

CAC Advocacy Update

Developments and facts about Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) funding for CACS

March 2022

The president has signed into law an Omnibus Spending Bill, defining the federal budget for the coming year. The Omnibus Bill includes a number of critical updates that affect VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funding for CACs and NCA grant funding allocated through VOCAA (Victims of Child Abuse Act). Here's an insider's view of what's happening in Washington and what critical actions you can take to help ensure abundant, sustainable funding for CACs for years to come.

What's happening with VOCA?

The FY 22 Federal Budget is law, and VOCA is funded at the minimum floor level we in the CAC movement requested at \$2.6B. This is \$600M more than last year, and a 40% increase in the dollar amounts going to states to distribute through VOCA administrators. Thanks to the minimum floor, we have one year of funding at the level we requested.

What's at stake for CACs?

However, even though the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) began replenishing after the passage of the VOCA Fix Bill, the fund is still currently low.

The CVF, which funds VOCA, is derived of federal criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, federal courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Cases must be tried, and funds must be collected and then deposited to replenish the CVF before the full effect of the VOCA Fix is felt. All signs are pointing to the CVF being back on a sustainable path, but CACs and Chapters must advocate hard to ensure that VOCA funding for children is available in the meantime.

When kids come in the door of the CAC, we want them to understand that there are adults ready to hear them, and believe them. When we asked them, 98% of children served by our nation's 924 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) told us we listened to them. They felt heard by our passionate advocates. Yet, these same CACs that heal lives need sustainable VOCA funding even as the CVF refills.

What's happening with the Victims of Child Abuse Act?

The President has signed the Omnibus Bill, funding VOCAA through the rest of the federal fiscal year, funding 2023 NCA grants to CACs and Chapters. In the Omnibus Bill, VOCAA will receive \$33 million for FY22. We very much appreciate the \$3 million increase over funding levels. Despite highly anticipated increases of significantly more, we very much appreciate the \$3 million increase over our current funding levels. In their final negotiations Congress made across the board cuts to most expected discretionary increases to offset other spending priorities such as aid to Ukraine.

While this is disappointing, we have already begun fighting to reestablish the higher funding levels in the FY23 budget. You will receive ways to help with that in coming days. Chapters can get more state-specific information from our government affairs team regarding what this means for the upcoming grant year for Chapter funds. But, Chapters should rest assured that this level of increase will allow us to meet our commitment to offset the lost \$15,000 per Chapter in RCAC funding in the upcoming year.

What is NCA doing?

- Thanking Congressional supporters for these important increases in funding as we continue to educate about the need for more funding.
- Advocating to both DOJ and Congress to ensure that all parties understand the impacts of funding cuts, interruptions, and uncertainty on our services to children and families.
- Providing specialized technical assistance and guidance as needed to CAC and Chapter advocacy leaders to develop a state-specific approach to ensure level, sustainable funding.

What should you do?

1. Thank those Members of Congress in your state who supported higher funding levels and let them know these needs continue into FY23.
2. Rally the troops in your state to advocate to your State VOCA Administrators!
 - If you are a Chapter and consultation would be beneficial, [contact Denise to set up a session for your state](#).
 - If you are a CAC, ask your Chapter how you can help and whether a consultation session might be helpful. Assist your Chapter in educating VOCA Administrators, as requested by your Chapter.
3. Learn these talking points and look out for more from NCA soon!