



Price of Service Cuts

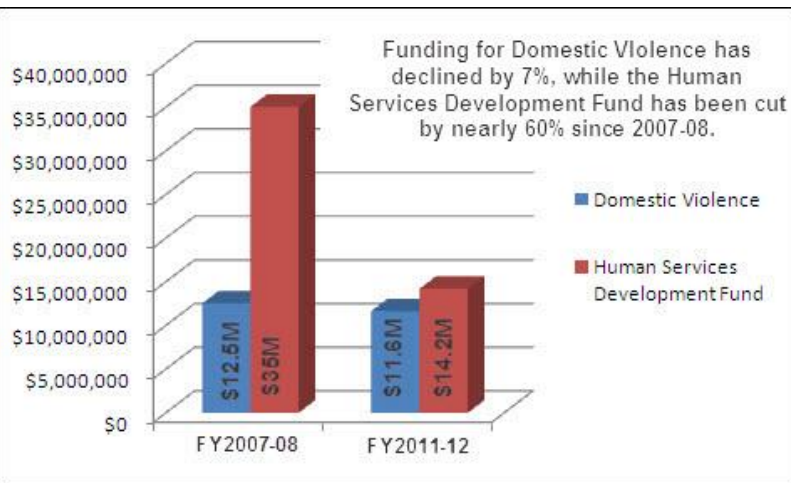


Fewer Places to Turn for Victims of Domestic Violence

The second in a new series about the impact of five years of state service cuts on the citizens of Pennsylvania. Keep up with all the stories in the days and weeks ahead by liking our [Facebook Page](#) or bookmarking our Price of Service Cuts [web page](#).



After suffering abuse, Michelle went with her two young girls (2 and 6 years) to SafeNet, a domestic violence program in Erie. SafeNet's emergency shelter was over capacity but made room for Michelle and her children. SafeNet offered Michelle and her children a safe place to stay and counseling. Staff and volunteers put in extra effort working with the children, unwitting victims who are often confused and traumatized by the violence they have witnessed, to assure their physical and emotional well-being.



Domestic violence shelters can only provide 30 days of shelter for victims, but Michelle needed more time to find permanent housing and get back on her feet. SafeNet continued to work with Michelle, but could no longer provide shelter because of limited funding.

The state provides funding to 61 local shelters, like SafeNet, through the Department of Public Welfare's Domestic Violence Services program. In 2011-12, this program helped local agencies provide 105,000 days of shelter and 242,000 hours of counseling to 46,000 victims. From 2007-08 to

2011-12, state funding has decreased from \$12.5 million to \$11.6 million, a 7% cut.

The Human Services Development Fund (HSDF) provides counties with flexible funding for an array of services, including for victims of domestic violence, but it was deeply cut from \$23.5 million to \$14.2 million in 2011-12. Since 2007-08, funding for HSDF has dropped almost 60%. These cuts give counties, like Erie, less ability to meet social needs.

Funding for domestic violence services in the commonwealth has been stagnant or decreasing over the last 11 years, while the operational costs of providing shelter and counseling have skyrocketed. The recession and high rate of unemployment, while not causes of domestic violence, are tied to an increase in both the frequency and severity of reported cases. With less funding, fewer victims are getting the help they need.

Learn More: Linda Lyons King, Safenet, Erie: 814-455-1774

The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center a non-partisan policy research project that provides independent, credible analysis on state tax, budget and related policy matters, with attention to the impact of current or proposed policies on working families. Learn more at <http://pennbpc.org/priceofcuts> or at <http://facebook.com/PennBPC>.

