

My name is Sara Barber and I am the Executive Director of the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA). We are grateful to the committee for its support during previous budget years and the increase last year to \$1.5 million each to support services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. I am here today to respectfully ask the committee to consider a significant increase to the level of funding provided through the state budget to our 22 member organizations due to the prospect of large cuts in federal funding that will decimate the essential services they provide.

As you are, I am sure, aware, the data on these issues is horrifying. The SLED Crimebook for 2022 reports 50 domestic violence homicides and 28,349 assaults. There were 4,278 sexual offenses ranging from fondling to rape and incest reported to law enforcement; in 316 of those the perpetrator was identified as an intimate partner. As high and as shocking as these numbers are, they are undercounts. The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that only 1 out of 3 rapes is reported, and that the reporting of violent victimizations such as domestic violence may be as low as 41%.

Our member organizations provide an essential path towards healing for survivors of these crimes, whether they report what happened to them to law enforcement or not. Demand for their services continues to outpace availability.

During FY 2022, our members provided:

- emergency shelter to 1,834 adults and 1,612 children (equals 49,344 nights of shelter);
- other supportive services such as counseling or legal advocacy to 17,307 victims of domestic violence;
- support, advocacy and hospital accompaniment to around 7,000 victims of sexual assault and,
- answered over 30,000 hotline calls.

On one day, September 7, 2022, the 13 domestic violence programs who are full members of SCCADVASA provided services to 477 victims, while 51 requests for service could not be met because of a lack of resources. Over the year, the number who could not be served was 558.

The commitment and work of advocates in these programs provides a thread of hope to people who have experienced severe levels of trauma, often in their homes, the very place that we seek safety. This year, these programs face potentially catastrophic cuts of up to 40% in federal VOCA funding due to the dwindling balance of the federal Victims Crime Fund. Without additional and ongoing support from the state to supplement this critical funding, core services will be drastically reduced.

What will this mean? In your packets, you will find estimates from the programs that provide services in your districts on the impact they expect including:

- We would have to lay off half our staff and cut programs.
- Nobody will be available to answer the hotline or work with shelter residents during second shift.
- We will have to eliminate programming in one county entirely.

- It will mean a \$492,520 cut to our budget.

The balance in the VCF is not going to bounce back quickly. We are facing a funding crisis as we work with victims in crisis.

It is critical that the state invests in these programs, to keep them stable and to potentially help them grow to meet demand and to expand their work in prevention. We are asking that you consider increasing the annual state appropriation to \$5 million each in recurring funds to the sexual assault programs (through DHEC) and the Domestic Violence Programs (through DSS) from the current level of \$1.5 million.

I'm going to leave you with one story of the difference made in one person's life, a difference that is the outcome we all hope for, and which impacts not only the survivor, but her children and the community in which we all live.

"She was nervous and frantic when she entered our shelter, and we worked with her on a weekly basis to overcome her trauma. Now, she's working and looking for housing, and she's more empowered and independent. It's great to see her smiling and feeling free. She looks like a totally different person."

Thank you again for your previous support, and for your consideration of our request.

**Impact of 40% VOCA cuts in South Carolina on Services Provision to  
Victims & Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence**

Rape Crisis Center serving sexual assault victims in **Richland, Lexington, Newberry, Sumter & Clarendon** (Pathways to Healing):

- We would have to lay off half our staff.
- This would reduce our capacity to serve survivors and anticipate 50% drop in the number we can serve (1,000 survivors)

Domestic Violence Program serving **Richland, Lexington, Fairfield, Kershaw, Newberry** (Sistercare)

- A 40% cut equals a cut of \$388,490 to our annual budget.
- This cut would force us to eliminate our programming in Fairfield County and it would cripple our programming in Kershaw County along with our Clinical Department. It would also severely affect our emergency shelter programs.
- 8.5 positions would be eliminated. Cut in number of survivors served: approximately 1,600 survivors would lose or face increased hurdles to services.

Rape Crisis and Child Advocacy Center serving **Kershaw & Lee Counties**

- 3 staff positions will have to be cut.
- We would have to move from our office, meaning that we would have to find new space (disrupting services) and raise funds for moving costs.

Dual Program serving DV victims in **Aiken, Barnwell & Allendale**, and SA victims in **Aiken, Barnwell, Allendale, Edgefield, Saluda, McCormick** (Cumbee Center):

- A 40% cut in VOCA funding would be a \$117,000 cut to our budget.
- We would have to lay off staff and reduce services offered.

Domestic Violence Program serving **Charleston, Berkeley & Dorchester** (My Sister's House):

- We would have to close our clinical services department, eliminating both individual and group therapy. In FY23, we served 527 clients in this department, hosted 143 group sessions with 665 participants.

Sexual Assault Program serving **Charleston, Berkeley & Dorchester** (Tri County Speaks):

- "If there was a 40% cut, we would need to cut all three part time employees who help assist us in handling cases and assist with outreach thus adding more work for full time advocates and outreach coordinator. We would also lose our hotline contractors who help sustain our 24/7 hotline resulting in full-time employees



taking on the additional responsibility of maintaining it or limiting our hotline to the weekdays.”

Sexual Assault and Child Advocacy Program serving **Lancaster, Chester & Fairfield** (PCASA):

- “I hate to think about another cut in VOCA funding. We have already cut services to the core.”
- We would have to lay off several staff and cut programs.

Sexual Assault and Child Advocacy Program serving **Anderson & Oconee** (First Light):

- “The only way to cut 40% of my VOCA budget without compromising the number of victims served immediately post-assault would be to cut my entire counseling department. We received roughly 280 referrals for counseling this year. They serve the fewest number of survivors given the amount of time necessary to spend with each client to help them through their trauma. This would eliminate all access to free, trauma-informed counseling for survivors of sexual assault in our service area.”

Sexual Assault & Child Advocacy Center serving **Greenwood, Laurens & Abbeville** (Beyond Abuse):

- A 40% cut in VOCA funding means our agency budget will be reduced by \$185,200. This could result in losing approximately 4 positions and possibly ending one program. The number of survivors served could also decrease by 30 to 40%.

Domestic Violence Program serving **Greenwood, McCormick & Edgefield** (MEG’s House)

- Nobody would be available to answer the hotline or work with shelter residents during second shift. Victims in acute crisis would not receive the immediate help they need.

Domestic Violence Program serving **Laurens, Abbeville & Saluda** (The Safe Home)

- A 40% cut would result in the loss of 2 full-time and 1 part-time staff positions.
- We would have to eliminate/ greatly reduce our services for those who are out of shelter. This is our biggest group of those seeking services. Those that can stay in their homes or with family and need referrals to other programs, out of shelter case management and advocacy. On the Quarterly VOCA reports we serve on average over 120 people in this category.

Aggregate Cuts if VOCA funding decreases by 40%

### ***Impact on Victims/Survivors***

Estimates of the numbers of survivors who would face the loss of services or increased hurdles to services range between 25 – 50% depending on proportion of the agencies' budgets that are supported by VOCA grants. This would mean that **thousands** of people facing crisis would not be able to access services.

### ***Impact on Staffing***

A cut of this magnitude would require SCCADVASA member organizations to lay off at least 65 members of staff. The instability in funding and the inability to provide raises and benefits in a difficult labor market will impact their ability to retain qualified staff.

- "We would have to lay off half of our staff."
- "We would have to close our clinical services department."
- "We would have to lay off several staff and cut programs."
- "Nobody would be available to answer the hotline or work with shelter residents during second shift."
- "We have 4 positions (2 counselors, 1 legal advocate, and 1 victim service volunteer coordinator) that are paid 100% from VOCA funds (salary and fringe). It would devastate our services."

### ***Impact on Programs***

- "We would have to close our office."
- "We would have to eliminate programming in one county completely."
- "We would have to close our clinical services department."
- "The only way to cut 40% of my VOCA budget without compromising the number of victims served immediately post-assault would be to cut my entire counseling department. We received roughly 280 referrals for counseling this year. They serve the fewest number of survivors given the amount of time necessary to spend with each client to help them through their trauma. This would eliminate all access to free, trauma-informed counseling for survivors of sexual assault in our service area."
- "We would have to close our Legal Services Program and our Community Education and Outreach."
- "We would have to close our Transitional Shelter, 2 Child Advocacy Center sites and reduce services in 7 counties."

Sexual Assault Program serving **Pickens County** (PCAC):

- “We have 4 positions (2 counselors, 1 legal advocate, and 1 victim service volunteer coordinator) that are paid 100% from VOCA funds (salary and fringe). It would devastate our services.”

Domestic Violence Program serving **Horry & Georgetown counties** (Family Justice Center):

- A 40% cut in VOCA would result in a 15% cut to our overall budget.

Rape Crisis Center serving **Horry & Georgetown** (The Rape Crisis Center)

- 1 FTE Sexual Assault survivor advocate (we only have 2 on staff); this position served 70 sexual assault survivors in 2023.) Volunteer Coordinator position
- for all remaining staff, we'd have to eliminate completely our agency provided medical benefits.
- For remaining VOCA funded staff, this would also eliminate any paid training opportunities.
- 29% reimbursement for the Horry County center's rent
- reimbursements for
  - Victim Supplies
  - Therapy Supplies
  - Crisis hotline technical maintenance
  - Volunteer Advocate supplies/training
  - Contracted Clinical supervision
  - Contracted bilingual counselor
  - Outreach supplies and printed materials

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault & Child Advocacy Center serving **Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper** (Hopeful Horizons)

- A 40 percent VOCA cut would be approximately \$492,520 and would leave us with \$738,730 in VOCA funding. If we cut what little is currently left in our VOCA budget for other expenses including indirect costs (which are currently helping fill gaps in VOCA funding), MIS support, rent and office supplies, we would still need to eliminate the equivalent of at least 6 FT positions, including therapists and advocates (we've already made a number of VOCA funded FT positions PT on this year's grant and are using private funding to make up the difference). I anticipate that this would result in a capacity reduction of at least 25-30 percent - or 300 to 400 victims/survivors over a year that we would not have the capacity to assist. A reduction of this magnitude would also mean longer waiting periods for services and/or only being able to provide short-term, crisis-intervention services. A cut as devastating as 40 percent would create ripple effects

throughout our service area and increase the burden on law enforcement, DSS, hospitals and human service providers.

Domestic Violence Program serving **Greenville, Anderson, Pickens, Oconee** (Safe Harbor)

- Funding lost for 7 staff.
- Estimate we will be able to help 130 fewer survivors.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program serving **Spartanburg and Union** Project Rest)

- **Staff cuts**
  - Part-time Attorney/General Counsel
  - 4 victim/court advocates
  - Health Education Advocate
  - Community Engagement and outreach Director
  - Part time therapist
  - Spanish speaking therapist we contract we so that we can do EMDR therapy work for Spanish speaking clients.
  - Reduce salary for two (2) staff members (therapist and shelter advocate)
  - Accounting assistant
- **Elimination of programs**
  - Legal Services (Order of Protection) Program
  - Community Engagement and Outreach
- **Cut in number of survivors served.**
  - Estimated 800 or more.
  - Estimated 70,000 or more people we would be able to reach (awareness of our services) through social media, attending various outreach, community education and speaking events.

Also, it is important to note that our volunteer engagement has been in a decline. Therefore, our current staff has been carrying a heavier load. If we were to cut staff we do not have the volunteers to help us maintain the work we do.

- 2023 we had 7,996 volunteer hours.
- 2022 we had 12,478 volunteer hours.



Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Children's Advocacy Center serving: ***Florence, Williamsburg, Marion, Dillon, Darlington, Chesterfield & Sumter*** (Pee Dee Coalition)

- Closure of New Beginnings Transitional Shelter in Wallace – 5 staff
- Closure of 2 CAC sites- 4 staff.
- Reduction of 7 county victim services sites-7 staff.

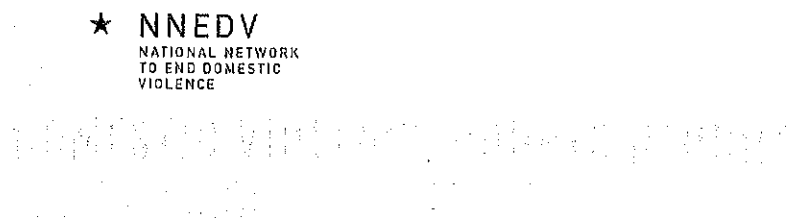
Domestic violence, Rape Crisis and Child Advocacy Center serving ***York, Chester, Lancaster & Union*** (Safe Passage)

- Funding lost for 3 positions.
- Staff retention becomes harder when employees see instability in funding and continued cuts.



Agency	VOCA FUNDING FOR SERVICES	2018 Approved Amount	2021 Approved Amount	2022 Approved Amount	2023 Approved Amount
Beyond Abuse	Sexual Assault Services Program	\$ 191,593	\$ 172,434	\$ 172,434	\$ 172,434
Beyond Abuse	Children's Advocacy & Education Services	\$ 255,062	\$ 291,370	\$ 291,370	\$ 291,370
CASA/Family Systems	Child Advocacy Center	\$ 452,550	\$ 80,395	\$ 80,133	\$ 80,133
CASA/Family Systems	Outreach and Advocacy	\$ 125,934	\$ 107,377	\$ 99,129	\$ 99,129
Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons, Inc	Victim Services	\$ 244,484	\$ 292,815	\$ 292,815	\$ 292,815
Family Justice Center of Georgetown and Horry Counties	Domestic Violence Services	\$ 437,064	\$ 275,964	\$ 275,964	\$ 275,964
Foothills Alliance	Children's Advocacy Center	\$ 431,651	\$ 160,555	\$ 160,555	\$ 160,555
Foothills Alliance	Sexual Trauma Center	\$ 237,228	\$ 480,028	\$ 480,028	\$ 480,028
Hopeful Horizons	Direct Service to Victims	\$ 712,553	\$ 1,231,300	\$ 1,231,300	\$ 1,231,300
Julie Valentine Center	Adult Crisis Services	\$ 1,875,882	\$ 453,433	\$ 453,433	\$ 453,433
Julie Valentine Center	Child Therapy Services	\$ 203,594	\$ 150,252	\$ 150,252	\$ 150,252
Laurens County Safe Home	Domestic Violence Services	\$ 633,381	\$ 114,698	\$ 114,698	\$ 114,608
Meg's House	Domestic Violence Trauma Reduction Team	\$ 175,268	\$ 27,162	\$ 27,162	\$ 27,162
My Sister's House	Clinical and Training / Domestic Violence Victim Services	\$ 115,523	\$ 395,586	\$ 395,586	\$ 395,586
Palmetto Citizens Against Sexual Assault	Sexual Assault Victim Services Programs	\$ 594,110	\$ 276,460	\$ 276,460	\$ 276,460
Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault	Community Victim Services	\$ 381,917	\$ 1,021,385	\$ 1,021,385	\$ 1,021,385

Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault	Transitional Shelter	\$ 1,416,350	\$ 293,726	\$ 293,726	\$ 293,726	\$ 293,726
Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault	Child Abuse Services	\$ 411,072	\$ 893,191	\$ 893,191	\$ 893,191	\$ 893,191
People Against Rape (Tri-County S.P.E.A.K.S.)	Victims Assistance Programs	\$ 1,232,001	\$ 323,495	\$ 323,495	\$ 323,495	\$ 323,495
Pickens County Advocacy Center	Sexual Assault Victim Services	\$ 532,006	\$ 261,549	\$ 261,549	\$ 261,549	\$ 261,549
Rape Crisis Center Horry / Georgetown	Sexual Assault Services Project	\$ 357,423	\$ 283,549	\$ 283,549	\$ 283,549	\$ 283,549
Safe Harbor, Inc.	Comprehensive Domestic Violence Victim Services	\$ 412,034	\$ 816,627	\$ 816,627	\$ 816,627	\$ 816,627
Project R.E.S.T.	Domestic Violence Services	\$ 1,116,695	\$ 618,282	\$ 618,639	\$ 618,639	\$ 618,639
Project R.E.S.T.	Sexual Assault Services	\$ 596,968	\$ 384,055	\$ 383,371	\$ 383,371	\$ 383,371
Safe Passage, Inc.	Comprehensive Services to Victims of Child Abuse	\$ 850,944	\$ 177,315	\$ 173,500	\$ 173,500	\$ 232,688
Safe Passage, Inc.	Comprehensive Services to Victims of Sexual Assault	\$ 186,194	\$ 121,922	\$ 114,543	\$ 114,543	\$ 117,723
Safe Passage, Inc.	Comprehensive Services to Victims of Domestic Violence	\$ 138,603	\$ 415,510	\$ 341,052	\$ 291,091	\$ 291,091
Safe Passage, Inc.	Comprehensive Services to Underserved Populations	\$ 378,680	\$ 169,900	\$ 255,552	\$ 243,145	\$ 243,145
Pathways to Healing	Sexual Violence Services	\$ 538,177	\$ 1,262,089	\$ 1,262,089	\$ 1,262,083	\$ 1,262,083
Sistercare, Inc.	Comprehensive Intervention for Safety Program	\$ 1,906,776	\$ 971,226	\$ 971,226	\$ 971,226	\$ 971,226
South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	Multi Agency Network Database	\$ 1,316,025				
The Family Resource Center	Victim Advocacy & Counseling Program	\$ 531,258	\$ 372,642	\$ 372,642	\$ 372,642	\$ 372,642
YWCA of the Upper Lowlands	Therapy and Victim Advocacy Program	\$ 163,491	\$ 117,705	\$ 117,705	\$ 117,705	\$ 111,839
		\$ 18,960,898	\$13,013,997	\$13,005,160	\$12,999,198	\$12,999,198



On September 7, 2022, **12 out of 13 (92%)** identified domestic violence programs in South Carolina participated in a national count of domestic violence services conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). The following figures represent the information shared by the participating programs about the services they provided during the 24-hour survey period.

#### Emergency Shelter

**295** adult and child victims of domestic violence found refuge in emergency shelters, transitional housing, hotels, motels, or other housing provided by local domestic violence programs.

**182** adult and child victims received non-residential supportive services related to legal needs, housing advocacy, transportation, mental health, public benefits, and more.

#### Domestic Violence Hotlines

Domestic violence hotlines are lifelines for victims in danger, providing support, information, safety planning, and resources via phone, chat, text, and email. Hotline staff received **113** contacts, averaging nearly **5** contacts per hour.

#### Public Training Sessions

On the survey day, local domestic violence programs provided **11** public training sessions (educational sessions provided to the public) to **92** people, addressing topics like domestic violence prevention and early intervention.

#### Unmet Requests for Services

Victims made **51** requests for services that programs could not provide because they did not have the resources. Approximately **63%** of these unmet requests were for emergency shelter, hotels, motels, and other housing.

Table 1: Services Provided on 9/7/22	% of Programs Providing Services
Emergency Shelter	92%
Therapy/Counseling for Adults	92%
Support/Advocacy Related to Housing/Landlord	75%
Court Accompaniment or Legal Advocacy	67%
Children's Support or Advocacy	58%
Support/Advocacy Related to Mental Health	58%
Therapy/Counseling for Children or Youth	58%
Transitional or Other Housing (run by DV program)	58%
Transportation	58%

§ 16-16-10. Any person who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, or child abuse or neglect, or who is a witness to such an act, may request assistance from the law enforcement agency, the Department of Social Services, or the Department of Health and Human Services, or any other agency, to provide assistance, including but not limited to, transportation, counseling, medical care, and other services, and the agency shall provide such assistance as soon as practicable.

Learn about domestic violence in South Carolina:  
[SCCADVASA.org](http://SCCADVASA.org)

# Budget Request for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence 2024 For Services and Prevention Across South Carolina



**Rape Crisis Centers and Domestic Violence agencies in South Carolina are facing cuts in federal funding of up to 40% in 2024.**

**It is critical that the Legislature increase the state investment in these critical services to ensure that survivors can access the help they need to heal.**

## ***Rape Crisis Centers***

- Increase the state annual appropriation to support the response to sexual assault and the critical prevention work provided by the 15 member organizations who meet the DHEC Standards for Sexual Violence Programs **from \$1.5 million recurring to \$5 million recurring.**
- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey published by the CDC estimates that **20% of South Carolina women have experienced at least one attempted or completed rape during their lifetime.**
- The 2022 SLED Crimebook reports 4,278 sexual offenses ranging from fondling to rape and incest with a clearance rate of 35% and a total of 650 arrests. **Data from the Bureau of Justice reports that only one out of three rapes are reported to law enforcement.**
- South Carolina's **15 rape crisis centers annually serve around 7,000 (unduplicated) victims and survivors who are seeking services for the first time.** They provide hospital accompaniment to provide support through the forensic exam process (rape kit collection) and answer around 5000 calls made to 24/7 crisis hotlines.

## ***Domestic Violence Programs***

- Increase the annual state appropriation to the 13 DSS-approved organizations providing holistic services to domestic violence survivors **from \$1.5 million recurring to \$5 million recurring** due to the high prevalence of intimate partner violence, increased costs and cuts to federal funding.
- In FY2022, the 13 domestic violence programs approved by DSS provided:
  - **1834 adults and 1612 children** with emergency shelter for a total of **49,344 nights in emergency safe housing.**
  - **In just one day** (September 7, 2022), **these domestic violence programs provided services to 477 victims.** An additional 51 requests could not be met due to lack of resources. Approximately 63% of these unmet requests were for housing or emergency shelter.
  - **17,307 victims and survivors** received supportive services **such as counseling, support groups, legal advocacy.**
  - 24/7 emergency hotlines responded to nearly **30,000 calls, over 4,700 in the Pee Dee region alone.**



# Member Organizations



SCCADVASA works with 22 independently operated, 501(c)(3) non-profit member organizations in communities across South Carolina that provide confidential, direct services to survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault:

