



Three Priorities for Action

1. Addressing the VOCA funding shortfall

2. Ensuring Justice for Victims

3. Protecting Children

Rates of violence in California are on the rise, causing increased demand for victim services and support for children and families statewide. The ability of California's 27 Family Justice Centers and their community partners to respond to the critical needs of victims of domestic violence – including child abuse, sexual assault, elder abuse, and trafficking – is in jeopardy due to a dramatic decline in federal funding under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).

CFJN joins the California VOCA Advocacy Alliance in calling for the legislature and Governor to step in. California must ensure that domestic violence service providers and other victim services will not experience steep across-the-board cuts to their funding that will harm survivors' ability to access the safety and healing they urgently need and deserve.

Rates of Violence are Rising

One in twenty Californians have experienced physical violence in the past year. One in two Californians have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime (*source: rates from UCSD 2023 CalVEX study*).

Child Abuse

6% ↑

441,114 children were reported with at least one allegation of maltreatment in 2022, a **6%** increase from 2021 and a **13%** increase from 2020 (*source: rates from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project*).

Elder/ Dependent Adult Abuse

24% ↑

Rates are rising. In 2022, there were **69,170** confirmed adult victims of maltreatment reflecting a **24%** increase since 2020 (*source: CA Dept. of Social Services-Statewide A.P.S.*).

Domestic Violence

13/Min

On a typical day, local domestic violence hotlines receive approximately **19,159** calls or 13 calls a minute (*source: National Coalition to End Domestic Violence – CA Fact Sheet*).

Human Trafficking

7% ↑

Calls to the national hotline have increased **7%** since 2019 (*source: National Human Trafficking Hotline*).

Gun-Related Violence

37% ↑

From 2019 to 2022, gun-related homicides and aggravated assaults increased by **37%** and **61%**, respectively. In 2022 robberies involving a firearm rose by **12.5%** from 2019 (*source: Public Policy Institute of CA*).

Address The VOCA Funding Shortfall To Ensure The Continuation Of Critical Crime Victim Assistance Programs



Issue

Funding for the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is in decline, jeopardizing a wide range of crime victim services and the ability to provide vital, life-saving services to crime victims in California, including survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and child abuse.

Established in 1984 with bipartisan support, VOCA authorizes federal financial assistance to states for the purpose of supporting eligible crime victim assistance programs impacting

For FY24 California will receive a 43% reduction in VOCA funding from last year, the lowest amount since 2014. This reduction leaves California's crime victim services program with a roughly \$200 million budget shortfall. As a result, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) is planning across-the-board grant reductions of 47% for crime victim services starting in July, and will also be reducing by half the number of grant awards issued for each competitive grant in the next grant cycle.

VOCA grants support almost all crime victim services, including:

- Domestic violence emergency shelters, crisis hotlines, transitional housing, and Housing First program
- Rape crisis centers and sexual assault response teams
- District Attorney Office Victim Witness programs
- Outreach and services to survivors from traditionally underserved communities
- Child advocacy centers serving child abuse victims
- Legal services for victims

These cuts would force Family Justice Centers throughout California and their partners to lay off staff and reduce vital services, such as critical trauma-informed support to victims and families, help with legal proceedings, restraining orders, and safe shelter.



Solutions

Budget Request: Support the \$103 Million VOCA backfill in the state budget to provide ongoing funding for Crime Victim Services. This request is an immediate solution to address the urgent need to sustain victims' services programs.

The budget request was led by Assemblymember Reyes with a bipartisan coalition of supporters. Senate and Assembly leadership has agreed to \$103 Million in the legislature budget proposal. We urge them to make this a key priority in final negotiations with the Governor.

AB 1956 (Reyes): **Crime Victim Services Stabilization Act**

To address immediate funding needs due to the VOCA reduction, this bill requires the state to provide funds if the federal contribution to victims' services programs declines more than 10% from one year to the next.

AB 2432 (Gabriel): **Crime Victim Services Funding**

This bill would establish a permanent funding source for victims' services programs in the State Treasury, the California Crime Victims Fund, with revenues from criminal fees assessed against corporations convicted of crimes.



Issue

In the United States, nearly half of all female and one-tenth of male homicide victims are killed by intimate partners. Experts estimate approximately 800-1,200 hidden homicides occur each year, often referred to as staged crime scenes. The vast majority of these cases involve murdered women, with no accountability for their killers. Currently, only a legal heir or their representative has access to photographic records taken during a death investigation and other family members are left without access even when the heir is the potential perpetrator.



Solution

SB 989 (Ashby): **Justice for Victims Act**

This bill strengthens investigation protocols, adding any death with a history of domestic violence as a suspicious death case and expands the right to request an autopsy to family members, allows coroners to inquire into deaths they deem suspicious, and designates such deaths as suspicious until properly investigated.



Issue

Many victims of interpersonal violence report tech-based abuse, including, but not limited to, intimidation and threats, harassment, deletion of files, photos, and critical information stored in their phones, and tracking of victims' locations. Perpetrators leverage smartphone applications to remotely control everyday objects to exert control over, monitor, and abuse their victims.



Solution

SB 1000 (Ashby): **Connected Devices: Device Protection Requests**

This bill will put an appropriate level of responsibility on service providers to help stem tech-based abuse of domestic violence victims by requiring, for example, an account manager to deny a person [abuser] access to a connected device commencing no later than two days after a device protection request is submitted to the account manager.



Issue

A parent's illegal access to firearms and ammunition can be an immediate risk of harm to children in contentious child custody cases



Solution

AB 3072 (Petrie-Norris): Child protections

Requires family court judges to consider alternatives when children are in immediate danger. The bill also requires judges to consider a parent's access to illegal firearms and ammunition when determining if there is a showing of immediate harm to the child.



Issue

The United States considers marriage under the age of 18 to be a human rights abuse, yet children in California are still victims of forced child marriage. It is estimated that more than 8,700 children were married in 2021. California's marriage age is 18, but laws on the books allow a parent to "consent" to the marriage of their child at any age with judicial approval, and the court may enter a child of any age into marriage if the child does not have a parent capable of "consenting" to the marriage. Additionally, a child-marriage license is a valid defense to statutory rape charges, granting sexual predators an incentive to force a child to wed.



Solution

AB 2924 (Petrie-Norris): End child marriage

This bill would repeal the authorization for a person under 18 years of age to be issued a marriage license or to establish a domestic partnership, thereby prohibiting a person under 18 years of age from being issued a marriage license or from establishing a domestic partnership.