



## MAINTENANCE OF MONIES TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

38 percent of all women in Washington State have been victims of sexual assault in their lifetimes. Of these, 80 percent were victimized before the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> Sexual assault has an impact not just on victims, but also on their family, friends and community.

### Issue

Last year over 13,044 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 they must be maintained. Any monies lost could jeopardize 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 crime rates for all other violent crimes have gone down in recent years, rape and sexual assault rates have not.

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. These monies must be maintained at current funding levels so that victims have ongoing access to services, support, and healing.

In the 2011 legislative session, House and Senate budget proposals have maintained sexual assault monies at current levels and we are tremendously appreciative. We understand the difficult budget situation and express our sincere gratitude for preserving SA monies, recognizing the need for these valuable services, and acknowledging the quality delivery of services by sexual assault programs. We continue to ask that sexual assault monies be maintained.

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### Solution

- Maintain current funding levels for survivors of sexual assault.

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual Assault Experiences and Perceptions of Community Response to Sexual Assault: A Survey of Washington State Women. Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, November 2001.

**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.

