

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding in Pennsylvania

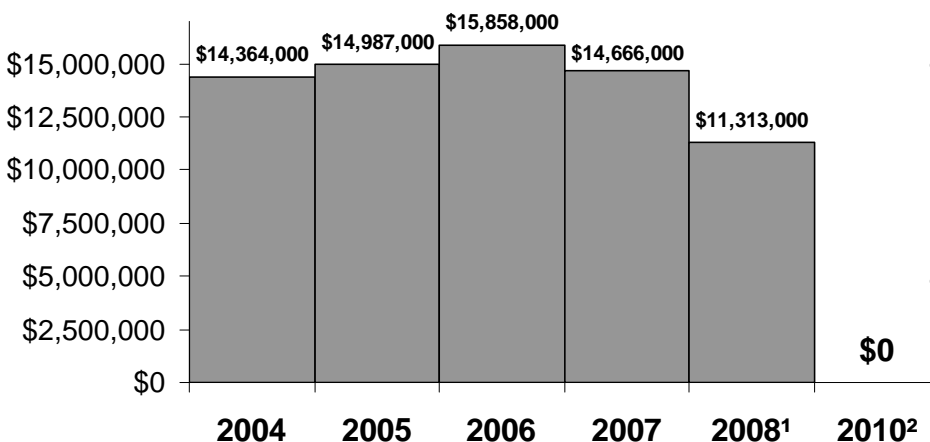
What is VOCA?

- Enacted by Congress and President Reagan in 1984 as a ***non-tax payer funding*** source for services that help victims of crime cope with the trauma and aftermath of crime.
- Funding is collected from various federal criminal fines, forfeitures, assessments and penalties. None of the money used by VOCA comes from taxpayer appropriations.
- VOCA funding provides victims assistance money directly to all US states and territories for victim services and compensation programs.

How Pennsylvania Helps Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence:

- In FY 2006-2007 domestic violence programs in PA provided 484,989 hours of *FREE* counseling and advocacy; 209,936 days of *FREE* emergency shelter for victims; and 19,840 *FREE* community education programs.
- On a single day, 61 domestic violence programs across Pennsylvania answered 892 hotline calls and 1,546 people received training on domestic violence.
- In 2007 Sexual Violence programs and Rape Crisis Centers provided *FREE* services to 23,334 adult and child victims of sexual assault and services to 13,320 family members of those victims.
- In 1 year rape crisis centers answered 69,137 hotline calls and provided 30,353 referrals for services.

Pennsylvania VOCA Allocations



- VOCA funding will shrink dramatically between **2008 and 2010** because of President Bush's request to rescind the VOCA balance.
- Many programs have experienced an increase in request for services but can not afford to hire new staff or maintain services due to **increased operating costs coupled with decreased funding**.
- If unprotected, the VOCA balance could be moved to the general treasury and **no funding** would be available to victims or service providers by 2010.
- In order to **restore services** and retain staff and programs the VOCA cap must be increased.

¹ Estimated FY 2008 state allocation based on 2007 Budget.

² Estimated FY 2010 allocation based on President's FY 2009 Budget Request.

What VOCA Funds:

- *Free* Counseling for adults and child victims
- *Free* Legal and medical advocacy
- *Free* Emergency shelter and transitional housing
- *Free* Outreach to special populations
- *Free* Services to family members of survivors
- *Free* Assistance accessing other community resources
- *Free* Community education
- *Free* School programs
- Prevention programs
- Direct monetary compensation to victims

Who VOCA Helps:

- Domestic violence victims and their children
- Rape victims
- Victims of child sexual abuse, incest and rape
- Victims of stalking
- Victims of Elder abuse
- Survivors of terrorism
- Survivors and families affected by drunk driving
- Parents of murdered children
- Victim Witness Assistance programs
- All victims of crime

Consequences of Losing VOCA Funds:

- Without VOCA funding many victim service programs will have to reduce the amount of services provided, provide services to fewer victims or close their doors completely.
- In a 2008 survey of rape crisis centers, 68.6% of programs stated they would have to lay off staff if funding was not increased in 2009.
- Increases in rent, insurance, utilities and health insurance for staff have caused a huge strain on victim services. These costs continue to rise while federal, state funding and local donations continue to decrease.
- Without VOCA assistance funding or victims compensation programs victims may not receive the counseling, medical care or legal assistance they need to heal from the trauma of crime.

How We Can Save VOCA Funding

Call Congress:

- Tell your Members of Congress that it's up to them to salvage VOCA funding in the FY 2009 spending bills.
- Ask them to deny the President's request to rescind the balance. Congress should insure that millions of crime victims will get the services they need and the funding needed to keep programs open.
- Ask for an Increase in the VOCA cap to \$ 1 billion, which will NOT RAISE TAXES but will allocate funding already collected to meet the needs of all victims of crime across the nation.

Talk to your community:

- Tell your volunteers, allied partners and clients what is happening to VOCA funds and the devastating result. Encourage them to contact their elected officials and ask for their support in saving VOCA.

To reach your Member of Congress go to www.Congress.org or call (202) 224-3121.