

An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes

VOCA Funding Reductions Put Victims' Services at Risk

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) has, since 1984, provided funding for core services to victims of violent crimes. From civil and criminal legal services to advocacy and financial support, this funding is critical to helping victims participate in the justice process, get their lives back on track after disruption and trauma, and heal from the hurt and pain of their experiences.

In fiscal year 2025-2026, shortfalls in the federal Victims of Crime Fund will result in up to 62% reduction to currently funded services in Maine. This comes after five years of flat funding. If not addressed, the resulting cuts will devastate services that victims count on to support them through an already difficult time.

“Over 12,000 people experiencing domestic abuse rely on these services, including 24-hour support, legal advocacy to obtain protection orders, advocacy within systems to ensure access to critical resources & individualized strategizing to keep themselves and their children safe.”

– Francine Garland Stark, Executive Director
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence



What is at Stake?

In the past year, VOCA funds supported almost 50,000 social, legal, and other services for survivors.

Civil Legal
Services
for Victims
of Abuse

Child
Sexual Abuse
Forensic
Interviews

Helpline
Advocacy
& Response
Services

Housing for
Elder Abuse
Victims

Supports
for Human
Trafficking
Survivors

Homicide
Victim Witness
Advocacy

Court &
Hospital Visit
Support

... and
much
more.

Impacted Programming

Cuts Could Eliminate:

Community-based Domestic Violence Services

Community-based Sexual Assault Services

Civil Legal Representation

Government-based Victim Witness Advocates

Court-Appointed Special Advocates for Children

Victim Services for Immigrants and Refugees

Housing & Support for Elder Abuse Victims

Training & Administration

Pine Tree Legal Assistance relies on VOCA funding for approximately half of the legal team representing survivors in civil legal cases, prioritizing child victims of sexual assault and their non-offending caregivers – the most challenging cases for parents and caregivers to navigate without legal representation.

VOCA Funding Cuts Threaten Victims' Services.



– Tom Fritzsche, Executive Director
Pine Tree Legal Assistance

Victim Services Are Crime Prevention Services

When people harmed by crime have what they need and can heal from their experience, they are less vulnerable to future victimization and less likely to cause harm to others.

Maine Must Fill This Gap

Cuts in VOCA funding at a time when demand for services are increasing will result in drastic reductions in available services unless the policymakers act now to fill these gaps both next year and into the future.

At least 18 other states have already acted, including Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

VOCA helps ensure that when crime victims are involved in criminal cases, they don't walk alone. Victim Witness Advocates serve as guides through every step of the process, keeping victims up to date on court hearings and case decisions and providing a conduit to prosecutors and the court.



– Cara Cookson, Director of Victim Services
Maine Office of the Attorney General