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## Iowa Attorney General Advocates for Crucial Funding Increase to Protect Crime Victims

DES MOINES, Iowa – January 2, 2024 – The Iowa Attorney General's Office submitted its fiscal year 2025 state budget request, aiming to secure a \$4.6 million increase for Victim Assistance Grants designed to fortify agencies across the state providing support services to victims of violent crime. Attorney General Bird's dedication to actively seek additional state funds is applauded, recognizing the critical role these funds play for Iowa crime victims, especially in light of the imminent threat of a potential 40% reduction in Iowa's largest source of federal funding for victim services – generated entirely through non-taxpayer revenues— via the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).

This looming federal funding cut could result in a substantial \$5 million loss to agencies providing support services to survivors, families, and communities across the state. The impact would be particularly devastating, decimating the capacity of victim service provider agencies to maintain statewide access to comprehensive support services. Rural areas and small programs catering to communities disproportionately affected by violence would be particularly affected.

The [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(ICADV\)](http://www.icadv.org) and the [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault \(IowaCASA\)](http://www.iowacasa.org) stand firmly behind 26 local victim service agencies, recipients of federal, state, local, and private funding. These agencies provide comprehensive support services to violent crime victims, including families impacted by homicide, as well as victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, rape, child abuse, and human trafficking. Most of the 55,965 victims who sought support from Iowa victim service provider agencies last year were served by one of these programs.

Emphasizing the vital role these victim service agencies play in aiding crime victims to recover and reintegrate into their families and communities, the persistently high prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) underscores the urgent need for more substantial and consistent investment in victim support services. Such investment could significantly impact crime reduction and violence prevention.

Victim service agencies, working tirelessly alongside various stakeholders, offer a range of services from crisis response to long-term support. These services include counseling, safety planning, assistance with paperwork, guidance through legal proceedings, job applications, homelessness prevention, finding stable housing, and connecting victims with financial independence and recovery resources.

Years of insufficient state and federal funding have jeopardized victim access to support, with the failure to prioritize investment in victim services exacerbating the impact of the looming 40% cut in VOCA funds. The reliance on federal VOCA funding, with a minimal state investment of \$5 million, places undue strain on service providers. While federal grants enhance program capacity, consistent state investment is crucial for operational support and statewide accessibility of services. A lack of funds translates to fewer available staff, limited support for victims, constraints on 24/7 crisis response, and limitations on the services victims need, particularly in rural areas.

The Attorney General's Office's efforts to secure additional state funding and engage federal policymakers to avert this crisis, along with the responsiveness of Iowa's U.S. Congressional delegation, are acknowledged. However, the urgency remains for policymakers to prioritize their promises and deliver additional state and federal funding. Violence is preventable, and the onus is on our state lawmakers to make the right choice – to invest an additional \$4.6 million in victim services during this legislative session.

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

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence works to enhance the capacity of direct service providers and communities to support victims. We provide training, education, and technical assistance to service provider agencies to help increase access to effective services, meet the needs of victims, and ensure services are responsive. We serve as a statewide resource on IPV to increase understanding of the problem, promote funding for effective responses, and improve access to support. The network has survivor advocates available throughout all 99 Iowa counties. To learn more, visit [www.icadv.org](http://www.icadv.org).

**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](http://www.iowacasa.org).

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