

EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR CHILD CARE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVIDERS

April 2020

YWCA USA and its more than 200 local associations are grateful for the initial emergency relief included in the CARES Act, which helped to address immediate funding, staffing, and safety crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was an important first step, but based on regular survey data from our local associations in 45 states and Washington, D.C., more is needed in the next COVID-19 stimulus relief package.

Need: Ensure Domestic Violence Service Providers Keep Survivors Safe, Meet Increased Demand for Services

Among the over 110 respondents to our survey of local YWCA associations, during the first week of April:

- 84% of YWCA domestic and sexual violence hotlines report an increase in calls due to the pandemic
- 70% of YWCA domestic violence shelters report an increase in demand for emergency housing

1. Ask: An additional \$340 million in Emergency Funding to Domestic & Sexual Violence Service Providers

Utilize existing funding streams at the Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Housing & Urban Development, and U.S. Department of Justice to quickly distribute:

- An additional \$100 million through HHS' Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)
- \$100 million for HUD's Continuum of Care domestic violence bonus
- At least \$40 million to DOJ's VAWA Transitional Housing Assistance Grants
- \$100 million to support and respond to sexual violence through DOJ's VAWA Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)
- Waive the matching fund requirements for the Victims of Crime Act grants during this crisis to more quickly meet survivors' needs

YWCA requests maximum flexibility in use of funding, including waiving any required match, so that domestic and sexual violence service providers can utilize funds as needed. YWCA also supports the National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence's requests related to domestic and sexual violence.

Need: Keep Child Care Available for First Responders and Working Families

From YWCA's April survey of over 110 respondents:

- 70% of YWCA childcare programs are currently closed due to the COVID-19 crisis
- 32 YWCAs are providing **child care for first responders and essential workers** in communities as varied as New Britain, Connecticut; Cincinnati, Ohio; Kalamazoo, Michigan, and San Antonio, Texas.

2. Ask: Provide Additional Emergency Funding through CCDBG to Support Child Care Providers

We join broad childcare coalition requests for additional funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant to ensure that providers can continue to meet needs during the crisis and are able to help families get back to work as the nation's economy recovers. Maximum funding flexibility is needed to enable childcare providers to purchase supplies, ensure safe and sanitary conditions at centers, and maintain operations.

Need: Ensure 2020 Primary and General Elections are Safe, Fair, and Accessible

3. Ask: At least \$3.6 billion in funding to ensure both the public's safety and an equitable voting process

Systemic and structural racism - and active efforts to suppress voter participation - continue to disenfranchise communities of color. COVID-19 has further obstructed access to the voting booth making it even more

important for Congress to pass additional measures that would fully fund and direct states to administer the 2020 elections in a safe, fair, and accessible manner. This can be achieved through the expansion of early voting and in-person voting options. With the proper funding and flexibility, we can ensure a more secure, efficient, and accessible election while protecting the public health and safety.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE FIELD

From Nashville & Middle Tennessee

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more victims of domestic violence are being isolated at home with their abusers. The stress of the pandemic adds to an already dangerous environment. [We have] seen a 55% increase in calls to our 24-Hour Crisis Line for help in the last two weeks, including a 22% increase in calls from police officers connecting victims to our services.

Weaver Domestic Violence Center is the largest shelter in the Middle Tennessee region. At 65 beds, we serve over 500 women and children annually for over 20,000 nights of safety. [We] provide immediate safety for victims and are a critical service for Metropolitan Nashville Police Department as well as our local network of hospitals and social service agencies encountering victims of domestic abuse. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have put additional protocols in place to keep both our clients and staff as safe as possible. This includes social distancing, taking temperatures, and the use of masks and gloves when appropriate. Also, we are leveraging community resources for testing for those showing signs of illnesses, including telemedicine resources, so that we appropriately access the situation should someone present signs of illness.

From YWCA Central Massachusetts

The two traditional child care centers have closed but one opened as an emergency childcare center in collaboration with four other providers. They are providing childcare to workers at two hospitals and the City's first responders. Staff continue to connect with parents and children through computer webinars, email and home delivered packets and support.

From YWCA Metropolitan Detroit

For a city of over 670,000 people, there is only one emergency domestic violence shelter serving the entire city: YWCA of Metro Detroit - Interim House. Their 67-bed shelter is currently over capacity providing a safe place for 71 people (25 women and 46 children)... the shelter is currently overcrowded and always in need of cleaning supplies. Additionally, preventative gear is also needed as well as other essential items like personal need items, laundry detergent and diapers. Also because of the state's shelter-in-place order, YWCA Metro Detroit is not permitted to release anyone and cannot take in any new survivors at this time due to bed capacity.

From YWCA Harrisburg in Pennsylvania

We are not able to go to emergency room as medical advocates during SAFE exams. They are offering sexual assault survivors a video option to our advocates or making a referral for follow-up, but it is decreasing the number of survivors we connect with.