

**Domestic Violence To Responsible Choices LLC
Melissa Deas (Director)
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Bristol, VT 05443
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4-01-2016

Regarding: SFY 2017 budget (H.875)

To Whom it May Concern:

I have coordinated/facilitated a battering intervention program in Addison County for 12 years through Spectrum Youth and Family Services. I now am the director of DVRC and facilitator in both Addison and Chittenden Counties since June of 2015. I am a member of the Domestic Violence Accountability Committee, which sprung from the VT Council on Domestic Violence as well as been a member of various other committees that requires expertise on domestic violence.

I would like to bring your attention to the crucial position that Rebecca Thomforde holds as the Domestic Violence Accountability Coordinator for the VT Council on Domestic Violence. This position requires \$40,000 to support. Rebecca is the pivoting point for battering intervention programs to meet the state standards and to become certified by the Council. This position keeps watch over the ongoing trainings that each BIP must do to meet state standards. She is also vital to the follow through for communication from all service workers whether it be through emails or the many meetings that need to take place to improve our state's community response to domestic violence. This includes an awareness of the effectiveness of our state standards, while improving them when the dv accountability committee deems it to be necessary. If this position is not supported, I, and many service providers, fear that we will loose tremendous ground in our ability to provide to our community BIPs that are inclusive to all abusive men to keep our communities safe.

Included with the work Rebecca does is to help bring to VT in cooperation with the Dept. of Corrections, an intention to pilot an evidence-based curriculum, called ACTV (Achieving Change Through Value Based Behavior) to begin in 2 counties as well as a correctional facility. This is one of the

many efforts to reduce recidivism in VT and to help provide community safety. The \$200,000 requested, included supporting this important ACTV pilot. This included the training of VT trainers and the facilitators who would be piloting the new curriculum. I believe this is a superior curriculum because it is not based on shaming, but to meet the abuser where he is. The ACTV curriculum will help a man who is abusive to understand what his goals are, what his triggers are they keep him from meeting his goals, while teaching him the skills he can access to be successful in meeting his goals. An evidence-based curriculum is exactly what has been requested by judges and others involved with domestic violence for many years. We are right on the cusp of making this happen.

Please help us to be successful in meeting the needs of our communities safety by approving our request for the \$200,000 that will allow us to support the position of Domestic Violence Accountability Coordinator and to support this requested and successful curriculum pilot that is scheduled to begin in October 2016. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Melissa Deas (DVRC director)