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Ohio Domestic Violence Programs Respectfully Request Funding Increase

Request

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is requesting a \$10M annual, \$20M total allocation to the Domestic Violence Program line item (GRF 055504) in the FY 2024-2025 budget to enhance the capacity of programs across the state and meet the needs of survivors currently unable to access services.

Services Provided vs. Services Needed

For calendar year 2022, ODVN's 76 member programs¹:

1. Sheltered 9,886 survivors (approximately 5,594 adults and 4,292 children) who spent 487,253 nights in emergency shelters. However, 5,681 survivors seeking shelter -- more than 36% -- were turned away because of insufficient capacity.
2. Provided services to 72,920 people, most of whom never spent a night in shelter. Nineteen percent (19%) of our programs were unable to meet the need for support groups, transportation and other supportive services.
3. Answered 90,751 crisis calls.² More than one fifth (23%) of our programs said they were unable to answer crisis calls consistently because they didn't have enough staff.

Service Reductions: Since 2019 federal funding to our member programs has been reduced by 60%

1. **More than 40%** of our programs reported **reducing or eliminating services to children.**
2. Only 40% of programs have mental health professionals on staff and 22% of programs have reduced or eliminated mental health staff.
3. More than half (**55%**) of our programs reported eliminating or reducing programs focused on preventing domestic violence.
4. More than one quarter (27%) of our programs turned away survivors seeking assistance with a protection order or court advocacy, due to no available staff. That means

¹ The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) surveyed its 76 member programs January 5 to 27, 2023 about the prevalence of domestic violence. A total of 74 programs responded, a 97% response rate.

² Additionally, 42 programs have the capacity to handle crisis communications through text and/or webchat.

domestic violence survivors often must try to navigate the complicated legal system including attending hearings where their abusers are present – without an advocate’s support.

- a. 4 in 10 of felony courts (40%) and 25% of municipal courts in our programs’ service areas do NOT have coverage from a victim advocate through an ODVN member program.
- b. More than a fifth (22%) of domestic relations courts and more than half (56%) of juvenile courts in our programs’ service areas do NOT have coverage from victims’ advocates provided through an ODVN member program.

What the \$20 Million Line-Item Will Do

1. Potentially save lives, by reducing the number of domestic violence survivors and their children who are turned away from emergency shelter services.
2. Begin to address the deficits in youth, legal and prevention services.
3. Save taxpayer dollars. By providing emergency shelter, ODVN member programs collectively saved Ohio communities more than \$32 million in short-term costs associated with medical care, property damage, law enforcement, emergency response, child protective services, legal fees, and loss of life including end-of-life expenses.³

How Ohio Compares

On a per-capita basis, Ohio is *LAST* in funding domestic violence services compared to all surrounding funded states. In FY 2022-23:

- Ohio spent 32 cents
- Pennsylvania spent \$1.56
- West Virginia spent \$1.41
- Indiana spent 92 cents
- Kentucky spent \$2.54

If the line item is increased to \$20 million in FY 24-25, Ohio’s per capita DV funding rate would be 85 cents.

³ In spring 2022, ODVN engaged a third-party research firm, Measurement Resources Company (MRC), to calculate the impact and estimated social return on investment (ESROI) of domestic violence shelters. For more information: [Social Return on Investment 2021](#)