



**FCADV**  
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTERS

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2015-2016  
CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

September 2015

*Sponsored by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the State of Florida,  
Department of Children and Families.*

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTERS 2015-2016 CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **History**

The Florida Legislature created the Capital Improvement Grant Program in 2000 to ensure that victims of domestic violence and their children have a place for refuge and safety in times of crisis (section 39.9055, Florida Statute). Since the inception of this program, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$31 million to distribute to Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers to construct, repair, acquire, improve, or upgrade center facilities.

In 2000, Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers were forced to turn away 7,896 domestic violence victims and their children due to overcapacity. During fiscal year 2013-2014, Florida's centers turned away 3,715 victims representing an approximate 53% decrease since the creation of the Capital Improvement Grant Program. The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) determines each year if advocating for capital funding is a priority for each legislative session. When the economy significantly declined, FCADV made the decision to focus on other needs. Florida's economy reflected the State was beginning a slight economic rebound during fiscal year 2011-2012. Therefore, FCADV requested the 2013 Florida Legislature consider appropriating an additional 10 million dollars to address the ever increasing demand for emergency shelter services. In April 2013, the Florida Legislature passed SB 1852 that appropriated 10 million dollars from the State's Mortgage Settlement Agreement to increase the number of emergency shelter beds available for domestic violence survivors and their children.

### **Distribution Methodology**

Florida Statute 39.9055 is prescriptive in terms of required eligibility criteria and qualifications for appropriating funds under the Capital Improvement Program. Florida law also mandates the collaboration of the Department of Children and Families with the FCADV and requires a competitive process utilizing the criteria, qualifications, and results of the annual needs assessment conducted by the Department. Unless otherwise directed by the Legislature, the Domestic Violence Program Office serves as the lead on creating the competitive RFP as well as assembling a selection committee to score and make funding recommendations. However, the 2013 Florida Legislature included language in Senate Bill 1852 that directed FCADV to serve as the lead entity to create a competitive RFP, appoint a selection committee, and render funding recommendations to the Department.

Historically, additional points are awarded to applicants that include higher than required match amounts to ensure the private sector is as invested as the State of Florida in ensuring survivors of domestic violence and their children are able to achieve safety in their communities. In addition to the statutory requirements, the Department and FCADV create additional criteria based on waiting lists, priorities reflected in the capital needs assessment, and match requirements. Additional points are typically awarded to those applicants who are actively engaged in a capital campaign and have a concrete plan of implementation. The independent selection committee ranks the applications and the centers are awarded funding based on their scores. The Department's General Services Office manages the fixed capital outlay funding provided to the projects in collaboration with the Domestic Violence Program Office.

### **Eligible Grant Applicants**

The only applicants eligible for Capital Improvement Grant funds are Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers. All centers house emergency shelter, outreach, and administrative facilities, and many also provide additional services such as transitional housing, childcare, and thrift store facilities. All services provided by the domestic violence centers are confidential, free of charge, and include 24-hour crisis hotline; emergency shelter; safety planning; information; advocacy; referral to services, such as legal, medical, vocational, housing, financial, and educational needs; individual and group support; children's services; and a multitude of other services.

### **Statement of Need**

In 2014, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Uniform Crime Report reflected that 106,882 incidents of domestic violence were reported to law enforcement and 64,460 arrests were made for domestic violence offenses. In the same year, 205 individuals died as a result of domestic violence murder and manslaughter, representing approximately 20.9% of all homicides in Florida.

Shelters range from small 15 bed facilities to larger 132 bed facilities, and provide temporary refuge for the victim in immediate crisis. Without options for emergency shelter, domestic violence victims find themselves without an escape venue, forcing them and their families to remain in an abusive home or becoming homeless, thus, putting them at greater risk. Shelters continue to be full, forcing many centers to take in families beyond their bed capacity, or to find alternative space in other types of local shelters or hotels that may pose more risk for the victims and their children.

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the state's certified domestic violence centers provided emergency shelter to 15,397 individuals and were forced to turn away 4,278 victims due to the lack of emergency shelter beds.

### **Survey Findings**

The 2015-2016 DV Center Capital Needs Assessment Survey was distributed by FCADV to Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers with a 98 percent response rate. Should the legislature appropriate funds for 2016-2017, the following information garnered from the 42 certified domestic violence centers will guide the priority areas of the competitive RFP.

Renovations or additions to emergency shelters ranked as the most urgent need, with maintenance and repairs ranking a very close second. Not surprisingly, with the limited affordable housing in Florida, respondents ranked transitional housing as the third most urgent need.

#### **Active Planning:**

- Six of the 42 centers are engaged in active capital campaigns to expand bed capacity and build new shelters; and
- One center is currently developing its capital campaign

The fundraising goals of the individual programs range from \$300,000 to \$7,400,000 depending on the capital project. For determining long-range needs the centers use a variety of accessible data including: 1) number of reported domestic violence crimes in their service areas during the calendar year; 2) number of nights shelters are at full capacity; 3) number turned away due to lack of space; 4) number of alternate accommodations provided due to lack of shelter space; and 5) population forecasts for service areas.

Other significant survey findings include:

#### **Shelters:**

- 24 centers need renovations or additions;
- 22 centers need maintenance and repairs;
- 14 centers need additional shelters or additional shelter beds; and
- 5 centers need replacement of existing shelters

Based on the survey responses, the domestic violence centers identified the need for increasing emergency shelter capacity by an additional 242 beds. Further, the surveys reflected the need for capital funding to expand meeting space for prevention education and other programs; upgrade kitchens, bathrooms, electrical, plumbing, and security systems; replace roofs, HVAC systems, and security fencing; provide for the addition of day care facilities, elementary classrooms, and playgrounds; and improve the configuration of

space to better accommodate residents' needs at any given time- single women to large families, survivors with disabilities to male survivors, etc.

### **Transitional Housing:**

Finding safe, affordable, and permanent housing for a survivor of domestic violence can be difficult, especially during the present economic climate. Today's market-rate is simply not affordable for families with low-incomes; and subsidized housing is almost nonexistent, with more than a year waiting lists in most communities. Therefore, it takes much longer for a survivor to secure housing due to this shortage, forcing them to stay in shelter longer than intended, live in substandard conditions, or return to their batterers. Recognizing the housing needs of survivors, many centers have or would like to set up transitional housing programs independently or with community partners.

- 13 centers list transitional housing as an essential need for residents exiting from shelter;
- 5 centers need additional housing for residents exiting from shelter;
- 3 centers need maintenance and repairs to their transitional housing facilities; and
- 2 centers need renovations or additions to their existing transitional housing facility

Capital improvements for transitional housing will add an additional 133 transitional housing units with a total of 370 additional beds.

### **Outreach:**

In communities where emergency shelters may not be available and public transportation is limited, especially in rural communities, domestic violence outreach programs provide essential services to the survivor and their children.

- 10 centers need replacement of existing facilities;
- 9 centers need maintenance and repairs of outreach facilities;
- 7 centers list additional outreach facilities as an essential need; and
- 5 centers need to add space or renovate existing facilities

### **Summary**

The centers estimated that their proposed capital improvement projects will add 242 emergency shelter and 370 transitional housing beds which will increase their capacity to provide life saving services to an estimated 3,000 additional victims and their children. The surveys identified nearly \$49 million in capital needs with an estimated individual project cost ranging from \$1,500 to \$8.7 million depending on the extent and complexity of the project.