

FY23-24 PA State Budget



Investing in Domestic Violence Services

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) is the oldest statewide domestic violence coalition in the nation. Its network of 59 local domestic violence programs provides free and confidential direct services to victims of domestic violence and their children in all 67 counties of the Commonwealth. **PCADV and its programs rely on appropriations in the state budget allocated to the Department of Human Services through Act 44.**

PA Domestic Violence Programs by the Numbers (FY22)

82,941

Victims of domestic violence served

338,555

Hours of counseling provided to victims

100,663

Domestic violence crisis hotline calls answered

Critical Need for Act 44 Domestic Violence Funding Increase

Domestic violence programs are at a tipping point, nearing financial crisis that threatens the ability to keep their doors open to welcome victims who are fleeing life-threatening violence in their own homes.

"I'm working with a budget deficit and can't afford to pay our domestic violence advocates a living wage. We can only cut so much and still do the work."

Increasing Act 44 by \$4M in FY23-24 will begin to fill gaps paramount to ensuring victim safety. As allocated through PCADV's funding formula, a \$4M increase in Act 44 would range from programs receiving approximately an additional \$5,678 to \$447,310 to balance their budgets and keep their doors open for victims fleeing violence.

Fiscal Year	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	Governor's Budget	PCADV Ask FY23-24
Act 44 Funding (in millions)	17,357	17,357	19,093	19,093	20,093	20,093	20,093	24,093
Highest Increase Received by a DV Program*	\$0	\$0	\$189k	\$0	\$108k	\$0	\$0	\$447.3k
Lowest Increase Received by a DV Program*	\$0	\$0	\$0.8k	\$0	\$1.4k	\$0	\$0	\$5.7k

*Impact of program specific allocations are dependent on DHS approved funding formula and minimum funding standards.

FY22 PA State Budget Unmet Needs

Living Wages to Retain Skilled Program Staff

The typical salary for a domestic violence advocate in Pennsylvania is below a living wage. Advocates fill positions that require them to manage high-stress, secondary-trauma, and inflexible schedules to ensure 24/7 service provision. Last year, PCADV programs had 431 advocates vacate their positions and were only able to rehire 371 new advocates to fill these positions. That equates to every domestic violence program in Pennsylvania being understaffed, with an average of 7 vacancies per program in a single year. **This unprecedented domestic violence victim advocate shortage is a product of underfunding** whereby programs are unable to offer competitive salaries to recruit and retain skilled advocates, resulting in victims being placed on longer waitlists or survivors not receiving the services they need when they need them. In 2022 there were 3,209 unmet requests for services.

431

Domestic violence advocate staff vacancies

3,209

Unmet requests for services

"High rates of staff turnover have resulted in reduced capacity to serve families in our safe house, as well as waitlists for counseling and support groups. Raising hourly rates has helped, but our budget has not expanded to keep up with rising costs. We need additional funds to maintain and increase capacity so we don't have to turn victims away or delay services."

FY22 PA State Budget Unmet Needs (Cont.)

Safe, Stable Housing & Flexible Emergency Housing

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. Housing support is often the number one need of victims in PA with requests ranging from emergency shelter to direct financial assistance to further housing stability. In a single 24-hour period in Pennsylvania, 166 requests from domestic violence victims for emergency shelter, hotels, emergency relocation, and other housing needs to PCADV programs were **unmet due to a lack of funding**. That's an average of 5,000 unmet service requests per month.

166

Unmet requests for housing in 1 day

Civil Legal Representation

Currently, Act 44 only provides enough funding for PCADV to support specific Civil Legal Representation (CLR) Projects for domestic violence victims in 22 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. **Additional funding is needed to address this large gap, where imperative civil legal representation is unavailable to victims in over two-thirds of the Commonwealth.** This gap is potentially lethal. Victims with legal representation are significantly more likely to obtain all appropriate court ordered provisions to ensure safety for themselves and their children.

45

PA Counties without CLR Projects

Economic Safety: Transportation, Childcare, & Durable Goods

Economic abuse occurs in 99% of domestic violence situations and economic independence is one of the best predictors of whether a victim will be able to stay away from their abuser. Flexible funding for programs to support victims' access to transportation, childcare, durable goods, and other necessities is incredibly limited. Last year, PCADV applied for Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) funding to support 30 domestic violence programs working to help victims achieve economic independence, but due to limited funding, only 16% of the demonstrated need was awarded.

"Survivors are not being served as well as we want them to be served."

Prevention

In 2022, Pennsylvania enacted Act 55, "It's On Us," revising Public School Code XX-G to require all institutions of higher education and private licensed schools to establish and maintain a memorandum of understanding with domestic violence programs but **did not allocate funding for domestic violence programs to provide this critical support.**

Additional Recommendations of FY23-24 State Budget

While these budget line-items are outside Act 44 (which is distributed by the Department of Human Services directly to PCADV and passed through to domestic violence programs), investments in these funding streams will also support domestic violence victims and enhance their safety.

- Allocate an additional \$750K for **"Sexual Assault Prevention"** through the Pennsylvania Department of Education to fund domestic and sexual violence programs' implementation of "It's On Us," Act 55 of 2022.
- Pass SB 532 to raise the **Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) funding cap**, which will support domestic violence programs working to help victims avoid homelessness and achieve economic independence in a way that meets their individual needs.
- Appropriate \$3M to **"Transfer to Crime Victim Services and Compensation Fund"** through the Executive Offices budget to offset the financial impact placed on victims by crime.

Please contact PCADV's policy director, Deanna Dyer, with any questions or for additional information.



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