

# VOCA STABILIZATION



## talking points for legislators

VOCA Grants are the primary source of federal funding for thousands of victim service providers, including CACs. VOCA is a key component within the entire criminal justice system because it funds critical services to victims of crimes so they can not only heal, but also work (many times in partnership) with law enforcement and prosecutors in pursuing justice.

VOCA grants (released from the Crime Victims Fund (CVF)) are non-taxpayer sources of funding that supports thousands of crime victims services providers serving millions of victims of crime annually and is funded by monetary penalties associated with federal criminal convictions and with deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) and non-prosecution agreements (NPAs).

White-collar criminal prosecutions and fines associated with these crimes (which fill the Crime Victims Fund) are at a 20 year low, meaning the CVF has experienced a number of years of concerning low deposits.

State grants decreased in FY'19, FY'20, FY'21, and FY'23, reflecting the decreased deposits. If deposits remain at 2022 levels, state victim assistance grants would drop to approximately \$400 million, a 90% cut compared to FY'18. It remains to be seen how states will implement the most recent FY24 cuts.

The Crime Victims Fund is out of money. The CVF had a large enough balance to offset the decreasing deposits for several years, but the reserve has now been exhausted. The FY23 final allocation obligated the entire existing balance of the CVF at that time, plus approximately the first three months of deposits after the beginning of the fiscal year. And most recently, the FY24 allocation saw a \$613 million reduction in relation to the FY23 level – a 40% cut for most states.

Deposits into the CVF were historically low from 2018 through 2022. Deposits the last five years have been \$445 million, \$495 million, \$503 million, \$774 million, and \$822 million respectively - deposits have not been this low since 2003.

CACs estimate that we may/will have to lay off at least 400 MH clinicians (and we believe significantly more) that are directly funded by VOCA dollars. These clinicians provide evidence-based trauma-informed therapies to help kids and families heal.

CACs serve more than 380K abused kids each year, or more than 1000 abused kids a day. Currently, 285K kids are able to access mental health services (in large part due to VOCA funding). Without VOCA, mental health for these 285K abuse kids is in jeopardy.

VOCA funds more than 1,000 CAC Victim Advocates. The VA not only helps identify mental health needs and link children/families to providers, but also encourages families to continue coming for CAC services. We estimate that access to all 1000 Victim Advocates in our centers is also in jeopardy.

The pandemic has already put strains on existing staff, making it harder to not only recruit staff but also to retain them. Additional cuts will further exacerbate the ability and wait times to conduct forensic interviews which not only delays in the child's ability to heal, but also delays assistance to law enforcement in pursuing criminal cases.

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) are essential community resources that provide a safe, child-friendly environment where abused children can find hope, healing, and justice. At CACs, we bring together a multidisciplinary team (MDT) of professionals—including law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical and mental health professionals, and victim advocates—to work collaboratively on child abuse cases. This team approach ensures that the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of child abuse cases are handled in a way that is efficient, effective, and child-centered. By minimizing trauma and providing comprehensive support, CACs help children and their nonoffending family members heal while holding offenders accountable.

- CACs provide a safe, child-focused environment for coordinated multidisciplinary responses to child abuse.
- Services include forensic interviews, medical examinations, mental health services, case management, and advocacy for non-offending family members.
- Ensures that each child's unique needs are met while seeking justice.
- Leads to efficient handling of child abuse cases, benefiting law enforcement, the judicial system, and child welfare services.

- The MDT model brings together professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, medical, mental health, and advocacy services to collaborate on child abuse cases.
- This coordinated approach ensures a comprehensive response to child abuse, providing holistic support to victims and their families.
- Local sheriffs, district attorneys, and other community partners are integral to the MDT model and strongly support the work of CACs.
- VOCA funding cuts will directly impact all MDT members and the critical services they provide, undermining their ability to protect and support child victims effectively.

# 2023-2024 Statistics

## Children Served 2023-2024

12,063

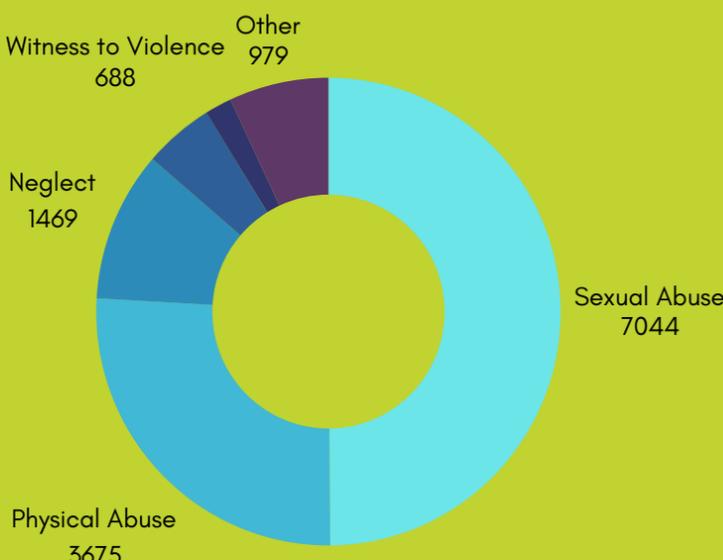
### Forensic Interviews

9,781

### Child Medical Evaluations

6,772

## Abuse Types 2023-2024



### Therapy Sessions

3,535

### Victim Advocacy

9,305

### Prevention

2,009,381