



January 12, 2023

2022 Annual Report to the Governor and the Legislature

The Legislature created the Council in 1982 to address the disruptive influence of domestic violence on society, provide protection and refuge to victims, and administer grant funding for victim services throughout Idaho. [Idaho Code § 39-5201](#). The Council is required to submit annual reports to the governor and the legislature per [Idaho Code § 39-5208\(8\)](#). We appreciate the opportunity to share this legislative report summarizing the work of our agency during 2022. Your feedback is welcome, and we are happy to answer questions.

Mission

The Council's mission is to ensure that all victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and other violent crimes in Idaho have access to quality trauma-informed and victim-centered services. Victim services should be accessible and sustainable throughout the State while supporting the resiliency and empowerment of victims.

Sustaining Victim Service Programs Through a Decline in Federal Funding

Pursuant to [Idaho Code § 39-5201](#), the Council is the advisory body to fund, promote, and support programs and services affecting victims of domestic violence and other crimes in Idaho. **Most of Idaho's funding for victim services is from the federal Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance formula grant, VOCA. VOCA awards declined significantly in recent years, and all states have struggled to navigate this funding decline, with many losing victim service programs. If our rural Idaho programs cannot survive the funding decline, they likely will not return when funds rebound, so sustaining programs has been a key Council objective.** Director Cunningham began serving on the board of the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) in 2022, which will help ensure that primarily rural states like Idaho have a voice in national discussions, including those regarding the current balance of the Crime Victims Fund (which funds VOCA awards from penalties on federal crimes).

Idaho has not yet lost any victim service programs due to funding. The Council funded 49 programs in FY22 and 45 in FY23. Governor Little recommended, and the 2022 Idaho Legislature appropriated, \$6 million in one-time funding from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund to

help bridge the gap until VOCA awards increase to sustainable levels. Additional one-time funds were also made available through our other federal formula grant, Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (FVPSA). These funds have been vital in sustaining programs.

Also critical is the remarkable effort that Idaho programs made to pull together and reduce the total amount of their grant requests, recognizing the need to ensure the survival of all programs. It was a major shift to transition from typical grant requests, where each program sought as much funding as possible each application cycle, to limited and reduced requests where programs asked for the minimum necessary to sustain operations. Director Cunningham asked programs to begin to think of VOCA funds at the statewide level; those funds must sustain *all* programs. Every program must take the needs of others into consideration when making grant requests if we are to sustain services statewide until additional funding is available, and *they have*.

Our [FY23 grant scoring rubric](#) incentivized programs to reduce their dependency on Council grants, avoid duplication of services, collaborate with each other and community partners, cut expenses, and prioritize direct services. **Our transparency and engagement with programs has led to collaboration and cooperation which is truly unique in the national landscape.** Director Cunningham was recently asked to speak at the VOCA Bi-Annual Summit about Idaho's messaging to programs regarding the funding decline. Federal grant officers, other state administrators, and even the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime complimented Idaho on the proactive and creative strategies we have implemented, the extent of our engagement with funded programs, and the clear results due to these changes. Other states have not only lost programs, but have experienced programs fighting one another for limited resources, with state staff being attacked by programs over the budget reductions to the point that they quit their jobs. **We are proud of Idaho programs and the ways they are working together, and with the Council, to keep victim services available at a time when there is a greater demand for services than ever, yet declining funding.**

[Making the Best Use of Limited Funds Requires Revisions to Administrative Rules](#)

As part of the proactive effort to ensure limited funds can be sent where they are most needed, the Council embarked on the negotiated rulemaking process to revise our grant distribution formulas; the result is [pending IDAPA 16.05.04](#). Stakeholder involvement was exceptionally high, with 47 of 48 funded programs participating in the rulemaking process, as well as 6 other stakeholders. In a recent survey of programs, over 69% of respondents indicated the rulemaking process educated them about the rules and how they impact programs. There has been no opposition; everyone seems to understand the need to update these outdated and ineffective formulas which have not been revised since 1990. There is also overwhelming support for revising how the state domestic violence project grant, funded from fees on marriage licenses

and divorce decrees, are distributed. The Council proposes a bill this session to revise [Idaho Code § 39-5212](#) to allow need and demand to be taken into account in grant distribution.

Developing Reliable Data to Inform Funding Decisions

Good data is key to good decision making. **The Council began collecting data on the need and demand for housing and counseling in FY22. The first 15 months of data show that while 2,445 victims were provided shelter, 1,082 victims were waitlisted.** The average stay in emergency shelter was 28 days, while the average length of stay in transitional housing was 103 days. The Council's Research Analyst, Ms. Marshall, was asked to present at the national VOCA conference about Idaho's data collection advances, as many states are still looking for ways to capture any need and demand data from funded programs.

The Council has also partnered with the Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) on development of a statewide data dashboard which will allow anyone to see, at a county level, reported crimes in comparison to victimizations reported, identify trends, and see where victim service providers are located and the counties they serve. The dashboard is another step towards ensuring we can allocate limited funds where they are most needed and adjust priorities annually if necessary. The SAC also recently pulled together [data on the impact of the *State v. Clarke* decision](#) at the Council's request. [Biennial reports](#) on victimization and victim services, funded by the Council, also provide data and recommendations on filling gaps in statewide victim services. Reliable data is key to good decision making, and the Council collaborates with others working with victim populations to share the best available data.

Completely Clean Federal Monitoring: No Open Audit Items, No High Risk Programs

The Council must monitor all our funded programs for compliance with federal requirements at least once every two years; all our programs have been monitored within the required timeframe and no programs are designated high risk. **The Council was monitored this year by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for both programmatic and financial compliance with federal VOCA grant conditions and requirements;** the records of half of our funded programs were randomly selected and reviewed. **There were *no findings*,** which is very rare, and strong evidence that all the steps the Council has taken to address issues raised in our 2019 DOJ audit were effective and our current grant administration policies reflect best practices.

Prioritization of Direct Services and a Clear Strategic Plan

[The Council's 2022 Strategic Plan](#) prioritizes efficiently funding direct services, as well as development of reliable data, serving as a resource for information, and collaboration with other stakeholders to ensure a sustainable safety net of critical victim services statewide. **Council**

grants fund 357 Idaho jobs in whole or in part in FY23, down from 374 in FY22. The Council's Annual Safety & Resilience Conference, kicked off by Governor Little's remarks, had 448 registered attendees from multiple disciplines this year. In addition, the Council provided trauma-informed training to 147 people across every region of the state as part of our 2022 Regional Roundtables, bringing training to local law enforcement and others working with victims. Council staff gives multiple presentations to agencies and groups working with populations that contain victims of crime to share information, hosts a quarterly data collaboration call, and engages in extensive collaboration with the Idaho State Police Planning & Grants team, which also administers DOJ grants for victim services (STOP and SASP).

[Competitive Federal Technology Grant to Acquire Grant Management Software](#)

The Council was awarded a \$500,000 competitive grant from the Office for Victims of Crime for grant management software. Staff currently manages grants using Excel, and we could not afford enhanced technology absent this federal grant, as every dollar possible is needed to sustain programs. Staff has worked to maximize efficiencies without added technology. In FY21, it took an average of 30 days for a reimbursement request submitted by a program to be paid - in FY22 this was reduced to 18 days. The time it took between submission of a reimbursement and review by staff was reduced by 50% between FY21 and FY22, from 20 days to 10. For additional process streamlining, we need additional tools. The implementation of a comprehensive grants management system to manage the application, reimbursement, budget management and data collection functions of the Council grant awards will save time for staff of both the Council and its funded programs, allowing us to be more efficient in other aspects of grant administration and providers to spend more time on services and less on administration.

[Overwhelmingly Positive Stakeholder Feedback](#)

Idaho programs funded by the Council were recently asked to provide feedback on the changes the Council has implemented in the past two years and their experience working with current Council staff. 40 responses were received. Transparency, candor, fairness and communication were repeatedly mentioned as positive changes at the Council, as well as a clear desire to help programs succeed. Highlights from respondents:

- 79% report receiving a response to an inquiry of staff within 24 hrs; 21% within 48 hrs
- 84.62% feel all programs are treated equally by the Council

[Addressing the problem of Missing & Murdered Indigenous People](#)

The Council continues to work on addressing the problem of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) in Idaho. Director Cunningham and Bernie LaSarte (from the Coeur d'Alene

Tribe) co-chair the MMIP Subcommittee of the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission. The [MMIP report](#) created in response to the 2020 Legislative HCR 33 continues to inform this work.

Collaborating to Deploy Sexual Assault Resources Statewide

Council staff participate on the Idaho Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (ISAKI) Committee led by the ISP Forensic Lab and participate in ongoing efforts to improve the state's response to sexual assault. **Partnering with Idaho State Police (ISP), the Council used one-time grant funds specific to sexual assault to purchase nine Cortexflo machines, used to document evidence in sexual assault and strangulation cases around the state.** It is crucial that rural areas with more limited nursing staff have this tool, which allows for images to be taken hands-free. In many cases, there is only one SANE nurse alone in the exam room with a victim. Before acquiring Cortexflo machines, nurses would often opt out of taking photos that could serve as important evidence because they could not be in 2 places at once. This technology is now available in communities throughout Idaho. As part of the same subaward, statewide trauma-informed training for law enforcement was funded, with live presentations in each region as well as POST approved recordings available so that the trainings are also available on demand.

Revised Minimum Standards for Offender Intervention Programs

The Council is responsible for establishing minimum standards for offender intervention treatment programs (OIP) and determining which providers are approved to offer such programs per [I.C. § 18-918\(7\)\(d\)](#). **After a yearlong revision that took into account stakeholder and provider input, [revised OIP standards](#) were adopted January 1, 2022.** The Council also began collecting data from providers on January 1st. The first three quarters of data show that most participants were on probation and were court ordered to participate in offender intervention programs. The most common reasons for discharge/incomplete programs were failure to appear at sessions, committing new crimes, and violating terms of probation or parole.

Funding, Expenditures and Current Subawards

Additional information relating to the Council's FY22 funding and expenses can be found on [pages 62-65](#) of the Department of Health & Welfare's annual Facts, Figures, and Trends report. A summary of our [FY23 subawards](#) is on our website, as well as information on the seven [Council members](#) currently serving (pursuant to appointment by the Governor).

Contact Information

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A version of this report with hyperlinks is available on our website: www.icdv.idaho.gov