

Funding to Preserve Essential Domestic & Sexual Violence Services



The Essential Work of Vermont's Domestic & Sexual Violence Organizations

Domestic and sexual violence remains a leading public safety and health challenge in Vermont. **The 15 member organizations of the Vermont Network provide the frontline response.**

These service providers offer a 24/7 hotline, emergency housing, legal advocacy, children's services, and prevention programming. In 2024, the 15 member organizations of the Vermont Network answered over 22,000 hotline and chatline calls from Vermonters seeking support for issues of domestic and sexual violence.

- ✓ Confidential Support
- ✓ 24/7 Hotlines & Chatline
- ✓ Legal Advocacy & Legal Clinics
- ✓ Emergency & Transitional Housing
- ✓ Forensic Nursing Program
- ✓ Children's Services
- ✓ Violence Education & Prevention
- ✓ Services in Every Vermont Community

VT Domestic & Sexual Violence Organizations Rely on \$12M in Federal Funds

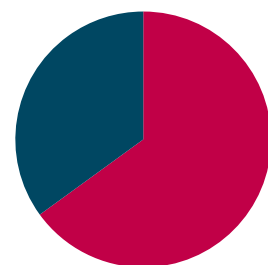
The federal funding crisis has caused great instability in our field, which is uniquely dependent on federal funds. It is threatening the promise we make to Vermonters that essential services will be available 24/7 in their community.

Vermont's domestic and sexual violence service organizations rely on over \$12 million in federal funding to keep their doors open and deliver core services to survivors. **Federal funds make up the majority of our member organizations' total funding.** Some are more than 90% federally funded.

Federal dollars are used to fund entire programs – like Vermont Network's Legal Clinic and the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program – and salaries of dozens of hard-working staff across the state.

Several essential sources of funding for victim's services have been specifically targeted, forcing organizations in other states to already suspend programs and lay-off staff.

Federal Funds vs. Total Budgets at Domestic & Sexual Violence Organizations



■ Federal ■ Other

Even Before Federal Funding Instability, State Funding Was Unsustainable

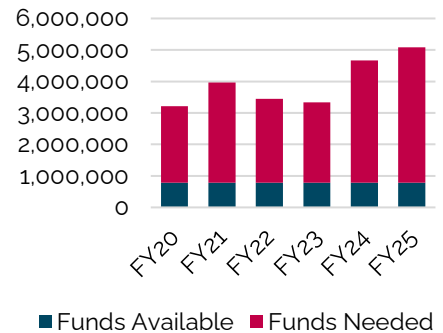
Despite their essential work, the member organizations of the Vermont Network have been largely **flat funded through Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund for 15 years.**

The fund's revenue sources and funding level are unsustainable, jeopardizing services.

The funding mechanisms for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund – a portion of surcharges on criminal offenses, civil penalties, and marriage license fees – see annual shortfalls.

In FY26, we anticipate an approximate \$100,000 deficit.

***Funds Available vs. Needed
Domestic & Sexual Violence
Fund***



Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund supports \$784,000 in expenses annually. These funds are distributed among Vermont's 15 member organizations using a funding formula, with **allocations to organizations ranging from \$11,000 to \$45,000 annually.**

With the increased need for services, complexity of cases, and lengths of stay in shelter – on top of inflationary pressures – this funding has failed to keep pace with the most essential services.

FY26 Proposal: \$1.2M in Base Funding and a Contingency Fund for Services

The Vermont Network has two requests for the FY26 state budget to preserve essential domestic and sexual violence services in Vermont:

1. To address Vermonters' need for services, **Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund must support \$5 million in expenses annually.** We're seeking a blend of General Fund dollars and other revenue sources to meet that need. We expect this to be a multi-year endeavor and are requesting an **initial investment of \$1.2 million in base general funds in FY26.**
2. We request the legislature **create a contingency fund for domestic and sexual violence organizations, for use if reductions in federal funding jeopardize services.** There are \$4.1 million in one-time excess reserve funds from General Fund and the Human Services Caseload Reserves, which could be used for this purpose. In the case contingency funds are not needed, those monies may be re-appropriated in the FY26 budget adjustment process.

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