

## Talking Points for Congressional Meetings

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### Tell your story

- ★ Provide compelling anecdotes from your state/program to reinforce the points.
- ★ Include NNEDV's DV Counts 2019 Report numbers to demonstrate the demand for, and gaps in, services.
- ★ Provide local information about the need. For example:
  - Describe the successes and challenges of programs in your state.
  - Explain the funding needs of programs in your state.
- ★ Pick just a few of the talking points for each meeting, depending on your priorities and the interests of the Member of Congress with whom you are meeting.
- ★ The most important talking points are the ones on this page.

### Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on survivors and DV programs

- ★ Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and have urgent, ongoing housing, economic, health, safety, and other human needs. *Share how this looks in your state/territory.*
- ★ Immigrant survivors and survivors of color face additional threats and barriers to accessing resources. *Share how this looks in your state/territory.*
- ★ Programs that serve survivors need increased, flexible funding. *Describe what your programs are doing and their needs (housing, digital and remote services, flexible funds for survivors and for local programs).*
- ★ The final COVID-19 package and FY 21 funding must meet survivors' needs.

### The final COVID-19 package must meet survivors' needs

Include and expand upon the House-passed HEROES Act (H.R. 6800) to address survivors' needs. Please include the following funding streams and policy changes in the next COVID bill. (*Use the COVID request sheet.*)

- ★ **Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) (\$100M/no match)**
  - \$45 million was included in the CARES Act but is insufficient.
  - *Explain that additional funds are needed for emergency shelter, housing, and services in your state/territory.*
- ★ **Culturally Specific Services Program for Survivors of Color (\$40M)**
  - This new program would address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on survivors of color.
  - *Explain the needs of culturally specific programs in your state/territory.*
- ★ **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund (Statutory fix; eliminate match)**
  - VOCA is a critical non-taxpayer source of funding for victim services that goes to every state and territory.
  - *Share how critical VOCA is in your state/territory.*
  - The VOCA Fund is in danger of running out of funds but can be fixed by a no-cost statutory change. (*Reference the VOCA statutory fix fact sheet.*)
  - Congress must amend the VOCA statute to deposit penalties and fines from federal non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements into the CVF.
  - Congress must eliminate the VOCA match in the wake of the pandemic.
- ★ **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**
  - VAWA funds are needed to provide victim services, specifically for culturally-specific services, sexual assault services, and housing.
  - There was no sexual assault services funding included in the CARES Act, and yet survivors' needs are increasing.
  - Congress should include the following funding:
    - Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) (\$100M)
    - STOP funds to states for victim services (\$225M)
    - Transitional housing (\$40M)
- ★ **Housing Resources (Domestic Violence Bonus Funds/Vouchers)**
  - Survivors' housing needs have increased while shelter capacity has decreased. Demand for housing will grow as the economic fallout continues.
  - *Talk about the needs for DV-specific housing resources in your state/territory.*

- Congress should increase Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Domestic Violence Bonus Fund by \$100 million to cover increased rental assistance costs.

★ **Immigrant Survivors**

- Immigrant survivors were not included in the CARES Act; non-citizen survivors of many statuses face barriers to economic and health supports.
- *Provide examples of the challenges facing immigrant survivors in your state/territory and how they need access to COVID-related health care and funding.*
- Congress must extend immigrant visas (such as U visas, T visas, etc.) and work authorization, offer access to COVID testing, treatment, and care, and provide stimulus checks for those who pay taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.

★ **Unemployment Insurance and Paid Leave**

- Some survivors must leave their jobs due to the abuse and should be able to access unemployment insurance and paid leave.
- Congress should include these provisions and maintain HEROES Act provisions that expand paid leave and wage replacements.

★ **Investments in Social Safety Net**

- Survivors depend on a broad array of safety net programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, housing assistance, and food and nutritional programs. Also, advocates need increased pay as essential workers.
- Maintain HEROES Fund provisions in the final package.

## FY 21 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS TO MEET SURVIVORS' NEEDS

### General Talking Points on Federal Funding Issues:

- ★ While FVPSA, VOCA, and VAWA have been extremely successful, many victims still have unmet needs, and we must continue to improve our responses to address the crisis of violence in many communities.
- ★ These needs have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the demand for services will remain high for months or years. Even with the emergency supplemental funding provided by Congress, we cannot meet these increases in demand and survivors' lives are in danger.
- ★ We need increased funding in Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations bills.

- ★ In our state/territory, we rely on the combination of these federal funding streams to provide comprehensive responses to survivors.
- ★ *Talk about what funding is important for you and your local programs.*

### Requests:

- ★ **Fund FVPSA at \$200 million.**
  - FVPSA provides shelter and supportive services in every state and territory.
  - It is the only dedicated federal funding source for domestic violence.
  - FVPSA helps keep lights on and doors open at emergency shelters.
- ★ **Fund new Culturally Specific Services Program (FVPSA office) at \$40 million.**
  - Funding for culturally specific services for Communities of Color is insufficient to meet the needs of survivors. A new Culturally Specific Services Program to be administered by the FVPSA Office at HHS will meet the needs of Survivors of Color.
- ★ **Release \$2.65 billion from the VOCA Fund with a set-aside for tribes and create a statutory fix.**
  - VOCA is a non-taxpayer funding source, helping survivors of all types of crimes, including DV/SA.
  - VOCA funds 6,000 direct services providers, serving 6 million victims annually.
- ★ **Fully fund VAWA programs: SASP, T-housing.**
  - Together, VAWA funding streams support comprehensive, specialized services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including culturally specific services, rape crisis centers, and transitional housing.
- ★ **Allocate \$50 million in HUD Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program for domestic violence housing – the “DV Bonus Funds.”**
  - DV Bonus Funds are now the largest DV-specific federal funding resource, providing immediate housing to survivors who are homeless and in danger.

### Supporting materials

- COVID-19 Requests
- VOCA Statutory Fix Recommendations
- Appropriations Chart (two-page detailed chart)
- FY 21 Appropriations Requests

- 2019 Domestic Violence Counts Report – national and state summaries
- Additional state-specific information

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO COMPLETE AN [ADVOCACY REPORT FORM](#) FOR EVERY MEETING AND SUBMIT IT TO NNEDV.**