

An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of Crimes (LD 2084)

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 2025, shortfalls in the federal Victims of Crime Fund will result in a 62% (\$5.8 million) 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 & their children safe.

Francine 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.

VOCA Funding Pays For...

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 would eliminate

Community-based Domestic Violence Services	\$2,882,595 per year
Community-based Sexual Assault Services	\$1,056,872 per year
Civil Legal Representation	\$762,216 per year
Government-based Victim Witness Advocates	\$544,446 per year
Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children	\$214,121 per year
Victim Services for Immigrants & Refugees	\$138,173 per year
Housing & Support for Elder Abuse Victims	\$50,009 per year
Training & Administration	\$117,990 per year

Total Cuts of: \$5,766,422 next year

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.

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 Legislature acts 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.

