

Investing in Domestic Violence Services in the FY24-25 PA State Budget



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 services to victims of domestic violence and their children in all 67 PA counties. PCADV and its programs rely on appropriations in the state budget allocated to the Department of Human Services through the domestic violence line item.

Last year, PCADV domestic violence programs

<p>Served over 82,000 adult and child victims of domestic violence</p>	<p>Provided over 338,000 hours of counseling to domestic violence victims</p>	<p>Answered over 100,000 domestic violence crisis hotline calls</p>
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Priority Need: Domestic Violence Line-Item 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. Increasing the domestic violence line item by \$8M in FY24-25 will begin to fill funding gaps paramount to ensuring victim safety.

Fiscal Year	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24	Gov. Budget	FY24-25 Ask
Domestic Violence Funding (in millions)	\$17.357	\$17.357	\$19.093	\$19.093	\$20.093	\$20.093	\$20.093	\$25.093	\$28.093

Domestic violence is a public health epidemic impacting 1 in 3 women, 1 in 4 men, and over half of LGBTQ individuals. According to Muhlenberg College's 2024 Pennsylvania Public Health Survey, 96% of Pennsylvanians consider domestic violence to be a crisis or a problem in our Commonwealth (including 95% of Democrats, 97% of Republicans, and 94% of Independents).

96%

of Pennsylvanians say domestic violence is a crisis or a problem

It is possible to prevent domestic violence, but none of us can do it alone. PCADV calls on legislators to come together and meaningfully invest in domestic violence intervention and prevention to build a Commonwealth where healthy relationships thrive and abusive ones don't.

Additional Recommendations of FY24-25 State Budget

In addition to increasing the domestic violence line item, investments in these funding streams will further support domestic violence victims and enhance their safety:

- Transfer a \$4M one-time infusion to the **"Crime Victim Assistance Fund"** to offset the historic federal funding deficit from the Victims of Crime Act that will impact domestic violence programs
- Increase the **Rape Crisis line item** in DHS's budget by \$5M
- Pass SB 670 to establish the "Survivor-centered, Accessible, Fair, Empowering" **(SAFE) Housing Trust Fund**
- Pass SB 532 to raise the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement **(PHARE) funding cap**
- Allocate \$1.75M for **"Sexual Assault Prevention"** through the PA Dept. of Education to fund domestic and sexual violence programs' implementation of **"It's On Us"**
- Transfer a \$5M one-time infusion to the **"Crime Victim Services and Compensation Fund"** to offset the historic federal funding deficit from the Victims of Crime Act that will impact direct victim compensation

PCADV

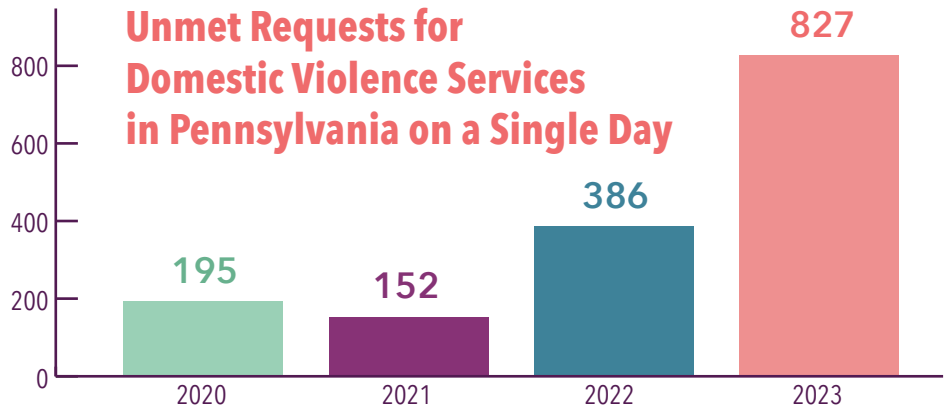
The Real Cost of Domestic Violence

Investing in survivor safety saves lives.

FY24-25 State Budget Unmet Needs

During a single-day in 2023, PCADV programs served over 3,000 victims, but over 800 service requests were **unmet because of a lack of financial resources**. The number of unmet requests doubled in 2023 compared to the previous year.

Flat funding domestic violence services would mean even more victims won't be able to receive life-saving services when they need them.



Safe, Stable Housing & Flexible Emergency Housing

The Violence Against Women Act findings indicate 92% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. In a single 24-hour period, 471 requests to PCADV programs from domestic violence victims for emergency shelter, hotels, emergency relocation, and other housing needs were unmet due to a lack of funding. That represents nearly a three-fold increase in the number of unmet housing requests from victims over the past year.

471
Unmet requests for housing in 1 day

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. Yet, funding to support victims' access to transportation, childcare, durable goods, and other necessities through Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) funding is capped too low.

Civil Legal Representation

Currently, specific Civil Legal Representation (CLR) Projects for domestic violence victims are 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

Medical Advocacy Direct Services

Throughout healthcare settings in Pennsylvania, specially trained domestic violence advocates provide domestic violence victims with life-saving counseling, support, and advocacy regarding the health, safety, and injuries resulting from violence. This is often a victim's only access point to an advocate, but more funding is needed to offer this service consistently.

Domestic Violence Prevention

PCADV programs currently receive no state funding to implement domestic violence prevention programming. With a state investment in DV prevention, people will be less likely to experience domestic violence in the first place.

Living Wages to Retain Skilled Program Staff

Over 800 advocates responded to PCADV's 2024 salary study which found most advocates (63%) are hourly employees and the overwhelming majority (87%) make less than \$25/hr. Because of these non-competitive wages, last year 431 domestic violence advocates left their positions resulting in a 14% vacancy rate at domestic violence programs.

431
Domestic violence advocate staff vacancies

"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."



Learn More
pcadv.org/real-cost

Questions? Contact PCADV's policy director, Deanna Dyer, at ddyer@pcadv.org or 717-545-6400x157