

**SAMPLE LETTER FOR LEGISLATORS**

[DATE]

The Honorable [Legislator’s full name]

[Street Address]

Albany, NY [ZIP]

**Re: New York State Budget FY ’24–‘25**

Dear [Assembly Member/Senator + last name],

I am writing to you today as a/an [advocate, program director, executive director, etc.] at [your organization].

Thousands of domestic violence (DV) victims rely on the care of agencies like [your organization] each year. In fact, New York State has the highest demand for DV services in the country. However, we do not receive the funding we need to provide survivor-centered, trauma-informed services for victims. **We have faced years of cuts or flat funding with increasing administrative burdens, and DV staff have historically been left out of cost-of-living salary adjustments aimed at the nonprofit human services sector.**

As a result, programs like mine have had to lay off staff, cut programming and obtain interest-bearing loans or lines of credit just to have enough revenue to keep our doors open. Hundreds of staff have left positions at our programs for better paying positions elsewhere. **The result: we are in an unsustainable funding and staffing crisis.**

I urge you to support the needs of DV survivors and their families, as well as the not-for-profit and community-based advocacy organizations that support them, by including the following recommendations in your chamber’s one-house budget bills:

1. Three earmarks totaling $134.4 million to prevent significant Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) cuts to non-profit victim assistance providers;
2. Legislation that includes residential and non-residential DV services and OVS-licensed crime victim service programs in the group of human services workers that receives cost-of-living salary adjustments (see S7793A/A8437A);
3. A $21 million increase in the set aside for state reimbursement to counties for adult protective services and emergency shelter for DV survivors;
4. A $5 million appropriation to expand the Survivors Access Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Fund; and,
5. A $24.5 million investment into the Criminal Justice Improvement Act to cover an anticipated increase in victim compensation applications following the passage of last year’s Fair Access to Victim Compensation legislation.

More information about these requests is available on the accompanying document. Please contact me at [phone number or email], or Joan Gerhardt, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, at jgerhardt@nyscadv.org, with questions.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Your name and title]