

2021 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA



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MINNESOTA

Violence Free Minnesota is a statewide coalition of over 90 member programs working to end relationship abuse across the state. Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. Safe, affordable housing and access to economic resources are the two most vital pathways to safety for victim/survivors and their children.



LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

The Minnesota legislature worked late into the night on June 29th and finished up their work on the Fiscal Year 22-23 biennial budget on June 30, just in time to avoid a state government shut-down. All thirteen budget bills plus the Tax bill have been sent to Governor Walz for his signature. There will be another special session in the fall for discussion and decision making around funding coming to Minnesota from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARP). Below is information on where Violence Free Minnesota's proactive and support agenda items ended up, as well as other provisions that are connected to the work of member programs.



PROACTIVE AGENDA ITEMS:

- **Survivor Support and Prevention Grants** – \$800,000 in the biennium (fiscal year 2022 and 2023) to support victim/survivors of crime and meet emerging or unmet needs.

Establishes grants to meet victim needs by directing organizations to provide funds directly to victim survivors of crime and to services to meet emerging or unmet needs. Directs the director of OJP to work with advocacy groups to establish requirements for grant recipients and further requires the director to prioritize grants based on need and type of crime. Requires at least 30 percent of the money to be spent on each type of grant. Requires the director to provide a report on the grants issue every two years.

Violence Free Minnesota is working together with the other victim advocacy coalitions and OJP to determine how funds will be distributed.

- **Governor Walz, by executive order, will be appropriating \$15 million in in community violence prevention grants from the American Rescue Plan Act** (federal) – A portion of these funds will be dedicated to “survivor support grants” (one-time appropriation).

Violence Free Minnesota is working with the Governor's office and OJP to get more information and details on this funding, including the amount dedicated to “survivor support grants.” We anticipate that these funds will be used for increases to programs, domestic abuse transformation programming, direct client assistance, and prevention work.

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Contact Katie Kramer at 651.646.6177 x127 or kkramer@vfmn.org to discuss how you can make Minnesota safer for all.
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PROACTIVE AGENDA ITEMS:

- **Improving Retention in Domestic Violence Programs** – \$150,000 the first year is to develop an open and competitive grant process to award a grant to establish a pilot project to increase the rate at which participants voluntarily complete a person-centered, trauma-informed violence prevention program by addressing the social and economic barriers that inhibit program completion.

This funding is available to programs already providing domestic abuse transformation programming.

- **Emergency Services Program (ESP)** –Funding for Emergency Services Program was increased to \$6 million per year. This funding level will begin FY 2022 (July 1, 2021) and is ongoing. This is a substantial increase, with the current state investment in the program only being \$844,000 per year. ESP funding provides emergency shelter and safety through congregate, scattered site, and motel settings.



PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUDICIARY OMNIBUS BILL PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous – \$500,000 each year to establish and maintain an office dedicated to reviewing, preventing, and ending the targeting of Indigenous people, disappearance of Indigenous people, and deaths of Indigenous people that occur under suspicious circumstances through coordination with Tribal nations, executive branch agencies and commissions, and community organizations and impacted communities. Within OJP.
- Task Force on Missing and Murdered African American Women – \$100,000 the first year and \$50,000 the second year for implementation.
- Veteran's Restorative Justice Act to allow the opportunity for veteran's whose crime was directly related to a service-related disorder/experience to receive community-based programming/treatment rather than incarceration.
- U-Visa bill to streamline and speed up the U-Visa process.
- National Guard sexual assault investigations - appropriates \$160,000 each year for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to investigate sexual assault cases in the Minnesota National Guard.
- Combatting sex trafficking - appropriates \$250,000 each year for an antitrafficking investigation coordinator and to implement strategies to combat sex trafficking.

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUDICIARY OMNIBUS BILL PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Fines and Fees Reform - gives judges discretion to waive, reduce, or offer a community service alternative in lieu of the \$75 State Surcharge in cases where imposition of the surcharge would cause financial hardship to the convicted person or their immediate family.
- Provisions related to police reform that were included in the final package:
 - Restrictions on the use of no-knock warrants (to “first-degree murder, hostage taking, kidnapping, terrorism and human trafficking”);
 - Increased support for mental health response in crisis calls by requiring 911 operators to refer calls to mental health crisis teams in certain situations;
 - Creation of a \$6 million fund named after Philando Castile, a Black man who was killed by police in Falcon Heights in 2016, for training police in things like crisis intervention, de-escalation and cultural competency;
 - Requiring judges to issue “sign and release” warrants instead of arrest warrants for certain offenses. Police who encounter people with those sign and release warrants in their name would provide written notice of a future court appearance in their cases in lieu of arrest.
 - Expanded data collection at the Peace Officers Standards and Training Board (POST) Board - requires police chiefs to report to the POST Board all disciplinary actions taken against police officers for the purpose of identifying patterns of behavior suggesting an officer is in crisis or may violate a board-mandated model policy;
 - Increased pay for interpreters;
 - Creating a Youth Justice Office;
 - Funding to support Innovations in Community Safety Grants and Youth Intervention Program Grants;
 - Overhauling how Minnesota enforces safety standards and reforms use of force guidelines in Minnesota jails and prisons through the Hardel Sherrel Act;
 - Prohibit the use of restraints on children appearing in court;
- DOC Provisions:
 - Homelessness mitigation plan. Appropriates \$12,000 in FY22 to develop and implement a homelessness mitigation plan for individuals released from prison.
 - Identifying documents. Appropriates \$23,000 in FY22 and \$28,000 in FY23 to assist inmates in obtaining a copy of their birth certificates and provide appropriate DOC identification cards to individuals released from prison.
 - Predatory offender statutory framework working group. Appropriates \$25,000 the first year for the predatory offender statutory framework working group.
 - Prohibits corrections officers from using chokeholds or prone restraint on inmates in most circumstances.

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUDICIARY OMNIBUS BILL PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Criminal Sexual Conduct Statutory reforms:
 - Change criminal sexual assault statutes to permit prosecution of cases where victims were intoxicated through voluntary consumption (also known as “the voluntary intoxication loophole”);
 - Creates a crime for sexual extortion;
 - Eliminates the statute of limitations in sexual assault cases;
 - Prevents the prosecution of underage consumption or controlled substance use for victims of sexual assault and those who help them.



OTHER PROVISIONS THAT WERE PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURE

- Drivers License Suspension Reform: The passage of this bill will end driver’s license suspensions for the following: 1) failure to pay a parking or traffic ticket, 2) failure to appear in court on a petty misdemeanor parking or traffic violation after a driving after suspension ticket, and 3) a conviction for driving after suspension or revocation. The bill will also end the practice of “stacking” driver’s license reinstatement fees for all except DUI-related suspensions and revocations.
- Shelter Bill of Rights Taskforce creation: The Taskforce will meet over the next year, and is tasked with providing recommendations to the legislature regarding standards for shelters and the resources and supports needed to implement standards that ensure safe and appropriate shelter spaces and services. The Taskforce will have representatives from several government agencies (including DPS), coalitions, community members who have experienced homelessness, as well as shelter providers. One of the shelter provider representatives on the Taskforce must be a DV/SA shelter provider.
- Eviction Off-Ramp: As part of the housing omnibus bill the legislature passed a phase-out from the Eviction Moratorium that was in place under Executive Order as a result of the pandemic. VFMN, along with our partners, were successful in advocating for the implementation of an off-ramp, and the inclusion of notice provisions and increased protections for those with pending applications for rental assistance.
- Several provisions that VFMN supported were passed and signed by the Governor mid-session. They include:
 - The Healthy Start Act - permit the Department of Corrections to place pregnant and postpartum female inmates in community-based programs
 - This bill passed both bodies and has been signed by the Governor
 - Appropriates \$100,000/year
 - The Canadian Order for Protection bill – makes Canadian OFP’s enforceable in Minnesota.

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*360 Communities/Lewis House, Dakota, Carver, Goodhue, Hennepin, Ramsey
Advocacy Center of Winona, Winona
Advocates for Family Peace, Itasca, Northern St. Louis
Advocates for Human Rights, International
Advocates of the Bemidji Area, Beltrami
*Alexandra House, Anoka
*American Indian Community Housing Organization, St. Louis, Koochiching, Lake, Cook, Itasca
*Anna Marie's Alliance, Sherburne, Benton, Stearns, Mille Lacs, Wright
ARRC Shelter, Hubbard
*Asian Women United of MN, Hennepin, Ramsey
Battered Women's Justice Project, National
Bluff Country Family Resources, Fillmore, Houston
Bois Forte Tribal Government - Victim Services, Nett Lake, Koochiching, St. Louis
Brave of Heart, Washington
Breaking Free, Ramsey
*Casa de Esperanza, Hennepin, Ramsey
*Committee Against Domestic Abuse, Brown, Nicollet, Blue Earth, LeSueur, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan, Faribault, Martin
Community Health Services, Polk, Norman, Clay, Pennington
Community Stabilization Project, Ramsey
Community University Health Care Center, Hennepin
Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicios (CLUES), Hennepin, Ramsey
*Cornerstone Advocacy Services, Hennepin
Crime Victim Resource Center – Mayo Clinic, Mower
Crisis Resource Center of Steele County, Steele
CURA-POT, Ramsey
Division of Indian Work, Hennepin
Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, St. Louis
Domestic Abuse Project, Hennepin
East Side Neighborhood Services, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey
*Equay Wiigamig, Red Lake Reservation, Beltrami
*Family Pathways, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Carlton
Family Safety Network, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard
Freeborn County Crime Victim Crisis Center, Freeborn
Friends Against Abuse, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods
Gender Violence Institute, Statewide
Global Rights for Women, International
Hands of Hope Resource Center, Morrison, Todd
Hmong American Partnership, Ramsey
Healing Opportunity Provided Equally (HOPE), Aitkin, Crow Wing
Hope Center, Rice
*Hope Coalition, Goodhue, Wabasha
Indigenous Women's Life Net, Ramsey, Hennepin
Karen Organization of Minnesota, Statewide
*Lakes Crisis and Resource Center, Becker & surrounding area
Martin County Victim Services, Martin
McLeod Alliance for Victims of Domestic Violence, McLeod
Men As Peacemakers - Men and Masculine Folk Network, Statewide
*Mid-Minnesota Women's Center, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, Wadena

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Family Violence Prevention Program, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pine
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, Statewide
Minnesota Elder Justice Center, Statewide
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, Hennepin
*Missions, Inc. - Home Free, Hennepin
New Horizons Crisis Center, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Redwood
North Shore Horizons, Lake
Northwest Indian Community Development Center, Beltrami
*Northwoods Battered Women's Shelter, Beltrami, Cass
Oasis of Love Crisis Intervention, Hennepin
OutFront Minnesota, Statewide
Pearl Crisis Center, Mille Lacs
Phumulani: Minnesota African Women Against Domestic Violence, Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington
Pillsbury United Communities, Hennepin
Praxis International, National
Rape and Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead, Clay, Wilkin
Rivers of Hope, Wright
*Safe Avenues, Kandiyohi, Swift, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Renville, Meeker, McLeod
*Safe Haven Shelter and Resource Center, St. Louis, Carlton, Aitkin, Itasca, Lake, Cook, Koochiching
SEWA-AIFW (Asian Indian Family Wellness), Hennepin, Ramsey
Sexual Violence Center, Hennepin, Carver, Scott
*Sojourner Project, Hennepin, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey
Someplace Safe, Big Stone, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Douglas, Traverse, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Wadena
Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS), Southern Minnesota
Southern Valley Alliance, Carver, Scott
Southwest Crisis Center, Noble, Pipestone, Rock, Cottonwood, Jackson
St. Paul and Ramsey County Intervention Project, Ramsey
Standpoint, Statewide
Stevens County Victim Witness, Stevens
ThinkSelf, Statewide
Transforming Generations, Ramsey, Hennepin, Washington, Dakota
*Tubman, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington
*Violence Intervention Project, Red Lake, Pennington, Marshall, Kittson, Roseau
Violence Prevention Center, Cook
White Earth DOVE Program, White Earth Reservation, Mahnommen, Becker, Clearwater
WISE, Statewide
*Women of Nations, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington
*Women's Advocates, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington
WoMen's Rural Advocacy Programs, Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine, Redwood
*Women's Shelter and Support Center, Dodge, Fillmore, Olmsted & surrounding counties
Yellow Medicine County Victim Services, Yellow Medicine

*Emergency Shelter Program

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