

The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa
Iowa State Capitol; 1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

CC: *The Honorable Brenna Bird, Attorney General of Iowa*

August 13, 2025

RE: Justice System budget request - \$10 million crime victim services

Dear Governor Reynolds:

As victim service provider agencies who are members of the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault and on behalf of the crime victims we collectively serve, we write to request you include at least \$10 million in state funding for victim services in your Justice System budget proposal to ensure consistent statewide access to crime victim support services and a vital victim service provider network. Our agencies support victims of sexual and domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, stalking, and families impacted by homicide. Last year, these agencies served most of the 49,795 victims seeking assistance from organizations receiving public funds (state and federal) administered by the Iowa Attorney General's Victim Assistance Section (*SFY24 Victim Assistance Section Annual Report*).

[Investing](#) in crime victim support services saves lives and helps individuals become contributing members of families, communities, and valued employees of Iowa businesses. Domestic and sexual violence are *preventable public health* problems impacting almost 1 in 2 women and more than 40% of men over a lifetime. They are also pervasive crimes that result in staggering human and economic costs for individuals, communities, and employers.

Insufficient funding continues to erode statewide access to crime victim services and to essential post-crisis support that helps victims and families get back on their feet. Victim service provider organizations already operate on lean budgets. Right now, service providers are stretched beyond capacity and have difficulty maintaining immediate response services, let alone the type of long-term healing services needed for victims such as adult survivors of child sexual abuse or children who have witnessed domestic violence.

These providers work alongside other stakeholders funded in the Justice System budget to improve public safety and support crime victims. They work with first responders and hospital staff offering crisis support. After the crisis, service providers offer counseling, safety planning, help meeting basic needs such as food and housing, connecting to legal services, and generally being available when survivors continue to struggle from the harm they have experienced. Organizations do not have enough staff to cover enormous service areas and without additional funding they cannot continue to provide comprehensive services or pay salaries to attract the workforce needed to effectively support victims.

Crime victims need Iowa to do better. Victim service providers rely on state, federal, and private funds to support victims. Federal funds remain the largest source of funding but were never intended to replace state responsibility. For the last decade Iowa has provided just over \$5 million for victim services each year despite increased demand for services and rapidly declining federal funding ([Funding sources](#)). Private funds simply cannot make up the enormous gap between actual costs of providing services and the amount of public funding received by organizations. We appreciate your commitment to crime victims. Please request a meaningful and sizeable funding increase for victim services in your Justice System budget proposal this year.

The 'need' for crime victim support services does not disappear when funding is insufficient. Failing to invest in victim services means individuals and families lose the capacity to thrive and increased costs for every Iowa business and government agency or system (legal, schools, health care, child welfare). It means fewer victims can access the most requested and effective services and leaves many with no access to support, especially in rural

areas. Increasing financial support will increase how many victims can access support, the type of services available, and make it significantly easier for victims to find and receive the help they and their families need.

Violent crime victims experience significant challenges to recovery because they are often harmed by someone they know. Post-crisis support is essential and most frequently requested because victims need support beyond what family and friends can provide. Supporting rape and human trafficking victims and helping victims find safe housing or navigate legal protections and proceedings are resource intensive. Access to these services is most threatened by lack of funding.

In addition to the human cost, failing to adequately fund victim services is not cost-effective for state and local government and misses an incredible opportunity to prevent violence. It increases the workload of other providers and is ultimately more expensive as victims lacking stability continue to need services. When victim service providers must triage cases and reduce critical services because they lack funding, i.e., when they cannot help victims avoid eviction, assist police, or help county attorneys support a witness, it means victims get no support or adds to the workload of others. And given the prevalence of harm and the concentration of repeat victimization, helping these victims recover can help prevent future violence.

Failing to fully support crime victims keeps violence alive in every community. Yet most victims struggle to access help. A [national survey](#) of crime victims found that nearly 1 in 2 did not know where to find support; 74% did not receive counseling or mental health support; and 87% did not receive economic assistance to help recover costs.

Iowa can do better. As you draft your annual budget proposal, please request at least \$10 million for victim services in the Justice System budget. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria Corona, PhD; Executive Director
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Tamika D. Payne; Executive Director
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Iowa Crime Victim Service Provider Agencies:

Gwen Bramlet-Hecker; Executive Director; **Riverview Center; Dubuque**
Sexual assault support services for 14 counties in NE Iowa

Ben Brustkern; Chief Executive Officer; **Friends of the Family; Waterloo**
Shelter/housing support services for 14 counties in NE Iowa

Melissa Cano Zelaya; Executive Director; **Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (L.U.N.A.); Des Moines**
Culturally specific victim support services for Latino communities

Nicole Cisne Durbin, LCPC; Chief Executive Officer; **Family Resources; Davenport**
Domestic/sexual violence, housing, human trafficking, homicide support services for 5 counties in SE Iowa

Carson Eggland; Executive Director
Helping Services for Youth & Families – Domestic Abuse Resource Center; Decorah
Domestic violence support services for 7 counties in NE Iowa

Kristie Fortmann-Doser; Executive Director; **DVIP - RVAP; Iowa City**
Domestic violence, sexual assault, & shelter/housing support services for 8 counties in SE Iowa

Kristina Griego; Executive Director; **ACCESS: Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support; Ames**
Domestic violence, sexual assault, housing, homicide support services for 5 counties Central Iowa

Pearl Hammes; Executive Director; **Crisis Intervention Services; Oskaloosa**
Sexual assault and Shelter support services (12 counties), Homicide services (9 counties); South Central Iowa

Stephanie Henrich; Executive Director; **Centers Against Abuse and Sexual Assault; Spencer**
Sexual assault support services for 19 counties in NW Iowa

Nelly Hill; Director of Victim Services; **Waypoint; Cedar Rapids**
Domestic violence & homicide support services for 7 counties in NE Iowa

Mary J. Ingham; Executive Director; **Crisis Intervention Service; Mason City**
Domestic violence, sexual assault, & homicide support services for 23 counties in North Central/NE Iowa

Hibo Jama; Executive Director; **Nisaa African Family Services; Des Moines**
Culturally specific victim support services for African immigrant/refugee communities

Jennifer Kalina Upah; Executive Director; **Thrive Together Today; Cedar Rapids**
Culturally specific victim support services for deaf and hard of hearing

Brenda McBride; Executive Director; **Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center; Fort Dodge**
Domestic violence, homicide, housing/shelter support services for 20 counties in North Central Iowa

Stephanie Pickinpaugh; Executive Director; **SafePlace; Sioux City**
Domestic violence services for Plymouth & Woodbury counties; shelter services for 19 counties in NW Iowa

Carrier Potter; Program Manager, Shelter & Housing
Catholic Charities Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program; Council Bluffs
Domestic violence & sexual assault support services for 9 counties; shelter services for 19 counties in SW Iowa

Evelyn Robertson-Garrison; Executive Director; **Amani Community Services; Waterloo**
Culturally specific victim support services for Black/African American communities

Jessica Rohrs; Executive Director; **Family Crisis Centers; Sioux Center**
Statewide Victim Call Center ('hotline'); Domestic violence, human trafficking, homicide services in NW Iowa

Abigail Sui; Executive Director; **EMBARC; Des Moines**
Culturally specific victim support services for immigrant/refugee communities

Johna Sullivan; Executive Director; **Crisis Intervention & Advocacy Center; Adel**
Domestic violence, sexual assault & homicide support services for 10 counties in SW Iowa

Lorraine Uehling; Executive Director; **Family Crisis Center; Ottumwa**
Domestic violence support services for 12 counties in South Central Iowa

Mira Yusef; MSW, MA; Executive Director; **Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity; Des Moines**
Culturally specific victim support services for API communities