**COVID Impacts on Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Child Abuse**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating impact across the United States, not only in exposure to a deadly virus, but also the increased risk of violence faced by children, adolescents, and adults. Abuse was already rampant before the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing high rates of violence against both children and adults. A fix to increase deposits into the non-taxpayer-funded Crime Victims Fund to avoid dramatic cuts to VOCA victim service grants and to increase the availability of victim compensation is critical to address the current and ongoing COVID-19-related victims’ needs. For example:

 **Child Abuse:**

* Child abuse reports have been down 50-70% across the US (as compared to 2019) because mandatory reporters (teachers/school personnel/doctors/etc) are not able to see children in person. Reports are again rising (30-40% each month); however, when schools reopen, the numbers are expected to increase dramatically.
* The National Child Abuse Hotline experienced a 23% increase in calls and a 263% increase in texts in March 2020, as compared to March 2019; and more than half of the caller’s to RAINN’s National Sexual Abuse Hotline were minors reporting their own abuse, with 79% of them living with their abuser.
* In Texas, the number of cases of child abuse fatalities doubled during the March/April/May time frame, over what they were during those 3 months in 2019.

**Intimate Partner Violence:**

* In April, the National Domestic Violence Hotline saw an increase of 15% in contacts over April of 2019. Between March 16 and July 5, nearly one-in-ten callers specifically identified COVID-19 as part of the pattern of abuse perpetrated against them.
* Nationwide, calls to police related to domestic violence incidents increased by 30% during the first 6 weeks of the pandemic.
* Multiple studies have found a correlation between disasters with similarities to the COVID-19 pandemic and an increase in domestic violence. The need for services often peaks months after survivors can safely leave their homes.

**Sexual Assault:**

* 40% of programs have experienced an increased demand for services since the onset of COVID-19 both in terms of new requests and more dire and complicated requests from current clients, including reports of employers and landlords taking advantage of survivor vulnerability to commit abuse.
* A survey of sexual assault programs found that 89% of pro[g](https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/)rams need additional funding to respond to current requests from surviv[ors](https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/).
* VOCA funding is more vital than ever for programs trying to serve survivors. April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and many programs had to cancel their signature fundraisers in addition to experiencing overall decreases in private donations.

**Human Trafficking:**

* Human trafficking increased 40% in April over April of 2019.