



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

S. Duke Storen
Commissioner

January 3, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Janet D. Howell, Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chair
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: S. Duke Storen *S. Duke Storen*

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention
Fund

The attached report is pursuant to § 63.2-2300 C. 6. of the Code of Virginia. Please contact me if you have any questions.

SDS:kc
Attachments



SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND

Fiscal Year 2021 Report to the General Assembly

The first report on the new special Fund established in 2020 to decrease the negative effects that sexual and domestic violence have on communities in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Department of Social Services
October 2021

Report Mandate

Virginia Code § 63.2-2300 provides:

“B. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special non-reverting fund to be known as the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund (the Fund). The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All moneys appropriated by the General Assembly for the Fund, and received from any other sources, public or private, shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Commissioner. Up to five percent of the Fund may be used to pay the expenses necessary for administration of the Fund by the Department.

C. 6. The Department shall produce an annual report on the expenditures and activities associated with the Fund and provide such report to the Governor and the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations and the House Committee on Appropriations by November 30 each year.”

History and Overview

The Virginia General Assembly established a special, non-reverting fund in 2019 to decrease the negative effects sexual and domestic violence have on communities in the Commonwealth. The Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund (the Fund) is established in Section 63.2-2300 of the Code of Virginia. (See Appendix 1). The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is responsible for administration of the Fund. In collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (the Action Alliance), VDSS will develop a plan for the distribution of 85% of the funds through grants for the provision of local sexual and domestic violence prevention initiatives. VDSS is also responsible for the development of a sub-grant for the provision of training and technical assistance to those implementing prevention programs.

Virginia has a long history of funding the core services that respond to the needs of those who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault. Today there are 71 sexual and domestic violence agencies funded by state agencies to provide comprehensive sexual and domestic violence services. Although services may look slightly different across the state, comprehensive services typically include:

- 24-hour crisis intervention
- 24-hour access to accompaniment services (medical or justice systems)
- Access to emergency shelter
- Advocacy
- Service coordination
- Population-specific programming/interventions

- Counseling
- Accompaniment to medical and criminal/civil justice systems
- Support groups
- Children's services
- Emergency transportation
- Access to food and clothing

Comprehensive services such as these, including community engagement activities (presentations and trainings), are offered throughout the state by domestic and sexual violence agencies and play a vital role in the safety net needed by individuals and families impacted by violence. These intervention services are also considered secondary or tertiary prevention efforts, as they may prevent further abuse from occurring on a short-term basis. Secondary prevention involves intervening and responding to violence that has already occurred with the goal of stopping violence from occurring again. Tertiary prevention provides ongoing support and services to survivors of trauma to reduce the long-term effects. As further defined in the *Professional Standards Manual for Sexual and Domestic Violence Programs* (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2019), prevention is the shifting of attitudes, behaviors, and norms that support and perpetuate the root causes of sexual and/or domestic violence. Prevention initiatives use evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies to promote healthy behaviors in communities where sexual and/or domestic violence are likely to occur.

Sexual violence (SV) prevention activities have primarily been supported by Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) funds. The Violence Against Women Act, passed by Congress in 1994, established the RPE program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The RPE program provides funds for state health departments and seeks to develop and strengthen SV prevention efforts at local, state, and national levels. Virginia has received RPE funds since the program's inception. RPE funds have been integral to sexual violence prevention work in the Commonwealth by supporting a public health approach through education and primary prevention efforts. Primary prevention refers to strategies used to prevent trauma before it occurs and reduce overall likelihood that a person will be victimized.

In 2005, Virginia made significant strides to move from basic awareness activities to those primary prevention strategies that change beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. In June of that year, VDH issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Sexual Violence Prevention. This RFP requested proposals with a significantly different focus than that of prior RPE funded projects and required a majority of the funded projects be focused on primary prevention strategies rather than outreach and awareness activities. Subsequent RPE funded solicitations have continued to ensure alignment with emerging best practices in primary prevention.

In 2016, the CDC published *STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence*. This compilation of core strategies focuses on prevention activities with the greatest potential to reduce sexual violence and its consequences. *STOP SV* supports a comprehensive approach to the prevention of sexual violence at the individual, relational, community and societal levels of the social ecological model (SEM).

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program provides funds for domestic violence shelter and services. These federal funds are awarded to VDSS through the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Only a small portion of the FVPSA funds may be used for prevention initiatives. After 40 years of exclusive intervention funding, VDSS began to use funds for domestic violence (DV)

primary prevention. In 2016, VDSS set aside a small portion of the FVPSA funds for primary prevention. The sub-recipients of the FVPSA funds made the choice to decrease their intervention dollars to enter into the critical development of primary prevention initiatives. These programs use best practices in public health to not only reduce risks, but to build protective factors and resilience and to prevent violence before it can occur.

VDSS and VDH developed an immediate collaborative partnership, working together and with other stakeholders, including the Action Alliance, to write the first Sexual and Domestic Violence Primary Prevention State Plan. The collaborators invited local service providers and national experts to help inform the Plan.

The three agencies continue to bring together those doing prevention work, to network, share ideas and learn about effective strategies for delivering evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention programs. Unfortunately, most agencies attempt to operate their *primary* prevention programs on budgets of less than \$20,000 per year, a level insufficient to gain their intended impact.

In 2020, House Bill 1015 and Senate Bill 297 were passed that created Virginia Code § 63.2-2300, which established a special, non-reverting fund, known as the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund (the Fund). (See Appendix A). These bills and the subsequent allocation of general fund dollars, marks the first time that state funds have been dedicated to the primary prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Expenditures

The Fund is located in the VDH budget section of the Appropriation Act. Allocations for the Fund in the amount of \$750,000 for the first year and \$750,000 for the second year were made during the 2020 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, but were later unallotted due to the extenuating circumstances brought on by COVID-19. During the 2021 Session, Funds were re-allotted in the amount of \$100,000 for the first year (FY 2021) and \$650,000 for the second year (FY 2022).

Revised guidance from the CDC required VDH to shift their funding focus of RPE funded efforts increasing an emphasis on the community and societal levels of the SEM. The resulting shift in the types of RPE supported prevention projects created unavoidable funding challenges for sexual violence agencies previously supported by RPE funding. In FY 2022, additional budget language was added to the state budget, directing VDH to use the Fund to continue the financial support to a number of local agencies previously supported through the federal funding stream of RPE funds. (See appendix 2).

The more recent approved budget of \$100,000 for FY 2021 was well below the funding level required to fulfill the directives identified in the Appropriation Act. As the Fund is a special, non-reverting fund, FY 2021 funds will remain in the Fund and be added to subsequent appropriations. In FY 2022, VDH will be able to comply with the directives detailed in the Appropriation Act. As a result, no funds have yet been spent by either agency.

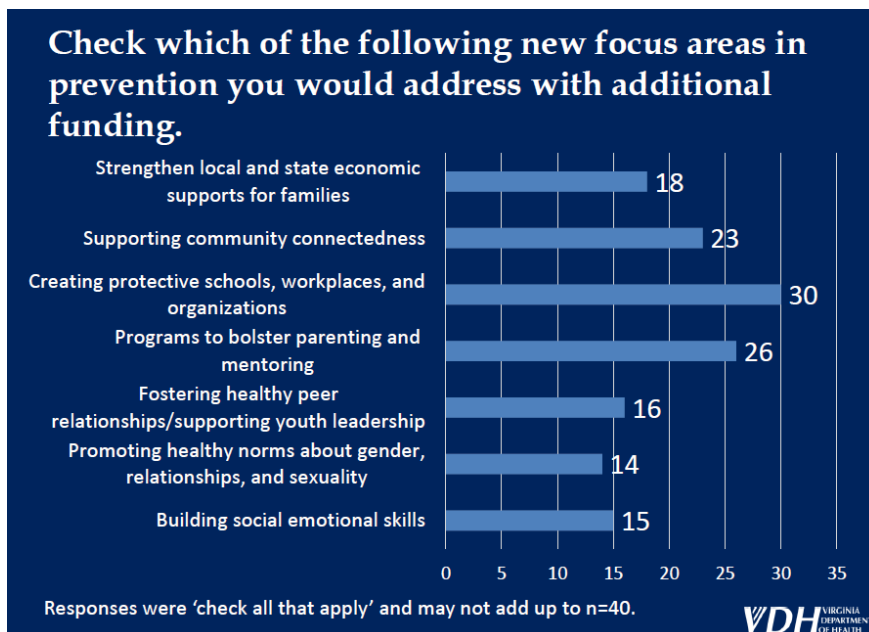
Activities

Funding Plan Development:

VDSS worked in coordination with VDH and the Action Alliance, forming a workgroup, to develop a plan for the distribution of the moneys in the Fund. The workgroup met throughout FY 2021 to develop a framework for the Funding Distribution Plan that addressed the full spectrum of considerations. To ensure that voices from the field were incorporated into the Funding Distribution Plan, the workgroup developed a survey through which local sexual and domestic violence agencies (SDVAs) could provide input.

A survey of local SDVAs was conducted in November, 2020. VDH led the survey development process with the full workgroup, and set up the survey in RedCap. The Action Alliance distributed the survey to all of their member agencies and 40 local SDVA completed the survey. Most respondents were dual (domestic and sexual violence) agencies (n=25). Other respondents included multi-service organizations, stand-alone domestic violence agencies, culturally specific organizations and one stand-alone sexual violence agency. Two of the findings include:

- The responses showed an even split in current levels of experience with and capacity for primary prevention, with 50% having a moderate to low capacity, and 50% having moderate to high capacity.
- Respondents expressed a broad interest in new focus areas that they would like to address with additional funding.



The Funding Distribution Plan is a living document that will change with the available levels of funding and will reflect current research, literature, and the opinions of local prevention experts. The

framework of the Funding Distribution Plan states the funding priorities of 1) equal support for sexual violence prevention and domestic violence prevention, 2) a dedication of 50% of available funds to support brand new initiatives, and 3) a required focus of every funded project on underserved populations.

With the funding for sexual violence prevention being funded through a separate state agency (VDH) from the domestic violence prevention (VDSS), the Funding Distribution Plan outlines requirements of all funded projects, ensuring a uniform focus, collaboration expectations, levels of readiness, data collection and minimum dedicated staffing levels.

The final component of the Funding Distribution Plan is the requirement that all funded initiatives adhere to one of the supported strategies listed below:

1. Developing social and emotional skills
2. Teaching/ promoting healthy norms about gender, relationships, and sexuality
3. Fostering healthy peer relationships/supporting youth leadership
4. Programs to bolster parenting & adult/youth mentoring
5. Creating protective schools, workplaces, & organizations
6. Supporting community connectedness
7. Strengthen local and state economic supports for families

Budget Implications

A distribution formula is detailed in Virginia Code § 63.2-2300, ensuring that all intended aspects of the Fund are appropriately supported. Funds to support sexual and domestic violence prevention are each to receive 40 to 45% of the Fund; not less than 5% of the Fund will support training and technical assistance; up to 5% of the Fund will support the administrative costs of VDSS; and, 5% of the annual allotment must remain in the Fund.

Additional budget language added new obligations for VDH for FY 2022. The level of funds required by VDH to support the organizations previously funded by the RPE grant are being re-examined in light of the awardee selection for the 2022 RPE Request for Proposals released by VDH. In FY 2022, VDH will award monies from the Fund to any of the sexual assault agencies identified in the budget language not receiving RPE funds. The remainder of the Fund, outside of the 5% of the annual allotment required to remain in the fund, will be made available to VDSS for the purposes of domestic violence prevention activities.

Appendix

1. Section 63.2-2300 of the Code of Virginia
2. Budget - Virginia Department of Health, Item 301
3. Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund, Distribution Plan Workgroup Members

APPENDIX 1

Code of Virginia

Title 63.2. Welfare (Social Services)

Chapter 23. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund

§ 63.2-2300. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund; report

A. The General Assembly finds and declares that sexual and domestic violence is a serious public health and safety concern in the Commonwealth, and that evidence-based and evidence informed prevention programs are critical to decrease the negative effects that sexual and domestic violence have on communities in the Commonwealth. It is therefore in the best interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth to support such programs for the purpose of lowering the occurrence of sexual and domestic violence in the Commonwealth.

B. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special non-reverting fund to be known as the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund (the Fund). The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All moneys appropriated by the General Assembly for the Fund, and received from any other sources, public or private, shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund.

Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Commissioner. Up to five percent of the Fund may be used to pay the expenses necessary for administration of the Fund by the Department.

C. The Fund shall be administered by the Department in accordance with the provisions of this section and subject to the following:

1. The Department shall use moneys in the Fund to develop and support prevention programs in the Commonwealth and perform such other acts as may be necessary to comply with the provisions of this section.

2. No less than five percent of the Fund shall be granted to an organization that provides training and technical assistance to entities implementing prevention programs and for the development of statewide strategies to reinforce and expand prevention efforts.

3. No less than 40 percent but not more than 45 percent of the Fund shall be granted to the Department of Health's Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Prevention program for the distribution of grants to support and evaluate evidence-based and evidence-informed sexual violence prevention programs. Up to five percent of such funds may be used to pay the expenses necessary to distribution of such grants by the Department of Health.

4. The Department shall, in coordination with the Department of Health and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, develop a plan for distribution of moneys in the Fund. Such plan shall identify evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention programs and develop strategies to promote research and evaluation of prevention initiatives. Such plan shall include a process for determining appropriate grant amounts and other strategies that help to prevent or support programs that prevent sexual and domestic violence in the Commonwealth.

5. The Department shall distribute grants to support and evaluate evidence-based and evidence informed domestic violence prevention programs.

6. The Department shall produce an annual report on the expenditures and activities associated with the Fund and provide such report to the Governor and the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations and the House Committee on Appropriations by November 30 each year.

7. No more than 95 percent of moneys in the Fund shall be awarded or allocated in any fiscal year.

D. For the purposes of this section, "prevention program" means an evidence-based or evidence informed program that (i) is operated by a local public or private nonprofit agency and (ii) has the primary purpose of preventing sexual and domestic violence through strategies that (a) promote the development and maintenance of healthy practices related to relationships, sexuality, and social-emotional development and (b) counteract the factors associated with the initial perpetration of sexual and domestic violence.

2020, cc. [912](#), [913](#).

The chapters of the acts of assembly referenced in the historical citation at the end of this section may not constitute a comprehensive list of such chapters and may exclude chapters whose provisions have expired.

APPENDIX 2

VIRGINIA STATE BUDGET

2021 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB1800 (Chapter 552)

Bill Order » Office of Health and Human Resources » Item 301

Department of Health

G.1. Out of the appropriation, \$100,000 the first year and \$650,000 the second year from the general fund shall be transferred to the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund.

2. The Department of Health shall continue to award and provide federal Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) funds through the cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control to the six sexual and domestic violence organizations that received such funds in year two of the cooperative agreement. If however, the Centers for Disease Control does not approve or limits the cooperative agreement funding that can be awarded to these organizations, then the department shall make grants, notwithstanding any other provision of law, from the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund in an amount the first year or the second year to ensure the same level of funding the organizations received in federal RPE funds in year two of the cooperative agreement.

APPENDIX 3

SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND DISTRIBUTION PLAN WORKGROUP

Virginia Department of Social Services

Nancy Fowler, Director, Office of Family Violence

Quillin Musgrave, Domestic Violence Program Specialist

Virginia Department of Health

Heather Board, Division Director, Injury and Violence Prevention

Lisa Wooten, Injury and Violence Prevention Program Supervisor

Maria Altonen, RPE Director

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Kristi VanAudenhove, Executive Director

Jonathan Yglesias, Policy Director

Kat Monsky, Prevention & Community Resilience Director