

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz  
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues  
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Michlewitz and Rodrigues:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) and the Victim and Witness Assistance Board, relative to the Victims of Drunk Driving Trafficking Trust Fund.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 10, § 66, the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance is submitting this letter to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees to detail Victims of Drunk Driving Trust Fund (DDTF) funding and activities during FY2023 (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023).

### **Fund History**

The DDTF was established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2002 to provide direct support services to victims, witnesses, and their family members impacted by drunk and drugged driving crashes. Funding is derived from fines and fees levied against a person who is convicted, placed on probation, granted a continuance without a finding, or admits to sufficient facts for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

These fines are directed into the DDTF and granted out to government and community-based agencies that provide free services including criminal justice advocacy, counselling services, case management, peer support, and information/referrals to other needed services. To increase awareness and impact of DDTF services, available services were expanded in 2012 to include prevention, education, and training (PET) activities.

The allocation of DDTF funding has fluctuated in recent years amid challenges and unpredictability of MOVA's varied funding streams. In FY2019, to preserve DDTF funds for the future, MOVA began to fund direct services related to impaired driving through federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants rather than the trust. However, VOCA funding has since been significantly reduced over the last several years. From FY2018 to FY2023 Massachusetts saw a nearly 60% decrease in its federal VOCA award. Thus, MOVA has had to evaluate the overall impact of reductions in our funding to determine the best and most effective ways by which to utilize all funds available to us, including through the DDTF.

### **Reporting**

As part of an intentional and strategic decision by MOVA, funding awards were not granted in FY2023 from the DDTF. Direct service programs serving victims of drunk and drugged driving were supported by a *braided funding model*, which utilized both federal VOCA funds and general appropriation dollars from the ["VOCA Bridge"](#). PET awards were not offered in FY2023.

Over the last several years, annual deposits into the DDTF have fluctuated (See Table 1). In FY2023, \$315,319.29 was deposited into the DDTF. The FY2023 year-end balance amounted to \$1,230,776.20. MOVA is actively advocating for additional state support for the VOCA Bridge, an ongoing funding request to the Massachusetts legislature to supplement the reduced federal VOCA funding. Supplemental funding for victim services in Massachusetts will minimize the need to reserve and reallocate our current funding sources, such as the DDTF, in order to sustain vital victim and survivor services across the state.

***Table 1: DDTF Deposit Amounts FY18-FY23***

<b>Fiscal Year (FY)</b>	<b>Deposits</b>
2018	\$343,465.95
2019	\$350,179.15
2020	\$302,722.87
2021	\$248,151.38
2022	\$259,151.38
2023	\$315,319.29

DDTF collections over the last several years highlight the overall unpredictability and lack of consistency in funding for victim services. Table 1 illustrates the specific amounts associated with the annual deposits into the DDTF over the last six years, highlighting the recently dynamic nature of the fund's financial activity.

Though no awards were administered in FY2023, MOVA previously awarded \$249,000 to 9 community-based and government service agencies in FY2022. These agencies provided impaired driving prevention, education, and training (PET) activities in FY2022. PET programming was implemented within 5 counties and reached audiences that included law enforcement, high school and college students, school faculty, parents, healthcare professionals, mental health providers, bartenders, and servers among others. Should appropriate funds become available in the future, MOVA would award similar initiatives, providing essential prevention and support services for communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Looking ahead, in FY2024, funds within the DDTF are being utilized to actively mitigate reduced federal VOCA funding, helping to keep crucial victim service programming afloat across the state. Through this initiative and others, MOVA aims to maximize the impact of currently available funding, while also seeking more sustainable, long-term solutions that will allow agencies and service providers to best meet the unique needs of their communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. MOVA is appreciative of your support to advance the rights and services available to crime victims in Massachusetts. If MOVA may provide further documentation or information to the committees with respect to the DDTF, please do not hesitate to contact Policy and Legislative Affairs Specialist, Georgia Aguilar, at: [georgia.m.aguilar@mass.gov](mailto:georgia.m.aguilar@mass.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Liam T. Lowney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

**LIAM T. LOWNEY**

*Executive Director*