



**FY26 Budget**  
**Karen Tronsgard Scott, Co-Executive Director**  
**February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

My name is Karen Tronsgard Scott, and I am the Co-Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The Vermont Network is our state's leading voice on domestic and sexual violence. Our members are 14 independent, nonprofit organizations that provide advocacy and support to domestic and sexual violence survivors in every town in Vermont.

These services are life-saving and life-changing. Member Organizations provide 24/7 crisis response when a survivor's safety is at risk, shelter for survivors and their children fleeing violence, and confidential advocacy to help people navigate medical care, the legal system, and basic needs. Advocates meet survivors where they are and help them reclaim safety, dignity, and control over their lives.

In 2024 alone, our Member Organizations answered more than 23,000 hotline calls from Vermonters seeking support and provided in-person supports to nearly 8,000 individuals.

Despite the impact of this help on the lives of our fellow Vermonters, services have been largely flat-funded through Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund for nearly 15 years. The Fund has experienced a deficit in almost every fiscal year since FY15, requiring one-time appropriations to prevent cuts. In FY26, the Fund is once again facing a shortfall.

We have two vital requests for the FY26 state budget.

**1 – \$450,000 in Base Funds to Directly and Level Fund Domestic and Sexual Violence Services**

First, we request \$450,000 in base funding to level-fund domestic and sexual violence direct services for survivors. While we estimate the Special Fund must eventually support \$5 million in annual expenses, given the current fiscal climate, this request focuses on maintaining current services. Without fully investing \$450,000 for direct services, domestic and sexual violence survivors and their children could lose access to these life-saving services.

**2 – \$717,750 to DCF for Statewide System of Supervised Visitation Services**

Second, we request \$717,750 to the Department of Children and Families to support a statewide system of supervised visitation services. Supervised visitation is ordered when safety concerns exist for a child or a non-abusive parent, often in cases of domestic violence. Chronic underfunding has led to program closures, leaving five counties without local services and long waiting lists statewide. This investment is critical to the safety of children and survivors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.