



To the Minnesota Legislature:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write to express our support for an increase in state funding to Crime Victims' Services (CVS). CVS advocates are critical to Minnesota's public safety infrastructure, not only contributing to the safety and security of our communities, but also contributing to the restoration of economic health and emotional wellness for people and their families who have been impacted by violence and crime.

CVS advocates contribute to the public safety ecosystem in varied ways. They run physical infrastructures like Domestic Violence Shelters, Sexual Assault Response Centers, Child Advocacy Centers, and Supervised Visitation Centers. They provide services like legal advocacy and legal systems navigation, mental and behavioral health support, and assistance with economic benefits. They are a crucial part of many survivors' safety and healing journeys, and their sole mandate is to support and respect the lives of those who are impacted by violence and crime.

CVS advocates do more than simply provide vital public safety infrastructure. They also help to provide direct economic aid to people who need it, and help victims/survivors navigate employment opportunities. By helping crime victims establish economic security and independence, CVS advocates not only interrupt the cycle of violence, but they also interrupt the cycle of poverty. The goal is a dignified life for all people, no matter what they have experienced. When individuals, families, and communities who have been harmed by crime and violence are able to overcome barriers around housing, personal finance, and safety, everyone wins.

CVS advocates help more than just victims/survivors. Often, victims and survivors of crime have entire families in need of advocacy, safety, and respect. CVS advocates help with that. Many CVS advocates used to be clients of a CVS program. When survivors experience support, they often are inspired to start a career as an advocate supporting other survivors. This leads to a cascade of survivors helping and creating careers for other survivors.

Federal investment in CVS providers has collapsed since 2017. The amount of federal money being provided to CVS providers was lower in Fiscal Year 2023 than in Fiscal Year 2015, and investment has continued dropping. Demand for advocacy services has only risen since the pandemic. At one Domestic Violence Shelter, the turnaway rate for otherwise eligible clients is 78% due primarily to a lack of available beds. These programs are unable to provide any more services at their current level of resources, even as those services are desperately needed.

Programs are experiencing hiring freezes, wage freezes, reductions in benefits, and the loss of staff due to funding shortages. We cannot fail to invest in these services - and in survivors.

Our state can do far more to support crime victims, and ensuring programs can pay their advocates a thriving wage is the first step. Please commit to a robust and long-term investment in Crime Victims' Services, and affirm that Crime Victims' Services *are* a critical piece of Minnesota's public safety infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Cinnamon Bankey

Executive Director

Mending the Sacred Hoop

Nicole Matthews

Executive Director

Minnesota Indigenous Women's Sexual
Assault Coalition

Shaunta McGee

Executive Director

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Marcia Milliken

Executive Director

Minnesota Children's Alliance

Guadalupe Lopez

Executive Director

Violence Free Minnesota

Bobbi Holtberg

Executive Director

Minnesota Alliance on Crime

Organizational Signatures

Otter Tail County Attorney's Office

Michelle Eldien
Otter Tail County Attorney
Otter Tail County, MN

Nickelmore & Ellig, P.A.

Joe Ellig
City Prosecutor
Fergus Falls, MN

Women Empowered MN Service Corporation

Veronica Hardaway
CEO
St. Paul, MN

Wilkin County Health and Human Services

Becky Tripp
County Health and Human Services
Director
Wilkin County, MN

YWCA Mankato

Ceceli Bidelman
Executive Director
Mankato, MN

Nicollet County Attorney

Michelle Zender Fischer
Nicollet County Attorney
Nicollet County, MN

Partners for Affordable Housing

Trisha Anderson
Executive Director
Mankato, MN

Big Stone County Family Services

Jennifer Warnock
Social Worker
Ortonville, MN

MRCI

Marcia Highum
Director of Public Support Programs
Mankato and Owatonna, MN

Alexandria Police Department

Kevin Guenther
Police Captain
Alexandria, MN

Greater Mankato Area United Way

Sarah Buesing
Community Impact Director
Mankato, MN

Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee

David Boehnke
Lead Organizer

Minneapolis NAACP

Raj S
Co-Chair
Minneapolis, MN

West Central Minnesota Communities Action

Amber Holmstrom
Family and Community Services Director
Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and
Traverse Counties

First Congregational UCC of Grand Marais

Rev. Enno Limvere
Pastor
Grand Marais, MN

New Justice Project MN

Nelle Rivers
Organizer
Twin Cities, MN

Until We Are All Free Movement

Kahlee Griffey
Executive Director
Minneapolis, MN

Minnesota Freedom Fund

Danielle Matthias
Senior Organizer
Twin Cities, MN

Women's Foundation of Minnesota

Sara Gangelhoff
Director of Advocacy and Innovation
Minneapolis, MN

Young Women's Initiative Cabinet

Ely Zeimet
Youth Advocate
Minneapolis, MN

Hennepin County Attorney's Office

Mary Moriarty
County Attorney
Hennepin County, MN

Mankato Economic Development Authority

Nancy Bokelman
Associate Director of Housing and
Economic Development
Mankato, MN

Itasca County Attorney's Office

Becky Fideldy
Victim Assistance Coordinator
Itasca County, MN

Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota

Kim Kleven
VP of Play and Learning
Mankato, MN

**National Association of Social Workers,
Minnesota Chapter**

Karen Goodenough
Executive Director
Backus, MN

City of Mankato

Susan Arntz
City Manager
Mankato, MN

Mankato Public Safety

Jeremy Clifton
Director/Chief of Public Safety Fire/Police
Mankato, MN

YWCA Duluth

Savannah Swanson
Policy and Advocacy Director
Mankato, MN

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center

Katy Nelson
Senior Director of Development and
Communications
Minneapolis, MN

Individual Sign-Ons**Alvin Peters**

Chair of the Board
Hands of Hope Resource Center
Browerville, MN

Kim DeZurik

Vice Chair of the Board
Hands of Hope Resource Center
Little Falls, MN

Annie McKizzie

Food Shelf Coordinator
Minneapolis, MN

Chelsea Beaver

Assistant County Attorney
Stearns County, MN

Roberta Frahm

Probation Agent
Stearns County, MN

Julie Sievert

Senior Tax Specialist
Little Falls, MN

Kelly Wencil

Marketing and PR Manager
PrimeWest Health
Alexandria, MN

Josiah Smalley

Housing Resource Specialist
Mankato, MN

Rachel Hanson

Attorney
Hanson & Moen Law
Fargo-Moorhead Area

Gretchen Pederson

County Disability Waiver Case Manager
Granite Falls, MN

Stacy Pigue

Child Protection Specialist
Clay County, MN

Reanna Milbrett

Social Worker
Mankato, MN

Courtney Prokofieff

Outreach Representative
Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge
Minneapolis, MN

Nancy Fitzsimmons

Professor of Social Work
Mankato, MN

Carolyn Cadem

Attorney
Fergus Falls, MN

Sandi Miller

Lead Case Manager, Safe Harbor
Lutheran Social Services
Mankato, MN

Melissa Geisthardt

Lead Case Manager
Lutheran Social Services
Mankato, MN

Jane Vader

Safe Harbor Regional Navigator
Lutheran Social Services
Mankato, MN

Lindsey Netwal

Senior Sales Associate
Gardonville Coop Telephone
Association/Someplace Safe Board Member
Alexandria, MN

Rebecca Schmitz

Executive Director
Alexandria, MN

Fei Yuan

Professor
Mankato, MN

Kaylie Schuch

Case Manager
Lutheran Social Services
Mankato, MN

Sydney Maciej

Probation Agent
Crow Wing County, MN

Grace Grinager

Community Member
Grand Marais, MN

Rose Downey

Children's Mental Health Social Worker
Grand Marais, MN

Leslie Olson

Children's Mental Health
Grand Portage, MN

Kate Surbaugh

CEO
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic
Grand Marais, MN

Mark Osler

Professor of Law
University of St. Thomas
Minneapolis, MN

Sarah Sigford

Grand Marais, MN

Stacy Schmidt

Licensed Social Worker
Grand Marais, MN

Tim Desmond

Category Manager
UNFI Corp
Grand Marais, MN

Jeremy Lopez

Grand Marais, MN

Ryan Leng

Librarian
Grand Marais Public Library
Grand Marais, MN

Karina Roth

Musician
Grand Marais, MN

Tara Bischoff

Community Member and Parent
St. Paul, MN

Jessica Smith

Registered Nurse
Rochester, MN

Christie John

Programs Administrator
Cook County, MN

Sarah Waddle

Grand Marais, MN

Alexis Enright

Healthcare Eligibility Worker
Polk County Social Services
Polk County

Joseph Hassler

Pastor and volunteer Police Chaplain
Mapleton, MN

Karen Egge

Educator and Coach
Growing Love Project LLC
St. Paul, MN

Serina Aubrect

Naturopathic Physician and Nutritionist
Minneapolis, MN

Rebecka VanderWerf

Assistant County Attorney
Mille Lacs County, MN

Samantha Gonzalez Longley

Community Educator
Brooklyn Park, MN

Mary Jo Sandretsky

Sales
RR Donnelly and Sons
Minneapolis, MN

Molly Fox

Lead Social Worker
North Mankato, MN

Hannah Van Otterloo

School Social Worker
North Mankato, MN

Desirey Trulove

Certified Peer Recovery Specialist
Mankato, MN

Olivia Oeltjen

School Social Worker
Mankato Public Schools
Blue Earth County, MN

James Sellers

Partner Operations Specialist
2nd Harvest Heartland
Minneapolis, MN

Patrick Clark

School Social Worker
Mankato Area Public Schools
Mankato, MN

Jacob Rux

School Social Worker
Mankato, MN

Anastasia Carter

School Social Worker
Mankato Area Public Schools
Mankato, MN

Brooke Rheault

Juvenile Case Administrator
Red Wing, MN

Tiana Iverson

School Social Worker
ISD 77
Mankato, MN

Colleen Newman

School Social Worker
MAPS Center for Learning
Mankato, MN

Alicia Brandenburg

Legal Assistant
Anoka County, MN

Megan Schultz

Youth Mental Health Navigator
Mankato Area Public Schools
Mankato, MN

Courtney Prokofieff

Outreach Representative
Minneapolis, MN

Melinda Wedzina

Chief Executive Officer
VINE Faith in Action
Mankato, MN

Christine Sorensen

Pastoral Minister
Risen Savior
Burnsville, MN

Becca Sharpsteen

School Social Worker
Mankato, MN

Katharine Hannaher

Attorney
Hennepin County Adult Representation
Services
St. Paul, MN

Elizabeth Harstad

Clinical Education Coordinator
Center for Rural Behavioral Health at
MSU-Mankato
North Mankato, MN

Andrew Young

IT Operations Specialist
Champlin, MN

Brit Fankhauser

Homeless Prevention Case Manager
Mankato, MN

Laura Schultz

Therapist
Mankato, MN

Rande Gustafson

Retired
Houston County, MN

Jodi Johnson

Paralegal
Sartell, MN

Nicole Gable

Tribal Worker-Lower Sioux
Morton, MN

Jacob Radtke

Housing Program Manager
Rochester, MN

Stephanie Rice-Neumann

Director of Social Services
The Landing MN
Rochester, MN

Nicole Austin

St. Paul, MN

Jennifer Valimont

CE Referral Specialist
River Valleys Continuum of Care
Blue Earth County, MN

Nicole Wibstad

McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison
Rochester, MN

Kevin Hill

Assistant County Attorney
Carver County
Chaska, MN

Greyson St. Martin

Assistant County Attorney
Carver County
Chaska, MN

Lisa Rovang

Social Worker
Rochester, MN

Midori Sakamoto

St. Paul, MN

Nancy Altman

Social Emotional Learning Interventionist
Mankato, MN

Christina Janiszkeski

Licensed Professional Counselor
Marshall, MN

Pam Whitfield

Professor
Mankato, MN

Dave Borchert

Chief of Police and Brown County

Commissioner

New Ulm, MN