

# Call Congress to say Save VOCA!

## VOCA Call-In Day Toolkit

**As Congress works to complete its budget, we urge advocates to take immediate and ongoing action over the next few weeks to save VOCA.**

**We need your help to tell Congress that a 40% cut to VOCA will be devastating and dangerous for survivors. Congress needs to act now!**

For more information, please contact Terri Poore ([terri@endsexualviolence.org](mailto:terri@endsexualviolence.org)) or Monica McLaughlin ([mmclaughlin@nnev.org](mailto:mmclaughlin@nnev.org))

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### **Tell Congress:**

“I am a constituent from (city/county/State) and I work for (local program/coalition) and I am urging (Senator/Representative X) to please take action to prevent a devastating \$700 million cut to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Victims and victim service programs in our community will suffer greatly unless Congress acts.”

### **SHARE THE MOST COMPELLING SURVIVOR-CENTERED POINT YOU HAVE**

For example:

“If Congress allows this cut:

- we will have to close our statewide hotline
- we have to layoff X number of advocates
- we will have to reduce X services (housing, legal, counseling, shelter, etc)
- X number of survivors will be unable to access lifesaving services”

**“We ask that Congress invest adequate resources to ensure level funding for VOCA in the final FY24 budget without cutting other programs that victims and survivors rely on.”**

To find your two senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>

To find your representative:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

You can call the Capitol switchboard and ask to be transferred to your Representatives' and Senators' offices at this number: (202) 224-3121

See below for additional [background](#) on VOCA and the [current crisis](#).

You can ask for an email address to send your Representative and Senators our [VOCA letter to Congress](#) and **\*New\*** [Impacts of FY24 Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\) Cuts - NNEDV and NAESV](#)

If you'd like to take action on social media in addition to calling, here's our [social media toolkit](#).

### **Background:**

The Victims of Crime Act's (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund (CVF) is a **non-taxpayer** source of funding that supports thousands of victim services providers **servicing millions of victims annually** and is funded by monetary penalties associated with **federal convictions and certain criminal settlements**.

**Deposits fluctuate annually** based on the cases that the Department of Justice successfully prosecutes and settles. Deposits have been low for several years, impacting the balance of the CVF.

Appropriators decide how much to release from the CVF every year for VOCA grants. Statutorily, **this money funds specific DOJ programs and state victim assistance grants, and supplements state victim compensation funds**.

**It is important to have money in the CVF to provide a buffer for lean years.**

Unfortunately, if there are too many lean years in a row, the CVF will not be able to provide that buffer. That is the situation we are currently facing.

Because funds in the CVF are very low, the amount Appropriators will release is low and as a result, **states are or will be experiencing enormous cuts** to their awards. Every state manages their grant cycles differently. Most states have either already cut funding to victim service organizations or will do so this coming fiscal year.

### **Current Crisis:**

While the VOCA grant allocation of \$1.9 billion that was included in the final FY23 budget essentially level funds VOCA with previous years, the proposed \$1.2 billion in President's FY24 budget and the FY24 House and Senate CJS appropriations bills is a **40% cut, as compared to FY23**. States have already begun to implement significant cuts, with some cutting more than 60% in the current year alone. At this proposed funding level, thousands of victim service providers across the nation will be forced to layoff staff, cut programs, and/or shut their doors. The impact will fall hardest on the smallest programs, particularly programs in rural communities, low-income communities, and Communities of Color. Potentially millions of victims nationwide will lose access to lifesaving and life-sustaining child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other victim services. Without access to these critical services, the real-time impact will not only be felt by individuals and families, but also in communities nationwide. It is important to note that, after being kept in isolation due to the pandemic, many survivors are still experiencing trauma, and as a result are now coming forward seeking services. Losing access will further set back their healing and safety.

Victim service providers across the country have worked diligently with private donors and with state and local lawmakers to secure funds to address increased need and to provide a buffer if VOCA grants are cut by 40%, as anticipated based on the House and Senate CJS Appropriations bills and the President's budget. However, even programs that have been successful in securing state, local, and/or private funding to protect against VOCA decreases simply cannot absorb cuts of this magnitude.

**Given the dire potential consequences, on behalf of the victims and survivors we all serve, we ask that Congress invest adequate funding for VOCA in the final FY24 Appropriations budget.**

