Pennsylvania
Commission on Crime and Delinquency

OFFICE OF VICTIMS' SERVICES

VOCA 101

Pennsylvania's Victim Services Funding Crisis



VOCA is a federal law passed in 1984 that created the Crime Victims Fund, providing a permanent, nationwide source of funding for services that support victims of crime. It is the largest and primary funding source for victim service organizations across the nation, including in Pennsylvania.

How is VOCA funded?

VOCA is unique because it does not use taxpayer dollars. Instead, the Crime Victims Fund is supported entirely by fines, penalties, and forfeitures paid by federal offenders.

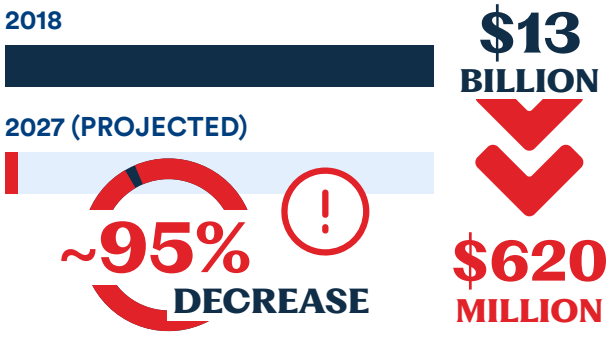


What is the current problem with VOCA funding?

The federal Crime Victims Fund has experienced years of declining deposits, leaving states with far less money to distribute to local victim service programs. Victim assistance funding nationwide has dropped from $3.3 billion in 2018 to under $800 million in recent years, a roughly 77 percent reduction caused by fluctuating revenues from criminal penalties and congressional redirects to non-victim programs.

Pennsylvania has already implemented a 12.5 percent cut to VOCA grants over the past three years, and if funding continues to decline as expected, the state will be forced to impose even more severe reductions in grant to local programs in the next year which will have devastating impacts on the entire

How serious is the decline in the Crime Victims Fund?



The available balance (excluding deposits still on hold) has declined from a high of $13 billion in 2018 to an anticipated $620 million at the start of 2027—a decrease of roughly 95%.

How does VOCA funding help victims in Pennsylvania?

VOCA funds are distributed to states, then passed to local agencies via grants to pay for salaries and benefits of employees and to help provide victim services such as:

- Crisis intervention and 24/7 hotline support
- Emergency shelter, housing, and safety planning
- Counseling, therapy, and trauma-informed care
- Legal advocacy and court accompaniment
- Victims' rights information
- Referrals to community resources

Additionally, VOCA reimburses around 75% of what Pennsylvania pays through the Victim Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP), which helps offset the financial costs crime victims face that can't be covered through other means, such as medical, counseling, funeral, and relocation expenses.

Take Action: Support Victims

Scan the QR code or visit **PCCD.PA.GOV** to view the **VOCA Toolkit** and learn how you can help Pennsylvania victims and their families

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What about the "VOCA Fix" and pending "Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act"?

In 2021, Congress passed VOCA "Fix" legislation, which improved how fines and penalties were deposited into the Crime Victims Fund. However, the fix has not been enough to offset reductions in deposits and reverse fund depletion.

More recent federal legislation has been proposed to direct False Claims Act recoveries into the Crime Victims Fund to stabilize it. While this "Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act" legislation overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House in January 2026, it is still awaiting further action in the Senate.

What specific services are being cut as VOCA funds decline?

As VOCA funding declines, Pennsylvania victim service providers report reductions in staffing and essential services:

Staffing Capacity
Staff reductions of up to 33%, limiting programs' capacity to respond to victims.

Counseling & Trauma Support
A 35% reduction in counseling, therapy, hotline counseling, and support group services provided annually between 2021 and 2025, along with reduced therapy hours and trauma counseling.

Emergency Housing & Crisis Response
Reductions in emergency housing, housing assistance, and crisis response—including the elimination of emergency housing services for some sexual assault and trafficking victims.

Civil Legal Services
Reduced civil legal assistance for domestic violence survivors.

What happens if VOCA funding continues to decline?

Victim service providers may face:

Reduced Services
Further reductions or elimination of victim services

Longer Waitlists
Reduced or delayed access to counseling, shelter, and other assistance

Staffing Losses
Additional vacancies and layoffs

Program Sustainability
Potential program or agency closures



94% of VSPs

believe additional cuts will further reduce their ability to serve victims

- **54%** of VSPs report staff burnout
- **31%** report high staff turnover
- **64%** intentionally leave positions vacant due to funding uncertainty
- **50%** struggle to hire qualified staff
- **74%** say low wages/benefits are a major barrier
- **75%** cannot fully meet the needs of victims today

What can our legislators and policymakers do to help?

- **Consider Federal Stabilization Legislation**
  Support the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act of 2025 (H.R. 909), which would redirect False Claims Act residual funds to support VOCA grants.
- **Consider Temporary State Bridge Funding**
  Advocate for emergency 'stop-gap' state funding to help offset the federal VOCA funding shortfall and sustain essential victim services while federal VOCA funding reforms are also pursued.
- **Engage Local Victim Service Providers**
  Visit local victim service providers to see firsthand the critical impact VOCA has on communities.

How have other states responded?

Maryland
Nearly $60M in FY 2027 victim services funding

Massachusetts
$20M VOCA Bridge funding since FY 2023