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State investment in comprehensive services is vital to the safety of Iowa crime victims

DES MOINES, Iowa – April 19, 2023 – Our promise to Iowa crime victims must be clear: when you come forward for help and support, it will be available. We can do better. Access to housing is the #1 barrier to safety and stability for victims leaving an abusive home or recovering from a violent crime and the most requested support when seeking assistance from a local service provider. Still, two bills that reduce barriers to safe housing for crime victims – and all Iowans – and received overwhelming bi-partisan support at the Iowa Legislature appear unlikely to pass this session.

But there is still time for Iowa legislators to provide meaningful support for crime victims. The [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(ICADV\)](#) and the [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(IowaCASA\)](#) urge Iowa legislators to approve a state budget investing \$10 million in state funds for crime victim support services. Current state funding of \$5 million is woefully insufficient to meet the demand for support services. It is wholly inadequate for keeping our promise to crime victims of enhancing access to the comprehensive support they need and deserve.

Collectively, the Coalitions represent a nationally recognized [network of 26 local victim service provider agencies](#) supporting victims of violent crime, including families impacted by homicide; survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including stalking, rape, and child abuse; and survivors of human trafficking. Most of the 55,000 victims* who sought support from Iowa victim service provider agencies last year received support from one of these agencies. ([2022 Victim Assistance Annual Report*](#))

These local programs provide free, confidential services to crime victims 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Beyond the obvious importance of providing crisis assistance, when service providers help victims avoid homelessness, maintain stable employment, and keep children in school, it eases the workload of other community service providers. When these agencies assist law enforcement at crime scenes or help victims navigate legal proceedings, they enable the criminal justice system to serve victims better. In short, investing state dollars in local programs helps victims recover, which improves economic stability and helps Iowa communities.

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Everyone cares about victims, just like everyone wants safe communities and Iowans to be housed and safe in their homes. But it takes money and people to provide that support. An investment of \$10 million in state funds for crime victim support services helps create communities where victims feel safe and supported.

About the [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

The [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(ICADV\)](#) provides education and certification training, support, and technical assistance to domestic violence service providers, enabling them to establish housing and supportive services for victims /survivors and their dependents. We also serve as an information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the state. We support the development of policies, protocols, and procedures to enhance domestic violence intervention and prevention in Iowa.

To learn more, visit www.icadv.org or follow us on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IowaCADV

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/icadv>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/icadv

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/iowa-coalition-against-domestic-violence>

About the [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#)

The [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(IowaCASA\)](#) provides training, resources and support across the state to rape crisis centers, culturally specific programs, emergency sheltering programs, and allied agencies. Our mission is to end sexual violence and improve support available to survivors of sexual assault. We are a bridge between advocates at sexual assault service programs, statewide policy makers, and federal responses to sexual violence.

To learn more, visit www.iowacasa.org or follow us on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IowaCASA

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/iowacasa>

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