnedv.org.