

2018 POLICY AGENDA

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Our purpose is to create a world free of oppression where actions, beliefs, and systems support all people to thrive.

❖ Victims deserve agency and options.

The criminal justice system does not always meet victims' needs.

- Establish a study committee to examine Restorative Justice options for victims.
- Include psychological abuse as a qualifying factor in applying for Relief from Abuse Order.
- Establish equity in Relief from Abuse Order application access across the state.
- Prevent re-traumatization of child and vulnerable adult victims in court proceedings.

❖ Victims must be able to meet their basic needs

Poverty increases vulnerability to violence.

- Increase housing rental assistance.
- Protect victims from employment discrimination.
- Support paid family and medical leave.
- Increase the minimum wage while protecting child care assistance.

❖ Many perpetrators can change

Quality systems will support such efforts.

- Support coordination and certification of domestic violence accountability treatment programs.
- Specify referral to certified treatment program in list of options for conditions of release.

❖ Communities are safer when systems respond to risk

Systems must have the tools necessary at all critical moments.

- Ensure quality risk assessment of perpetrator at all points of entry and release.
- Ensure all Judges have access to adequate risk assessment prior to bail decisions.
- Support required training on domestic violence risk assessment for all law enforcement.
- Allow for the removal of firearms at scene of domestic violence incident.
- Support the creation of a separate strangulation statute.

❖ The trauma of violence can have long lasting effects

Ending violence means supporting healing in children and adults over generations.

- Support trauma-informed services for children and families across systems of care and education.
- Support creation of Trauma Coordinator staff position at Agency of Human Services.
- Increase support services for victims, especially for mental health and substance abuse.