



## **President's 2014 Budget Proposal Would Restore and Increase Resources for Victims**

### ***NNEADV calls on Congress to maintain and increase investments***

[Washington, DC ~ April 11, 2013] Yesterday, President Obama released his fiscal year 2014 budget proposal, which includes desperately needed investments in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) shelter funding.

"At a time when fiscal decisions are tough, we are reassured by the continued support of President Obama and Vice President Biden for lifesaving programs that address violence against women," said Kim Gandy, NNEADV's President and CEO. "Recent decreases in federal funding due to sequestration have jeopardized victims' access to safety. Congress should build on the President's budget proposal to ensure that victims of violence won't be denied critical services."

The President's budget would release \$800 million from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund (made up of criminal fines, penalty fees, forfeited bail bonds and the like) dedicated to direct services for victims of crime, including survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The budget targets a portion of the VOCA funding to support national initiatives and services to tribal victims, while maintaining funding to state victim assistance programs. The budget proposal would restore funding for the recently renewed Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Resources for domestic violence shelters, funded by the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), would be restored and increased by \$6 million in this budget.

For most VAWA programs, increases in the President's budget proposal basically restore funding that was cut in fiscal year 2013 due to sequestration and other cuts. In some programs, the President's budget provides modest increases over fiscal year 2012, which will result in more funding to meet the needs of domestic violence victims. The essential VAWA transitional housing grant, however, is reduced below FY 12 funding.

The President's budget proposal responds to a prolonged crisis faced by victim services providers. There are simply not enough resources to meet the demand for victim services. In September 2012, NNEDV surveyed the 56 state and territorial coalitions working against domestic violence to obtain information on funding of those programs throughout the United States. The survey revealed that across the country, state and local programs are experiencing substantial cuts in funding from federal, state and local governmental sources. Additionally, the vast majority of states reported that their programs have seen decreases in their funding in the last fiscal year.

Since 2011, at least 19 local DV programs across the country have been forced to close entirely. NNEDV's "Domestic Violence Counts" report found that in one 24-hour period in 2012, nearly 65,000 victims received lifesaving services at domestic violence programs nationwide. Unfortunately, during that same 24-hour period more than 10,000 requests for services went unmet largely due to lack of funding. The President's proposed investment in these programs will help local domestic violence shelters respond to more victims who are fleeing abuse.

"Plainly," said Gandy, "the funding crisis means that victims will be turned away when they are at their most vulnerable. While service providers work with each victim who comes to them to find safety, they cannot create shelter beds out of thin air, hire advocates on a promise, or build affordable housing on a wing and a prayer. They need funding to help provide refuge and safety for victims."

While the President's budget is a strong starting place, NNEDV encourages Congress to make additional investments in victim safety. NNEDV calls on Congress to release at least \$1 billion from the VOCA fund and to structure the release to maximize the funding distributed through the state formula grants directly to local programs. Additionally, NNEDV encourages Congress to increase VAWA STOP (Services\*Training\*Officers\*Prosecutors) funding to at least \$205 million to ensure that states can continue to improve the response to victims. Congress should maintain VAWA transitional housing at \$25 million to ensure that victims are not faced with the choice between continued abuse or homelessness. Finally, NNEDV encourages Congress to target at least \$140 million for the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) to support domestic violence shelters and programs.

"We look forward to working with Congress throughout the budget process to restore funding lost through sequestration and to target investments to lifesaving victim services," Gandy concluded.