

Government Funding of Domestic Violence Services in Utah

Executive Summary

PURPOSE

This work group was assembled to identify all sources of government funding, federal and state that are allocated for domestic violence services in Utah. It was charged with identifying barriers to effectively using that funding, and develop recommendations for improvement. It also was charged with developing a collaborative funding plan to determine the future of this funding.

OUTCOMES

- Identified funding sources include the following federal grants: Victims Of Crime Act grant (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act grant (VAWA), Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grant, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds, and Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funding. State funding identified are state general funds passed through DHS/DCFS, and state restricted general funds.
- Given the number of funding sources and agencies administering them the group evaluated possible redundancies in the process. While federal law requires separate applications and outcome reports for each grant, there were minimal reporting items that overlapped. It was determined that a single, statewide database for the shelter programs from which the required data elements could be mined would be very beneficial and reduce administrative burden on the programs.
- VOCA and VAWA are administered by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC); FVPSA, state general funds and state restricted general funds are administered by the Department of Human Services / DCFS; HUD and TANF are administered by the Department of Workforce Services.
- DCFS in conjunction with OVC authorized the Social Research Institute to conduct a state wide needs assessment. Concurrently, UDVC authorized the University Of Utah College Of Social Work to conduct another. The studies utilized different methodologies and subjects, however produced very similar outcomes.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN UTAH

Needs identified in the needs assessments in urban areas:

- Emergency shelter
- Short-term, transitional and long-term housing
- Relocation assistance

and in rural areas:

- Relocation assistance
- Rental assistance / short-term housing
- Advocacy with employers/landlords/creditors
- Immigration assistance

Challenges to obtaining adequate assistance identified in survivor responses included:

- Need for improved law enforcement and legal system response
- Clergy lack adequate education about domestic violence
- Finding adequate child care
- Lack of transportation and employment, especially in rural areas

Challenges identified by service providers include:

- Lack of funding / restrictions placed on funding
- Inadequate services available for people with mental health / substance use disorders
- Inadequate transportation, especially in rural areas
- Use of the Lethality Assessment Protocol has increased the need for shelter beds however available bed space has not increased

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Evaluate options for statewide DV shelter database
2. Programs coordinate work with homeless shelters, including use of HMIS database to locate housing for DV survivors
3. Additional funding to secure hotel rooms when shelters are at capacity, which is most of the time
4. Develop standardized service definitions to facilitate communication and efficiency
5. Authorize an annual, or semi-annual, Domestic Violence State Plan to continue needs assessment, gap analysis, and funding strategies