



STATE BUDGET ANSWERS THE CALL FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTERS

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) roundly applauds the Illinois General Assembly and Governor JB Pritzker for responding to the needs of sexual violence survivors by approving an FY25 state budget that includes a crucial and long-awaited funding increase for sexual assault services across the state.

The increase from the introduced \$7.6 million to the requested \$20 million will permit ICASA's 31 rape crisis centers to retain office sites, restore staff positions, reduce waiting lists for counseling and advocacy services for survivors, increase the number of hospitals served, and narrow the wage gap between rape crisis center staff and other social service providers.

“It was incredibly necessary that the State of Illinois increase its investment in sexual assault survivors and services and, for the first time in more than 20 years, significantly increase state funding for sexual assault services,” ICASA CEO Carrie Ward said. “Survivors and communities needed this to happen, and the General Assembly and Governor Pritzker came through for sexual assault survivors and services in our state. We thank them for their efforts and their acknowledgment of the essential services provided by sexual assault centers in Illinois communities.”

The \$20 million allocation reflects the first substantive increase in state General Revenue Funding for sexual assault services in over two decades and comes at a critical time given recent cuts to federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding and the upcoming sunset of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. In the past year, decreased federal funding and increased costs have resulted in closure of five satellite offices, cancelled contracts with 14 hospitals, and establishment of waiting lists for services at more than half of funded sexual assault centers across the state. This increase prevents further erosion of services, allows for many lost services to be restored, and increases capacity for competitive compensation for the highly trained, trauma-informed staff who respond to survivors in their time of need 24/7/365.

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