



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence
ACTION ALLIANCE

**Action Alliance Public Policy
Strategic Priorities 2017-2023**

The Action Alliance, established in 1981, is Virginia's leading statewide voice on sexual and domestic violence. We are a coalition of survivors, advocates, local sexual assault and domestic violence agencies, and community partners who believe:

- * Everyone deserves to live a life free of violence;
- * Children should be safe in their homes and in their communities; and
- * Sexual and intimate partner violence are preventable.

For more than 30 years, we have worked to enhance Virginia's response to and prevention of sexual and domestic violence through advocacy, policy leadership, training, and technical assistance. We are committed to ensuring that our policy work addresses the urgent needs of victims and promotes a comprehensive approach to responding to and preventing sexual and intimate partner violence. Our policy work is guided by these core principles:

We will **balance** promotion of sexual and intimate partner violence **prevention and intervention strategies**, rely heavily on a practice of innovation, and frame our efforts in the belief that **a world without violence is attainable**.

We will **engage our members as partners and leaders** in our efforts, encourage community work that successfully engages broad collaboration, build bridges across disciplines, and **build alliances with organizations seeking common outcomes**.

We will **address the root causes of sexual and intimate partner violence and promote social change** in two vital ways:

- We will **center** the voices and leadership of people impacted by violence and most **marginalized** in our work.
- We will ensure that our work is guided by a **trauma-informed** approach to intervention, an **asset-building** approach to prevention, and grounded in a **commitment to racial justice**.

1. The Action Alliance will prioritize policy efforts that promote an understanding that sexual and intimate partner violence are preventable.

Strategies:

1. Promote policy efforts that contribute a reduction in intimate partner violence with an emphasis on lethal intimate partner violence, working in partnership with communities of color to ensure that strategies have a positive outcome for African-American women who are statistically most likely to be killed by their partners.
2. Engage in policy work that promotes all persons having equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.
3. Advance policies that promote evidence-informed approaches to comprehensive, age-appropriate education about healthy relationships, sexuality and consent.

2017-2019 Activities:

- **Promote effective implementation of the firearms restrictions for individuals with Protective Orders through the development of guidelines and other resources.**
 - **Collaborate with community groups representing diverse African-American communities to develop a common understanding of how best to ensure that the restrictions benefit and do not harm African-American survivors of intimate partner violence. Summarize what we learn in a discussion paper for use by the Public Policy Committee and by member SDVAs.**
- **Build the Public Policy Committee's understanding of health disparities and their connection to sexual and intimate partner violence and other forms of oppression; identify 1-3 areas of health promotion focus for our policy work.**
- **Build the Membership's understanding of sexual health, including human sexuality and sexual rights.**
- **Promote passage of the federal Teach Safe Relationships Act**

Outcomes:

- ✓ *Key elements of ensuring that implementation of firearms restrictions is effective for African-American women at risk will be identified and shared with all 65 Member SDVAs and included in community guidelines.*
- ✓ *100% of the Coordinated Community Response teams across Virginia will receive guidelines for effective implementation of the firearms restrictions, and at least 50% will indicate that they have used the guidelines as they develop their implementation plan.*
- ✓ *The Action Alliance Public Policy Committee will identify 1 to 3 priority areas for engaging in policy work that addresses health disparities.*
- ✓ *Visible support for the federal Teach Safe Relationship Act will translate into comparable Virginia legislation being drafted and introduced.*

2. The Action Alliance will increase engagement among Action Alliance members and general public in policy activities and advance the purposeful inclusion of diverse experiences and voices in policy efforts.

Strategies:

1. Ensure multiple venues for survivors, members and the public to become informed and engaged including, but not limited to, an on-line action list, the Action Alliance blog and other social media, and legislative advocacy day.
2. Promote the consideration of diverse experiences and voices in public policy initiatives through partnerships with allied community organizations and through recruiting and supporting a diverse Public Policy Committee to provide leadership to our efforts.
3. Increase the political and social will to end sexual and intimate partner violence through strategic communications and political organizing.

2017-2019 Activities:

- **Identify and/or develop training and resources to increase the Membership's confidence and competency in legislative advocacy, including recommendations on preparing survivors for public speaking.**
- **Establish consistent process for Salsa action alerts and utilize alerts to engage membership and general public in diverse policy actions.**
- **Highlight policy issues and activities impacting diverse survivors at least monthly on the Alliance in Action blog, and at least weekly in other social media venues.**
- **Identify and nurture partnerships with allied community organizations to collaborate on policy initiatives of mutual interest.**
- **Advance our Move to End Violence Work, including facilitation of "Critical Conversations" during annual membership meetings and development of a strategic communications plan around our MEV pivots, values and goals.**

Outcomes:

- ✓ *Participation in Action Alerts increases by 50% on average each year and contributes to a 10% increase in membership*
- ✓ *Participation in Legislative Advocacy Day increases to at least 200 people.*
- ✓ *The Action Alliance collaborates with a minimum of two allied coalitions/organizations on a shared policy effort/initiative.*
- ✓ *Key elements of the MEV pivots and values will be shared with all 65 Member SDVAs and incorporated into our Core Messages; at least 25% of our membership is actively engaged in the Action Alliance's Move to End Violence activities.*

- ✓ *The Action Alliance participates with other state coalitions and national partners in experimenting with working in alignment around at least 1 priority area that furthers the MEV work.*

3. The Action Alliance will prioritize policy efforts that strive to promote conditions that ensure every child has opportunity to reach their full potential and dignity to the last child

Strategies:

1. Encourage provision of a full range of options for the health and safety of women and girls, including reproductive health and safety.
2. Support efforts to reduce the criminalization of youth, especially youth of color and other marginalized youth.

2017-2019 Activities:

- **Build the Membership's understanding of the intersection of our racial justice and violence prevention work with juvenile justice and school to prison pipeline reform efforts.**
- **Build connections with policy leaders, stakeholders, and advocacy groups engaged in advancing reproductive justice, especially through a racial justice lens.**
- **Build connections with policy leaders, stakeholders, and advocacy groups engaged in disrupting the school to prison/abuse to prison pipeline.**
- **Establish/strengthen partnerships with policy leaders, stakeholders, and advocacy groups to address the racial disparities and disproportional representation of youth of color and LGBTQ identified youth in the juvenile justice system.**

Outcomes:

- ✓ *The Public Policy Committee will develop and disseminate a policy brief on the intersection of reproductive justice, racial justice and violence prevention work.*
- ✓ *The Public Policy Committee will develop and disseminate a policy brief on the intersection of school to prison pipeline and juvenile justice reform with racial justice and violence prevention work.*
- ✓ *The Action Alliance Public Policy Committee will identify 1 to 3 priority areas and/or action steps for engaging and/or supporting policy work that addresses reproductive justice and/or juvenile justice reform.*

4. The Action Alliance will continue to expand evidence-informed approaches to sexual and intimate partner violence victim services and offender accountability, including alternatives to the traditional criminal justice response.

Strategies

1. Promote an effective and coordinated community response to sexual and intimate partner violence that includes supporting policies and practices that:
 - a. provide a swift, consistent and proportional response to offenders;
 - b. preserve victims' rights and privacy and confidentiality;
 - c. promote access to age-appropriate, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services; and
 - d. support access to fair, equal and respectful treatment for all persons.
2. Promote policy efforts that remove burdens, barriers, or restrictions to affordable, accessible, and trauma-informed services that allow people to make the best decisions for themselves and their families.
3. Engage in policy that addresses the intersections of racism, interpersonal violence and state violence and actively engage in expanding access to alternatives to the criminal justice system for safety and justice for survivors and accountability for perpetrators of sexual and intimate partner violence.

2017-2019 Activities:

- **Work with statewide partners to integrate the basic principles outlined in the Department of Justice's "Guidance on Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence" into law enforcement trainings, policies, and practices.**
- **Complete new framework for adult and child sexual assault codes and get feedback from ET/MT; present to Public Policy Committee for approval by June 30, 2017.**
- **Promote effective implementation of the new campus reporting requirements and victim confidentiality by collaborating with the Campus Task Force to promote designation of campus-based sexual and domestic violence advocates as confidential advisors on Virginia's campuses.**
- **Convene an annual Policy Summit for stakeholders and front-line service providers to discuss challenges and successes, identify solutions, network, and exchange information.**

Outcomes:

- ✓ *The Department of Criminal Justice Service takes administrative and/or legislative action to promote practices in the DOJ Guidelines.*
- ✓ *The Public Policy Committee will develop and disseminate a policy brief on the intersection of juvenile justice, racial justice and violence prevention work.*

- ✓ *The key concepts for a new sexual assault criminal code will be shared with all 65 Member SDVAs and key policy leaders, including candidates for Attorney General and Governor.*
- ✓ *A minimum of 2 policy strategies to advance revision of sexual assault criminal statutes will be identified and engaged/implemented.*
- ✓ *The Attorney General/Governor takes administrative action to promote designation of campus-based advocates as confidential advisors OR Campus Task Force actively engages with the Advisory Committee to raise awareness about campus-based issues/needs.*
- ✓ *The Action Alliance will incorporate information gathered and identify at least 2 action plans/priorities in response to issues identified during Policy Summits.*

5. The Action Alliance will prioritize policy initiatives that sustain and build member competence to effectively respond to and prevent sexual and intimate partner violence.

Strategies:

1. Engage a wide network of organizations working in partnership with the Action Alliance and member agencies to increase competencies in responding to and preventing sexual and intimate partner violence.
2. Advance policy initiatives that ensure adequate state and federal funding for sexual and intimate partner violence victim services and prevention.
3. Promote public and policy leader understanding of the value of sexual and domestic violence advocacy, intervention and prevention efforts in the lives of survivors and in the health and well-being of communities.

2017-2019 Activities:

- **Conduct assessment of impact of increased VOCA and state funding in the Commonwealth.**
- **Work with DCJS and local SDVAs to discuss strategies for addressing match needs.**
- **Introduce groups/organizations new to the VOCA funding pool to the Action Alliance and invite them to join the Action Alliance in its work.**
- **Launch the “Advocacy Works” and “Advocacy Is” campaigns to broaden awareness and understanding of the impact and value of advocacy and conduct an evaluation with at least 1 select audience.**

Outcomes:

- ✓ *Governor McAuliffe address match needs in 2018-2020 budget, including increase in state funding for sexual and intimate partner violence OR Governor McAuliffe addresses match by increasing funding and/or transferring all state funding to DCJS.*
- ✓ *The number of affiliates and/or SDVAs engaged with the Action Alliance as contributors, consumers, and joiners increases by 10%.*
- ✓ *An evaluation of the “Advocacy Is...” campaign demonstrates that individuals exposed to the campaign report increased understanding in the impact of advocacy.*