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Micaela Deming, Policy Director  
Ohio Domestic Violence Network  
Senate Finance Committee  
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Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Micaela Deming and I am the Policy Director and Staff Attorney of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network. The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) represents 75 local domestic violence organizations across the state. ODVN appreciates the opportunity to provide interested testimony regarding the needs of these survivors and the programs that serve them. We need an increase in the domestic violence services line item from \$1 million to \$5 million per year.

We are incredibly grateful to the House which voted to increase the annual amount from \$1 million to \$2.5 million. That will certainly help survivors, but it is simply not enough.

The need for emergency shelter and support services for Ohio families struggling with domestic violence is greater now than ever before. In the past five years, 23 children were killed by domestic violence abusers, and seven law enforcement officers died responding to domestic violence incidents. Domestic violence fatalities in Ohio were up by 35% from July 2019 through June 2020, and preliminary [data](#) shows that domestic violence homicides are on the rise in some U.S. cities.

Many of Ohio's domestic violence programs are responding to a spike in the number of families seeking help. The number of calls to hotlines nearly tripled at some programs in the last year, and the average crisis call took more than twice as long to handle, according to a survey conducted in January 2021.<sup>1</sup> Programs reported an increase in the severity and lethality of the abuse described by survivors seeking help, including an alarming increase in strangulation reports. Families also are staying longer in shelter.

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network's 75 member programs served more than 82,000 survivors including nearly 12,500 children in 2019. They answered 97,667 crisis calls and sheltered 9,045 victims. Victims received counseling, court advocacy, help obtaining a protective order, or support while they prosecuted their abusers. With assistance from advocates, many families found safe, decent housing and began the process of rebuilding their lives.

For some perspective, according to the 2020 National Network to End Domestic Violence 24-hour census survey, in a single day in September 2020, our programs served 2,650 domestic violence

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<sup>1</sup> The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) surveyed its 75 member programs from January 8 to 25, 2021, about the effects of the pandemic on domestic violence prevalence. The survey also measured the effects of budget cuts in 2019 and 2020. A total of 63 programs responded, an 84% response rate.

survivors. They answered 676 crisis calls – that averages over 28 crisis calls per hour. Unfortunately, Ohio's programs turned away 252 victims – about 10% of requests made that day – because they didn't have enough room or resources to serve them.

Funding domestic violence programming is a good investment in Ohio's communities. One in four children in Ohio is exposed to domestic violence. By the time a child exposed to domestic violence reaches the age of 64, the cost to the economy is \$50,500 in increased health care and other costs and productivity losses, according to [The HealthPath Foundation of Ohio](#). As measured by one of our shelters, [every \\$1 spent on services saves the community \\$65.43 in social costs](#) avoided in police enforcement, lost work productivity, the justice system, and mental health services for adults and children served. Child protective services, law enforcement, prosecutors, and medical and mental health providers all rely on domestic violence programs to provide support and services to families experiencing domestic violence. Where do all of those providers send survivors to get safe and keep their children safe? Our shelters. Without proper funding for domestic violence programs, those same families and service providers lose a necessary partner to keep families safe.

Last fall Ohio's programs cut staff and services after crippling reductions to their most important federal funding source, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program. Ohio's VOCA grants to domestic violence programs were cut by \$7.7 million. During the last two years, most grants were cut by 40%. The Attorney General's Office has told us to anticipate cuts of 34% during the upcoming fall funding round. Our programs are being forced to lay off front-line staff, eliminate life-saving services, and cut essential community programming.

In 2019, Ohio became one of 33 states that provide state support for their programs. [Among the 33 states that provide state support for domestic violence services, Ohio's support is the lowest on a per capita basis – only 9 cents.](#) Even when increased to the amount in the House bill Ohio still comes in second to last, ahead of only Tennessee, at 43 cents per capita. Compare that to our surrounding states, \$1 in Michigan, \$1.40 in West Virginia, \$1.49 in Pennsylvania and \$1.50 in Kentucky.

The \$1 million annual allocation in the state budget provided grants of \$17,800 to 47 residential programs that year and \$12,000 grants to 69 programs in 2020. The grants softened the blows of the VOCA cuts and helped programs fund basic services: repairs to vehicles and buildings, furniture and appliances, children's items, improving disability accommodations, food, and supporting staff pay. "The State of Ohio DV line item provides hope to local agencies as they realize state legislators do recognize the negative consequences of not addressing domestic violence on the local level," said the director of a rural program, who had to cut two staff positions after the VOCA cut. The program now has a skeleton crew of three and is in danger of closing.

Domestic violence programs have stood strong during the pandemic, providing essential services while meeting social distancing requirements, placing survivors with health needs in hotels, and dealing with staff reductions. Please support our ask for an increase in the domestic violence survivor services line item from \$2 million to \$10 million to provide a stable funding source for local domestic violence programs. Adult and child domestic violence victims depend on our emergency shelters and life-saving services when they are in crisis. Your communities are relying on your support to keep families safe.



## Ohio Domestic Violence Programs Respectfully Request Funding Increase

### 1. Request

- a. The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is requesting a \$5M annual, \$10M total allocation to the Domestic Violence Programs line item (055504) in the FY 2022-2023 budget to sustain programs, address crippling federal cuts and serve more survivors seeking help.

### 2. Services

- a. ODVN has 75 programs that served more than 82,000 survivors including nearly 12,500 children in 2019.
- b. Programs answered 97,667 crisis calls and provided shelter to 9,045 victims.
- c. Victims received counseling, court advocacy, help obtaining a protection order, support while prosecuting their abuser, housing assistance and other services to help rebuild their lives.

### 3. How Past Budget Allocation was Used

- a. In 2019, Ohio became one of at least 33 states to provide state support for their programs, allocating \$1M per year, \$2M total, to the newly created Domestic Violence Programs Fund administered by the Attorney General's Office.
- b. The line item provided grants of \$17,800 to 47 residential programs in 2019 and \$12,000 grants to 69 programs in 2020.
- c. Most of those funds were used for shelter operations: repairs to vehicles and buildings, food, furniture and appliances, children's items, staff salaries and other essential services.

### 4. Why We Need an Increase

- a. Ohio's programs turn victims and their children away every day because they don't have the room or resources to serve them. Ohio's residential programs served 2,640 victims and turned away 263 victims in a single day.<sup>1</sup>
- b. The number of families needing help has increased dramatically in the last year: more than 50% of ODVN programs reported an increase in survivors seeking shelter, calls to the hotline or other

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<sup>1</sup>National Network to End Domestic Violence, (2019) 24-hour census conducted Sept. 12, 2019. All of Ohio's 57 residential programs participated in the annual survey.

requests for services in 2020 compared to 2019. Some programs are experiencing nearly triple the number of victims needing services.<sup>2</sup>

- c. 58% of programs noted an increase in the severity of violence and injuries reported, including an alarming increase in strangulation.
- d. Domestic violence fatalities in Ohio were up by 35% from July 2019 through June 2020<sup>3</sup> and preliminary data shows that domestic violence homicides continue to rise around the country.
- e. One in four children in Ohio is exposed to domestic violence. A record number of children were served in one shelter in 2020.
- f. Ohio's surrounding states provide more support on a per capita basis - Ohio is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populated state, but Kentucky provides \$6.7 million, Pennsylvania, more than \$16 million, and West Virginia, \$2.5 million.
  - I. Among the 33 states that provide state support for domestic violence services, Ohio's support is the lowest on a per capita basis.
  - II. Among our surrounding states, Ohio spends 9 cents per capita, compared to \$1 in Michigan, \$1.40 in West Virginia, \$1.49 in Pennsylvania and \$1.50 in Kentucky.
- g. Ohio's Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) allocation was slashed in 2020, and grants to domestic violence programs were cut by \$7.7 million.
  - I. In total, program grants were cut by nearly 40% in 2019 and 2020. The Attorney General's Office has warned that additional cuts of up to 30% are expected in 2021.

## 5. What the Increase Will Do

- a. Ensure resources are available to reduce the number of victims who are turned away.
- b. Re-hire front-line staff. More than 70% of Ohio's programs have been forced to reduce staff or eliminate positions in the past year. More will be forced to lay-off staff or close when the third VOCA cut in three years occurs in October.
- c. Restore eliminated life-saving services like reopening closed program locations, counseling, staff available for after-hours emergencies, and even more basic needs like obtaining identification documents needed to file for a protection order, register children for school, or start a new job.
- d. Restore essential community programming like trauma counseling and court advocacy.

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<sup>2</sup> The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) surveyed its 75 member programs from January 8 to 27, 2021, about the prevalence of domestic violence during the pandemic. The survey also measured the effects of budget cuts in 2019 and 2020. A total of 71 programs responded, a 94% response rate.

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Domestic Violence Network (2020), *Ohio Domestic Violence Fatalities*, annual count of fatalities between July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020, compiled by ODVN staff from media reports and member program staff. Fatalities included targeted victims, perpetrators, and others at incidents involving intimate partner relationships.



## Mission

The **Ohio Domestic Violence Network** advances the principle that all people have the right to an oppression and violence-free life; fosters changes in our economic, social and political systems and brings leadership, expertise and best practices to community programs.

## About ODNV

ODNV is a non-profit, membership organization in Columbus, Ohio. ODNV is a network of **75 local domestic violence programs** that serve all 88 Ohio counties. ODNV advocates for **survivors** and their **children**.



Relocation program helped **572 survivors** and **673 children** move into safe homes with their families in 2020.

Legal assistance program helped **more than 1,000** survivors annually with a wide range of legal services to help them and their children build safer lives.



ODNV provides the only comprehensive Training Institute in Ohio for front-line advocates who provide services to domestic violence survivors. A total of **13,199 people** received training in 2020.

**Prevention** programs including the Ohio Men's Action Network (OHMAN) and The New Playbook, OHMAN's evidence-informed signature training, work to transform individuals and communities to bring and end to DV.

ODNV is a lead partner in Linking Systems of Care for Ohio's Youth federal demonstration project, a collaborative effort to improve responses to **Ohio's youngest victims of traumatic crimes**. ODNV and the Ohio Attorney General's Office are working with more than 75 child-serving organizations and state agencies on the \$2.5 million project.

## 2019 Member Services Provided



More than  
**82,492**  
survivors served including  
**12,450** children

## Why we need to end Domestic Violence

### 109 Ohio Fatalities

due to domestic violence

In FY2020, **109 people died in 77 cases of domestic violence**, a 35% increase over 2019. The youngest victim was 2 years old.

### Ohio DV Programs

## One Day Snap Shot

Ohio's programs provided these services during the National Census of Domestic Violence Services conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence on Sept. 10, 2020.

Served **2,650 victims** with shelter or services, including counseling, legal advocacy and support groups.

Answered **676 crisis calls**—an average of 28 crisis calls per hour.

**252 victims could NOT be served because programs lacked the resources.** Unmet requests, 57% of which were for housing, included shelter, transportation, childcare, legal representation and more.



**9,045**  
survivors sheltered including  
**3,862** children

### Contact

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# Ohio Domestic Violence Network

## Domestic Violence Programs



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# Ohio Domestic Violence Fatalities

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

In an attempt to better understand the prevalence and circumstances of domestic violence fatalities in Ohio, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network reviewed media reports identified by staff members or local member programs. Fatalities included targeted victims, perpetrators, and others at incidents involving intimate partner relationships.

**38% OF CASES INVOLVED SUICIDE**



THERE WERE **71** MALE PERPETRATORS AND **7** FEMALE PERPETRATORS. IN ONE CASE THERE WERE 2 PERPETRATORS.

**1 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER** WAS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY BY A BATTERER

**109 FATALITIES IN 77 CASES**  
71 DECEASED VICTIMS AND 38 DECEASED PERPETRATORS  
(55 FEMALE FATALITIES; 54 MALE FATALITIES)

**4 YOUNG VICTIMS WERE KILLED**, INCLUDING TWO 2-YEAR-OLD GIRLS, A SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY, AND A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL

**AT LEAST 20** PERPETRATORS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PRIOR TO THE FATAL INCIDENT

**8 CASES** REQUIRED SWAT OR A STRATEGIC RESPONSE TEAM ACTION FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT



IN **22** CASES, THERE WAS BOTH A HOMICIDE AND A SUICIDE

THE OLDEST VICTIM WAS AN **82-YEAR-OLD MAN**

IN AT LEAST **27%** OF FATALITY CASES, THE VICTIM OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE HAD ENDED THE RELATIONSHIP OR WAS IN THE PROCESS OF ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP

**18% OF CASES INVOLVED CHILDREN AT THE SCENE**



**88 PEOPLE** WERE KILLED OR INJURED BY GUNS

IN AT LEAST **70% OF FATALITIES**, THE DECEASED WERE KILLED BY GUNS, EXCLUDING SHOOTINGS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

# 77 CASES REVIEWED

## MULTIPLE FATALITIES

**27** CASES

2 cases involved 4 fatalities each

## ABDUCTIONS

**5** CASES

1 case resulted in an amber alert

## 3RD PARTY FATALITIES

**9** CASES

13 secondary victims died in IPV-related fatalities

## PERPETRATOR KILLED BY 3RD PARTY

**8** CASES

5 perpetrators were killed by law enforcement

## ROAD RAGE

Domestic violence is not just behind closed doors. Several incidents occurred on public roadways. Perpetrators are frequently known to extend their menacing behavior in traffic, driving recklessly, weaponizing vehicles as a tool of their abuse.

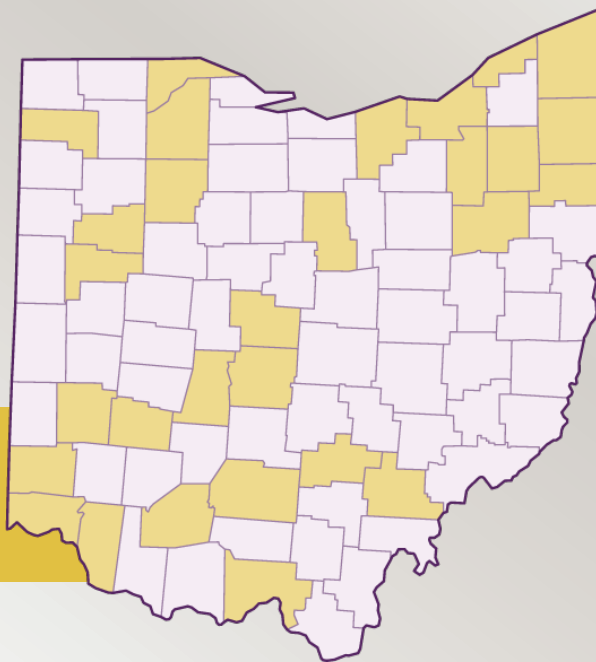
One victim was killed when her abuser veered into a tree as he was being pursued by police. Another threw his partner out on the freeway, resulting in her death, and a third tried to take over the steering wheel, exited the car, and apparently walked into traffic, resulting in his death. One abuser abducted his estranged wife, and as law enforcement followed the truck, he swerved, pulled into a driveway, and fired two fatal shots, ending her life and his.

Sadly, one law enforcement officer in a different incident lost her life when she was intentionally rammed by an abuser as she tried to aid in his apprehension.

## THE WORDS OF A SURVIVOR

An Auglaize woman who survived an attempted homicide by defending her life shared these words: *"In my heart, this was the person that I chose to be with. I cared about him. I wanted to make things better. I wanted to fix us. I want people to understand you have every right to step away from someone. It's better to do it now when things are calm or when things are in an area where you can look at each other and say this isn't working, instead of fearing for everything."*

**29 counties** had fatal incidents of domestic violence



**Remember these losses, strive to understand the issue, and support advances toward long-term solutions.**

ODVN will be working with legislators, domestic violence programs, public officials, and others to design more effective responses that can prevent these tragedies.