

Budget Unit Brief

FY 2017



Victim Assistance Grants

The Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) of the [Office of the Attorney General](#) includes the Victim Support Services (VSS) Program that administers Victim Assistance Grants.

Program Overview

The [Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee](#) provides oversight and a State General Fund appropriation for Victim Assistance Grants to the Office of the Attorney General for the VSS Program. The appropriation is combined with federal funds to provide services to victims at the local level. The budget for the VSS Program varies annually. Approximately \$25.0 million annually is available for the CVAD to administer the Program. This funding includes a mix of federal funds, the State General Fund appropriation, and the State Victim Compensation Fund. The CVAD retains 5.0% of federal funds for administration at the state level. The VSS Program provides partial funding and technical assistance to community-based service providers for victims of violent crimes including domestic abuse and sexual abuse crimes. These local service providers also seek federal, state, and local support for their programs. The VSS Program funds the operating costs of the statewide domestic violence hotline (1-800-942-0333) and the statewide sexual abuse hotline (1-800-284-7821). The VSS Program also funds the statewide coalitions that provide certification, training, and technical assistance to victim service providers.

Program Redesign – FY 2013

The CVAD focused on a rapid rehousing response and transitional housing model for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The CVAD worked with the [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#), the [Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#), and local providers to develop and implement requirements for local services to meet the federal initiative.

Services and advocacy for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and shelter care varied across the state. The CVAD funded approximately 44.0% of these services in FY 2013, and established six service areas within Iowa, based on census data and geography. Local providers were encouraged to develop coalitions to strengthen victim services and advocacy within their service area. The focus was to serve more victims while strengthening services to sexual assault victims and homicide victim survivors. Operating a shelter is expensive; the majority of existing shelters were underutilized.

In FY 2013, there were 26 programs that served victims of either domestic abuse or sexual assault, three programs that served victims of domestic violence, and three programs that served victims of sexual abuse. There were 20 domestic violence shelters.

Transition – FY 2014

FY 2014 was a transition year to implement the redesign of victim services at the local level. The CVAD made FY 2014 grant awards of state and federal funds to the six service areas created in FY 2013.

There were 12 domestic abuse comprehensive and 10 sexual abuse comprehensive programs in Iowa's six service areas, funded by the VSS Program in FY 2014. Comprehensive programs provide multiple services to victims, such as emergency shelter; crisis intervention; personal advocacy with other agencies such as the Department of Human Services (DHS), criminal and civil

More Information

Office of the Attorney General: <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/>
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.icadv.org
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault: www.iowacasa.org
Iowa Organization for Victim Assistance: <http://www.iowaiova.com/>
U.S. Department of Justice: <http://www.justice.gov/>
U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime: <http://ojp.gov/ovc/>
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov/>
Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>
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court system, and medical services; and counseling by certified advocates. The VSS Program also funded five programs for homicide survivors within the four Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) regions. There was a collaborative homicide survivor program between Fort Dodge and Mason City.

Of the 20 shelters that existed in FY 2013, 10 shelters received ongoing funding for FY 2014 through contracts with the CVAD. Eight shelters received transitional funds to remain open for a portion or all of FY 2014. There were two domestic violence shelters that did not receive grant awards from the CVAD in FY 2014. These shelters may have stayed open with other funding sources, or may have become transitional housing facilities or homeless centers, or may have closed permanently. That decision was up to the local program's board to decide.

Current Situation

There are currently 18 domestic abuse comprehensive and 17 sexual abuse comprehensive programs in Iowa's six service areas, funded by the VSS program. These comprehensive programs also rely on funding sources other than CVAD to address the needs of victims. There are eight shelters focused on providing services to victims of domestic violence. These shelters must serve any victim of violent crime that accesses the program, due to federal funding guidelines. The VSS Program also funds five programs for homicide survivors within the four DCI regions. There is a collaborative homicide survivor program between Fort Dodge and Mason City in DCI Zone #3.

State and Federal Funding

The State General Fund appropriation is \$6.7 million in FY 2017; this is no change in funding compared to the last two years. The Justice System Appropriations Act requires \$150,000 to be transferred from the Victim Compensation Fund to the Victim Assistance Grants Account in FY 2017. The Attorney General authorized a total of \$1.4 million to be transferred in FY 2016.

Federal funds include:

- [Victim of Crime Act \(VOCA\) Assistance](#): The funds are allocated to service providers of victims of violent crime. The CVAD uses the VOCA grant award received from the U.S. Department of Justice to fund the domestic abuse and sexual assault programs, the homicide victim survivor programs, and 20 victim/witness coordinators (19 in county prosecutor offices and one in the Office of the Attorney General).
- [Family Violence and Prevention Services Act](#) funds can only be used for domestic violence programs.
- [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#) funds are used for victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, and court services (pursuant to federal law) for domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking programs. A \$30,000 General Fund match requirement is included in the appropriation to the Office of the Attorney General.
- [VAWA Sexual Abuse Services Program](#) funds are specifically designated for nongovernmental sexual abuse/assault programs to provide direct services to victims.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [13](#) and [915](#)
[61](#) Iowa Administrative Code

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