

# Sexual Assault: Modernizing Iowa's System of Services



## What is the Restructuring?

Currently in the state of Iowa services for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence (victim services) are housed in community based organizations, many of which are non-profit organizations. There are 31 community based organizations that provide victim services, 3 of these programs are stand-alone rape crisis centers, 3 are exclusively domestic violence and shelter based services and the other 25 are dual sexual assault and domestic violence programs. Each victim services program provides services to multiple counties in their geographic region with county coverage ranging from two to nine counties. These victim service programs receive funding from the Iowa Attorney General's Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD).

Given the increase in federal and state budget cuts in conjunction with research that has brought to light ways to strengthen victim services in the state of Iowa, the Iowa Attorney General's Office called for a reallocation of resources to best meet the needs of survivors. This call for sustainable change has resulted in the current victim services restructuring initiatives to move services from a community based model to a modernized multi-county service area model. The six multi-county service areas are designed to ensure victim services are available in their designated service area. An additional difference is that services will be structured in three categories: Comprehensive Sexual Assault Services, Comprehensive Domestic Abuse Services, and Shelter Based Services as opposed to victim services being co-housed in the same organization. Application for these funds are competitive and programs who intend to apply were to submit applications for the specific victim services(s) for their multi-county service area.

The Crime Victim Assistance Division of the Iowa Attorney General's Office's "Strategic Funding & Services Plan for Iowa Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse Services" (Plan) provides detailed information regarding the state restructuring and a map of the six multi-county service areas.

*To receive a copy of the Plan please contact the Crime Victim Assistance Division at (515) 281-5044 or Toll-Free at 1-800-373-5044.*

## What will comprehensive sexual assault services include?

Each multi-county service area could have 1 or 2 Sexual Assault Comprehensive Programs that will include, but are not limited to:

- 24-Hour Regional Crisis Line for Sexual Abuse Survivors
- Case Management for Survivors
- Community Education
- Crisis Intervention (24-hour response, emergency response to hospitals and law enforcement to assist the survivor)
- Emergency and Long-term Advocacy (court/legal, housing, economic, medical, personal or general advocacy)
- Programming for all sexual abuse/assault survivors across their lifespan
- Outreach and programming for friends and family
- Systems Advocacy
- Transportation
- Training of Allied Professionals
- Trauma-specific/informed counseling strategies (individual & group)
- Volunteer Program

## Why is the Restructuring happening

Following are primary reasons why victim services are being modernized:

- Federal and state funding cuts have dramatically diminished the resources available to provide victim services. According to CVAD, in Fiscal Year 2013 approximately \$1 million dollars were cut. There are further cuts predicted for the Fiscal Year 2014. These cuts are exacerbated by the fact that the Violence Against Women Act has yet to be reauthorized.
- Former strategies of transferring monies from the reserve funds in CVAD are not a sustainable long term solution.
- **Statewide data show that financial resources need to be distributed in a new fashion to ensure that all victims of sexual assault and domestic violence have access to such services. This is particularly the case for sexual assault victims in the state. A 2009 Iowa study estimated 55,340 individuals in Iowa experienced sexual violence. Whereas, Iowa's Victim Service Programs served 4,637 sexual assault victims in that year, or approximately 8% of the 55,340 individuals who experienced sexual assault (CVAD).**

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## How will this impact survivors in my community?

Change is hard and often confusing; however CVAD, IowaCASA, ICADV, and all of the current victim service providers in the state of Iowa are committed to providing modernized care, support, and healing services that survivors need and deserve. Doing so is the foundation of our work and we want to ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible. One of the primary initiatives of this restructuring is supporting victim service providers in strengthening their relationships with community and multi-county service area organizations, groups, individuals, and businesses. This strategic thinking and planning will help bolster our efforts to provide services to survivors who might not necessarily walk into a program's office. The change will be in who provides a particular type of service. Note that agencies awarded funds to provide services are required to have plans in place to ensure that as many survivors as possible are able to access services in their multi-county service area. This restructuring creates an opportunity to critically think about financial resource allocation and service delivery as a chance to move Iowa into an increasingly productive direction.

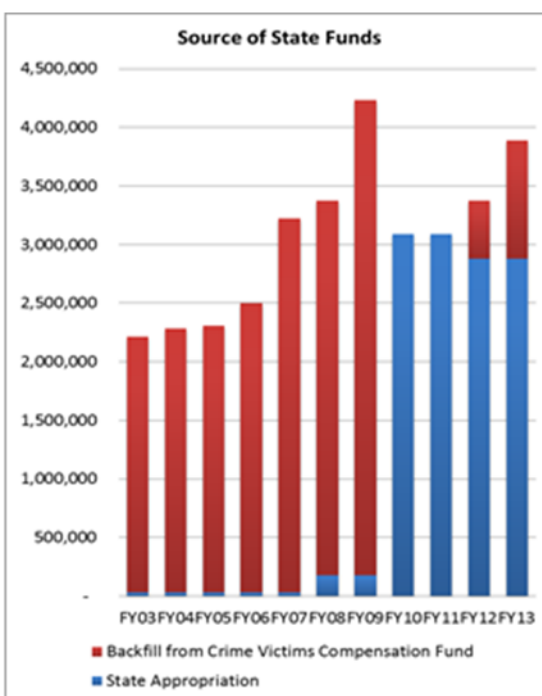
*If you have questions regarding sexual assault services in the state of Iowa please contact, Elizabeth Barnhill, Executive Director or the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault at (515) 244-7424*

*If you have questions regarding domestic violence services in the state of Iowa please contact, Laurie Schipper, Executive Director of the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence at (515) 244-8028*

## How Are Victim Services Funded?

The Iowa Attorney General's Office Crime Victims Assistance Division currently administers the Federal and state funds to domestic violence and sexual assault programs on a grant basis. Services for victims are funded by a combination of Federal, state, and local funds. Over the last ten years, Federal funds have comprised 50-65% of all victim services dollars in Iowa.

The Iowa General Assembly appropriates funds in a line-item called Victim Assistance Grants within the budget of the Attorney General's Office. In FY2003, the Legislature appropriated only \$30,000 for Victim Assistance Grants and the Attorney General's Office made a transfer from the Crime Victims Compensation Fund (CVCV), a fund paid by criminal fines and restitution to assist victims of all sorts of crime, to cover the deficit. This reliance on transfers continued until FY2009, when the Fund was drained. As the chart below demonstrates, this manner of funding victim services appears to be making a comeback.



Independently verified data from Needle Analytics indicates a minimum of \$6M in additional funding is needed to increase the capacity of programs by adding 147 field advocates. These additional advocates will serve nearly 20,000 more victims. The data also shows this level of increase in funding will still leave a minimum 6,593 victims without any services or support.

Add'l Funding	Add'l # Advocates	Add'l # Victims Served
\$2,000,000	49	6,654
\$4,000,000	98	13,308
\$6,000,000	147	19,961
\$8,000,000	196	26,615
\$10,000,000	245	33,269