

SPECIAL REPORT

Estimated National Expenditures For Domestic Violence Services and Programs



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Domestic violence is an important concern in our society and a concerted national effort is essential to curb the problem. Fundamental to this endeavor is an identification of the current financial resources being devoted to this concern. This delineation is part of the process of assessing the overall cost-effectiveness of domestic violence programs.

Funding to support abuse-reduction efforts comes from a variety of sources: federal, state, and local government, charitable organizations, and private contributions. The purpose of this Special Report is to identify existing domestic violence programs and services, and quantify the funding streams that are available to support them.

The Report first provides an overview of the nature of the domestic violence issue. Then it analyzes various federal laws and programs with definable intimate partner violence components. The Report then estimates non-federal expenditures to curb partner aggression. It is concluded that our country spends about \$4 billion a year to combat the problem of domestic violence.

Extent, Nature, and Causes of Domestic Violence

Evidence-based policies rely on an up-to-date understanding of the extent, nature, and causes of intimate partner aggression:

1. One in 10 American couples engages in intimate partner violence each year.

About one in 10 married and cohabiting couples experience some form of partner aggression (slap, shove, punch, etc.) each year.¹

2. Men and women initiate domestic violence at similar rates.

- Over 250 scholarly studies “demonstrate that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners.”²
- If an incident escalates, the female partner is more likely to be injured. Nonetheless, of all victims who require medical attention, one-third are male.³
- Female initiation of partner violence is the leading reason for the woman becoming a victim of subsequent violence.⁴

3. Partner aggression is often two-way.

- A Centers for Disease Control survey found that half of all partner violence was reciprocal.⁵
- One study of dating couples concluded that 70% of all physical abuse was mutual.⁶

4. Although all segments of society are affected, domestic violence is concentrated in certain groups.

Domestic violence is more common among certain groups such as:

- Lower income couples.
- Couples who are not in intact, married relationships.
- Lesbian and gay partners, compared to heterosexual partners.⁷

5. Many factors contribute to domestic violence incidents.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has identified 28 different causes of domestic violence. These include individual, relationship, and community factors.⁸

6. America is making steady progress in the national effort to curb intimate partner aggression.

Domestic violence among intimate partners has fallen dramatically since the mid-1970s, whether violence is measured by community surveys,⁹ crime surveys of non-fatal violence,¹⁰ or FBI homicide statistics.¹¹

Federal Expenditures

There are four major federal laws with a major or sole focus on curbing domestic violence, listed here in alphabetical order:

1. Family Violence Prevention and Services Act
2. Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act -- Family Violence Option
3. Victims of Crime Act
4. Violence Against Women Act

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) was first enacted in 1984 to provide funding to abuse shelters, state domestic violence coalitions, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The Act authorizes grants to states and Indian tribes for the provision of shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents. The law was reauthorized in 2003 as Title IV of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act.¹²

FVPSA funds are administered by the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).¹³ In FY2007 the program was appropriated \$125 million.¹⁴

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act – Family Violence Option

The 1996 welfare reform act, known by its acronym PRWORA, allows states to enact a Family Violence Option (FVO) to exempt domestic violence victims from the two-year back-to-work expectation, as well as other selected requirements of the welfare reform law. All 50 states have now enacted the Family Violence Option or an equivalent policy.

Many states do not require proof of violence to qualify under the FVO. According to the Government Accountability Office, “25 states do not require evidence beyond a client’s statement in order to grant a waiver from work requirements.”¹⁵ Once a person has been approved, the benefit is long-lasting. “Most states provide waivers indefinitely,” reveals a Congressional Research Service report.¹⁶

No national accounting of expenditures for the Family Violence Option is believed to exist. Therefore, an extensive Internet search was conducted using the terms “family violence option” and “budget.”

The search succeeded in identifying the budgets or expenditures in six states with a broad range of populations (Appendix A). Because of the large variability of the numbers, the highest and lowest numbers were considered to be outliers and removed from subsequent calculations. According to this preliminary calculation, the total annual budget for the Family Violence Option is estimated to be \$65 million.

Victims of Crime Act

Enacted in 1984, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) represents a federal initiative to assist victims of criminal actions. VOCA established the Crime Victim’s Fund, which is administered by the Department of Justice and supported by fines that are collected from persons convicted of offenses. Because the amount of the fines varies from year to year, Congress establishes an annual expenditure cap on VOCA expenditures. In FY2005 the cap on VOCA monies was set at \$620 million.¹⁷

According to the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, “Domestic violence and sexual assault victims make up half of those receiving services” under VOCA.¹⁸ This statement is corroborated by a report from Idaho that notes 52.4% of the 7,909 persons who received VOCA monies in 2002 in that state were victims of domestic violence or adult sexual assault.¹⁹

Therefore, it is estimated that VOCA provides \$310 million each year for domestic violence and sexual assault services.*

* \$620 million x .5 = \$310 million

Violence Against Women Act

First enacted in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is administered by the Department of Justice. The law aims to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence. VAWA promotes arrest and enforces restraining orders; promotes collaboration among law enforcement, judicial personnel, and service providers; funds training of judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel; increases public awareness of domestic violence; addresses the special needs of the elderly, disabled, children, and youth; and addresses the unique circumstances of immigrants.

VAWA was reauthorized in 2000 and 2005. In FY2005 the Violence Against Women Act was authorized \$391.8 million.²⁰ A detailed funding analysis is available from the Congressional Research Service.²¹

In addition to these four major laws, there are several identifiable domestic violence programs within the federal government:

1. Agency for International Development -- Women in Development
2. Citizenship and Immigration Service – VAWA Petitions
3. Department of Defense - Community and Family Policy Program
4. Legal Services Corporation

Agency for International Development - Women in Development

According to its website, the USAID Women in Development program “is working to improve women’s equality and empowerment.”²² The program sponsors a number of domestic violence initiatives and activities:²³

- Research: Cost of Violence Against Women²⁴
- Research: Gender-Based Violence in South Asia
- Promotion of new domestic violence laws
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence
- Distribution of domestic violence publications

In FY2005, the Women in Development’s total proposed obligation was \$11.5 million.²⁵ Of this amount, an estimated \$2.5 million was devoted to domestic violence programming.

Citizenship and Immigration Service – VAWA Petitions

Title VIII of the Violence Against Women Act allows immigrants who are victims of domestic violence to bypass usual sponsorship requirements. These persons “self-petition” the Citizenship and Immigration Service to receive priority consideration for work authorization and citizenship.^{26,27} Such petitions are reviewed by the CIS Vermont Service Center.

The Vermont Service Center processes a total of 1.4 million cases each year and is budgeted \$62 million annually for such work. In FY 2010, about 14,000 of the 1.4 million (1.0 % of the total) were VAWA I-360 applications.²⁸ Therefore, an estimated \$600,000 is allocated to the processing of VAWA petitions.

These numbers do not take into account the public benefit and welfare services received by foreign nationals whose I-360 applications are approved – such services are believed to be considerable.²⁹

Department of Defense - Community and Family Policy Program

The Department of Defense Community and Family Policy Program operates three domestic abuse programs:³⁰

1. Family Advocacy Program
2. Victim Advocacy Program
3. Transitional Compensation Program

The Community and Family Policy Program also oversees the implementation of a series of DoD policies and directives.³¹ The Department of Defense provided the Family Advocacy Program \$23 million over a three-year period, which translates into an annual budget of \$7.7 million.³² The budgets for the Victim Advocacy and Transitional Compensation programs are unknown.

Legal Services Corporation

Created in 1974, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is a private organization established by the Congress to promote equal access to justice by providing civil legal assistance to persons who otherwise would be unable to afford it.

In FY2007 the LSC was funded at \$348 million.³³ Thirty-eight percent of the LSC caseload involves family matters, specifically domestic violence and child custody issues.³⁴ Making the assumption that half of the family caseload pertains to domestic violence, it is estimated that the LSC devotes \$66 million for domestic violence services.[†]

Other Federal Programs

Several other federal programs award grants or otherwise address domestic violence issues, but their domestic violence-specific expenditures are unknown at the present time:

- Department of Health and Human Services welfare programs:³⁵
 - Child Welfare Services Programs (Title IV-B)
 - Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Programs (Title IV-E)
 - Social Services Block Grant (Title XX)

[†] \$348 million x 19% = \$66 million

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)³⁶
- Housing and Urban Development:
 - Emergency Shelter Grants Program³⁷
 - Community Development Block Grants³⁸
- State Department
 - Office of Global Women’s Issues³⁹
 - Contributions to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Total Federal Expenditures

In sum, the total domestic violence-related expenditures for the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, Victims of Crime Act, Violence Against Women Act, Agency for International Development, Citizenship and Immigration Service, Department of Defense, and Legal Services Corporation are estimated at \$968.8 million annually.[‡]

The expenditures for the other federal domestic violence programs, services, and initiatives, including the DoD Victim Advocacy and Transitional Compensation programs, are presently unknown. However, these costs are believed to exceed \$100 million annually.

These expenditures do not include health care, counseling, or rehabilitative services for domestic violence victims that are provided or paid for under existing federal Medicare, Medicaid, and other medical service programs. Such expenses are likely to be considerable.

In summary, the annual federal outlay for domestic violence programs, services, and other initiatives is conservatively estimated at \$1 billion dollars a year.

[‡] FVPSA: \$125 million. PRWORA: \$65 million. VOCA: \$310 million. VAWA: \$392 million. USAID: \$2.5 million. Citizenship and Immigration Service: \$0.6 million. Department of Defense: \$7.7 million. LSC: \$66 million.

Non-Federal Expenditures

Domestic violence programs receive considerable financial support from state and local governments, as well as from charitable organizations and individual donors. At present, there is no single data source that reports these amounts.

Therefore, this Special Report examines the domestic violence-related expenditures in West Virginia, the one state in which extensive financial analyses have been conducted.

Projected Expenditures

A. According to an analysis by Dr. Benjamin Foster, state and local governments in West Virginia financially support the following domestic violence-related programs:⁴⁰

- Law enforcement: \$11.0 million
- Family and magistrate courts: \$4.4 million
- Public defender: \$0.5 million
- West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which supports local abuse shelters: \$6.9 million

These four cost categories total \$22.7 million annually.[§]

B. Other domestic violence-related expenses include the following:

- Hiring of 10 family court judges to handle the additional DV-related caseload: \$2.7 million⁴¹
- Incarceration of DV offenders in state prisons: \$4.8 million. (see Appendix, Calculation #1)
- Supervision of parolees and probationers: \$1.8 million. (see Appendix, Calculation #2)

These three categories total \$9.3 million annually.

C. Additional expenditures associated with domestic violence programs, based on conservative estimates:

- Buildings, vehicles, and other capital expenses for criminal and civil justice courts and law enforcement departments: ^{**} Estimated expense: \$1 million
- Costs for incarceration in local jails: Estimated expense: \$4 million^{††}

[§] Figures do not add to \$22.7 million due to rounding error.

^{**} For example, Cook County, Illinois renovated its Domestic Violence Courthouse at a cost of \$51 million. Cook County Information Center. Press Release, 2005. <http://www.friendsofdowntown.org/events.html>

^{††} The Administrative Office of the United States Courts estimates that in FY2004, the following annual imprisonment costs per inmate: \$23,206. <http://www.uscourts.gov/ttb/may05ttb/incarceration-costs/index.html>

- Personnel involved in prosecuting criminal DV cases, including prosecutors, judges, bailiffs, and their assistants: Estimated expense: \$3 million
- Circuit Court and higher courts involved in processing domestic violence cases: Estimated expense: \$1 million
- Non-personnel operations for family and magistrates courts: Estimated expense: \$0.5 million
- Other expenses associated with criminal DV cases such as building maintenance: Estimated expense: \$0.5 million
- Offender treatment programs: Estimated expense: \$0.5 million

These seven cost categories total \$10.5 million annually.

Adding the amounts from A, B, and C, the total annual expenditures for domestic violence programs and services in West Virginia is estimated at \$42.5 million.

Projected Income

The \$42.5 million for domestic violence programs and services is financed from a variety of federal and non-federal sources. The federal government awards these amounts to support domestic violence programs in West Virginia:

- Victims of Crime Act: \$1.8 million (see Appendix, Calculation #3)
- Family Violence Prevention and Services Act: \$0.2 million⁴²
- Violence Against Women Act: \$8.9 million⁴³

These federal funds total \$10.9 million annually.

To calculate the non-federal revenue sources, we make the assumption that the West Virginia domestic violence programs operate on a break-even basis, i.e., that expenditures equal revenues. Knowing the total annual public expenditures are \$42.5 million and the annual federal funds awarded to West Virginia are \$10.9 million, we can subtract these amounts to calculate the amount that comes from state and local governments and from charitable and private contributions: \$31.6 million.

Thus in West Virginia, non-federal sources represent about three-quarters of the total expenditures for domestic violence programs in West Virginia (see Appendix, Calculation #4).

These numbers are summarized below (amounts are in millions of dollars):

<i>Projected Expenses</i>		<i>Projected Income</i>	
Foster analysis:	\$22.7	VAWA:	\$ 8.9
Other expenses:	9.3	VOCA:	1.8
Estimated costs:	10.5	FVPSA:	0.2
		<u>Non-federal:</u>	<u>31.6</u>
Totals	\$42.5		\$42.5

A \$4 Billion National Investment to Curb Domestic Violence

The first part of this Special Report makes a conservative estimate that the federal government expends \$1 billion a year for domestic violence programs and services. In order to calculate non-federal domestic violence-related expenditures, we examined financial estimates from West Virginia.

In that state, about \$42.5 million are expended on domestic violence programs and services annually. Federal funds cover approximately one-quarter of the costs, and non-federal sources provide for the remaining three-quarters of costs.

Nationwide, the federal government allocates about \$1 billion for domestic violence programs and services. Extrapolating from the West Virginia data, revenues from state and local governments and from charitable and private sources amount to an additional \$3 billion annually.⁴⁴

Hence we conclude that in the United States, approximately \$4 billion is expended for domestic violence programs and services each year.

Family Violence Option Expenditures

State	FVO Budget or Expenditures	Year	Source
Alabama	\$946,248	2011	Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. SAIL Project. No date.
Nevada	\$608,490	2010	Sue Meuschkel. Proposed elimination of domestic violence contracts. Silver Pinyon Journal. December 18, 2010. http://myspj.com/commentary/guest-opinion-and-letters-to-editor/999-proposed-elimination-of-domestic-violence-contracts
New Jersey	\$549,544	2007	New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women. IRS Form 990, 2007, Attachment
Ohio	\$590,452	2004	Corlett J. The allocation of TANF and child care funding in Ohio. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. 2006. www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060810_TANFOhio.pdf
Oklahoma	\$7 million	2001	Trujillo OJ, Test G. Funding the work: Community efforts to end domestic violence and child abuse. Washington, DC. American Public Human Services Association. No date. www.thegreenbook.info/documents/fundingstreams.pdf
Texas	\$2,935,832	2011	Voyles M. Enhancing services to survivors of family violence through work with funders and program administrators. No date. www.nawrs.org/LA2010/Papers/w2e2.pdf
Sum	\$12,040,114		
Average	\$2,006,686		
Removing upper and lower outliers (NJ and OK):			
Sum	\$5,081,022		
Average	\$1,270,256		
Total U.S. (est.)	\$64,783,030		

State-Level Calculations

Calculation #1:

1. In 2005, the West Virginia correctional population was 5,312, of whom 56% (2,975 inmates) were incarcerated for a violent crime.⁴⁵
2. Of these 2,975 inmates, an estimated 7% (208 persons) were imprisoned for a crime against an intimate partner.⁴⁶
3. The annual imprisonment costs are \$23,206 per inmate.⁴⁷
4. Calculation: 208 inmates x \$23,206 = \$4,826,848

Calculation #2:

1. In 2003, there were 6,430 probationers and 999 parolees in West Virginia, of whom an estimated 7% (520 persons) had been imprisoned for domestic violence.⁴⁸
2. The annual costs for supervision by probation officers are \$3,453 per person.⁴⁹
3. Calculation: 520 persons x \$3,453 = \$1,795,560

Calculation #3:

1. Number of DV victims served in 2002: 16,293
2. Number of victims of adult sexual assault (SA) served: 1,406
3. Total victims served: 33,899
4. Percentage DV and SA: $(16,293 + 1,406) \div 33,899 = 52.2\%$ ⁵⁰
5. Total VOCA expenditures for domestic violence and sexual assault: \$1.8 million⁵¹

Calculation #4:

\$31.6 million ÷ \$42.5 million = 74.4%

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