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### Member Agencies

Blackstone Valley  
Advocacy Center

Domestic Violence  
Resource Center of  
South County

Elizabeth Buffum  
Chace Center

Women's Resource Center

### Task Force

Sisters Overcoming  
Abusive Relationships

### Affiliate Members

Center for Southeast Asians

Crossroads Rhode Island

Family Service of Rhode Island

McAuley Ministries –  
McAuley Village

Progreso Latino

YWCA Rhode Island

To: Representative Teresa Tanzi, Chair of the House Finance  
Subcommittee on Human Services  
Honorable Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Lucy Rios, Executive Director  
RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Date: April 2, 2025

Re: **Governor's FY 2026 , FY 2025 Revised and Capital Budgets**

On behalf of our network of member agencies and SOAR (Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships), our taskforce of survivors, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) appreciates this opportunity to support the proposed Department of Human Services budget (DHS) in the Governor's FY 2026 state budget.

**We appreciate the Governor's commitment to sustaining funding to the RICADV Domestic Violence Prevention Fund (DVPF).** These resources maintain critical community connections that prevent violence in our state and support children who have witnessed abuse. **This line-item is the only funding of its kind available at the state level to address the prevention of domestic violence.**

In 2016, the General Assembly established the DVPF with the goal of stopping domestic violence before it starts and preventing people from ever becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse. As the administering organization, RICADV uses these funds in two critical ways: supporting evidence-informed primary prevention programs and providing services for children who have witnessed abuse. In 2023, DVPF funds supported seven micro-grant recipients: Conexión Latina Newport, The Step Up Center, East Bay Community Action Program, Refugee Dream Center, Sojourner House, and the Alliance of Rhode Island South East Asians for Education. Each organization leveraged their strengths to apply prevention strategies that prioritize communities most impacted by domestic violence.

In addition to funding micro-grants in partnership with community-based organizations, **DVPF funds support hundreds of children in our state who witness abuse in their home.** In 2022, children were present for 26% of domestic violence incidents resulting in arrest.<sup>1</sup> Exposure to violence is a major risk factor for children, not only increasing the likelihood of experiencing or perpetrating relationship abuse themselves, but also impacting mental health and educational outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

As the state's only recognized domestic violence coalition made up of agencies serving victims throughout the state, we are uniquely positioned to pass these funds through to our member agencies: Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County; Women's Resource Center; Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center; and Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center. Our full-member agencies were among the first to provide services for victims of domestic violence in RI and have been the bedrock of our community's response to domestic violence for almost half a century. **In 2024 alone, RICADV member agencies served 303 children who witnessed domestic violence, 9,661 individual victims, and provided 46,318 individual services.**

Thank you again for your continued investment in domestic violence prevention in our state. **As federal Victims of Crime Act funds wane, with further federal cuts predicted, state funding has never been more imperative to support the needs of survivors and end domestic violence in our state.**

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Kids Count. (2024). Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook. [https://rikidscount.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/children-witnessing-domestic-violence\\_2024fb.pdf](https://rikidscount.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/children-witnessing-domestic-violence_2024fb.pdf)