



## NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### LOWERED FUNDING JEOPARDIZES SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SEPTEMBER SURVEY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COALITIONS SHOWS HIGHER NEED, REDUCED RESOURCES

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) survey requested information on funding of local domestic violence (DV) programs throughout the United States in order to determine the state of the field with respect to funding. This survey was intended to capture information on recent changes in funding at the state and local levels, and the impact of any changes on the provision of services to victims of domestic violence.

#### Key Findings

- 88% of state coalitions\* reported that domestic violence programs have recently experienced an increase in demand for services.
- 69% of state coalitions\* reported that domestic violence programs experienced funding decreases from Fiscal Year 2011 to Fiscal Year 2012.
- In 2011, over 80% of state coalitions\* reported that, due to a shortage of funding, some DV programs had to reduce staff in 2011. Over 70% of coalitions reported that some DV programs had to reduce victim services because of funding shortages.
- In the first 8 months of 2012 alone, over 71% of coalitions\* reported that some DV programs were forced to reduce staff because of funding shortages, and 66% reported that some DV programs had to reduce victim services.
- Since 2011, at least 19 local DV programs across the country have been forced to close entirely.

*“We recently surveyed programs and about 85% of respondents said they lost revenue in the last 2.5 years.” -Wisconsin*

#### Funding Cuts

According to survey responses, domestic violence programs are experiencing funding cuts or reductions from multiple sources. Nearly 44% reported decreases in federal funding over and above the decreases experienced as a result of cuts to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. Almost 80% of states reported that their programs were experiencing cuts or reduction in funding from local county and city sources. Approximately 90% of states reported that their programs were seeing decreases in private donations. Additionally, almost 80% of states reported that United Way funding was decreasing for programs.

*\*As used herein, “state coalitions” refers to the 56 domestic violence coalitions of: the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands*

## Increase in Demand

At the same time that funding is decreasing, programs across the country are seeing an increase in demand for services. Victims continue to need crisis services and shelters, which are often operating at or over capacity; however, programs are finding that victims frequently have deeper and more complex needs, including those related to mental health, employment, and legal services.

*“There were 556 women, children, and men staying in a domestic violence emergency shelter on an average night in 2011, a 12% increase over the past two years. More than 3,000 families seeking shelter could not be served because the shelter was full. The demand for sexual and domestic violence services continues to rise. In the past two years, our programs have seen a 6% increase in the demand for sexual assault crisis services and an 18% increase in the demand for domestic violence crisis services.” -Virginia*

## Types of Services Cut

When faced with budget cuts, domestic violence programs are forced to cut services. Almost half of the survey respondents reported that their local programs had to cut direct services to victims. The same percentage responded that the programs had to cut children’s services. Over a third of state coalitions reported that their programs had to cut legal services.

## Staff Cuts

Programs and coalitions have also been forced to lay off staff and/or to operate with unfilled positions. This has hampered the ability of state and local programs to provide much-needed services and advocacy to victims.

*“We are shuffling our various sources of funding to keep staff. However, they are all stretched to the max and we really need additional staff. We are constantly reassessing priorities.” -Illinois*

## VAWA, FVPSA, and VOCA Funding

The funding from and programs supported through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) remain of vital importance to service providers. This funding is more essential than ever in ensuring that programs are able to provide victims with much-needed services. Some of the most important funding priorities identified by the coalitions include VOCA; FVPSA, VAWA’s STOP Program, Transitional Housing, Civil Legal Assistance programs; the National Domestic Violence Hotline; and the Rape Prevention and Education Program.

## Methodology

The survey was distributed in September 2012 to the 56 state and territorial\* domestic violence coalition. Of that number, 52 (93%) responded to at least some of the survey questions, and 44 (79%) completed the entire survey. Data was collected at the state coalition level, not from individual programs. While this was an informal survey, it provides insights into the current funding climate and the needs of the field as understood and communicated by those organizations responsible for monitoring the state of domestic violence services in their respective areas: the state and territorial domestic violence coalitions.