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Illinois Rape Crisis Centers Await Budget Decisions

[SPRINGFIELD, IL] As the end of the legislative session looms large, the fate of Illinois rape crisis services hangs in the balance. The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) continues to call upon the Illinois General Assembly to **invest an additional \$12 million in General Revenue Funding** to the 31 rape crisis centers in Illinois. This urgently needed increase, the first major investment in over 20 years, would offset a **drastic \$9.5 million federal funding cut and the ongoing impact rising inflation has had on the workforce**. Without it, Illinois communities will be forced to severely reduce rape crisis services across the state. Projected reductions in service will become reality unless the State of Illinois augments its investment in rape crisis services.

“It is critical that the State steps up to assist survivors of sexual violence. Rape crisis services are essential to Illinois communities. The 24-hour crisis response provided by advocates across the state ensures that sexual assault survivors have trained, compassionate professionals available to respond immediately in their time of need. Ongoing advocacy and counseling services assist survivors during some of the most difficult times in their lives.” ICASA Chief Executive Officer, Carrie Ward, said. “This investment is long overdue and if it doesn’t happen this year, the emergency services that survivors and our communities need will be severely and immediately reduced (effective July 1, 2023). Rape crisis workers will be laid off, satellite/outreach sites serving neighboring counties will close, and sexual assault survivors will face long waiting lists for services many of which will be more restricted.” ICASA centers assisted nearly 22,000 survivors in FY22, including responding to over 5,500 survivors who presented at Illinois hospitals seeking medical care after an assault.

Increasing the investment in statewide rape crisis services would bring the state’s total investment in rape crisis services to \$20 million. For many years, State funding has averaged \$364 per survivor for rape crisis services. This increased investment boosts State funding to an average of \$900 per survivor. This is a small price to pay when considering the lifetime impact of sexual violence costs more than \$122,000 per survivor, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center [2018]. Without increased State funding the impact will be devastating. **“Sexual assault survivors deserve this investment, and Illinois communities need these essential services. Don’t allow survivors to bear the brunt of funding cuts.”** Ward said.