



**FY27 State Budget – Supervised Visitation Services**  
**Charlie Gliserman, Policy Director**  
**April 3, 2026**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the committee today about supervised visitation services in the FY27 state budget. The House budget appropriates a one-time increase of \$130,000 in General Funds for supervised visitation.

**We are requesting at least a \$250,000 General Fund appropriation (\$120,000 above the House-appropriated amount) to prevent closures of existing supervised visitation programs and expand access in underserved areas.**

**OVERVIEW OF SUPERVISED VISITATION**

Supervised visitation provides a safe, structured setting where a parent can have monitored time with their child. Courts and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) order supervised visitation in situations where safety concerns exist for a child or a non-abusive parent. This includes many cases of domestic violence.

Trained staff ensure visits occur in a safe, supportive, and trauma-informed environment. Many programs also offer supervised custodial exchange, allowing children to move safely between parents without exposing the non-abusive parent to risk.

At their core, supervised visitation services are designed to serve children and help foster safe relationships between them and their parents. Supervised visitation allows a non-custodial parent to maintain or build a healthy relationship with their child within a structured, supportive setting.

These services also play a critical role in protecting the safety of the non-abusive parent. Abuse frequently escalates after separation. Custody or visitation arrangements often necessitate ongoing contact with an abusive partner, creating safety risks and disrupting a survivor's healing.

**CURRENT STATUS OF SUPERVISED VISITATION IN VERMONT**

Supervised visitation programs have been chronically underfunded for more than 15 years, leading to multiple program closures and significant gaps in services.

Currently, each program receives a very small grant from DCF, and some also receive supplemental support from the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS). Together, these grants amount to **approximately \$16,000 to \$40,000 per program annually – far below what is needed to sustain safe, reliable services.**

**Today, six independent nonprofit centers operate in Vermont, leaving five counties – Lamoille, Orange, Washington, Windsor, and Rutland – without a local program.** These counties are clustered in the center of the state, creating a “desert” where families have limited access to essential services.

Since these services are mandated by the court and DCF, families often must travel long distances, forgo visits, or rely on untrained family members or friends to supervise contact – arrangements that may pose safety risks.

Even in counties with programs, long waiting lists – sometimes several months to a year – make it difficult for families to comply with court or DCF orders.

### **SUPERVISED VISITATION REPORT & FUNDING NEEDS FOR FY27**

Last year, lawmakers – including this committee – asked the Commissioner of DCF and the Chief Superior Judge to develop a proposal for sustainably funding a statewide system of supervised visitation programs.

The report outlines the significant challenges facing supervised visitation programs and identifies insufficient funding as a primary barrier to ensuring consistent services statewide.

**We respectfully request that the committee continue this important conversation by holding a hearing on the report.** I have submitted a copy with my testimony.

With supervised visitation services at a breaking point, this work is timely. We estimate programs need upwards of \$700,000 to fully meet the needs of Vermont families. Recognizing the current fiscal landscape, we are requesting \$250,000 total in additional funding prevent further program closures and improve access to services in deeply underserved counties.

I have included in my testimony a cost analysis detailing this funding request, as well as an accounts from two survivors of domestic violence who testified in House Human Services – one whose life was shaped by access to supervised visitation and one who lived in a county where services she and her children desperately need were unavailable.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

## FY27 Funding Request Analysis – Supervised Visitation Services

<b>Funding Types</b>	<b>Amounts</b>
Total Funding Needed	\$486,800
Existing Funding	\$237,500
<b>Total FY27 Request</b>	<b>\$249,300</b>

Existing funds include \$137,500 in General Funds currently allocated to the VCCVS and \$100,000 in federal Office of Child Support grants to DCF.

### **LOCAL & REGIONAL SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAMS - \$436,800**

<b>Type of Cost</b>	<b>Per Program Cost</b>	<b>Total Statewide Cost</b>
Salary – 1 FTE Monitor	\$42,000	\$336,000
Fringe – 1 FTE Monitor	\$12,600	\$100,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$54,600</b>	<b>\$436,800</b>

### **Number of Programs**

Total request assumes 8 supervised visitation programs statewide, with a goal of expanding to 12 programs in the future.

These program funds would serve the following purposes:

1. Preventing further closures of the existing six programs by providing base funding.
2. Encouraging two additional programs to open and serve areas of the state where there is currently no access to supervised visitation.

The estimate also takes into consideration existing programs serving more than one county (Franklin/Grand Isle and Caledonia/Essex/Orleans).

### **Per Program Costs**

This request would fund a monitor per program with a salary of \$42,000. For context, the average full-time domestic violence advocate salary is \$49,720 in 2024 dollars.

The request assumes salary for one monitor plus a 30% fringe rate to account for required taxes and benefits such as unemployment, disability, and health insurance.

### **STATEWIDE SUPERVISED VISITATION COORDINATION - \$50,000**

The request includes 0.4 of one position, salary and fringe, at the Vermont Network to provide statewide coordination. This equals \$50,000.

**Testimony from Hearing on Supervised Visitation Services**  
**January 8, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Wood and members of the House Human Services Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share my story as a survivor of domestic violence who relied on supervised visitation services - and watched them change my daughter's life.

I am testifying anonymously today to protect my safety.

When I filed for divorce, my daughter was three. My ex-husband took our house, car, and money in our bank accounts - and threatened and tried to take my daughter away from me.

I maintained custody of our daughter, and the court ordered visits with ex-husband every other Saturday were supervised by my mother at her home. This informal arrangement was unsafe for my mother, myself, and my daughter.

The breaking point came when my ex-husband arrived angry for a visit, subsequently cornering and shouting at my mother. My daughter, still very young at the time, passed a note asking if she needed to call the police. After that, the visits had to stop.

We were placed on a waiting list for a slot at a supervised visitation program. And we stayed on that waiting list for years.

When we finally got a slot at All About Kids in Franklin County, the difference was like night and day. The staff at All About Kids were incredible. They expertly facilitated exchanges and supervised visits between my daughter and her father. They had protocols in place which allowed me to drop off my daughter safely.

After years of dreading visits with her father, my daughter slowly built a relationship with him. The facilitator empowered her - allowing her to gradually extend her visits at her own pace. My daughter had visits with her father at All About Kids for 4 years and those were the best years of their relationship.

Having trained staff coordinate visits, instead of me, kept me safe. It prevented my ex-husband from using our daughter to regain control over me. For the first time in years, I was able to move forward with my life instead of living in limbo.

Supervised visitation was transformative for my family. Access to this essential service should not depend on your ZIP code or how long you've been on a waitlist. Extended family members, like my mother, should not be in the position of having to supervise contact. High-quality, sustainably funded supervised visitation programs must be available to all Vermonters, like me, who need them.

**Testimony from Hearing on Supervised Visitation Services**  
**January 8, 2026**

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and taking the time to listen to my story. Good afternoon. My name is Katie Mackenzie. I live in Washington County, and I am a survivor of domestic violence.

One of the most important things I try to teach my children is that safety matters, for themselves and for others. That is why I am here today, in support of a statewide, well-funded system of supervised visitation programs. For families like mine, this is about safety, not theory.

Washington County has little to no access to supervised visitation services. I have seen what that lack looks like, not just in my own family, but in others around me as well.

After I left the father of my children, I worried about my children's safety during visits. He had been abusive in our relationship and had a history of substance use. During an earlier period, when he was in active substance use, I had to step in and supervise visits myself because there were no programs available in our area.

That was stressful and isolating, and it should not be the only option families have.

I have also been asked to supervise visits for another family member when no program was available. I was not trained for that role. I had no guidance, and no clear safety framework. There were moments when I did not know how to intervene safely, and no one should be placed in that position.

I have seen how quickly visits can become unsafe without professional supervision. It is terrifying. Children deserve better than that.

Vermont needs more supervised visitation programs, both in Washington County and across the state. Thank you for listening, and for caring about the safety of children and families.