

March 8, 2023

Dick Dever, Chairman
North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee/
Human Resources Division
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Chairman Dever and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

For the record, my name is Coiya Tompkins and today I come to you wearing a few different hats: I serve as the president/CEO for the Community Violence Intervention Center in Grand Forks County. I'm also a volunteer as the Legislative Committee Chair and a member organization of CAWS North Dakota, a statewide coalition of 20 domestic violence and sexual assault programs throughout the state. In addition to professional roles, I'm also both a child and adult survivor of domestic violence.

As a former corporate marketing executive who spent more than half my career in health care, a small business owner who helped farmers and contractors manage risk, and now nonprofit leader, I've become accustomed to measuring both day-to-day and long-term outcomes. This includes operational outputs that impact clients to long-range strategic initiatives that guide CVIC's 82 employees, more than 3,500 private donors and an annual operating budget of more than \$6 million. CVIC serves more than 3,300 direct service clients and educates nearly 10,000 students and professional annually. When we track performance, expand services, and measure results, we're not only doing right by our clients, we're also safeguarding future generations.

My colleagues and I are going to dive into a few of these data points and results with you today. As we do this, I ask you to also consider the individuals they represent. Like me as an 11-year-old, who spent time with my kid brother and mother in Minot's Domestic Violence Crisis Center, these statistics represent human beings. Many of these clients are your parents, your brother or sister, your children or your grandchildren. Because of the secrecy of these issues, you may or may not know this about them. They are community leaders, they are everyday folks, they are rich and poor, they own lake homes and are homeless, but all deserve to live resiliently and free from violence.

It's been almost 40 years since my mother loaded my younger brother and me into a dated Chrysler to make a call from Trinity Medical Center in Minot. This was long before cell phones and texting, so my mother picked the closest location she could with free phone access. About 30 minutes later, a lovely volunteer named Vicki drove us to an unmarked home in far east Minot. It's been 37 years, and I can still smell the damp carpet and see the dark wood paneling. We spent a few days in that shelter while Vicki and other staff helped my mother prepare a safety plan and problem solve next steps.

We left without personal belongings because my mother told this now deceased partner that we were going to the grocery store. In that old house, which is now a beautifully constructed facility, thanks to local Minot donors, I remember an entire room filled with clothing and personal care items that Vicki offered us. I was so grateful because I was wearing heavy corduroy pants, feeling very tired and wanted something more comfortable to sleep in.

Today, as my colleagues will share with you in just a few minutes, survivors face far more complex situations. I'm sad to report, particularly following COVID, a depressed economy and since January 2021, depleted resources impacted by Lutheran Social Services' closure, that violence is escalating. In Grand Forks County alone, last year law enforcement screened 156 individuals using a lethal assessment protocol, an evidence-based program designed to avoid domestic violence homicides. Of these individuals, 111 (more than 70 percent) of them were deemed to be in high lethality situations.

On the other side of this, are resources my colleagues and I provide to also help those who use violence. At CVIC, we served nearly 200 individuals who were court ordered to participate in a domestic violence intervention program. Through this program, we track several measurements including reductions in 911 calls and criminal charges. In Grand Forks County, we track progress two years following an individual's completion of this program. We've seen a 78 percent reduction in 911 calls and more than a 90 percent reduction in criminal charges. When we address violence intervention for both survivors and those who use violence, both adults and children win. The nearly 200 participants in CVIC's domestic violence intervention program are the parents and guardians of more than 300 children. When we help mom and dad, we also help kiddos. If you'd like additional insights, we encourage you to review the joint letter in your packet, which reflects testimony from 11 sheriffs and nine police chiefs throughout North Dakota.

When we talk about children, we also note support for visitation and exchange programs as well as children, one as young as six months old, who've experienced sexual assaults. In just a few minutes, I'll yield a bit of my time to my colleagues from Bismarck (Michelle Erickson, executive director of the Abused Adult Resource Center) and Minot (Jill McDonald, executive director of the Domestic Violence Crisis Center), who can share more about the how decreased state funding has a direct impact on victims. Our colleague Darianne Johnson from the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center in Dickinson also has provided written testimony.

In your packet, we've outlined a request we were asked to share for consideration in the executive budget last summer. In December, Gov. Doug Burgum responded with an ~~slight~~ increase of a little more than \$3 million for the biennium. We are deeply grateful to Gov. Burgum for this investment. At the same time, our funding partners in the Department of Health and Human Services, who work closely with our programs, manage grant applications and reports, and monitor compliance with statewide standards prioritized our request closer to \$15 million.

Our original request was \$17.65 million. Prior to the session, my colleagues and I revisited this number. After several hours of spirited debate and discussion, we still believe this is the right number.

- The statewide coalition represents 20 domestic violence/sexual assault agencies (supporting all 53 counties).
- The annual operating budgets to run these programs cost roughly \$22 million.
- Current state funding, which has remained relatively flat throughout the past decade, is currently at 9%.
- We serve roughly 6,500 survivors and educate nearly 50,000 community members/professionals and students annually.
- Please note that this only takes into account new domestic violence and sexual assault clients. It does not include hundreds of families served through our supervised visitation and exchange, and domestic violence intervention programs or thousands of victims of crime each year.
- Based on data from the CDC, We estimate that 18% of North Dakotans will experience domestic violence or sexual assault in their lifetime. (CDC reports that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men will be impacted by domestic violence or sexual assault in their lifetime.)
- This equates to nearly 140,000 North Dakota citizens.

Here is a breakdown of the \$17.65 million:

- The first number of each bullet is what is currently budgeted.
- The number in green is what we requested.
- The number in italics is what the executive team put forth for the legislature's consideration.

Domestic Violence General Funds (currently \$1.9M per biennium):

- **Requesting \$10M/biennium**, *executive/recommended budget: \$2,686,285*
- This amount represents the gap between our fundraising and state funding as well as our crime victim witness costs. Please note that several programs support crime victim witness services pro-bono, even though contracts for these advocacy services are administered through county state's attorney offices.

Domestic Violence Offender Treatment (currently \$300K per biennium)

- **Requesting \$1.45M/biennium**, executive/recommended budget: \$700,000

Supervised Visitation and Exchange (currently \$425K per biennium)

- **Requesting \$2.2M/biennium**, executive/recommended budget: \$0

Sexual Violence Prevention Funds (currently \$200K per biennium)

- **Requesting \$4M/biennium**, executive/recommended budget: \$0
- Allocations for this are currently significantly under resourced. The fund also does not provide for domestic violence prevention needs. Enhancing this fund’s flexibility and capacity would offer significant savings to ND.

Total request: \$17.65M/biennium, executive/recommended budget: \$3,386,285

To date, the House of Representatives has graciously passed House Bill 1004 with additional increases, which collectively puts our funding at \$7.2 million.

A current breakout is noted below:

	Current Biennium	2023-2025 Biennium
State General Fund	\$1,910,000	\$5,596,285
Safe Havens	\$425,000	\$425,000
Sexual Violence Prevention	\$200,000	\$200,000
Offender Treatment (Community Health Trust Fund)	\$300,000	\$1 million
TOTAL	\$2,835,000	\$7,221,285

Given all of the funding requests facing you this biennium, I don’t envy this committee and your tough decisions. However, I urge you to consider additional resources for HB1004 or at a minimum, support the House of Representative’s recommendation.

I’m going to yield the remainder of my time to my colleagues now who are going to underscore a few points that reinforce our request for additional funding. Yvonne Griffin, a former client and current CVIC Board member, also will share a few words about her experience with our agency.

Best Regards,



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 President/CEO, Community Violence Intervention Center
 Chair, CAWS ND (statewide coalition) Legislative Committee