

Hello Rep. Grad,

Many thanks for the opportunity to speak in greater depth with the House Judiciary Committee today about the CRF Memo submitted to the committee last week. Please find below a summary of what I discussed today along with some additional financial information. All of this information is supplemental to what was provided in the [CRF Memo](#) submitted to the committee. Each of these requests would provide supplemental funding to pre-established programs to assist with COVID-related expenses. Please let me know if this satisfies the questions of the committee. I would be more than happy to provide additional information as requested.

- **Remote Operations of the Domestic Violence Accountability Programs During Pandemic - \$130,000**
  - **Proposed Expenditures:** There are 13 sites statewide which provide treatment to individuals who use violence in their relationships. The vast majority of participants are mandated to attend and many individuals cannot complete their court ordered sentences or meet requirements of DCF case plans until completing this programming. These programs, which use a group model for their services, have all needed to transition quickly to secure, remote operations. In addition, these programs are funded solely by participant fees. The pandemic has caused immense financial difficulty for many treatment participants. The \$130,000 allocation would provide \$10,000 grants to each treatment site to assist in paying for secure, remote technology and help defray participant costs for those facing financial hardship. These community based programs were previously funded by the Department of Corrections but currently receive no state dollars.
- **Supports for incarcerated and re-entering victims of domestic and sexual violence - \$197,000**
  - **Proposed Expenditures:** The DIVAS program, which has operated at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility for many years, provides the majority of its services to women who are currently incarcerated. The COVID pandemic has necessitated that DIVAS advocates transition their work to providing more extensive reentry services. These funds would fund an advocate for several months working specifically with survivors reentering into communities from incarceration. While many of these survivors are leaving incarceration in Chittenden County, they are returning to communities across the state. These funds would also allow Vermont Network Member Organizations in communities across the state to provide specialized supports to these survivors as they reestablish their lives. The DIVAS program currently receives \$72,000 in state funds from the Department of Corrections.
- **Investment in no-cost legal representation for victims of domestic and sexual violence - \$80,000**
  - **Proposed Expenditures:** The Vermont Network Justice for Victims Clinic provides no-cost legal representation to victims of domestic and sexual violence in civil and family court cases across Vermont. In addition to the full time clinic attorneys, the clinic contracts with a network of private attorneys across Vermont to provide legal representation to victims. There is a waiting list of victims seeking representation which has grown during COVID. As the courts reopen, we anticipate many more victims will be seeking representation for increasingly complex cases. This allocation will be used to enter into low-bono contracts with private attorneys who will in turn

provide free legal services to victims of domestic and sexual violence navigating family and civil cases. The Justice for Victims Legal Clinic is currently funded with federal dollars and receives no state funds.

- **Support for Vermont's Forensic Nursing Program to support access to medical care for victims of domestic and sexual violence during COVID - \$160,000**
  - **Proposed Expenditures:** Vermont's Forensic Nursing Program programs operate in 16 healthcare settings statewide. These programs are primarily based in hospital emergency departments. As a result of COVID, the patient care model has changed considerably. Advocates who previously accompanied patients for this specialized medical care are no longer permitted to be physically present. We propose dividing these funds equally among the 16 forensic nursing sites in the state. This allocation will provide for an investment in remote technology to facilitate advocates' support of patients who are undergoing forensic exams. In addition, these funds will support forensic nursing programs to strengthen their services during the pandemic, including paying for staffing. The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program is currently supported through federal funds which support clinical education offerings and credentialing for nurses. There are currently no state funds allocated to support this program.

Many thanks,

Sarah

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*Uprooting the causes of violence so every last Vermonter thrives.*