

2026

**Washington State Coalition
Against Domestic Violence &
Sexual Assault**

**Washington State
Legislative Session Report**

WSCADVSA

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Thank You

Message From Roshelle

It was an honor to join the WSCADVSA team this year. Stepping in just as the legislative session began, and during our first session as the official sexual assault coalition, was both a challenge and a learning curve. Transitioning from my work at a rape crisis center, it was vital to me that we centered survivor voices from both domestic and sexual violence, sat in discomfort when necessary, and included field experts throughout the process. I am deeply passionate about breaking down systemic barriers, making policy more accessible (and comfortable), and challenging systems to do better.

This legislative session brought new pivots and faces to the Coalition policy team, and I am proud of what we accomplished together. Our team brought energy, insight, and dedication to every part of the process. From tracking bills and analyzing policy, to organizing Advocacy Days and supporting testimony, their collective efforts made this session a success. I want to especially acknowledge and thank Debriella Debrecki, Administrative Specialist; Sherrie Tinoco, Managing Director of Strategy and Policy; and Carey Morris and Melanie Smith, our dynamic lobbyist duo.

The 2026 legislative session was a short session, running 60 days from January 12th to March 12th. This year, we tracked 235 bills with the potential to impact survivors' safety, housing, economic stability, legal access, and more. Of these, 22 bills were signed into law, including eight out of thirteen of the Coalition's priority bills. In a short session, it is common for the majority of bills to die due to cutoff timelines.

Our top priority this year was securing funding for victim services — especially in light of continued federal VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) cuts that threatened critical programming. Thanks to the tireless work of the policy team and survivor advocates across the state, the legislature secured our full ask of \$21.3 million to maintain services for the upcoming year. I am especially grateful for the testimony provided by many, including Kate Krug (KCSARC), Suzi Fode (New Hope), Ali Price (Rural Resources), and policy evaluation contributions from Laurel Redden & Megan Allen (KCSARC) and Elizabeth Hendren (SVLC).

Looking ahead, we have already begun planning and researching ongoing funding policy options, learning from other states, evaluating good and bad bills we expect to see next session, and navigating the constantly shifting federal landscape. I have no doubt that, together, we can overcome the chaos, demand stabilized state funding, and push for legislation that truly protects survivors.

Sincerely,

Roshelle Cleland



Public Policy Director

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic
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Survivors Advocacy Day 2026

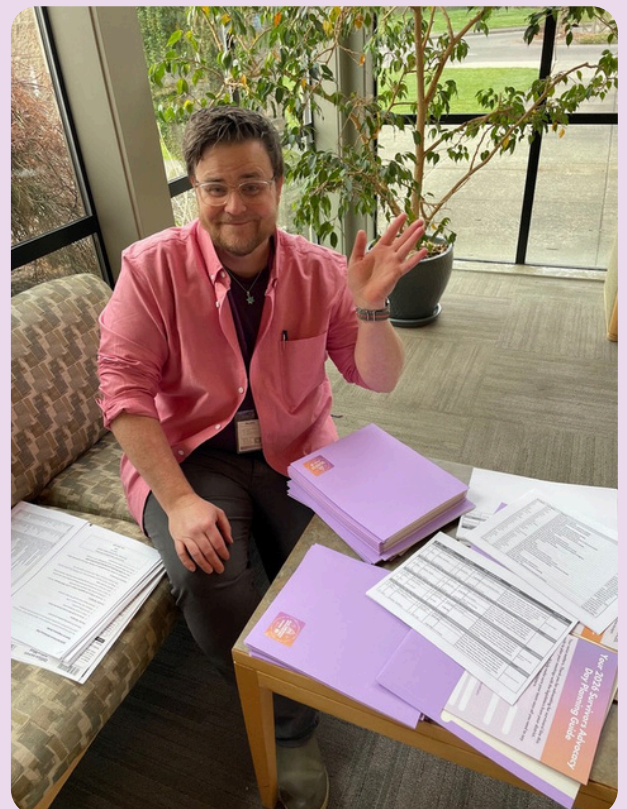
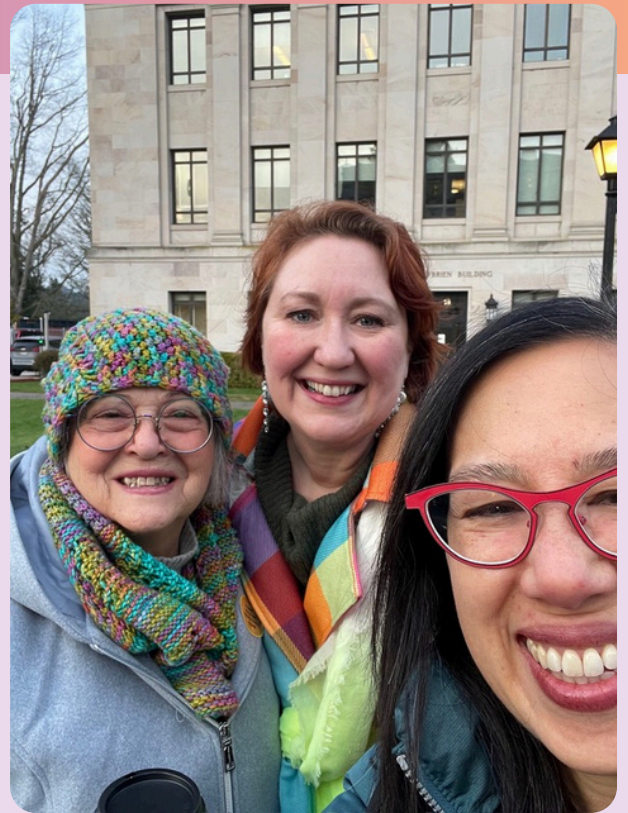
This year, the Coalition partnered with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington and the Washington State Sexual Assault Working Group to host a joint Survivors Advocacy Day, elevating a unified message about the severe challenges facing victim service providers and survivors amid ongoing budget shortfalls.

Survivors Advocacy Day 2026 marked the highest participation in our history, with 200 survivors, board members, directors, and advocates representing 65 programs coming together in Olympia. Participants shared their experiences, uplifted the voices of those most impacted by proposed legislation and funding cuts, and urged lawmakers to take meaningful action.

Throughout the day, advocates shared what is at stake: the advocate who answers a hotline call in the middle of the night, the legal support that helps a survivor secure a protection order, the housing assistance that allows a parent and their children to leave safely, and the trauma-informed services that help survivors begin to heal. These are the services that make it possible for people to escape violence, stay housed, and rebuild their lives, and they are at risk without sustained investment.

Grounded in hope, a deep commitment to advocacy, and a strong sense of community, participants brought urgency and clarity to every conversation with lawmakers, meeting with approximately 130 legislators to discuss the ongoing funding crisis and the importance of stabilizing victim services.

Thank you to everyone who showed up, spoke out, and made this day so impactful. We are stronger together, and we are deeply grateful for the collective effort that helped drive this progress forward.



Our New Dual Coalition Role

Becoming the Washington State Sexual Assault Coalition

In Spring of 2025, our Coalition was officially designated as the state's dual domestic violence and sexual assault coalition. With this expanded role, we now operate and advocate as the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (WSCADVSA). We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to extend our work into sexual assault victim services, bridge long-standing gaps between domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy and serve the field in this new capacity with care, humility, and accountability.

Impact on the 2026 Legislative Session

This first year has focused on listening to and building relationships with programs providing sexual assault victim services across Washington. Our goal has been to better understand program realities, funding pressures, and the range of survivor needs so our policy work reflects what programs are actually experiencing on the ground.

A key partner in this work has been the Sexual Assault Work Group (SAWG), whose members represent stand-alone sexual assault programs. SAWG provided critical guidance on legislative priorities and helped shape our positions throughout session.

During the 2026 legislative session, we tracked and engaged on legislation impacting the rights, safety, and services of sexual assault survivors. In addition to

SAWG, we worked closely with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington and community sexual assault programs (CSAPs).

Our expanded role also allowed us to bring sexual assault expertise into broader systems conversations. Coalition staff now participate in the Sentencing Guidelines Commission and the Sex Offender Policy Board, helping ensure survivor-centered perspectives inform decisions that shape long-term outcomes for survivors and communities.

As the designated coalition, we have also re-engaged with the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV). This connection helps keep Washington programs informed about federal funding shifts and policy changes, while strengthening coordination between state and national advocacy efforts.

Looking Ahead

To support long-term accountability and meaningful engagement, the Coalition's Board of Directors is developing bylaws and formal structures for sexual assault field participation. These will be brought forward for approval at the Annual Membership Meeting in September.

This is ongoing work. This designation strengthens our ability to align advocacy, deepen partnerships, and ensure survivors of both domestic violence and sexual assault in Washington have access to the support, services, and protections they need.

2026 Budget Update

During the 2026 legislative session, advocates across Washington came together to urge lawmakers to take action on the ongoing crisis in victim services funding. With federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars down 76% since 2018 — dropping from \$74.7 million to just \$17.8 million—programs that support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other crimes have been pushed to the brink.

For six consecutive years, programs have relied on temporary state funding to offset these federal cuts. While this has helped keep services in place, it has not created the stability programs need to sustain services, retain staff, or meet growing demand across communities.

Following the release of the Governor's proposed budget — which included \$12 million for victim services in fiscal year 2027 — there was widespread concern across the field.

This proposal represented roughly half of the funding provided in 2025. Advocates across Washington called for a more substantial and sustained investment to prevent further erosion of services.

In response to that advocacy, both the House and Senate took action. The final budget includes \$21.3 million for victim services. While we are grateful, this amount only brings funding back to levels from six years ago and does not reflect current needs or rising costs.

In addition to direct funding for victim services, the budget includes:

- \$350,000 for research on the use of Internal Family Systems as a modality for domestic violence treatment
- \$400,000 for a randomized control trial comparing the Strengths at Home program to standard domestic violence intervention treatment methods
- \$250,000 to support the development of instructional courses for peer support services for victims of certain crimes

This outcome was only possible because advocates, program staff, board members, legislative champions, and survivors across the state showed up and took action. From sharing stories and data to meeting directly with lawmakers, people across Washington made it clear that victim services cannot be ignored. We are deeply grateful for the collective effort that made this investment possible.



What's at Risk for Survivors Without Stable Funding

The Crisis at the State Level

Victim services across Washington State are in a full-scale funding crisis—and it is one the Legislature can no longer afford to ignore. This was the sixth consecutive year that victim service providers asked the Legislature for meaningful, sustained investment, yet funding has continued to fall short of what is needed to meet demand and maintain basic services.

The funding included in the FY26 state budget, while critical, only stabilizes services to where they were six years ago—and does not account for inflation, population growth, or the increased complexity of survivors' needs. In real terms, programs are operating with less.

Across the state, programs have already made devastating cuts: eliminating staff positions, scaling back prevention and outreach programming, and in some cases ending 24/7 crisis response. Community-based sexual assault programs have not received a funding increase in over two decades—not even by one cent—despite rising demand and expanded expectations for services.

If Washington is going to say that it believes survivors—that support will be there when they call—then funding must reflect that commitment.

Victim services are public safety and are as essential as law enforcement, courts, and emergency response. Support for survivors must be protected with reliable, sustainable funding for victim services programs.



What's at Risk for Survivors Without Stable Funding

The Collapse of VOCA Funding

The state crisis is being driven by the rapid collapse of federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Washington's VOCA award has fallen by 76% between 2018 and 2024, dropping from \$74.7 million to just \$17.86 million (Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, 2025).

VOCA was never designed to sustain the full weight of victim services, yet for decades it has been treated as a primary funding source. That model is no longer viable.

Without state investment to backfill these losses, programs will face even deeper cuts—laying off more staff, turning away more survivors, and potentially closing their doors for good. The consequences are immediate and severe: survivors left without shelter, without advocacy, without options.

Victim services can no longer depend on VOCA funds as a stable or reliable source of support. The system has reached a breaking point.

The Path Forward

Washington legislators face a clear and urgent decision: pass sustainable and ongoing funding or allow the safety net for survivors to erode beyond repair. Programs are breaking and can no longer rely on one-time funding that equates to levels of six years ago.

Failure to act is a decision—with real consequences. It means more victims will be killed because they have nowhere safe to go and no one to answer the phone. It means fewer survivors can access medical care and advocacy after a sexual assault, cutting off pathways to healing and support. And it ultimately costs the state more, as harm is prolonged and deepened rather than prevented and addressed early.

Stabilizing funding is not optional. It is the baseline and if Washington is serious about supporting survivors, then it must fund victim services like the essential public safety infrastructure they are.

This is a critical priority for WSCADV/SA in the months ahead and into the next legislative session. In collaboration with our partners, we are actively pursuing dedicated, stable, and ongoing state funding to safeguard programs and the services survivors rely on.



Why a Millionaire's Tax Matters for Community and Survivor Safety

SB 6346: Establishing a Tax On Millionaires (Effective 6.11.26)

Washington State legislature faced a defining choice this session: continue operating within one of the most regressive tax systems in the country or take meaningful steps to build a more equitable and sustainable future. The millionaire's tax—a 9.9% tax on annual incomes over \$1 million—represented a critical opportunity to do just that.

Washington ranks 49th in the nation for tax fairness². In plain terms, we are one of the worst states in the country when it comes to asking those with the least to pay the most. Low-income residents pay a significantly higher percentage of their income in taxes than the wealthiest households. This inequity directly impacts survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes and those who are living paycheck to paycheck, navigating financial abuse, housing instability, and economic hardship.

For survivors, financial stability is often the difference between staying in an unsafe situation and being able to leave. When basic needs like childcare, healthcare, food, and hygiene products are unaffordable, the barriers to safety become even greater. A more equitable tax structure helps relieve that burden.

The millionaire's tax is designed to shift that balance. By asking the wealthiest Washingtonians to contribute more, the state can invest in programs that directly benefit survivors and their families, including:

- K–12 education, including free breakfast and lunch for all students—putting money back into families' pockets and ensuring children are ready to learn
- Expansion of the Working Families Tax Credit, reaching an additional 460,000 families with direct financial support
- Affordable childcare investments, with more than \$320 million dedicated to reducing one of the highest childcare costs in the nation
- Tax relief for small businesses, including reducing or eliminating Business & Occupation (B&O) taxes for 138,000 small businesses
- Eliminates sales tax on essentials like diapers, over-the-counter medications, and hygiene products—saving families hundreds of dollars each year

This policy offers a pathway to stable, ongoing funding for victim services—addressing the cycle of one-time requests and reducing reliance on unstable resources that leave programs and survivors in constant uncertainty.

A more equitable revenue system creates the foundation for long-term investment in these services. It allows Washington to move beyond crisis-driven funding decisions and toward a stable, reliable system that we can depend on.

Bills That Passed

SB 5855: Law Enforcement Face Coverings (Effective 3.19.26)

This bill amends RCW 10.116 by prohibiting peace officers from wearing face coverings that obscure their identity (with carveout for N95s and similar) and requires officers to wear name or other identifying information their uniform. It also provides civil right of action for detainees.

HB 2105: Immigrant Worker Rights (Effective 6.11.26)

This bill requires Washington employers to notify workers if they receive notice of a Form I-9 audit and establishes additional worker protections. It prohibits employers from voluntarily allowing federal agencies to access employee records without a subpoena or judicial warrant, except in cases involving I-9 inspections or where access is otherwise required by law. The bill also allows the Attorney General to bring civil action against employers who violate these provisions.

SB 6002: Regulation of Automatic License Plate Reader Cameras (Effective 3.30.26)

This bill aims to protect those at risk of becoming a target of the federal government by regulating Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) or flock cameras. Regulations include which agencies can use ALPRs, how long data can be retained, and who can access it.

SB 6081: Protecting Washingtonians from Invasion of Privacy (Effective 3.16.26)

This bill adds provisions to protect Washington residents from invasion of privacy, including unauthorized disclosure of sex designation information and sex designation changes in official government records.

SB 6027: Affordable Housing Funding (Effective 6.11.26)

This bill enhances affordable housing initiatives by modifying requirements and allowed uses for certain funding related to providing and maintaining affordable housing and related services.

HB 2320: Firearm Manufacturing (Effective 3.24.26)

This bill prohibits the manufacture of certain firearms and components using 3D printers or CNC milling machines, with limited exceptions, and restricts the sale or distribution of digital firearm manufacturing code. By limiting the production of untraceable firearms, this bill helps reduce access to weapons that are harder to track and more likely to be used in violence.

Click each title to access the bill page

Bills That Passed



SB 5917: Improving Access to Abortion Medications (Effective 3.14.26)

Requested by the Women's Commission, this bill would remove the requirement that the Department of Corrections (DOC) sell the abortion medications it possesses at a certain cost but instead allows, but does not require, DOC to obtain payment for any abortion medications it distributes. Modifies the definition of abortion medications for these purposes to specifically include misoprostol.

SB 5105: Sexually Explicit Depictions (Effective 6.11.26)

This bill expands existing laws related to the sexual exploitation of minors. It includes digitally created or altered images—such as AI-generated or manipulated visual or printed depictions—that are obscene and depict minors in sexually explicit conduct, regardless of whether the minor is identifiable. The bill also updates defenses, immunities, and statutes of limitations for these offenses. Additionally, it broadens the definition of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor to include knowingly causing a minor to be photographed or participate in a live performance depicting sexually explicit conduct under certain circumstances.



Bills That Failed

SB 6017: Promoting Victim-Centered, Trauma-Informed Responses

This bill would have enhanced rights and protections for survivors of sexual violence. It would have promoted responses sensitive to victims' needs, ensuring their experiences were respected throughout the legal process and preventing direct questioning by abusers.

HB 1591: Survivor's Justice Act

This bill aimed to allow judges to consider a survivor's history of abuse when making sentencing decisions. Many survivors are incarcerated for actions connected to their experience of violence — this bill was designed to create a path to fairer outcomes.

SB 6070: Supporting the Recovery of Missing Persons

This bill proposed a new alert system for missing adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities, ensuring a rapid response based on revised definitions of high-risk situations.

HB 2510: Concerning the Supervision of Individuals in Community Custody

This bill would have required certain individuals to be supervised by the Department of Corrections based on convictions, including sex offenses, repetitive domestic violence, and stalking, and aimed to strengthen responses to stalking and address gaps in related cases.

HB 2660/SB 6308: Child Welfare Shelter Care Hearings

We opposed this bill. It would have required courts to hold a shelter hearing within 72 hours to determine whether a child could be immediately and safely returned home while the dependency case is pending. It also would have expanded surveillance and punitive responses without providing additional support, resources, or clarity, and without addressing the underlying barriers that impact families.

SB 6239: Tort Claims

We opposed this bill. This bill would have forced all survivors with claims against the state, cities, counties, schools, or any other government entity through a mandatory arbitration process before accessing their right to a jury.

HB 2526: Concerning Prostitution

This bill would have amended existing law to redefine and penalize patronizing a person for prostitution, including paying — or agreeing to pay — a fee or provide anything of value in exchange for sexual conduct. It aimed to establish escalating penalties for patronizing offenses. The bill also would have changed penalties for prostitution and make assault against a person engaged in prostitution a class C felony. In addition, it aimed to prohibit law enforcement from making arrests for prostitution when responding to or investigating other crimes.

Thank You!

Thank you for supporting survivors during this legislative session! We at the Coalition are honored to advocate alongside you each year and could not do this work without the stories, expertise, and persistence of our partner programs.

Your advocacy — whether meeting with lawmakers, sharing what you're seeing on the ground, or continuing to show up for survivors every day — makes this work possible. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and for the collective effort to ensure survivors across Washington have access to the safety, support, and services they deserve.

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WASHINGTON STATE COALITION AGAINST
WSCADVSA
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

