

the latest

January 2003

a bulletin for the members of the
Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Governor's 2004 Budget Proposal Spares Domestic Violence State Grant Funding as Legislative Session Begins

State funds for domestic violence services were spared from cuts in the fiscal year 2004 budget proposed by Governor Bob Holden on January 15. The budget process next moves to the Missouri House of Representatives where significant changes are expected from the Governor's proposal.

*"The good news is
we didn't get cut.
The bad news is the
budget process has
just begun."*

- Colleen Coble,
MCADV Executive Director

Domestic violence funding remains at current levels in the Governor's proposed budget. This includes \$4.3 million in state funds for shelter and related assistance services grants administered by the Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services (DFS). Federal funds for domestic violence victim assistance (DVVA) grants, also administered by DFS, remained at the current level of \$1.687 million.

Other funding for domestic violence services in the budget for the Department of Public Safety are not subject to state spending cuts as those budgeted amounts come from federal funds—such as the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and STOP grants—or from crime victims compensation fines that fund the State Services to Victims grants.

"The good news is we didn't get cut," MCADV Executive Director Colleen Coble said. "The bad news is the budget process has just begun." MCADV members will receive additional information and materials to assist in the necessary educational contacts with state lawmakers to protect state domestic violence funding from reductions as the state budget process proceeds.

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the missouri coalition
MCADV
against
domestic
violence

415 east mccarty
jefferson city,
missouri 65101

(573) 634-4161
(573) 636-3728 fax
mocadv@mocadv.org



MCADV Members on St. Louis Police Policy Committee

The members of the
MCADV St. Louis
Region Police Policy
Committee included:

- Committee Chair Rita Zagari, Legal Advocates for Abused Women;
- Diana Beasley, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri;
- Candace Bradley, LEAD Institute;
- Amiee Nassif, Legal Advocates for Abused Women;
- Jeanne Meurer, Woman's Place;
- Julia Shull, RAVEN; and,
- Paula Rutkowski, Legal Advocates for Abused Women and the Domestic Violence Response Team, St. Louis Municipal Police Department.

Other members of the
committee included:

- Nina Balsam, MCADV Legal Advocacy Projects Director;
- Lt. John Harper, Commander, Domestic Violence Response Team, St. Louis Municipal Police Department; and
- Chief Joseph Mokwa, St. Louis Municipal Police Department.

St. Louis City Police Adopt Response Policy for Officer-Involved DV Cases

AMCADV St. Louis Region Achieves Two-Year Goal
new policy will now guide St. Louis Municipal Police Department responses to domestic violence incidents involving any police officer or member of that department. The policy was developed through a two-year collaboration between the Police Policy Committee of the MCADV St. Louis Metropolitan Region and members of the St. Louis Municipal Police Department.

The policy, issued by Chief Joseph Mokwa on January 3, requires that a supervisor be summoned to any scene where a police officer or department member is identified as a suspect or victim in a domestic violence incident. The city's Domestic Assault Response Team will be contacted to investigate these cases whenever possible or will refer the case to the district watch commandeer.

The new policy requires that, with the victim's permission, an advocate be contacted in every police-involved incident. The first officer/supervisor on the scene will summon a domestic violence advocate to the scene—or designated safe location—to provide support and information in private with the victim. Those specially trained advocates will be drawn from the metro area's Domestic Violence Intervention Partnership. The police department's Internal Affairs Department will be notified immediately when the suspect is a police officer or department member.

A committee of advocates from the MCADV St. Louis Region worked for more than two years to develop the policy to ensure effective responses to incidents of domestic violence involving police officers. Members of the Police Policy Committee credited the leadership of Rita Zagari, Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW), as being the driving force behind the accomplishment. Zagari was praised by those who worked with her for her hard work, diplomacy and dedication to consensus on the collaboration project. Mary Fox, also of LAAW, said of the effort, "After more than two years, with many twists and turns, the committee, chaired by Rita, has constructed a policy change in the police department. What amazing things a group of dedicated advocates can accomplish!"

Committee members acknowledged the invaluable contributions of police department members Lt. John Harper and Chief Mokwa for their hard work and cooperation in developing the policy.

Civil Courts to Provide Foreign Language Interpreters

Non-English Speaking Petitioners for Protection Orders to Receive Help

Victims of domestic violence with limited English proficiency who seek Orders of Protection soon will be able to receive interpreter assistance in Missouri courts through a new grant-funded "Access to Justice" program of the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA). Courts will be reimbursed for translation costs by OSCA, with the funds provided by a STOP grant through the federal Violence Against Women Act.

Courts will establish local access to the Language Line, a translation service that provides a telephone connection to off-site interpreters. A "language ID flash card" will be used to help non-English speaking petitioners to identify the language they speak. Circuit clerks then would use a speaker phone connection with the

Language Line interpreter to assist the petitioner to understand and complete the petition for an *Ex Parte* Order. The interpreter would then translate the petitioner's statements to English for the circuit clerk to record on the petition form.

The OSCA project is designed to provide on-site interpreters—when possible—for court hearings for full Orders of Protection. If a qualified interpreter isn't available for a court hearing, the courts are to use the Language Line interpreter services.

MCADV members who wish to receive a copy of the evaluation forms for the Access to Justice project should contact the Coalition office at 888-666-1911 or by E-mail at mcadv@mcadv.org.

MCADV Members Elect 2003 Board of Directors; Board Elects Officers

On January 10, the 2003 MCADV board elected their officers: Chair, Becky Vermeire; Vice Chair Lisa Fleming; Treasurer, Martha Sander; and, Secretary, Jennifer Hill.

At-Large Members

Alison Brown , AVA,
St. Louis
Mary Fox , LAAW,
St. Louis
*Joyce Karrenbrock ,
Turning Point, Warrenton
*Ellen Reed , AVENUES,
Hannibal

Regional Members

CENTRAL - Rita Johnson ,
COPE, Lebanon
KANSAS CITY - Jennifer Salmons ,
Synergy, Kansas City
NORTHEAST - Elaine Browning ,
Robertson Center, Troy
NORTHWEST - Debbie Wallace ,
The Lighthouse Shelter, Marshall
ST. LOUIS - Jeanne Meurer ,
Woman's Place, Maplewood
SOUTHEAST - Open position:
election to be held
SOUTHWEST - Renee White ,
Lafayette House, Joplin

Continuing Members

Cathy Blair , AWARE,
St. Louis
Lisa Fleming , Rose Brooks
Center, Kansas City
Eloise Golden , Fortress
Outreach, St. Louis
Jennifer Hill ,
Haven House, Poplar Bluff
Susan Miller , Rose Brooks
Center, Kansas City
Martha Sander ,
Moss House, Nevada
Michelle Schiller-Baker ,
St. Martha's Hall and
Kathy J. Weinman Shelter,
St. Louis
Becky Vermeire ,
Women's Crisis Center of
Taney County, Branson

**denotes newly elected at-large member who was formerly elected regionally to Board*

Law allows certain 16- and 17-year-olds to be admitted to domestic violence shelters

By MCADV Technical Assistance and Training Specialists

Q. Wasn't there a law passed that allows domestic violence shelters to admit older teenagers?

A. Yes. In August 2000, a Missouri law took effect that gave 16- and 17-year old minors the legal status to enter into certain contracts and obtain services, including those from a domestic violence shelter. The law, 431.056 RSMo, specifies that for these teenagers to be able to gain admission to a domestic violence shelter or a homeless shelter they must be a victim of domestic violence or homeless, self-supporting and

FAQs frequently asked questions

have the consent of their parents to live independently.

This same section of law creates the status of a "qualified minor" and allows these 16- and 17-year-olds to enter into a contract for housing, employment, purchase of a car, receipt of a student loan, admission to high school or post-secondary school. They also can legally obtain medical care and establish a bank account.

The difficulty for many domestic violence shelters is determining whether or not older teenagers in need of safe shelter have the implicit or explicit consent of their parents to live independently. A common policy is to admit the teenager if she has been living separately from her parents and has been supporting herself without the parent's help. This is usually sufficient to admit the teenager for shelter as her independent living infers consent by the parents.

Programs unable to admit a teenager still should provide the advocacy support to ensure that the teenager is connected to appropriate services.

F GOT A QUESTION?

Call the MCADV member program Technical Assistance Helpline toll-free at (888) 666-1911.

alliance opportunities

MCADV REGIONAL MEETINGS

Location	Date/Time	Host/Information
KANSAS CITY TBA	March 27 10:00 A.M.	Jennifer Salmons (816) 587-4100
SOUTHEAST Cape Girardeau	Feb. 6 11:30 A.M.	(position open) (888) 666-1911
ST. LOUIS St. Louis	Feb. 11 9:00 A.M.	Jeanne Meurer (314) 645-4848
CENTRAL Jefferson City	Feb. 4 11:30 A.M.	Rita Johnson (417) 533-5201
SOUTHWEST Springfield	Feb. 7 11:00 A.M.	Renee White (417) 782-1772
NORTHWEST Marshall	Feb. 19 Noon	Debbie Wallace (660) 831-0988
NORTHEAST TBA	April 17 10:30 A.M.	Elaine Browning (636) 462-2724

UPCOMING MCADV TRAININGS

Location/Date/Time	Information
FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY Columbia / Feb. 25, 26 Holiday Inn Select Executive Center	
ADVOCACY FOR ALL Columbia / March 18, 19 Holiday Inn Select Executive Center	

regional update

ST. LOUIS — Executive Director Position Available—for a well-established domestic violence shelter. Prefer Master's or Bachelor's degree, but will consider appropriate related experience. Experience in working with domestic violence issues required. Send a cover letter and resume to: D. Noelker, 2122 S. Mason Rd., St. Louis, MO 63131