



**January 29, 2024**

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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**A Perfect Storm is Brewing in Virginia as the Impact of Drastic Cuts to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the Increase in Need Puts Victims in Hampton Roads at Risk**

- Virginia’s victim service agencies have suffered a 47.5% overall cut to VOCA.
- At the same time, there was an unprecedented increase in victims needing services. The rise in volume and complexity of victim service requests has strained local resources and further cuts will force agencies to set waiting lists and lay off crucial staff.
- These funds are projected to be fully depleted by fiscal year 2025 and will result in deep cuts to life-saving victim services in Hampton Roads this year.
- The H.E.R. Shelter, Samaritan House, Transitions Family Violence Services, and the YWCA of South Hampton Roads will be negatively impacted by these cuts starting in July, and services will be reduced to victims in the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.
- If leaders in Richmond don’t act now, victims of domestic and sexual assault, human trafficking, child sexual assault, and other violent crimes will suffer.

The purpose of this news conference is to discuss how cuts to Virginia’s funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and discretionary Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding will harm the safety net for victims in all of Hampton Roads and put them at risk.

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 30, 2024

**TIME:** 11:00 a.m.

**PLACE:** Samaritan House, 2620 Southern Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Robin Gauthier, Executive Director, Samaritan House, Virginia Beach
- Kristen Pine, YWCA Chief Operating Officer & Co-Director Norfolk Family Justice Center, Norfolk
- Olivia Smithberger, CEO & President, H.E.R. Shelter, Portsmouth
- Sanu Dieng, Executive Director, Transitions Family Violence Services, Hampton & Newport News

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# SAMARITAN HOUSE



Stop the violence. Start the healing.

2620 Southern Blvd  
Virginia Beach 23452  
757-631-0710-office  
757-430-2120-violence hotline  
757-587-4202-homeless hotline  
[samaritanhouseva.org](http://samaritanhouseva.org)

**ABOUT SAMARITAN HOUSE:** Since 1984, Samaritan House has sought to foster personal safety, growth and self-sufficiency in adults and their children through freedom from sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking and homelessness in Hampton Roads by providing emergency and permanent housing, support services and community outreach to victims. For additional information, visit: [www.samaritanhouseva.org](http://www.samaritanhouseva.org)

**ABOUT YWCA SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS:** YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. Since 1908, YWCA South Hampton Roads has strengthened social movements that eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, and dignity for all. For nearly forty years, YWCA South Hampton Roads has run its emergency shelter, providing the only place of refuge for families escaping domestic and sexual violence in the City of Norfolk. For more information, visit: <https://www.ywca-shr.org>

**ABOUT H.E.R. SHELTER:** Help and Emergency Response, Inc. provides leadership, advocacy, and resources to survivors and communities affected by Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Human Trafficking. The work of Help and Emergency Response, Inc. will create a safe and prosperous future for all through awareness, services, and training for lasting change in the communities we serve. For more information, visit: <http://hershelter.com/>

**ABOUT TRANSITIONS FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES:** Transitions Family Violence Services is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating domestic violence in Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson and York County. We are the sole provider of comprehensive services to adult and child victims of domestic violence. Since 1977, we have been a pathway to safety and a source of hope for thousands of individuals and families. For more information, visit: <https://www.transitionsfvs.org/>