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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 2650, victims and turned away 252 victims in a single day. They also answered 676 crisis calls in a single day—an average of 28 crisis calls per hour.¹
- 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 requests for services in 2020 compared to 2019. Some programs are experiencing nearly triple the number of victims needing services.²
- 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 2020³ 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 7th 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.

¹National Network to End Domestic Violence, (2020) 24-hour census conducted Sept. 10, 2020. All of Ohio's 58 residential programs participated in the annual survey.

² 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.

³ 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.

- 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 34% 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.