

NYSCADV's FY'24-25 Budget Priorities

- 1. Accept the Governor's \$120 million earmark in the ATL Budget for OVS (pages 1019-1020) and the \$14.4 million transfer of general funds into the Criminal Justice Improvement Act (CJIA) (PPGG Part X, page 156) to cover significant cuts to non-profit victim assistance providers.** Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding enables hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to access services, including shelter, housing, legal services, counseling and more. New York's federal VOCA grant has declined \$121.6 million in the past five years, losing 61% of its value. Prior state appropriations covered only 23% of the shortfall. Without this funding, catastrophic cuts to victim services will occur, leaving crime victims nowhere to turn.
- 2. Stabilize the DV sector's diminishing workforce by giving all staff at OCFS-licensed and approved nonprofit DV programs a cost-of-living salary adjustment.** New York State relies on nonprofit DV agencies to provide critical services to families experiencing domestic violence. The work can be grueling and requires specialized training. New York must ensure this essential workforce is paid living wages. But many DV advocates are not. In fact, they have never received a COLA, nor have they received bonuses or wage increases that other human services workers have. This has had a disastrous impact on the ability of DV programs to retain and recruit employees. We urge the Legislature to incorporate S7793/A8437, which would ensure DV advocates receive a COLA, into the FY'25 budget.
- 3. Accept a \$21 million increase to counties for adult protective services and emergency shelter for DV survivors (ATL Budget for OCFS, pages 333-334).** OCFS data demonstrate that requests for DV services are increasing. In fact, New York State continues to have the highest demand for DV services in the country. Yet state funding for adult protective and domestic violence services has been level funded for at least the last 15 years. We urge the Legislature to accept the Governor's \$21 million increase in this critical appropriation.
- 4. Accept a \$5 million appropriation (ATL Budget for OPDV, page 917) to expand the Survivors Access Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Fund.** Personal safety and economic security are inextricably linked for victims of DV. In fact, for many, economic instability is a significant reason for staying in or returning to an abusive relationship. The final FY'24 budget included \$5 million in DV Flexible Funding Assistance that permits DV programs to provide direct financial assistance to DV survivors. The FY'25 Executive Budget includes another \$5 million to continue this critical program. We urge the Legislature to accept this add.
- 5. Accept a \$24.5 million transfer of general funds into the CJIA (PPGG Part X, page 156) to cover an anticipated increase in victim compensation applications.** The Fair Access to Victim Compensation law (Chapter 695 of Laws of 2023) permits crime victims to have victim service providers, rather than law enforcement, support their application for victim compensation. To ensure all eligible crime victims can obtain assistance when needed, the Executive Budget includes a \$38.9 transfer of general funds to OVS' CJIA, which includes \$24.5 million to implement the new law. NYSCADV urges the Legislature to accept this critical appropriation.

Dated February 16, 2024