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NATIONWIDE SURVEY REVEALS WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

[Denver] – March 12, 2014 – Friday, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) released a new research report that found, in a single 24-hour period, more than 66,000 victims of domestic violence received help and support from domestic violence victim advocacy organizations throughout the United States. The report, “Domestic Violence Counts 2013: A 24-hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services,” examined a random day, September 17, 2013, and collected information from 1649 domestic violence programs throughout the United States from midnight to midnight on that day. One purpose of the report is to help identify needs that were met and that went unmet on that day, and it provides a snapshot of how budget cuts are affecting the staffing and resources of these organizations.

In Colorado, 978 survivors of domestic violence received services during the 24-hours of September 17, 2013. Five hundred and seventeen (262 children and 255 adults) found safe haven in emergency shelters or transitional housing; 461 children and adults received non-residential assistance. However, 205 requests for assistance could not be met (155 of were for housing) because domestic violence victim advocacy programs lacked the resources to meet the need. These numbers represent figures from the 45 programs in Colorado who were able to participate in the survey and therefore do not encapsulate all of the victim services provided or needs unmet in Colorado on September 17, 2013.

“The good news,” says Ellen Stein Wallace, Interim Executive Director of the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “is that because of the amazing work done by domestic violence victim advocacy organizations, so many survivors and their children received a wide range of assistance on this day (like every other day). The bad news is first, that there are so many in need of these services and second, that resources necessary to meet this need continue to diminish.”

More than 45 organizations throughout Colorado have created a wide range of life saving services in recognition of the complex needs of those residing with domestic violence in their lives. According to the report, 100% of the 45 responding organizations in Colorado provide individual advocacy to survivors and their children; 83% provide children’s support services; and 81% provide shelter of some type.

Economic security and personal safety are intricately connected for domestic violence survivors. For many, concern over their ability to provide financially for themselves and their children is a

key motive for staying in or returning to an abusive relationship. Many victims remain in abusive relationships or unsafe situations because they cannot afford to leave. When victims do flee, many do so without any financial resources. Domestic violence advocates help survivors address their basic financial needs which in turn helps survivors find safety and build long-term security for themselves and their children.

Emergency shelter, transitional housing, and affordable long term housing are critical in helping survivors permanently escape violence and increase their economic stability. 517 survivors accessed shelter beds in Colorado on September 17, yet the largest area of unmet need is in emergency shelter or transitional housing.

In addition to the core services known to be beneficial to survivors, which include direct advocacy and emergency shelter, organizations also provide court advocacy and legal services, 24/7 hotlines, group support, transportation, economic empowerment and financial literacy services, community education/prevention training and more. 98% of the counties in Colorado are served by a domestic violence victim service program.

“We have made so much progress toward ending violence and giving survivors avenues for safety. But continued program cuts jeopardize that progress and jeopardize the lives of victims.” says Kim Gandy, President and CEO of the NNEDV. When nationwide program providers were asked what happens to victims when services are not available, 60% said the most likely outcome was that victims returned to their abusers, 27% said the victims become homeless, and 11% said that victims end up living in their cars.

According to Ms. Stein Wallace, “The goal of domestic violence victim advocacy programs is to keep victims of domestic violence safer. Many programs are unfortunately having to reduce services given the economic realities of decreased funding and fewer staff. In a rural state like Colorado, there are local programs with just a handful of staff or less, providing services to domestic violence survivors across counties, mountain ranges and vast expanses of geography. Thank you to everyone who supports these programs and helps keep their doors open.”

Key findings for Colorado include this 24-hour data from September 17, 2013 (from 45 responding programs):

- 978 domestic violence victims and their children received services in just one day
- 361 calls to domestic violence hotlines were answered, averaging more than 15 hotline calls every hour
- 625 individuals across Colorado attended trainings on domestic violence provided by local domestic violence programs
- The majority of unmet requests were for emergency housing
- 22% of programs reported the cause of unmet requests as reduced government funding; 14% reported reduced individual donations; and 11% reported the cause as reductions in funding from private funding sources
- 11% of programs reported that their inability to meet requests were a result of limited staff. Across Colorado 18 positions (4%) were eliminated in 2013, predominantly in direct service positions such as shelter or legal advocates.

Download the full “Domestic Violence Counts 2013” census report at www.nnedv.org/census.

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About CCADV: Through training, technical assistance, resources and support, the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) helps build the capacity of domestic violence program members and allied professionals to meet the needs of the survivors and communities they serve. CCADV increases safety and support for survivors by engaging in policy and systems change, participates in and builds coalitions to create change through a collective voice, and serves as Colorado's center for reliable resources on issues related to domestic violence. To learn more about CCADV, please visit www.ccadv.org.

About NNEDV: *The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), a 501(c)(3) social change organization, is dedicated to creating a social, political and economic environment in which domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking no longer exist. As the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies, NNEDV members include all 56 of the state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, including over 2,000 local programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for almost 25 years. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit www.nnedv.org.*