

NEWS RELEASE

Lindsay Pingel
Director of Community Engagement
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
P: 515.421.4658
lindsayp@icadv.org



KellyMarie Meek
Coordinator of Prevention and Public Health Initiatives
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault
P: 515-217-8010
prevention@iowacasa.org



Request to Governor Reynolds to support Iowa crime victims goes unanswered as local service providers brace for full impact of massive loss in federal funding

DES MOINES, Iowa – April 7, 2022 – Due to a catastrophic cut in federal Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) victim assistance grant funding to Iowa in FY 2021, local crime victim service providers statewide recently received official notice from Iowa’s Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) to expect a devastating 15-22 percent funding cut to provide support services to crime victims in the upcoming year. This is on top of an 8 percent funding cut this year. CVAD estimates 28,000 fewer Iowa crime victims will receive services due to a lack of funding over the next two years.

Federal VOCA victim assistance grants are financed with non-taxpayer funds collected from criminal fines and penalties. These grants are currently the largest source of funds for providing support services to victims of violent crime. To put it in perspective, the amount of money that was cut – \$6 million – is more money than the state of Iowa chooses to invest in crime victim services each year. It is also more than the total amount of other federal funding the state traditionally receives - approximately \$4 million for victim services from the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA).

Governor Reynolds has an opportunity to support survivors and mitigate the impact of the federal funding loss through an allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds available to Iowa. Last spring, the state's leading voices against gender violence, the [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(ICADV\)](#), [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(IowaCASA\)](#), and the [Iowa Coalition for Collective Change \(ICCC\)](#), submitted a request for ARPA funds to the Governor. It outlined the impending cuts to the VOCA victim assistance grants and the massive impact it will have on victims of violence. After several meetings with Governor Reynolds’s staff and outreach to her office from the Coalition's network of 29 statewide programs, she has not responded to this request.

Victims of violent crimes face several challenges after their victimization. Access to crisis response and stabilizing services should not be one of them.

"The magnitude of the unmet need is unprecedented and federal ARPA funding is not only available to meet this significant funding need but affords a rare opportunity to do so without traditional budgetary tradeoffs", says Dr. Maria Corona, Executive Director, Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "We urge Governor Reynolds to seize this opportunity to support crime victims. Our agency and network of local programs cannot sustain cuts of this size; they mean the number of advocates to serve victims will be limited and meeting the needs of survivors will be dramatically reduced."

The state's crime victim service delivery network is nationally recognized for its success in improving access to effective services. Federal VOCA victim assistance grants have enabled local programs to dramatically increase the number of crime victims served, increase access in rural and underserved communities, and expand the range of effective post-crisis response services available providing long-term stability and healing. The cuts to federal VOCA victim assistance grants will dramatically limit access to services and diminish program capacity to serve victims of violent crime.

"It is too soon to know all of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on violence in our state, but emerging data and reports from those on the front lines have shown that all types of violence have intensified, and we are seeing demand for services increase as those survivors and their families are beginning to come forward," according to Elizabeth Barnhill, Executive Director of the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "There is never a good time for a cut like this, but for it to come now is truly devastating. Victims and their families need support now, and ARPA funds are critical in this moment to ensure that support remains available."

About Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) is the leading voice to end intimate partner violence in Iowa. Through our network of 22 statewide victim service programs, we provide comprehensive services to anyone who has been a victim of a violent crime – before, during and after. We take a survivor-centered approach to victim services and believe community-based agencies and interventions, healthcare, educational, and government systems should work together, centering the voices and experiences of those most vulnerable in our communities, to enhance safety for survivors and their families. When that happens, everyone has the ability to reach their full potential, thrive and live a life free from violence. To learn more, visit www.icadv.org.

About Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault

IowaCASA represents 24 victim service programs across the state. Our coalition provides a bridge between victim advocates at sexual assault programs, statewide policy makers, and federal responses to sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. Our mission is to end sexual violence and improve support available to survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. To learn more, visit: www.iowacasa.org.