

[Home](#)[Bill Information](#)[California Law](#)[Publications](#)[Other Resources](#)[My Subscriptions](#)[My Favorites](#)

AB-1956 Victim services. (2023-2024)

SHARE THIS:



Date Published: 03/04/2024 09:00 PM

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 04, 2024

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 1956**Introduced by Assembly Member Reyes**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Addis, Alanis, Bonta, Friedman, Gipson, Grayson, Kalra, Low, Stephanie Nguyen, Ortega, Joe Patterson, Quirk-Silva, Santiago, Waldron, Ward)

January 29, 2024

An act to add Section 13823.18 to the Penal Code, relating to victim services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1956, as amended, Reyes. Victim services.

Existing federal law, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, creates the Crime Victims Fund and authorizes federal financial assistance to states for the purpose of supporting eligible crime victim assistance programs. Existing law creates various programs under the Office of Emergency Services related to crime prevention and education, including, among other things, programs concerning family violence prevention and domestic violence prevention.

This bill would require the office to allocate funds, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to fill the gap in the federal Victims of Crime Act funding and to prioritize continuity and stability of crime victim services if the federal grant funding that is awarded to the office is 10% or more lower than the amount awarded in the prior year. The bill would require the office to regularly consult, collaborate with, and consider the recommendations regarding allocation of funding from the Victims of Crime Act Steering Committee.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), through the Crime Victims Fund, is the largest federal funding source for victim service providers. VOCA funds essential services that crime victims need access to, such as rape crisis

centers, domestic violence shelters, child abuse programs, court appointed special advocates, legal assistance, human trafficking services, and ~~more:~~ *more services.*

(b) In California, the Office of Emergency Services currently administers these federal funds to nonprofits, tribal, and governmental entities across California.

(c) In the 2021–22 fiscal year, these funds supported all of the following:

(1) A range of housing options for domestic violence survivors and their children, including 354,227 emergency shelter nights, transitional housing for 180,628 individuals, and support for another 6,882 individuals with housing services through a Housing First approach that connects individuals and families experiencing homelessness quickly and successfully to permanent housing.

(2) Services for 46,461 individuals experiencing sexual violence through California’s rape crisis centers.

(3) Culturally appropriate victim services for 42,184 unserved and underserved survivors of crime and 4,333 child and youth survivors of crime from unserved and underserved communities, and 866 culturally rooted therapy sessions provided to Native American children victimized by abuse or neglect.

(4) Comprehensive services to 15,156 elder abuse victims.

(5) Services for child abuse and neglect survivors, including 1,133 individual counseling sessions provided to children who are victims of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, advocacy or accompaniment for 8,649 foster youth through the Court Appointed Special Advocate program, comprehensive psychotherapy services for 14,732 children victimized by abuse or neglect and their family members and caregivers, support for 16,636 child abuse survivors and their families through victim-centered, trauma-informed forensic interviews, advocacy, direct or referral to therapy or counseling, and referrals for medical exams.

(6) Comprehensive services for 1,138 human trafficking survivors.

(7) Distribution of information about the criminal justice process to 275,270 people.

(d) Due to shifting prosecution styles, the Crime Victims Fund has slowly depleted over the past decade, jeopardizing funding for local direct service providers.

SEC. 2. Section 13823.18 is added to the Penal Code, to read:

13823.18. (a) The purpose of this section is to provide for the development, support, and continuity of victim services programs, provide trauma-informed, high-quality services for victims of crime, and to stabilize funding and support for victim services programs by supplementing federal funding for victim services programs when the federal Victims of Crime Act funding fluctuates.

(b) (1) If the grant funding from the federal Victims of Crime Act that is awarded to the Office of Emergency Services is 10 percent or more lower than the amount awarded the prior year, the office shall allocate funds, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to fill the gap in the federal Victims of Crime Act funding and to prioritize continuity and stability of crime victim services in the state.

(2) Funds for the victim services programs provided in accordance with this section shall be used to supplement, not supplant, funds that the programs receive from other sources.

(3) The office shall ensure that the funds awarded under this section are administered in a unified process with the federal Victims of Crime Act funds.

(4) The programs that receive funding from the office shall provide services to victims of crime as authorized by the federal Victims of Crime Act and related regulations.

(c) The office shall regularly consult, collaborate with, and consider the recommendations regarding the allocation of funding from the Victims of Crime Act Steering Committee.