

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Contact: Dr. Theresa Beachy, Executive Director, Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network, 352-377-5690 theresab@peacefulpaths.org www.peacefulpaths.org

November 27, 2023

Funding Cuts Create Significant Budget Shortfalls for Domestic Violence Centers

Peaceful Paths lost \$500,000 in October 2023 and will lose an additional \$400,000 in October 2024 due to the reduction of a federal grant, known as the Victims of Crime Act fund

GAINESVILLE- Due to a reduction in fines and penalties paid by Federal criminal offenders between 2017-2021, programs across the state are losing vital support. For Peaceful Paths, which provides domestic abuse services for residents of Alachua, Bradford and Union counties, that means a loss of nearly \$1 million, or one-third of its budget. Peaceful Paths lost \$500,000 in October, with another \$400,000 in cuts coming next year. ***While working toward a long-term solution, critical services across all aspects of Peaceful Paths programs are at risk unless this funding gap can be filled.***

What Peaceful Paths lost this year:

- One Lawyer: provides injunction services, referrals and advice to 200 victims annually
- Economic Empowerment Coordinator: provides housing, financial literacy, and case management to over 250 survivors a year
- High Risk Advocate: provides case management to more than 100 victims identified as high risk by police
- Outreach Advocate: provides support to 5-7 survivors walking in for services weekly
- Two Part-time staff at Shelter: provides coverage for helpline, resident services, and facility support, especially during high occupancy periods and when staff are out
- Trauma Counseling Services: Sessions for survivors reduced from 16 to 12 (25% loss)
- Supportive Housing Resources: Supplies and maintenance support for the six Campus apartment units was cut by 75%
- Direct Client Assistance: Cash support for relocation was cut by 75%
- Operations Support: Utility, insurance and office supplies are all cut by 25%

What we will have to cut next year without additional funding:

- Trauma Counseling services
- Supportive Housing support
- Relocation support
- Outreach and Shelter staff (multiple positions)

This cut, which comes at a time of rising operational costs for utilities, food, maintenance and insurance, supports 40% of Peaceful Paths direct client services. ***As advocacy groups work toward long-term fixes for the Victims of Crime Act Fund, you can help bridge the gap until federal funding returns.*** Here are the ways to assist domestic abuse survivors immediately:

- Donate using our online portal www.peacefulpaths.org/donate
- Consider making your donation recurring and become an Ally in Action or Corporate Partner
- Participate in our Hope Works 50th Anniversary Campaign and Events in 2024
- Provide Pro Bono Legal services to cover reduced staffing
- Contact your state representatives and let them know you support funds being provided for victim safety and support from Florida's budget
- Contact local commissioners and urge them to support our upcoming funding requests to help fill the gap

"It is only with substantial funding support that we can weather these temporary reductions and not impact services," said Dr. Theresa Beachy, Executive Director of Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network. "Relationship violence is more prevalent than many people realize, and Peaceful Paths ensures that survivors and their children have a path to safety and support as well as emotional and financial independence. This is an essential need - not an optional one - for any community that cares about protecting and lifting its most vulnerable people. ***Please consider an investment in your community and survivor services in this time of crisis.***"