



Highlights of OVW Accomplishments on the First Anniversary of the U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence May 2024

*The hallmark of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is its emphasis on a coordinated community response (CCR), which fosters a multi-sectoral approach that is survivor-centered and trauma-informed, bringing together victim service providers, criminal and civil justice systems, community-based organizations, health care providers, and other partners at the local level to meet the diverse needs of survivors on their path to safety, justice, healing, and well-being. The **U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action (GBV National Plan)**, which was launched in May 2023, further promotes this concept by establishing a “federal coordinated community response.” This plan acts as a comprehensive blueprint for a whole-of-government approach that builds on the lessons learned and achievements made through the efforts of GBV survivors, advocates, and others over the years, aiming to enhance strategies to prevent and address gender-based violence effectively and more comprehensively.*

As we mark the one-year anniversary of the launch of the GBV National Plan, below are highlights of the Office on Violence Against Women's (OVW) key accomplishments that contribute to advancing the vision and goals of the GBV National Plan. These initiatives span the seven pillars of the GBV National Plan.

Supporting Survivors and Advancing Coordinated Community Responses Across States, U.S. Territories, and Tribal Nations

In FY 2023, OVW awarded over \$633 million in grants and cooperative agreements to a broad array of organizations dedicated to addressing and preventing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other interconnected forms of gender-based violence (GBV is used as an umbrella term). This funding enhances coordinated community responses and increases access to resources for underserved communities. A significant portion of this funding, amounting to over \$68 million, was specifically directed toward supporting survivors in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

As a result of new provisions in the 2022 reauthorization of VAWA (VAWA 2022) and increased appropriations, OVW has launched several new grant programs and initiatives. Since 2021, funding for VAWA implementation has increased by over 35%, with FY2024 appropriations reaching \$713 million.

OVW provides a comprehensive report to Congress detailing the impact and strategic use of OVW's grants. The most recent Biennial Report to Congress on the Effectiveness of Grant Funds, covering FYs 2020-2022, was released in April.



Expanding Access to Justice through Support for Diverse Survivor Needs and Community-Based Approaches

Survivors need multiple pathways to access the support they need when seeking safety, justice, and healing. Therefore, OVW's programming extends beyond traditional victim services, incorporating additional community-based approaches such as restorative practices or violence interruption programs, as well as initiatives that aim to improve the law enforcement and justice system responses through survivor-centered and trauma-informed approaches.

- OVW recently implemented a new grant program, the Demonstration Program on Trauma-Informed, Victim-Centered Training for Law Enforcement on Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking (Abby Honold) Program, which was established in the VAWA 2022 reauthorization. The Abby Honold Program will award grants to law enforcement agencies to train officers to conduct trauma-informed and victim-centered investigations that reflect a coordinated community response. The program encourages law enforcement agencies to integrate into their policies, trainings and practices the eight principles outlined in the Department of Justice's 2022 updated guidance on Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias.
- In FY 2024, OVW launched the Enhancing Investigation and Prosecution of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Initiative. This new initiative, which was first authorized in OVW's FY 2023 appropriations act, will promote and evaluate effective policing and prosecution responses to gender-based violence and encourage law enforcement agencies and prosecutors' offices to expand and improve their capacity to effectively investigate and/or prosecute domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and in so doing, support victim safety and autonomy, hold offenders accountable, and promote agency trust within the surrounding community.
- In May 2024, DOJ released its Framework for Prosecutors to Strengthen Our National Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Involving Adult Victims. Written by prosecutors for prosecutors, this guide sets out five principles that, if implemented, will lead to better outcomes for victims, safer communities, and greater accountability for perpetrators of sexual assault and domestic violence. The guide is housed on a new webpage that provides additional resources and tools, principle-by-principle, to further assist prosecutors.
- Under the Electronic Service Protection Order Court Pilot, grants will be awarded to state or Tribal courts that employ multidisciplinary partnerships across victim services, law enforcement, prosecutors and defense attorneys, legal services, tribal courts, and case management experts to develop and implement a program for properly and legally serving protection orders through electronic communication methods, develop best



practices relating to such an electronic service, ensure that the program developed complies with due process requirements and other procedures required by law or by a court, and implement any technology necessary to carry out the program developed, such as technology to verify and track the receipt of a protection order by the intended party.

- OVW launched the Restorative Practices Pilot Sites Program in May 2024 with the release of the solicitation for this new grant program that was authorized in VAWA 2022. This grant program will support, strengthen, and expand existing restorative practice programs that prevent or address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. It will also focus on building evidence for victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally restorative practices addressing these harms. OVW has also made grant awards under the Restorative Practices Technical Assistance Project to three entities to serve as national training and technical assistance providers: ValorUS, New York University, and Men as Peacemakers. These organizations will collaborate with OVW to identify potential pilot sites, design program implementation, provide training, and support evaluation and assessment efforts. Additionally, the Restorative Practice Pilot Program Evaluation solicitation, released in March 2024, will support research and evaluation of restorative practices in collaboration with the pilot sites and technical assistance providers to inform practitioners and policymakers on developing, implementing, and using restorative practices to redress harm caused by domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- Community violence interruption (CVI) programs offer culturally relevant, grassroots solutions to prevent and address community violence. By addressing various types of violence holistically, these programs provide integrated, community-specific support that aligns with the complex realities that survivors face, particularly in historically marginalized communities. OVW funded The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence, which will implement the Intersection: Domestic Violence + Community Violence Project. The Network and its project partners will work with three pilot locations to strengthen the working relationship between domestic violence and community violence organizations, facilitate mutual understanding and learning between the two types of service provider organizations, and generate mutually impactful strategies and service models to respond to individuals who experience both domestic and community violence. OVW also convened a panel at the Bureau of Justice Assistance Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention conference in 2024 to identify strengths, barriers, and strategies common to both CVI and GBV prevention and intervention work. In addition, OVW convened two listening sessions focused on violence interruption, credible messenger advocates with lived experience, and community organizations doing GBV work at these intersections and in marginalized urban communities.



Advancing Equity through Intersectional Approaches

OVW is committed to advancing equity and Tribal sovereignty to address sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking effectively. This commitment shapes all OVW initiatives, which aim to enhance outreach, services, and justice responses for communities disproportionately impacted by violence and systemic obstacles. By adopting an intersectional approach, OVW broadened grant access for programs tailored to meet the specific needs of historically marginalized and underserved populations. This includes fostering a strengths-based approach by increasing access to resources to culturally specific and population-specific community-based organizations, ensuring that OVW's efforts are inclusive and comprehensive. Through listening sessions, site visits, and the creation of culturally relevant outreach materials, OVW's strategic engagements are crucial in shaping approaches to serve diverse communities' needs by making grant opportunities more accessible.

- In April 2024, OVW launched the Strengthening Culturally Specific Campuses' Approaches to Address Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Initiative under the Campus Program to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in strengthening their institutional response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- OVW released the FY2024 solicitation for the Expanding Legal Services Initiative, which enables organizations that do not currently offer legal services to establish a program from the ground up to provide legal representation to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Population-specific organizations led by and for historically underserved communities are prioritized for funding and will receive intensive, customized training and technical assistance during a capacity-building planning phase through the implementation phase to create a sustainable legal program that is responsive to the needs of their survivor communities.
- FY 2023 National Deaf Services Program - OVW funded Phase Two of a two-part initiative to expand and strengthen services for Deaf victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Under Phase One, OVW issued the National Deaf Service Line Initiative solicitation. This project resulted in the Expanding Deaf-Specific Victim Services Nationwide: A 5-Year Strategy report. With Phase One complete, OVW issued a solicitation and provided grant funding to implement the recommended strategy outlined in the report: Launch a virtual "for Deaf, by Deaf" victim services program, which will be the foundation of this program and test strategies to expand in-person services.



- OVW continues to administer VAWA-authorized discretionary grant programs that specifically focus and build on culturally responsive practices, building capacity, and creating targeted resources to increase access to survivor-centered, trauma-informed services for those who may encounter additional barriers to safety and support. Grants include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - The Grants to Enhance Culturally Specific Services for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (Culturally Specific Services Program)
 - The Sexual Assault Services Culturally Specific Program (SAS Culturally Specific Program)
 - Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations Program (Underserved Program)

Support for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

OVW is dedicated to preventing and addressing gender-based violence across all communities, with a particular emphasis on American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. Recognizing the distinct and rich cultural heritage, sovereignty, and unique challenges these communities face, OVW prioritizes supporting the development and enhancement of culturally sensitive and community-driven solutions. In FY 2023, OVW awarded \$68 million in grants to support American Indian and Alaska Native communities to provide services and promote justice for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking.

- The VAWA 2022 expanded the recognition of special Tribal criminal jurisdiction (STCJ) to cover non-Native perpetrators of sexual violence, child violence, stalking, sex trafficking, obstruction of justice, assaults on Tribal justice personnel, violation of a protection order, domestic violence, and dating violence. To implement the provision:
 - OVW launched the new Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction Reimbursement Program, which was authorized in VAWA 2022 to reimburse participating Tribes for expenses incurred in implementing STCJ. In May 2024, OVW funded 14 Tribes.
 - OVW issued a new solicitation for a special initiative in FY 2023 to provide funding under its Tribal Jurisdiction Grant Program to Alaska Tribes interested in preparing to seek Attorney General designation to exercise STCJ, under a new Alaska Pilot Program that was established in VAWA 2022. Two Tribes in Alaska received five-year awards of \$1.5 million each, and a solicitation to fund additional Alaska Native Villages was issued for FY 2024.



- OVW established the Alaska Intertribal Technical Assistance Working Group (ITWG) and funded the Alaska Native Justice Center to lead a training and technical assistance collaboration to support the ITWG and other Alaska Tribes. The ITWG is a voluntary working group of Tribal representatives who exchange information, advice, and peer-to-peer support on expanding their criminal justice capacity and potentially seeking Attorney General designation under the Alaska Pilot Program. The first Alaska ITWG was convened in May 2024.
- OVW released for the first time a solicitation for the Healing and Response Teams Special Initiative in May 2024. This special initiative, using VAWA innovation funds, was created in response to recommendations made by the Not Invisible Act Commission. It will support the creation, training, and sustainability of healing and response teams, including the funding of three pilot sites, using a Tribal-based model of care to respond to missing or murdered Indigenous persons (MMIP) cases related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking.
- On August 8-10, 2023, OVW hosted the 18th Annual Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation on Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women in Tulsa, Oklahoma. OVW solicited recommendations from the Tribes concerning administering Tribal funds and programs, enhancing the safety of Native women, strengthening the federal response to such violent crimes, and improving access to local, regional, state, and federal crime information databases and criminal justice information systems. This year, the 19th Annual Government-to-Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 19-21, 2024.

Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Online abuse and harassment are pervasive issues in the digital age, frequently intersecting with technology-facilitated domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The use of technology to facilitate abuse amplifies the reach, duration, and intensity of these crimes, blurring the boundaries between public and private spaces, and further complicating efforts to investigate and prevent such crimes. OVW increased access to survivor-centered services, information, and support for victims who experience technology-facilitated GBV through training and assistance for victim advocates, law enforcement, and the criminal legal system.

- OVW launched two new initiatives authorized by VAWA 2022 to support survivors of tech-facilitated abuse and online harassment:
 - The Local Law Enforcement Grants for Enforcement of Cybercrimes Program will support jurisdictions in providing training for state, Tribal, and local law



enforcement, prosecutors, and judges; enforcing laws that prohibit cybercrimes against individuals; establishing local task forces; and acquiring computer equipment to investigate these crimes.

- The National Resource Center on Cybercrimes Against Individuals will provide resource information, training, and technical assistance to improve the capacity of individuals, organizations, governmental entities, and communities to prevent, enforce, and prosecute cybercrimes against individuals, including the non-consensual distribution of intimate images and cyberstalking.
- OVW identified and prioritized addressing online harm and abuse in the FY 2023 and FY 2024 Grants to Prevent and Respond to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Sex Trafficking Against Children and Youth Program and the Grants to Engage Men and Boys as Allies in the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls Program, as well as the Grants to Reduce Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking on Campus Program.
- Under the FY 2023 Training and Technical Assistance Initiative Solicitation, OVW made a 36-month award of \$1 million to AEquitas for the Prosecution and Investigation of Online Abuse Initiative, which supports the provision of training and technical assistance to law enforcement and prosecution agencies to enhance their capacity to investigate and prosecute online crimes such as cyberstalking, online harassment, doxing, and threats to share or sharing of intimate images.
- In January 2024, OVW released the FY 2024 Training and Technical Assistance Initiative solicitation, which requested proposals to improve online safety for children and youth. This 24-month award will fund training and technical assistance to children- and youth-serving organizations, schools and school districts, institutions of higher education, and victim service providers to enhance their ability to provide prevention and intervention strategies and responses to children and youth (ages 0-24) who have experienced or are impacted by technology-facilitated abuse.
- Section 1309 of VAWA 2022 created a new federal civil cause of action for individuals whose intimate visual images are distributed without their consent, allowing the recovery of damages and legal fees. To raise awareness that the new relief exists, the Department of Justice's Office for Access to Justice partnered with OVW and the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys to develop an informational pamphlet for victims that explains the new cause of action, including its elements and available relief.



Enhancing Survivor-Centered Responses through Training and Technical Assistance

OVW's Training and Technical Assistance Initiative delivers training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies to tackle the challenges of addressing sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. This program not only aims to expand and strengthen trauma-informed programs and services to prevent and address gender-based violence but also prioritizes centering the lived experiences of survivors. The projects mentioned below represent only a select few from numerous technical assistance projects implemented.

- OVW partnered with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to host the event “Feds at the Forefront: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Federal World of Work,” with the participation of multiple federal agencies. This event focused on enhancing workplace policies and training programs designed to prevent and address gender-based violence and sexual harassment. It also initiated a cross-agency peer network within the federal workforce. The community of practice will be supported by OVW and The Resource Center on Workplace Responses to Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, an OVW-funded national training and technical assistance project.
- OVW released the National Protocol for Intimate Partner Violence Medical Forensic Examinations, developed in collaboration with the International Association of Forensic Nurses and in partnership with health care, victim advocacy, justice, law enforcement, and victim service providers. The protocol guides healthcare providers in conducting comprehensive assessments in a clinical setting of patients experiencing intimate partner violence that prioritizes the patient’s health and well-being. The protocol underscores trauma-informed, patient-centered care and the critical role of language accessibility.
- OVW introduced a new purpose area in the Training and Technical Assistance Initiative, focusing on disaster preparedness and response plans. This initiative will offer training and technical assistance to OVW grantees on creating response plans for disasters and public health crises tailored to the needs of survivors. Additionally, OVW has collaborated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in their establishment of a new National Advisory Council Gender-Based Violence Subcommittee, leveraging interagency resources to enhance GBV responses during and after natural disasters and emergencies.