NCCADV
North Carolina Coalition
Against Domestic Violence

Talking Points for General Assembly Coronavirus Relief Funding Request

- The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in North Carolina created an additional crisis for victims of domestic violence. Increased isolation because of pandemic conditions, the loss of jobs and resulting financial instability, and the loss of in-person social support and referral networks have meant that victims are sheltering at home with abusers with fewer safety lifelines.

- It is difficult to track data about increased rates of victimization through our official reporting mechanisms, which were not designed to capture services that have been modified for remote pandemic conditions. In a recent NCCADV poll, **88% of victim services agencies reported that they have been offering new or modified services since the pandemic**.

- Of the domestic violence victim services agencies polled, **75% reported increased calls for services during COVID-19.** Many of these agencies reported that crisis-oriented service calls were the ones that have increased.
    - Of agencies reporting an increase in calls for service, some have reported as much as a 215% increase in calls for service after COVID as compared to before.

- One of the greatest challenges since COVID-19 hit has been in providing emergency housing in a safe way during a pandemic. **84%** of agencies polled reported that they have begun providing emergency hotel stays as an alternative to their congregant shelters; however, these hotel stays are a new and additional expense on top of their typical shelter expenses.
    - 44% of agencies that have shelters have had to turn away clients due to limited shelter capacity in response to COVID and limited hotel stay funds. One agency has reported having to turn away as many as 175 clients seeking shelter since the crisis began.
    - Survivors are needing more nights of shelter and more financial assistance on average than they did before COVID.
    - Between 14-day quarantine periods before entering shelter and extended hotel/motel stays due to limited shelter capacity, agencies are spending between $1,500 and $6,695 per family for hotel stays. **When serving multiple families, this has amounted to up to $50,000 per month of unanticipated costs for one agency to house survivors and their children in hotel/motels**.

- **94% of agencies polled report that they are experiencing unexpected costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
    - Agencies report multiple unexpected costs related to COVID-19. In addition to paying for hotel/motel stays to enable social distancing and quarantine, agencies

3710 University Drive | Suite 140 | Durham, NC 27707
919.956.9124 | 919.682.1449(fax) | www.nccadv.org

have had to pay for PPE supplies, air purification for shelters, extra janitorial services, hazard pay for staff who have to provide in-person services, food for survivors during their hotel stays, high-security technological solutions to provide remote services, and more. Excluding costs for hotel/motel, agencies frequently report having spent $12,000-over $24,000 on unexpected costs in response to COVID.

- Agencies need funds that are flexible and allow for individual adaptation to the needs of their communities. Every agency is different, and every community has different resources available, so agencies need to be able to apply the funds to the areas of their own greatest need.

- In addition to the unexpected costs they've had to cover, many agencies have been earning significantly less unrestricted income than they anticipated. Agencies have had to cancel their fundraising events or transform them to online campaigns, as well as close their thrift stores. Many thrift stores have continued to be closed even in Phase 2, as they are volunteer-run, and volunteers are largely deciding not to continue in-person service due to the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Many agencies count on fundraisers that occur during October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month in North Carolina. The majority of these fundraisers will no longer be held in person.

    - As compared to their projected income based on previous thrift store sales and past fundraising events, **most agencies surveyed anticipate losing $40,000-$75,000 by the end of 2020.**
    - Between canceled fundraisers in April and October 2020, one agency has lost $150,000 of anticipated income because of COVID-19.

- Hazard pay will continue to be necessary for in-person services, especially as many staff across the state have decided that providing in-person to survivors is too risky for their health and their families' health, and have resigned. In order to attract and retain good advocates, **agencies report needing an additional $45,000-$90,000 per year for staff salary/hazard pay.**

- The budget for Domestic Violence Victim Services agencies in North Carolina was cut in 2009, and since that time, the budget line item has not been restored or increased.

- In SL 2020-80 (HB 1023), the General Assembly acknowledged the crisis of COVID-19, but instead of funding existing DV service providers, funded a new organization called "Caitlyn's Courage" to pilot an experimental GPS tracking program that will only benefit a small number of survivors in selected pilot program districts.

- In the next round of allocations, we are asking for Coronavirus Relief Funding to be distributed as a grant-in-aid via the North Carolina Department of Administration. We are

also asking that an equal distribution/amount be awarded to all currently eligible DV Centers designated in Chapter 50B-9, which established the NC Domestic Violence Center Fund.