



**Governor's Recommended FY 2022 State Budget- Public Hearing**  
**Jessica Barquist, Policy & Organizing Director**  
**February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence represents 15 Member Organizations throughout the state which provide advocacy and support to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Together, these organizations serve every town in Vermont. In 2020, member organizations supported 8,000 individuals and answered over 17,000 hotline calls.

We have three key funding priorities for the 2022 budget to support the needs of survivors in our state. Our priorities, in order of need, are as follows:

- **\$200,000 to support the re-entry of women into their communities from Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF).**

Re-entry of women was funded in 2020 through CARES act monies and was split between The Vermont Network DIVAS program, Vermont Works for Women, Mercy Connections and the Women Justice & Freedom Initiative. While the funding for this work has come to an end, the need continues. Supporting women to successfully reintegrate and achieve economic independence must be a priority in order to disrupt recidivism. Almost 80 percent of women incarcerated in Vermont are incarcerated for community supervision violations, such as losing one's housing or job. Supporting women to successfully reintegrate in the community can reduce the overall prison population by disrupting the cycle of Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) readmissions and save taxpayer dollars. *(See attached report for more information).*

- **\$400,000 to Domestic Violence Accountability Programming as suggested by CSG in the Justice Reinvestment report.**

We are very grateful that the Governor has added \$200,000 into his proposed budget to support the sustainability of the Domestic Violence Accountability Programs across the state. We are asking the legislature to increase this allocation by \$200,000 (to \$400,000) to represent the full amount recommended in the Justice Reinvestment report.

- **\$250,000 increase in state funding for the Vermont Network and our 15 Member organizations.**

We currently receive state funding through the Center for Crime Victims Services, but this appropriation has not seen an increase since 2008. Our programs are both resourceful and tenacious and have managed to maintain quality care for survivors in need across the state, but they are increasingly doing



more with fewer resources. These services provide a critical need for our communities and need greater support through state funding to continue doing so.

Thank you so much for your time today. We look forward to working with the appropriations committees to secure these much-needed funds.