

Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services: **FY27 Budget Narrative**

Mission: Established under 13 VSA §5361, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (CCVS) offers support, advocacy and services for those impacted by crime, and works to hold those who have caused harm responsible.

Activities and programs we are funding:

Per Vermont statute, CCVS: promotes the rights and needs of crime victims statewide; develops, strengthens and coordinates programs serving victims; administers state and federal grant funds for victim services; oversees the State of Vermont's Victims Compensation Program and Restitution Unit; and serves as a clearinghouse for information regarding victimization.

Through State General and Special Funds, CCVS supports: the Victims Compensation Program and the Vermont Restitution Unit, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and its 14 member programs, Supervised Visitation, domestic/sexual violence prosecutors,

CCVS uses federal funds to support the agency itself along with the programming noted above. Additionally, federal funds are used to support Vermont's Legal Partnership for Crime Victims, Restorative Justice Programming, Human Trafficking case managers, the Vermont Judiciary, Attorney General's Office and the Forensic Nursing Program, among others. Federal funding supports grants to multiple programs that assist underserved populations.

Who do we serve:

CCVS provides assistance to and supports services for Vermonters who are victims of crime. Most services that exist are not dependent upon the existence of a conviction for a crime.

How do our programs work:

CCVS' Victims Compensation Program works directly with victims, advocates and service providers to make direct payments to eligible victims for certain crime-related losses and expenses. The Program conducts frequent trainings for our partners and outreach events to communities.

The State of Vermont Restitution Unit is operated by CCVS, and the Unit works directly with offenders, victims, advocates, corrections, diversion and the judiciary to ensure efficient and timely collection and payment of restitution to victims as ordered by a court. Unit staff provide regular training for advocates, diversion, probation/parole and court staff.



CCVS' Grants Program administers over 200 individual subgrants to over 65 subgrantees. CCVS staff work with subgrantees to identify programming needs and gaps, and provides technical assistance with budget development, narratives and reporting. Staff conduct site visits, review programmatic and financial data for compliance, and report regularly to federal and state grantors and funders. Grant Program staff also conduct trainings, focus groups, statewide strategic planning and facilitate regular meetings with subgrantees. Our grants management system, GEARS, was customized by our Program Staff and requires regular maintenance and updates.

Changes to ensure more efficient and effective service delivery:

The Victims Compensation program recently received a federal VOCA Technology grant in the amount of \$219K to enhance its current Victim Claims system (CCVC). Our Restitution Unit strives to find more effect ways to utilize IT to increase efficiency, improve accessibility and enable a timely response that is still victim-centered, compassionate, and responsive. CCVS's grants department helped develop and implement the IGX GEARS grants management system. CCVS along with two other State of Vermont agencies use GEARS. CCVS continues to be the only agency that can upload AP vouchers directly to the SOV VISION system, providing payments more efficiently and timely. We anticipate the utilization of these systems will also continue to save money in the future.

New Initiatives:

In this budget year CCVS is unable to propose new initiatives, rather we are focused on trying to fill the funding gaps due to the very significant constraints on our budget and the budgets of our 60 plus subgrantees. Currently, our priority is avoiding any programming cuts to our subgrantees that rely on CCVS funding to provide critical victim services.

Programs/Issues posing most significant challenges:

- Changing complexion of crime and victimization
 - Increase in violent crime/homicides in Vermont
 - Victims are presenting for support with more complex needs, who in addition to significant trauma, frequently experience mental health, substance misuse, and housing challenges, among others.
- Sustainable and sufficient funding for CCVS and Vermont victim services, which rely heavily upon uncertain and declining revenue sources. As noted above, while caseloads have increased, and victims are presented with increasingly more complex needs, providers and advocates continue to work in positions that have been level-funded for over a decade; funding does not exist to provide cost of living increases nor to add additional positions.

CCVS bears the same burden as other state agencies relative to increases in health insurance and other benefits and the costs of necessary IT systems. Unfortunately, these costs are proportionally greater to a small agency such as CCVS, which must "go it alone" as it cannot participate in existing plans established for state employees.

What have we done to address challenges:

- Level-funded programs for 15 years to avoid “cuts”
 - Utilized vacancy savings and consolidated office space
 - Adopted IT solutions that promise to improve efficiency and lower costs long term
 - Requested a JFO study of our declining revenues and worked with the Legislature to implement some recommendations
 - Successfully advocated for state positions that C CVS had supported with Special or Federal Funds to shift to General Funds.
 - Obtained funding for an additional grants position at C CVS
 - Manage Federal Funds in a manner that utilizes multiple funding years whenever possible.
- Financial and grant administration by our 60 plus subgrantees requires an enormous amount of training and technical assistance from the Center, some of which is provided without funding for administrative support. **C CVS currently administers over \$2M in state grant funds with no financial support for the work required.**

What have we done to address challenges:

Our Grants Department developed a financial training course for all our subgrantees; that was rolled out in May of 2025. Additionally, C CVS has customized, established and trained our subgrantees on the utilization of GEARS, an online grants management system. C CVS staff support is ongoing for subgrantees to utilize this system, especially due to frequent turnover in positions within the victim service programs.

Significant Financial Changes:

As a state of Vermont agency, C CVS is unique as we primarily rely upon revenues into 3 different special funds from fines and fees to support our organizational budget. The revenues into these funds have had significant decreases, from 33% to as much as 47% over in the past few years. C CVS receives federal funds which are mostly pass-through grants to victim services throughout Vermont; a small percentage of funding is retained to support grant-related administrative costs. In recent years federal funds have been uncertain and particularly volatile, which creates challenges to both the number and amount of victim service grants that can be supported and the amount of administrative funds necessary to administer those grants. The available funding streams operate on different fiscal years. All these factors make building a budget difficult, often relying on projections and forecasting without knowing what will change during the fiscal year, and knowing that programs rely on the funding that C CVS provides to keep their doors open.

Loss of Federal Funds for Programming:

Our sources of federal funding are detailed in the dedicated section below. There are two significant changes we will highlight here.

- 1) The largest victim services grant Vermont receives is the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant, this notably is also the most uncertain and volatile federal grant. In 2018 it was over \$6.7M, in SFY26, it is \$2.8M, this is an increase from \$1.9 in SFY26. C CVS continually monitors VOCA funding and has been able to manage funding at current levels.
- 2) Like so many other SOV agencies C CVS lost American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) FVPSA funding on September 30, 2025, totaling \$1.8M.

Loss of State Special Funds for Programming:

CCVS administers 3 Special Funds that are supported by a surcharge on civil violations and criminal convictions, per 13 VSA §7282. This has been a declining revenue source for well over a decade.

There are two identified primary factors for this decrease. The first relates to changed behavior among law enforcement officers. The issuance of traffic tickets has declined steadily over the past decade-plus, as staff shortages and the rise in crime have caused changes in practice and priority. The other primary factor has been criminal justice reforms that have resulted in changes such as decriminalization of acts or increased diversion from the criminal justice system.

Victims Compensation Special Fund (Compensation) 13 VSA §5359

The Compensation Fund provides financial assistance to victims that have experienced a financial loss as a direct result of a crime, to include medical, loss of wages, funeral, counseling, housing and relocation, sexual assault mental and health services, crime scene clean up, and others. The Fund has experienced a 47% decline in revenues over the past five years and is **currently projected to have a deficit in SFY 26 in the amount of \$509K.**

Crime Victims Restitution Special Fund (Restitution) 13 VSA §5363

The Restitution Fund aims to address the financial loss and hardship caused to victims of crime. The Fund provides advancements to individuals for crime-related losses ordered by a court and supports the operation of the Unit. The Unit collects restitution from offenders on behalf of their victims and enforces outstanding orders. The Fund has experienced a 33% decrease in revenues over the past five years and is **currently projected to have a deficit in SFY 26 in the amount of \$423K.**

Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund (DV/SV) 13 VSA §5360

The DV/SV Fund provides funding for programs that address domestic and sexual violence and stalking. Funding is passed through CCVS to support the Network and its 14 member programs, the Domestic Violence Council Coordinator, and The Pride Center of Vermont. In addition to the surcharge, this Fund also relies on marriage license fees, as established under 32 VSA §1712(1). The Fund has experienced a decline in revenues and is **currently projected to have a deficit in SFY 26 in the amount of \$343K.**

Source of Federal Funding:

Approximately half of the funding CCVS receives and administrators are federal grants. The current grants and funding amounts are as follows:

Services Training Officers and Prosecutors (STOP) \$948,675, STOP supports communities in their efforts to develop and strengthen effective responses to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.

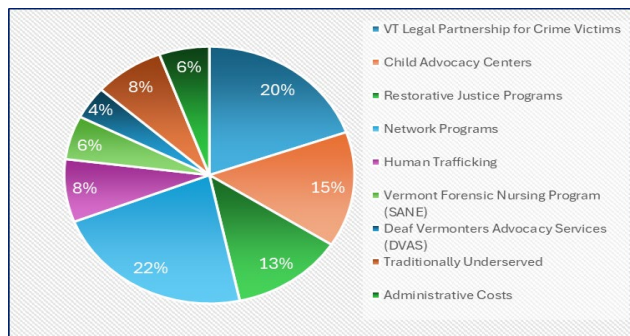
Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) \$816,301, supports emergency shelters, and domestic violence programs throughout Vermont.

Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) \$772,482 supports Vermont's two stand-alone rape crisis centers to serve victims of sexual assault with legal advocacy, crisis intervention, hospital/clinic/other medical response, case management and 24/7 hot line.

Rural Grant Program \$316,667 Provides funding and support to children and families who live in isolation and whose lives have been impacted by violence.

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) \$2,841,916 In SFY27, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant increased from \$1.9M to \$2.8M to Vermont.

This is the largest grant that CCVS receives, supporting 46 programs as follows:



Date Collection and Performance Measures:

The Victims Compensation Program collects data on the number of claims, types of crimes, and the amount of money paid by case type and by expense/loss; the collection of demographic data is also attempted. This information is reported to our Board, established under 13 VSA §5352, monthly; our funders also receive this data.

The Restitution Unit collects data on the number of victims paid, the amounts paid, and the number of individuals versus businesses reimbursed. The Unit also tracks the number of restitution orders issued by county and has established monthly benchmarks for the number of offender contacts that must be made and the amount of restitution collected. This data is shared with the CCVS Board and with the state of Vermont.

In SFY 26, the Center for Crime Victim Services (CCVS) distributed \$8,576,370 in federal and state grant funds, to 60 agencies in Vermont that provide core services for crime victims. Each funding stream has unique, complex and lengthy performance measures that are collected either annually, semi-annually or quarterly, on multiple reporting platforms with different data sets. These platforms all collect information on demographics and types of victimization and services offered. Additionally, some funding streams expect more specific reporting on data points tailored toward the purpose of the grant.

Support Requested:

The Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services is seeking an additional \$145,357.43 in General Funds for SFY27:

- \$ 49,502.73, representing a 3% increase in our base GF appropriation; this is included in the Administration's proposed budget.
- An additional \$95,854.70 in GF dollars to support its administration of State General Funds to victim services programs.