



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2013

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GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN POSES RISK OF SERVICE CUTS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT

BISMARCK, N.D. – It won't be long before the government shutdown harms victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in North Dakota. Aside from cuts to funding for safety net benefits, like the federally funded Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program, some shelters and victim service providers do not have access to their federal funds.

As of Friday, agencies funded through the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) no longer have access to the reimbursement system used to sustain crisis service centers. It's likely that OVW staff won't be available after Monday to answer requests for financial and technical assistance from service providers. These programs help victims of domestic violence leave life-threatening situations and may face tough decisions like cutting staff, reducing services, and serving fewer victims in crisis.

Also affected is the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which is one of the main ways victims in North Dakota get connected to services like emergency shelter, help obtaining protection orders, legal advocacy, counseling for victims and children, and safety planning. In 2011, the Hotline documented 174 calls from North Dakota. Nearly 70% of calls were from victims, and 4% of victims were male. The Hotline currently has no access to funding for fiscal year 2014 due to the government shutdown.

“North Dakota crisis centers and the National Domestic Violence Hotline are lifelines to victims seeking refuge from domestic violence and sexual assault. Many times we only get one chance to help people,” said Janelle Moos, Executive Director of CAWS North Dakota. “If the government shutdown continues, it very well may disrupt services and decrease our ability to respond when a victim reaches out for help.”

The government shutdown could delay funding and further destabilize programs that provide essential services in their communities. Domestic violence programs that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to serve victims in immediate and

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ABOUT [NNEDV](http://www.nnedv.org): *The National Network to End Domestic Violence is the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their advocates. As a membership and advocacy organization of state domestic violence coalitions, allied organizations and supportive individuals, NNEDV works closely with its members to understand the ongoing and emerging needs of domestic violence victims and advocacy programs. Then NNEDV makes sure those needs are heard and understood by policymakers at the national level. For more information, go to www.nnedv.org.*

serious danger rely on federal funding to keep their lights on and their doors open. Though programs will remain open during the shutdown, the uncertainty of federal funding only worsens the current reality of slashed budgets.

“We strongly urge Congress to immediately pass a budget that will allow the federal government to function and that does not enshrine the devastating sequester cuts which have already begun to dismantle victim services across the country,” said Kim Gandy, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), in a statement. “Congress must replace the sequester with a plan that meets the needs of our nation’s most vulnerable. It is unconscionable that shelters across the nation are at risk of closing due to the government shutdown – an inauspicious way to start Domestic Violence Awareness Month.”

In 2012, victim service providers across the state helped [4,624 unduplicated victims of domestic violence](#) and [919 primary victims of sexual assault](#). To learn more about the effects of sequestration on victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, go to www.nnedv.org. To find crisis services in your community, go to www.ndcaws.org.

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