

# MOVA

# SUPPORT THE VOCA BRIDGE

*\$20M needed in the FY25 Budget to bridge cuts to VOCA programs to maintain crime victim services*

## *What is the VOCA Bridge?*

The **VOCA Bridge** is a multi-year \$60 million funding request to the Massachusetts Legislature to bridge impending cuts to Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) programs to maintain victim services.

A continued state investment will support and stabilize critical victim service programs throughout the Commonwealth and ensure that access to trauma informed services remains accessible amid devastating reductions in federal funding.

To date, the Legislature has allocated \$40 million of the total request to support the VOCA Bridge.

## *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding*

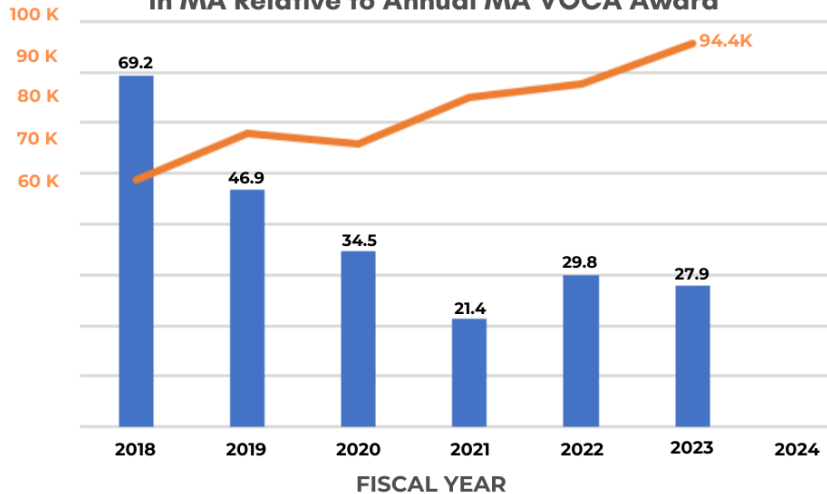
MOVA is the sole administrator of federal Victim of Crime Act's (VOCA) funding in Massachusetts. VOCA is not funded by taxpayers, but rather originates from monetary penalties associated with federal criminal convictions.

VOCA dollars are the only funding source available for services to all victims of crime.

Funding available for VOCA grants is historically low. The future of victim services across the Commonwealth is in jeopardy as a result of significantly reduced annual federal funding and few new deposits into the **Crime Victims Fund**.

The result: Any decrease in the funds available for distribution results in fewer victims and survivors served, as well as potential loss of essential staff for direct victim service programming, which threatens agencies' livelihoods and ability to prevent future violence by working to address root causes.

Number of Individual Victims Served by VOCA Dollars in MA Relative to Annual MA VOCA Award



- Approximate Total Number of Individual Victims Served in Massachusetts (in thousands)
- Annual Massachusetts VOCA Award in Millions of Dollars

VOCA grant awards have steadily declined since FY18, reflecting reductions in the federal VOCA fund. Yet, the demand for services has increased (detailed on the left).

**Massachusetts' VOCA awards have also steadily declined in the last six years. The projected federal funding allocation for the next year represents a 40% decrease from current awards. This means there is less funding available for crime victim support services, despite the reality that the demand for services has increased.**

Reduced available dollars impact funding to services that support all victims of crime including children's advocacy centers, sexual assault programs, domestic violence programs, homicide bereavement programs, victim legal assistance services, elder abuse programs and other services to historically marginalized and underserved crime victims who were disproportionately impacted.

## Where are we now?

The Legislature's commitment to supporting the VOCA Bridge has provided a critical lifeline for victims of crime to access services and address increasing demands.

To date, the Legislature has committed \$40M in VOCA Bridge funding in Massachusetts.

### REQUEST:

***Support \$20M for The VOCA Bridge to MOVA's line item (0840-0100) to ensure the sustainability of victim services throughout the Commonwealth and to allow MOVA to better support survivors and their evolving needs.***