



2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Vermont Network is Vermont's leading voice on domestic and sexual violence. Our members are 15 independent, non-profit organizations that provide advocacy and support to survivors of violence across Vermont.

The Vermont Network's 2025 Legislative Agenda features state-level policies that seek to uproot the causes of violence and support the well-being of survivors, their families, and Vermont communities.

Sustainable Funding for Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Providers

In 2023, the 15 member organizations of the Vermont Network answered over 23,000 hotline and chatline calls from Vermonters seeking support for issues of domestic and sexual violence. These service providers offer 24-hour services, emergency housing, legal advocacy, children's services, and prevention programming. Despite this essential work, our member organizations have been largely flat funded for 15 years. In addition, the funding mechanism used to support these providers faces annual shortfalls, jeopardizing critical services.

We support establishing a new and sustainable revenue source for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund and other investments in domestic and sexual violence services.

Supporting Survivors of Economic Abuse through Coerced Debt Protections

Nearly all survivors of domestic violence experience economic abuse. Economic abuse includes tactics to conceal financial information, limit a victim's access to assets, and control or reduce accessibility to the family finances. Coerced debt can limit survivors' ability to access credit, housing, education, loan, and employment opportunities, creating significant barriers to safety and independence.

Legislation can create specific financial protections and mitigate harm for survivors who have experienced coerced debt by prohibiting any debt accrued due to coercion from appearing on survivors' credit reports and mandating that collectors cease collecting a debt if it was accrued as a result of abuse.

Promoting Access to Safe and Affordable Housing for Survivors

Safe and affordable housing is one of the most urgent needs for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Lack of affordable housing often puts survivors in a position of having to choose between homelessness and staying in abusive relationships or unsafe living situations.

We are dedicated to working with homelessness service providers and affordable housing advocates to promote policies that ensure survivors experiencing homelessness have access to emergency housing, remove barriers to creating more affordable housing, and ensure that survivors have safe spaces to heal.

Protecting Youth from Harassment and Discrimination in Schools

We believe that all schools should be places where youth can learn and grow. Unfortunately, many Vermont students experience harassment and discrimination in education settings, including sexual and gender-based harassment. Harassment and discrimination can pose significant barriers to educational attainment and school success. To best serve youth, schools need evidence-based policies, strategies, and resources to prevent and address this harm.

We support revising the existing Hazing, Harassment, & Bullying Advisory Council to maximize the impact of its work for students, as well as create opportunities to strengthen civil protections against harassment and discrimination.

Preventing Technology-Facilitated Abuse and Nonconsensual GPS Tracking

Technology-facilitated abuse occurs when a person misuses technological tools to harass, control, or monitor a victim. As technology evolves, our laws must respond with new safeguards to protect survivors' safety and privacy.

We support civil protections against using GPS-enabled devices to track a person's location without their consent, as well as measures to ensure survivors can disable an abusive partner's access to GPS tracking and remote control of their vehicle. In addition, we support strengthening our protection order statute to ensure that survivors can request possession of their vehicles when seeking a protection order.

Reform and Trauma-Informed Approaches for Justice-Involved Women

Justice-involved women in Vermont deserve a robust system of support, rehabilitation, and healing. There is a clear relationship between lifetime experience of domestic or sexual violence and risk for incarceration among women. The vast majority of incarcerated women have experienced some form of interpersonal trauma prior to their incarceration.

We support the development of a new, smaller, and gender-responsive women's correctional facility in Vermont. This facility must be appropriately-sized and offer best-practice programming to support healing and robust reentry opportunities. In addition, we seek legislative changes to our statutes to ensure that women who become justice-involved as a result of their victimization can seek protections and legal relief.

Creating 24-Hour Access to Sexual Assault Protection Orders

Sexual assault protection orders are a critical legal tool for survivors of sexual violence. These court orders require a perpetrator of sexual violence to maintain physical distance from a survivor or other measures necessary for the survivor's safety.

Currently, survivors can only request a sexual assault protection order during regular court orders, leaving them at risk when emergencies occur on evenings and weekends. We support 24-hour access to sexual assault protection orders, so survivors have access to protective measures when they need them.

Charlie Gliserman, Director of Policy, charlie@vtnetwork.org

Sarah Robinson, Deputy Director, sarahkr@vtnetwork.org

Kara Casey, Director of Economic Empowerment, kara@vtnetwork.org