

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2021 Legislative Priorities

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) represents 22 local crime victim service provider agencies assisting survivors in every Iowa county. We support member programs, communities, and organizations in seeking to change attitudes and behaviors perpetuating a culture of violence. Gender violence is not a single-issue problem. We cannot incarcerate our way out of this problem. Instead, we believe ending and preventing violence requires meeting the needs of all victims: investing in and ensuring access to comprehensive services, including multiple options for safety and healing; enhancing economic security, and addressing systemic inequalities creating barriers to well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

Invest in Crime Victims - Ensure Access to Rights and Services. State and federal funds support local agencies that create a path to a better future for crime victims. Federal funds enhance program capacity, but state funds support infrastructure that enables local agencies to provide comprehensive, lifesaving services. **Victims need state legislators to mitigate the impact of a 35% cut in federal funds to states for crime victim services.**

- **Invest \$7.5 million in state funds for victim services** to address significant unmet needs of crime victims; prioritize efforts to eliminate disparities in access to services for traditionally marginalized communities disproportionately harmed by community violence by providing dedicated funding for homicide services.
- Improve Iowa victims' rights law: amend law to make legal rights enforceable; ensure access to legal services; enforce employment anti-discrimination protections for all crime victims.
- Support multiple options for trauma-informed responses to victims and violence: create/support community-informed approaches to safety, victim support, accountability, and healing; improve access to health care, including mental health and substance use services.

Enhance Economic Security. Economic insecurity compromises victim safety and undermines ability to maintain stable housing and employment. Additionally, easy access to guns dramatically increases the lethality risk for victims & children in homes experiencing domestic violence.

- Eliminate barriers to accessing/maintaining affordable housing: enact legislation to seal eviction records due to unfair tenant screening policies; ensure proactive enforcement of housing non-discrimination laws to ensure equal access and so victims are not penalized for actions of abusive partners; promote policies to allow lease bifurcation/early release.
- Bolster employment security & financial independence: promote prize-linked savings programs; enact paid leave; increase minimum wage; expand earned income and child-care tax credits.
- Ensure employment non-discrimination: fair chance hiring for returning citizens (ban the box); enhance protections against workplace harassment and violence.
- Improve access to health care and safety-net programs: expand Medicaid eligibility; oppose barriers to health/reproductive health care; increase eligibility and amount of nutrition assistance.
- Protect individuals and communities from gun violence.

Promote Equality: Biases and disparities based on race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, criminal background, etc, impact how individuals experience violence and how systems and people meet survivor's needs. Prioritizing the needs of those carrying the heaviest burden means all survivors will be served.

- Uphold state civil rights law to ensure equal access to rights and services: oppose undermining anti-discrimination protections, e.g. religious exemptions or prohibitions reducing access to LGBTQ individuals.
- Voting rights: support efforts to enhance civic participation and reduce barriers to voting; approve constitutional amendment to permanently restore voting rights of Iowans with felony convictions; uphold the integrity of Iowa's redistricting process.
- Ensure equal access across all systems to rights, services, and justice by addressing bias and disparities (racial, gender, LGBTQ, ableism, immigration status): uphold anti-discrimination protections in health access, housing, employment; improve training and policies to ensure victims are not arrested; standardize U visa certification policies for immigrant survivors; support criminal legal and judicial reforms including anti-profiling, bail reform, addressing needs of women in jail/prison, disparities in sentencing.