



# VIRTUAL ADVOCATE'S TOOLKIT

**LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY 2022**



# WELCOME

Thank you for your joining us on February 2nd for Legislative Advocacy Day (#LAD22)! We're excited you have committed to #AmplifySurvivorVoices and advocate for policies that both empower survivors and build a world rooted in justice and compassion.

Legislative advocacy means communicating directly with your elected representatives--in this case, legislators in the Virginia General Assembly (GA)--to educate legislators about issues that impact yourself, your family, and your communities.

Traditionally, legislative advocacy has meant speaking in person with lawmakers and their staff. However, this year many of us are not able to do so, and that's where virtual legislative advocacy comes in!

Virtual legislative advocacy consists of any engagement with representatives in the GA through the use of technology: phone calls, email, social media, and even good-old-fashioned letter writing. This toolkit is designed to help make engaging your legislators over social media, email, and telephone as easy as possible.

Here you will find the following tools:

**SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:** We've pulled together a number of sample Facebook and Twitter posts for you to share. All you need to do is copy and paste... and remember to use #AmplifySurvivorVoices and #LAD22

**SHAREABLE GRAPHICS:** Spread the word about #LAD22 and what you're doing to #AmplifySurvivorVoices by sharing these images on social media, your website, and/or emails.

**PHONE ADVOCACY TIPS AND EMAIL SCRIPTS:** Worried about stumbling over your words or missing a talking point? We got you! If you'd rather email, simply copy and paste, or use these scripts as a jumping-off point for your own message.

**CONTACT INFO FOR YOUR LEGISLATORS:** Find names and addresses for all of your legislators, simply by entering your own address. We've also done the work of compiling all Facebook and Twitter handles for your Virginia Senators and members of the House of Delegates!

# FIRST TIME THINKING ABOUT LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY? YOU MAY BE WONDERING...

## 1 WHY IS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY IMPORTANT?

Lawmakers cannot be experts on all issues all the time. Do you know who are the experts on sexual and intimate partner violence? People who have been directly affected by sexual and intimate partner violence... and the professionals who help them! It's our job to make sure that lawmakers who vote on issues affecting survivors are knowledgeable about the issues before they vote.

## 2 IS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY A GOOD USE OF MY TIME?

Yes! Because legislative advocacy works!

Lawmakers listen to their constituents. Pretty much every contact you have with a legislator and/or their staff is noted in order to keep track of where constituents stand on any given issue. Lawmakers want to be accountable to their constituents... and it's also in their best interests to do so. Plus, your voice/knowledge/point of view is worth sharing!

## 3 WHY AM I THE BEST PERSON TO CONTACT MY REPRESENTATIVES?

Because it takes all of us working together to build the world we want. You have a story to tell about how sexual and intimate partner has impacted you personally and/or professionally. You have your own vision of a world without domination. Never underestimate the power of story to influence lawmakers... whether it's about your own experience or the impact your program has on your community.

## QUICK LINKS

- [Action Alliance 2022 Legislative Priorities and Talking Points](#)
- [Action Alliance Legislative Advocacy Guide](#)
- [Who's My Legislator?](#)
- [Virginia House of Delegates: Facebook and Twitter Contacts](#)
- [Virginia Senate: Facebook and Twitter Contacts](#)

# SAMPLE POSTS

Here are a few sample posts to help get your message out there!

(tip: always remember to tag your representatives so they will see your post)



Join us in supporting two life-saving budget requests this General Assembly Session! Budget items 344 #2s (Sen. Favola) and 344 #2h (Del. Delaney) provide a \$650k increase in annual appropriations to the Virginia sexual and domestic violence prevention fund + a commitment from the General Assembly and administration to get these funds out to local programs immediately.

Since initial approval during the 2020 General Assembly Session, prevention funds have been held up by state agencies and unreleased to the sexual and domestic violence field. We have lost 2 years of crucial programming in our communities statewide. It's time to #FundPrevention, fully and effectively in Virginia.

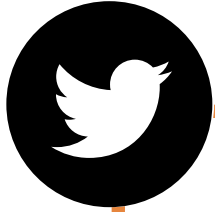


Virginia's crisis centers are in crisis! Significant reductions in the federal VOCA reserve have threatened the life-saving work of sexual and domestic violence agencies across the state. While we anticipate the FFY23-24 VOCA fund balance to increase – as a result of the federal VOCA Fix Act – Virginia's crisis centers NEED stability via state stopgap funding right now.

Join us in supporting Budget Items 486 #19s (Sen. Favola) and 486 #5h (Del. Coyner) this general assembly session! Help us to continue doing this life-saving work! #AmplifySurvivorVoices #LAD22 #ActionAlliance

# SAMPLE POSTS

Here are a few sample posts to help get your message out there!  
(tip: always remember to tag your representatives so they will see your post)



@\_\_\_\_\_ (Senator/Delegate twitter handle) promote  
victim safety in VA now! Support bills like HB 671 and SB 494  
#LAD22 #ActionAlliance



@\_\_\_\_\_ (Senator/Delegate twitter handle) help us  
prevent violence before it happens! Support budget items  
Budget Item 344 #2s (Sen. Favola) and 344 #2h (Del.  
Delaney) #FundPrevention #LAD22 #ActionAlliance



@\_\_\_\_\_ (Senator/Delegate twitter handle) VA crisis  
centers are in crisis! ARPA stop-gap funding can stabilize our  
life-saving work. Support budget items Budget Items 486  
#19s (Sen. Favola) and 486 #5h (Del. Coyner) #LAD22  
#ActionAlliance

# GRAPHICS

Share these graphics with your Facebook and Instagram posts to easily  
#AmplifySurvivorVoices.

## IT'S TIME TO FUND PREVENTION

Imagine, a Virginia where every community can engage in evidence-informed work to...



Teach young people how to have healthy relationships, foster positive norms, and build empathy and communication skills



Connect community leaders and young people with tools and resources, problem solving spaces, and safety and support networks



Strengthen economic supports for families



Build coalitions to make neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, and communities healthy and safe

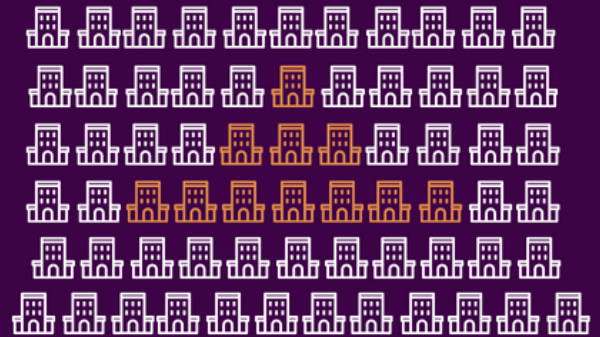


Educate parents and adults on how to teach consent, model respect, and support healthy youth development

[WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG)

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021, federal Rape Prevention & Education (RPE) dollars were redirected away from Virginia's rape crisis centers. Meaning that only 11 out of our 67 sexual & domestic violence agencies are able to access federal funds to support their life-changing work.



It's time to fund prevention, fully and effectively. Support Budget Items 344 #2s (Sen. Favola) and 344 #2h (Del. Delaney)!

[WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG)

## PREVENTION PROGRAMS STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT HAPPENS

Prevention staff in Virginia's Sexual & Domestic Violence Agencies (SDVAs) use evidence-informed, public health strategies to prevent violence like...



### TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE

Ongoing school-based and after-school education teaching young people the skills required to build healthy relationships and become community leaders;



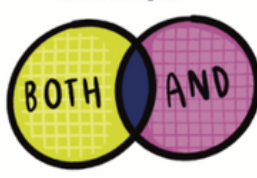
### SUPPORTING HEALTHY FAMILIES

Education for parents and adults on how to support developmentally appropriate communication and expression in youth, teach consent, model respect, and build social-emotional learning skills



### TRAINING AND TOOLS FOR LEADERS

Building road-maps with school administrators and faith and community leaders on ways to create healthy, violence-free environments - including recognizing and responding to harmful behaviors that may be risk factors for future violence



### BUILDING COMMUNITY COALITIONS A

Leading multi-disciplinary community coalitions to address the root causes of violence and make neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, and businesses healthy and safe

[WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG)

Click [here](#) to download all of the images included in this toolkit.





# INFOGRAPHICS

Share these infographics when you post to help share knowledge about how prevention can end violence before it starts.



**PREVENTION PROGRAMS STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT HAPPENS**

Prevention staff in Virginia's Sexual & Domestic Violence Agencies (SDVAs) use evidence-informed, public health strategies to prevent violence like...

**TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE**

Ongoing school-based and after-school education teaching young people the skills required to build healthy relationships and become community leaders;

**SUPPORTING HEALTHY FAMILIES**

Education for parents and adults on how to support developmentally appropriate communication and expression in youth, teach consent, model respect, and build social-emotional learning skills

**TRAINING AND TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Building road-maps with school administrators and faith and community leaders on ways to create healthy, violence-free environments - including recognizing and responding to harmful behaviors that may be risk factors for future violence

**BUILDING COMMUNITY COALITIONS AND CONNECTION**

Leading multi-disciplinary community coalitions to address the root causes of violence and make neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, and businesses healthy and safe

Prevention programs like these, led by Virginia's sexual and domestic violence agencies, are the cornerstones for ensuring community-wide health and resilience—a key factor in preventing future violence.

[WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.VSDVALLIANCE.ORG)

# VISUAL ELEMENTS

Use these elements to create your own graphics stickers, or buttons and stand in solidarity with all survivors.,



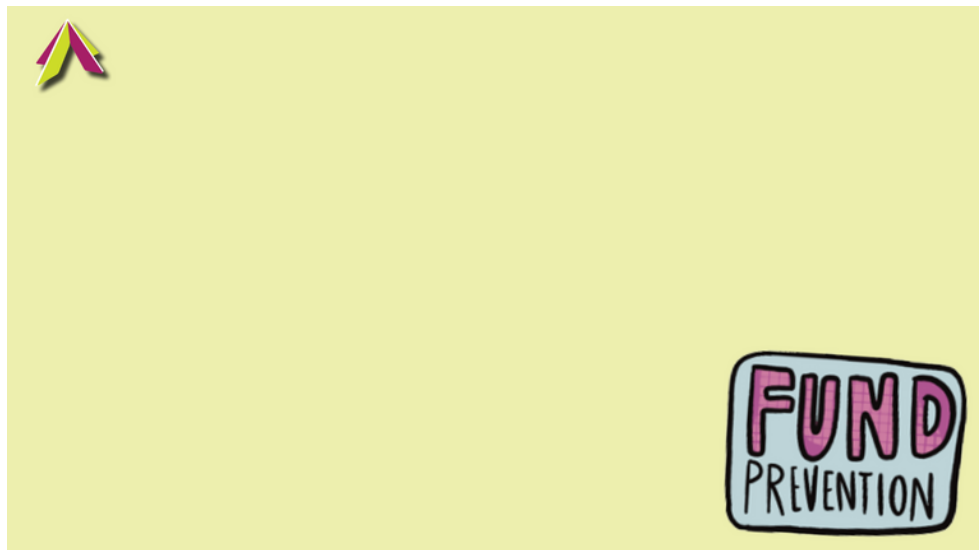
**Click here** to download all of the images included in this toolkit.





# ZOOM BACKGROUNDS

Make a statement in your Zoom meetings using these social media banners and Zoom backgrounds.



# SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Use these scripts as copy-and-paste templates or to help guide you as you send emails to your representatives.



## #FUNDPREVENTION AND GET THESE FUNDS TO WORK IN COMMUNITIES ASAP

**Subject:** Sexual & Domestic Violence is on the rise – help us stop it!

Dear Delegate/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_ (position/title) at \_\_\_\_\_ (sexual and/or domestic violence agency), a community based program serving \_\_\_\_\_ (town/city/county/) and working every day to end sexual and domestic violence. I'm emailing you today to urge you to Budget Items [344 #2s](#) (Sen. Favola) and [344 #2h](#) (Del. Delaney) which would provide life-saving appropriations to Virginia's sexual and domestic violence prevention fund.

Unfortunately, many of Virginia's sexual and domestic violence agencies have seen requests for services, including emergency shelter, drastically increase as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some communities, the increased demand for services reflects literally thousands more being served in 2021 in comparison to previous years. But we can reverse these upward trends across the state with your help. Please support crucial allotments to the prevention fund this session. These amendments provide \$650,000 from the general fund each year increasing the support for the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Fund to \$2.0 million each year. For more information on this ask and how you can support our cause in \_\_\_\_\_ (town/city/county), please see the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance's [prevention infographic](#)!

Thank you for your time and commitment to building safe and thriving families and communities in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Thank you!

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name, title, agency, contact info)

# SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Use these scripts as copy-and-paste templates or to help guide you as you send emails to your representatives.



## CREATE STOP-GAP FUNDING FOR VIRGINIA'S CRISIS CENTERS

**Subject:** VA's Crisis Centers are in Crisis! We Need Stop-Gap Funding NOW

Dear Delegate/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_ (position/title) at \_\_\_\_\_ (sexual and/or domestic violence agency), a community based program serving \_\_\_\_\_ (town/city/county/) and working every day to end sexual and domestic violence. I'm emailing you today to urge you to support Budget Items [486 #19s](#) (Sen. Favola) and [486 #5h](#) (Del. Coyner) which would provide life-saving appropriations in ARPA dollars directly to sexual and domestic violence crisis centers across Virginia.

Unfortunately, many of Virginia's sexual and domestic violence agencies have seen requests for services, including emergency shelter, drastically increase as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund reserve has been at an all-time low, meaning that millions of dollars which once supported our crisis centers are no longer available. Fund projections for FFY23-24 look promising, however, there is a critical gap in funding in Virginia right now which is threatening our work. We are asking for \$9M in ARPA funds to support immediate stop-gap funding that will help stabilize our life-saving services across Virginia. Please support Budget Items 486 #19s (Sen. Favola) and 486 #5h (Del. Coyner)

Thank you for your time and commitment to building safe and thriving families and communities in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Thank you!

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name, title, agency, contact info)

# SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Use these scripts as copy-and-paste templates or to help guide you as you send emails to your representatives.



## STOP WORKPLACE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT NOW

**Subject:** Strengthen protections for workers experiencing discrimination and harassment!

Dear Delegate/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_ (position/title) at \_\_\_\_\_ (sexual and/or domestic violence agency), a community based program serving \_\_\_\_\_ (town/city/county/) and working every day to end sexual and domestic violence. I'm emailing you today to urge you to support [Senate Bill 494](#) (McClellan) that would strengthen Virginia's protections for those who experience sexual and workplace harassment.

Workplace and sexual harassment continue to be a pervasive issue in Virginia. This has been especially true throughout the pandemic - which has exacerbated economic instability and created unsafe working conditions for survivors in low-wage jobs. The Virginia Human Rights Act (VHRA) requires procedural clarity, particularly with regards to a consistent and expanded statute of limitations and employer size threshold. For more [see our one-pager](#).

Many of the survivors we work with have had to choose between unsafe and even traumatizing working conditions versus the uncertainty of joblessness and housing insecurity during an already unstable time. For those who are ready to leave shelter and attempt to become self-sufficient, unsafe working conditions can force them to choose between their freedom or returning to an abusive relationship, to living in a car, or to re-entering the shelter. We believe that SB 494 is not only good policy for survivors of violence, but for all Virginia businesses and we hope that you'll support it.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to safety and justice in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Thank you!

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name, title, agency, contact info)

# SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Use these scripts as copy-and-paste templates or to help guide you as you send emails to your representatives.



## EXPAND ACCESS TO THE HOPE CARD PROGRAM STATEWIDE

**Subject:** Help us ensure victim safety by supporting HB 671

Dear Delegate/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_ (position/title) at \_\_\_\_\_ (sexual and/or domestic violence agency), a community based program serving \_\_\_\_\_ (town/city/county/) and working every day to end sexual and domestic violence. I'm emailing you today to urge you to support [HB 671](#) (Hope), a bill to expand the Hope Card Program for petitioners of Final Protective Orders in courtrooms across Virginia.

The Hope Card Program, operated by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, allows anyone who has a final protective order to obtain a card summarizing the order's critical information. The design of the Card combines law enforcement's immediate need for information in response to a domestic violence or stalking incident with a victim's need for safety, convenience, and wraparound services. For more on this program, please [see our one-pager](#).

We believe that HB 671 is a strong bipartisan proposal to promote victim safety and provide clarity and ease for law enforcement who are tasked with enforcing protective orders statewide. Join us in supporting HB 671 today!

Thank you for your time and your commitment to safety and justice in Virginia! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our partners at the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance.

Thank you!

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name, title, agency, contact info)



# PHONE ADVOCACY

The tips below can help you navigate phone-based advocacy during Legislative Advocacy Day. If you need any support, our staff will be available, simply email [policy@vsdvalliance.org](mailto:policy@vsdvalliance.org)



The same webpage which helps you identify your representatives also provides their phone numbers. Once you know which representatives are yours, a simple Google search should pull up their personal websites, which should also have office addresses and phone numbers.

- 1)** Remember your message prep! For phone calls, it can be helpful to write out some talking points ahead of time to make sure you know what you want to say. Calls to the front desk are often brief, but they do take note of them.
- 2)** Use the following email scripts as a launching pad to get you started on talking points.
- 3)** When you call your representative's office, the phone will be answered by a staff member (staffer). Tell the staffer you are a constituent and you'd like to speak to someone about sexual/ domestic violence issues. This information will help direct you to the most appropriate person.

# EMAIL FOOTERS



# GETTING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES



Find your representatives.

Find your Virginia Senators on Twitter  
and Facebook.



Find your Virginia Delegates on Twitter  
and Facebook.

## FOLLOW US

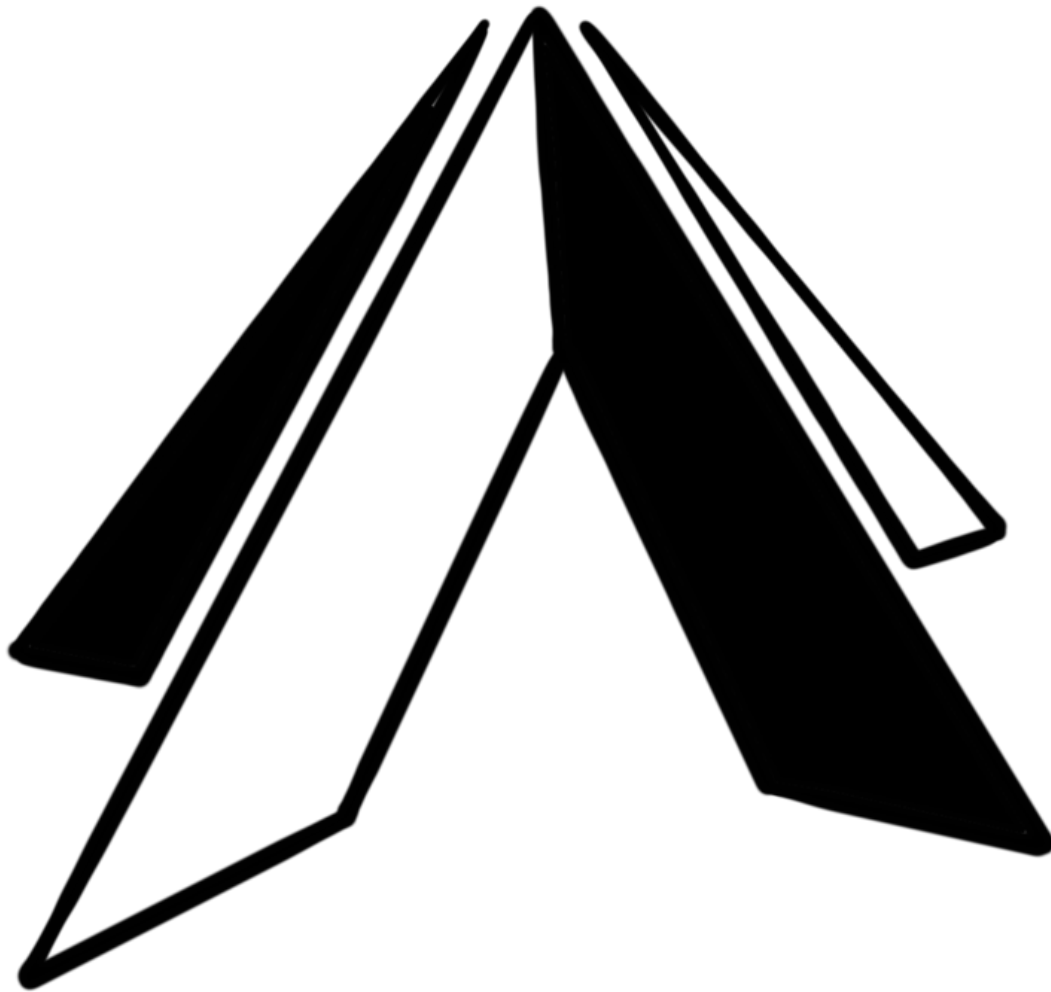


@VActionAlliance



@VSDVAA

# VIRTUAL ADVOCATE'S TOOLKIT



**VIRGINIA SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION ALLIANCE**  
VIRGINIA'S LEADING VOICE ON SEXUAL AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.

1118 WEST MAIN STREET  
RICHMOND, VA 23220

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**#VLAD22**