



FY27 Budget
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Sarah Robinson, Co-Executive Director
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The Vermont Network is the leading statewide voice on domestic and sexual violence. Our members are 15 independent, non-profit organizations that provide advocacy and support to survivors of violence. In 2025, our Member Organizations answered over 23,000 hotline calls from Vermonters seeking support – an increase of over 1,000 calls over the previous year – and provided in-person advocacy to nearly 8,000 Vermonters.

Despite this essential work, these organizations have been largely flat funded through Vermont's Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund for 15 years. The Fund was established in 2008 and its revenues are comprised of two sources of fines and fees – a surcharge on civil and criminal court judgements and a surcharge on marriage licenses¹. The funds are distributed among Vermont's 15 service providers using a funding formula, ensuring that all regions of Vermont receive equitable resources.

The Fund's revenues have experienced significant declines in the past 10 years. The fund has experienced a deficit each year since FY 15 with the exception of one fiscal year and the General Assembly has made annual one-time appropriations to make the Fund whole and prevent cuts, despite our repeated requests for sustainable ongoing funding sources. In FY27, the fund is expected to again experience a shortfall.

Last year, the General Assembly appropriated \$450,000 in one-time funds for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund. Of this amount, \$250,000 was distributed to our member organizations for services to domestic and sexual violence survivors. The Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services retained \$200,000 in order for the Center to have a cash balance for quarterly reimbursements.

In addition, the shifting federal landscape continues to pose unique challenges to our field. The Vermont Network and our Member Organizations rely on federal funds to provide services to victims. Our Member Organizations are majority federally funded. For some Member Organizations, federal funds represent 90% of their total budgets. The annual uncertainty and lack of stability in state funding threatens the promise that we make to Vermonters that there will be access to services 24 hours a day in any community in our state.

The Vermont Network has two requests for the FY27 state budget:

1 – \$450K in base funds to Level Fund Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

¹ There is a \$47.00, surcharge on criminal and civil judgements of which \$13.50 goes to the DV/SV Fund. The Marriage License fee in Vermont is \$80 of which \$50 goes to the DV/SV Fund.



Given the current fiscal environment, we are only seeking to level fund grantees in FY27. In FY27, we request \$450,000 in base funding for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund. In addition, the Center for Crime Victim Services currently receives no funding to administer the fund. We support the Center's \$95,000 request for administrative funds. \$450,000 will address both the deficit and the administrative needs of VCCVS. **Without these funds, direct services programs in the community will experience a cut in funding as of July 1st.**

2 – \$717,750 to DCF for Statewide System of Supervised Visitation Programs. We also wanted the Committee to be aware of an ongoing request to fund community-based supervised visitation programs. Supervised visitation provides a safe, structured setting where a parent can have monitored time with their child. Courts and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) often order supervised visitation in situations where safety concerns exist for a child or a non-abusive parent. The majority of supervised visitation referrals come from the court.

Last year, the House Human Services directed the Department for Children and Families and the Judiciary to jointly prepare a report on the system of supervised visitation and funding needs. As a result of the report, the Vermont Network is requesting an appropriation of **\$717,750 to be allocated to DCF to support a statewide system of care for supervised visitation.** This includes funding for community-based supervised visitation services and a small allocation for statewide coordination of services and standards.

We would appreciate House Judiciary's strong support for our requests. Thank you for your time and consideration.