



SUPPORT PROTECTION OF MONIES TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Issue

The Governor's proposed budgets maintained sexual assault funding at its current level. We express sincere gratitude to the Governor for recognizing the need for these valuable services, acknowledging the high quality of services delivered by sexual assault programs, and ensuring that these programs receive level funding to preserve services. We ask the House and the Senate to also support these life-saving critical victim services by protecting sexual assault funding.

In Washington State, 38 percent of all women have been victims of sexual assault in their lifetimes. Of these, 80 percent were victimized before the age of 18 (OCVA, 2001).

Sexual assault has an impact not just on victims, but also on their families, friends, and community.

Last year 18,918 victims came to Community Sexual Assault Programs for services including: advocacy, crisis intervention, therapy, support groups, and medical evaluations. ***These services are confidential and free.***

The need for these critical services is evident and funding must be protected in order to ensure availability and continuity of these vital services in Washington. Victims and survivors deserve quality comprehensive services and support!

Sexual assault victim services in Washington State are funded with both federal and state dollars. The Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Rape Prevention Education (RPE) funding complement the State's funding for these crucial services. Federal funding is based on the overall violent crime rate - while overall violent crime rates have decreased in recent years, rape and sexual assault rates remain significant.

There is a steady and ongoing need for additional monies to enhance services and meet rising costs of service provision. Advocates already do tremendous work with limited resources and cannot feasibly incur resource reduction. **State monies must be protected and preserved so victims have ongoing access to services, support, and healing.**

Loss of any sexual assault funding will mean that thousands of sexual assault victims, a majority of whom are children, will not receive prompt and comprehensive services to support their physical and mental health and well-being.

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Solution

- Protect sexual assault monies.

Contact: Andrea Piper-Wentland
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
4317 Sixth Avenue SE, #102 - Olympia, WA 98503
(360) 754-7583 - policy@wcsap.org

Reference:

Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (2001). Sexual Assault Experiences and Perceptions of Community Response to Sexual Assault: A Survey of Washington State Women.

Core Services provided by Community Sexual Assault Programs across the state:

Information & Referral: Trained advocates are available 24 hours a day to answer questions and to provide resources and referrals related to sexual abuse/assault.

Crisis Intervention: Trained advocates are available 24 hours a day to provide an immediate personal response to individuals presenting crises relating to sexual abuse/assault.

Legal, Medical, and General Advocacy: Advocates are available to provide legal, medical, and general information about sexual abuse/assault. Advocates are able to help clients identify their options in the different systems of care and can provide in-person support and advocacy services for clients in these settings. Advocates can act on behalf of clients to ensure their interests are represented and their rights are upheld.

System Coordination: Community Sexual Assault Programs work to coordinate the network of services that are available to survivors of sexual violence and their friends and family members.

Prevention Services: Community Sexual Assault Programs provide a wide array of services aimed at the prevention of sexual violence including: education & awareness, skill building and community development.

Specialized Services:

Therapy: Individual treatment to identify, understand and ameliorate the effects of sexual assault and to promote healing.

Support Groups: Regular facilitated meetings for victims or those close to victims, with a supportive and educational focus to provide emotional stability and promote the understanding of the impact of sexual assault.

Medical Evaluation: Specialized medical examination, consultation or interpretation to evaluate and treat medical problems resulting from sexual assault; to promote healing.

Sexual Assault Program Funding in Washington State

Current as of 9/20/2012

