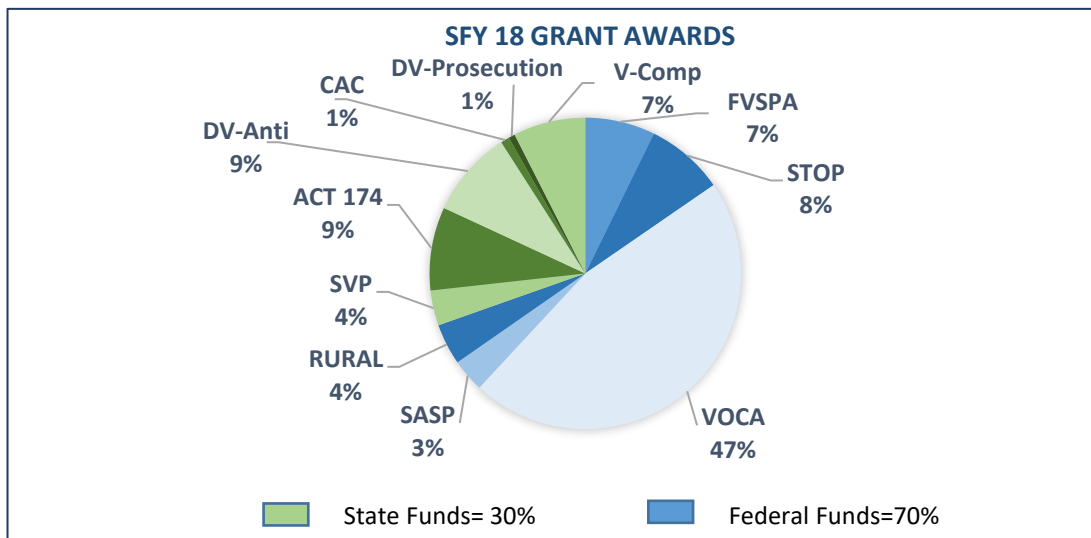


Center for Crime Victim Services General Funds SFY 2018	
Program	Amount
Antiviolence Grant (supports mandatory VOCA and FVPSA match requirements)	\$916,259
Child Advocacy Centers (supports mandatory VOCA match)	\$92,350
Supervised Visitation Programs	\$172,555
Domestic Violence Prosecutors DVP (supports mandatory federal STOP match requirement)	\$67,000
State of Vermont VISION annual fee	\$15,976
TOTAL	\$1,248,164

General Fund dollars provided to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS) are passed through to support programming that provides crucial services for the safety and security of Vermonters. The Center does not charge any administrative fees to manage these funds. These funds have been thoughtfully allocated to provide the mandatory required match of other federal funding streams. Thus, if these funds were reduced, other federal funding would be in jeopardy. As it stands, 71% of VCCVS grant programming is supported with federal dollars. Most federal grant programs require that 25% of the funds be supported with non-federal dollars; a level we are precariously close to, especially considering that not all the 29% of funding from the state can be used as a match for federal grant programming (e.g. Supervised Visitation). The Center has already seen a sharp reduction of state support over the past few years for these vital services.



FEDERAL FUNDS		STATE FUNDS	
FVPSA	\$736,636.00	SVP	\$ 369,750.00
STOP	\$826,550.00	ACT 174	\$ 878,856.00
VOCA	\$4,718,903.00	DV-Anti	\$ 916,259.00
SASP	\$347,374.00	CAC	\$ 92,350.00
RURAL	\$433,333.00	V-Comp	\$ 760,817.00
		DV-Prosecution	\$ 67,000.00
TOTAL	\$7,062,796.00		\$ 3,085,032.00

Essential Services Supported with VCCVS General Funds

Programs of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

All fifteen of the Vermont Network Programs receive funding from the state to support a crucial safety net, without which the lives of individuals impacted by domestic and sexual violence would be at risk. In 2014, the Vermont Criminal Information Center (VCIC) reported that 3,040 individuals were victims of crimes against persons. In 84% of those cases, the defendant/victim relationship was an acquaintance, intimate partner or family member of the victim. Approximately 58% of the crimes against persons in Vermont occurred in residences, which makes the home the most frequent location for violent crime in our state. It is also well documented that many domestic violence incidents go unreported because the victim believes the incident was a "private or personal matter," or to "protect the offender." (Bureau of Justice Statistics) Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that the 15 VT Network programs consistently report higher numbers of individuals served than the numbers that are reported by Vermont's 69 law enforcement agencies. In 2016 alone, the Network served 9,276 individuals, responded to 19,816 hotline calls, and provided 45,448 "bed nights" for victims and children of domestic and sexual violence.

The ripple effects of domestic and sexual violence are far reaching. One in three women, and one in four men have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime (Centers for Disease Control). Domestic violence is a major world health issue that impacts the over-all well-being of those directly affected, as well as their communities and workplaces. Victims often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and are at a higher risk for heart disease and substance abuse and other chronic diseases. The fatigue and insomnia resulting impacts the workplace and classroom. Nearly a quarter of employed women report that domestic violence has affected their work performance at some point in their lives. Each year, an estimated 8 million days of paid work is lost in the US because of domestic violence. It is an insidious epidemic that costs our nation \$8.3 billion annually. (Forbes, December 5, 2013). The effect of domestic violence on children is staggering, impacting their IQ scores, visual motor skills and causing problems with attention and memory. Living in a domestic violence home may significantly alter a child's DNA, aging them prematurely by 7 to 10 years. Children in these homes are abused or neglected at a rate that is 1500% higher than the national average, and are 6 times more likely to commit suicide, 50% more likely to abuse drugs, 74% more likely to commit a violent crime, and three times more likely to repeat the cycle. (Childhood Domestic Violence Association)

Victims of domestic and sexual violence must have trained professionals ready to help them, no matter the unimaginable scenario presented. It would be remiss to take any actions that reduce funding in this area. Domestic and sexual violence will not go away unless very intentional efforts are made to train teachers from kindergarten through college, first responders, policy makers, the courts, specialized victim service organizations, parents, the media and other community leaders about the profound impact domestic and sexual violence has on our society. The dedicated experts of the VT Network who are there 24/7 to assist victims in crisis are the same individuals who go forth to inspire change through education and outreach. These underfunded programs need more support, not less.

Types of Positions Supported at the VT Network with Vermont General Funds

- Crisis Responders
- Hotline Workers
- Shelter Coordinators
- Youth and Family Services Coordinators
- Family Court Advocates
- Criminal Court Advocates
- Volunteer Coordinators
- Hospital Advocates
- Trainers and Educators

Services the Vermont Network Provides with Vermont General Funds

- Sheltering victims of domestic and sexual abuse and their children
- Filing emergency RFA (Relief from Abuse) forms
- Assisting plaintiffs file for temporary protection orders
- Supporting plaintiffs during their final protection order hearings
- Providing general information on the family court process
- Providing information on dynamics of domestic violence to survivors and allied professionals
- 24/7 hotline support for victims of domestic, sexual, stalking violence and human trafficking
- Empowering survivors with information to make decisions based on the need of their individual circumstances
- Safety planning
- Providing information on emergency, temporary and private transitional housing options
- Problem solving and systems advocacy
- Civil legal advocacy

Supervised Visitation Programs

There are 9 programs in Vermont's Supervised Visitation Coalition. They are geographically situated to best serve all 14 counties in the state, given the limited funding available. This past year, these programs reported serving 398 families with 550 children, providing opportunities for 5233 visits with their non-custodial parent. (VCCVS Data) These programs rely heavily on the funding provided by the State General Funds, and without it the programs would not exist.

Supervised Visitation Programs (SVPs) provide a neutral and safe space in which a child may have contact with his or her non-custodial parent. Supervised visitation provides for the safe exchange of children in situations involving domestic violence, dating violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. Supervised visitation is often ordered by the court. Historically, the state of Vermont has been committed to supporting services that value parenting as a cornerstone of strong families. Supervised Visitation Programs can help foster parenting opportunities which enable both parents to stay emotionally involved

with their child(ren). Visits take place in a neutral setting in the presence of a third party who observes the visit and enforces effective safety measures for the child.

These Supervised Visitation Programs follow standards that have been developed by the coalition. These standards adhere to best practices which include (but are not limited to) safety planning, risk assessment, ensuring accessibility, providing separate physical entrances and arrival and departure times for custodial and non-custodial parents, confidentiality, neutrality, policies for terminating visits and mandated reporting.

Absent of supervised visitation, people end up using other alternatives that are not safe. They use family members, friends or schedule visits in public places. Quite often supervised visitation is ordered or scheduled soon after a separation, which is also the most dangerous time for the victims of domestic violence, further underscoring the need for heightened security measures, and thoughtful implementation.

Child Advocacy Centers

There are thirteen child advocacy centers in the state of Vermont. The Child Advocacy Centers provide a sensitive and age appropriate setting in which multidisciplinary teams of law enforcement, the VT Department of Children and Families, Prosecutors, Mental Health Services, and Medical Professionals work together to conduct interviews and make decisions about the investigation, treatment, management and prosecution of cases of child physical and sexual abuse and neglect. Twelve of Vermont's 13 Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) house Special Investigative Units. These Special Investigative Units were initially designed to serve child sexual assault victims, but because of the advanced training of the law enforcement investigators and prosecutors there, some adult cases are being handled at our SIUs. These SIUs are authorized by Title 24 VSA § 1940. In SFY 16, the SIUs served 1,730 new clients, consisting of 1,357 children and 363 adults. The offenders of children in Vermont were; parents (239), parent's boy/girlfriend (94), step-parents (45), other relatives (169), or another known person (389), or unknown (52). The offenders of adult victims were parents (12), parent boy/girlfriends (5), step-parents (4), other relative (24), or another known person (238), or unknown (28).

Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children ages 17 and under. 44% of rapes with penetration occur to children under the age of 18. Victims younger than 12 accounted for 15% of those raped, and another 29% of rape victims were between 12 and 17. Adolescents who were sexually abused have a 3 to 5-fold risk of delinquency. Behavioral problems, including physical aggression, non-compliance, and oppositional/defiant behavior occur frequently among sexually abused children and adolescents. (SFY 16 VT SIU Report to the VT Legislature)

The traumatic effects of child sexual abuse on victims are devastating and can last a lifetime. Child Advocacy Centers have been designed to minimize trauma by not requiring a child to describe the incident multiple times to numerous diverse professionals. Instead CACs provide a child-focused setting in which the multi-disciplinary team comes together, at the same time, so the child is only interviewed once. The state dollars used to support these programs are small in comparison to the federal funding they

receive, and without the state funding, the programs might not be able to make their match requirement, and the programs would struggle to survive.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Prosecutors in some State's Attorneys' Offices

Domestic and Sexual violence cases are among the most difficult and time consuming to prosecute. Domestic violence involves a complex pattern of behavior, rather than a single isolated event. Many prosecutors are frustrated by victims' reluctance to participate in the criminal case because of the emotional and financial control that the perpetrator has over them. Prosecutors need to be mindful of strategies for successfully obtaining evidence and engaging expert witnesses, alleviating the victims burden of providing testimony. From 2012-2016 Vermont's State's Attorneys charged 8,791 cases of domestic and sexual violence (of adults). (Data provided by Vermont's Crime Research Group).

The Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services administers the federal STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecution) formula grant from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, which totaled \$827,087 last year. This grant requires that 25% of the funding goes to prosecution. The State's Attorneys' Office thus received \$243,241.95 of these federal funds to support full-time DV prosecutors in Chittenden, Franklin/Grand Isle, Windham and half-time DV prosecutors in Caledonia and Rutland Counties. It is important to note that in the previous year, the Center implemented a competitive application process for all STOP subrecipients, as the same few counties had been receiving this funding as a matter of course for at least a decade. This resulted in two counties losing funding for their DV prosecutors, and two counties gaining DV prosecutor support. This significantly impacted the ability of Washington and Lamoille counties to prosecute these cases and they have not been able to hire replacements due to lack of state or other funding. It is vitally important to realize that there are not special DV prosecutors in all of Vermont counties, and that this is an underfunded urgent need. The five counties that now receive the STOP grant receive \$67,000 in State General Funds to support their work, which still does not completely meet the match requirement on that \$243,241.95 STOP federal award.

These crimes are extremely labor intensive, and demand specialized skills on the part of the prosecutors. Given the volume of cases presented each year, there is an urgent need for more, not less domestic and sexual violence prosecutors in our state. All counties should have domestic and sexual violence prosecutors and the data supports this. Proper prosecution of domestic and sexual violence cases should not be a luxury as it is central to the well-being of our society.