



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

AUG 14 2017

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Justice submits this report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives pursuant to section 3(b)(4) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(15)), which requires that the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) confer biennially with key stakeholders in the violence against women community. Specifically, VAWA 2013 mandates that OVW (1) establish a biennial conferral process with State and tribal coalitions and technical assistance providers who receive funding through grants administered by OVW, as well as other key stakeholders; (2) confer regarding the administration of grants, unmet needs, lessons learned in the field, and emerging trends; and (3) publish a report summarizing the issues presented during the conferral and what, if any, policies OVW intends to implement to address those issues.

To meet this reporting requirement, OVW has enclosed a report describing the input OVW received in eighteen conferral sessions held between September 2013 and November 2015. This report includes OVW actions taken during and after the conferral period in response or related to issues raised by conferral participants. The report will also be made available to the public on OVW's website.

We hope that you will find the information presented in this report provides a better understanding of OVW's efforts to reduce violence against women. If you have any questions regarding the substance of this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel R. Ramer".

Samuel R. Ramer
Acting Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

AUG 14 2017

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Conyers:

The Department of Justice submits this report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives pursuant to section 3(b)(4) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(15)), which requires that the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) confer biennially with key stakeholders in the violence against women community. Specifically, VAWA 2013 mandates that OVW (1) establish a biennial conferral process with State and tribal coalitions and technical assistance providers who receive funding through grants administered by OVW, as well as other key stakeholders; (2) confer regarding the administration of grants, unmet needs, lessons learned in the field, and emerging trends; and (3) publish a report summarizing the issues presented during the conferral and what, if any, policies OVW intends to implement to address those issues.

To meet this reporting requirement, OVW has enclosed a report describing the input OVW received in eighteen conferral sessions held between September 2013 and November 2015. This report includes OVW actions taken during and after the conferral period in response or related to issues raised by conferral participants. The report will also be made available to the public on OVW's website.

We hope that you will find the information presented in this report provides a better understanding of OVW's efforts to reduce violence against women. If you have any questions regarding the substance of this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel R. Ramer".

Samuel R. Ramer
Acting Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

AUG 14 2017

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Justice submits this report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives pursuant to section 3(b)(4) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(15)), which requires that the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) confer biennially with key stakeholders in the violence against women community. Specifically, VAWA 2013 mandates that OVW (1) establish a biennial conferral process with State and tribal coalitions and technical assistance providers who receive funding through grants administered by OVW, as well as other key stakeholders; (2) confer regarding the administration of grants, unmet needs, lessons learned in the field, and emerging trends; and (3) publish a report summarizing the issues presented during the conferral and what, if any, policies OVW intends to implement to address those issues.

To meet this reporting requirement, OVW has enclosed a report describing the input OVW received in eighteen conferral sessions held between September 2013 and November 2015. This report includes OVW actions taken during and after the conferral period in response or related to issues raised by conferral participants. The report will also be made available to the public on OVW's website.

We hope that you will find the information presented in this report provides a better understanding of OVW's efforts to reduce violence against women. If you have any questions regarding the substance of this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel R. Ramer".

for

Samuel R. Ramer
Acting Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

AUG 14 2017

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

The Department of Justice submits this report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives pursuant to section 3(b)(4) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(15)), which requires that the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) confer biennially with key stakeholders in the violence against women community. Specifically, VAWA 2013 mandates that OVW (1) establish a biennial conferral process with State and tribal coalitions and technical assistance providers who receive funding through grants administered by OVW, as well as other key stakeholders; (2) confer regarding the administration of grants, unmet needs, lessons learned in the field, and emerging trends; and (3) publish a report summarizing the issues presented during the conferral and what, if any, policies OVW intends to implement to address those issues.

To meet this reporting requirement, OVW has enclosed a report describing the input OVW received in eighteen conferral sessions held between September 2013 and November 2015. This report includes OVW actions taken during and after the conferral period in response or related to issues raised by conferral participants. The report will also be made available to the public on OVW's website.

We hope that you will find the information presented in this report provides a better understanding of OVW's efforts to reduce violence against women. If you have any questions regarding the substance of this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel R. Ramer".

Samuel R. Ramer
Acting Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure



2014-2015 Violence Against Women Act Conferrals with Stakeholders

Report to Congress

Summary Report from Conferrals Held between September 24, 2013
and November 4, 2015

July 2017

Contents

I. Introduction.....	2
A. The Statutory Directive	2
B. Structure of the Conferral	2
C. Overview of Results.....	3
II. Issues Presented by Conferral Participants Related to Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends.....	3
A. Access to the Criminal and Civil Justice Systems and Legal Services	3
B. Communities of Color.....	5
C. Elder Victims.....	6
D. Faith-Based Communities	8
E. Victims Facing Housing Barriers	9
F. Immigrants and Refugees.....	10
G. Incarcerated Victims.....	11
H. Individuals with Disabilities	13
I. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Victims.....	15
J. Male Victims	16
K. Native American and Alaska Native Victims	18
L. Rural Victims.....	20
M. Youth and Teens.....	21
III. Grants and Administration	23
A. Grant Applications and Grant Management.....	23
B. Funding.....	25
C. Effectiveness of Technical Assistance and Training	26
D. Data Collection and Reporting	27
E. Oversight	28
IV. Conclusion	30
Appendix 1: List of Conferral Sessions	31

I. Introduction

A. The Statutory Directive

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) submits this report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives pursuant to section 3(b)(4) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4 (VAWA 2013) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(15)), which requires that OVW confer biennially with key stakeholders in the violence against women field. Specifically, VAWA 2013 mandates that OVW (1) establish a biennial conferral process with state and tribal coalitions and technical assistance providers who receive funding through grants administered by OVW, as well as other key stakeholders; (2) confer regarding the administration of grants, unmet needs, promising practices in the field, and emerging trends; and (3) publish a report summarizing the issues presented during the conferral and what, if any, policies OVW intends to implement to address those issues.

B. Structure of the Conferral

Between September 7, 2013 to November 4, 2015, OVW held eighteen one-hour conferral sessions covering twelve topics with OVW stakeholders, including state, territorial, and tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, technical assistance (TA) providers, OVW grantees, advocates, service providers, and interested members of the public. Each conferral session was moderated by OVW senior management or attorney advisors. Participants were encouraged to openly discuss the unmet needs, promising practices, and emerging trends seen by stakeholders working directly in the field. Feedback on OVW's administration of grants was highly encouraged throughout the conferral process.

Email invitations were sent to OVW's distribution lists, including state, territorial and tribal coalitions, state formula grant administrators, TA providers, all OVW grantees, and individuals who have signed up to receive OVW blogs or updates. A public notice was also posted on the OVW website. There was no limit to the amount of sessions in which individuals could participate. The sessions were conducted primarily via webinar with conference call and chat options available. Some were open only by invitation to ensure the stakeholders named in the statute received sufficient opportunities to share their input. Additionally, several conferrals were held in person. For a full list of conferrals, see Appendix 1.

Closed-captioning was used to make the audio more accessible and to capture feedback for OVW's use in compiling this report. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges provided the webinar technology and technical support. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation was provided via video stream at four sessions. Participants who were not able to convey their opinions during the sessions, as well as individuals who were not able to join any sessions, were encouraged to submit written comments by email until March 15, 2015.

While the conferrals were intended to be listening sessions, many participants took the opportunity to ask OVW questions about grant programs and policies. Participants stated that they appreciated the chance to connect with OVW. Future reports will describe conferrals held in 2016, and another series of conferrals is planned for 2018.

C. Overview of Results

Stakeholders from across the country commented on pressing issues for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Through comprehensive feedback from stakeholders, OVW developed the following report of identified unmet needs, promising practices, emerging trends, and feedback for improving grant administration. All comments were collected anonymously and specific stakeholders are not referenced. Comments represent the opinions of stakeholders participating in the conferral process, and do not represent OVW's opinions.

This report includes OVW actions taken during and after the conferral period in response or related to issues raised by conferral participants. It is far from an exhaustive list of OVW's actions, but provides highlights of OVW's work from January 2014 through July 2016 (the relevant time period).

II. Issues Presented by Conferral Participants Related to Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

In addressing unmet needs, promising practices, and emerging trends, conferral participants highlighted multiple categories of underserved victims. Participants also discussed the challenges service providers and law enforcement face in providing adequate, accessible services to all victims.

A. Access to the Criminal and Civil Justice Systems and Legal Services

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants identified a pressing unmet need for legal services. Finding legal services was reported as a leading concern for many victims, as were challenges working with the justice system. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- There are not enough specialized, trained civil attorneys who provide low-cost legal services to victims beyond assistance filling out forms.

- Child victims are sometimes inadequately represented within the court system and their legal rights are not recognized or well-defended.
- More specialized training and guidance is needed for judges, prosecutors, and attorneys regarding responses to domestic violence and sexual assault. Mandated trainings are particularly useful as it can be difficult to get busy judges and prosecutors to attend.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- In 2014, OVW launched the [Justice for Families Program](#) pursuant to VAWA 2013. This program was then intended to improve the response of all aspects of the civil and criminal justice system to families with a history of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or in cases involving allegations of child sexual abuse. In implementing this program, OVW required grantees to integrate any civil legal assistance for victims provided under the program with activities designed to enhance the expertise and accessibility of court-based programs, services, and personnel, including juvenile courts.
- OVW also administered the [Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program](#), which was then intended to strengthen civil and criminal legal assistance programs for adult and youth victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are seeking relief in legal matters relating to that abuse or violence. As part of this statutorily authorized program, OVW required that domestic violence and sexual assault service providers be involved in the development and implementation of the project to help ensure quality representation for victims.
- In 2015 OVW launched the [Sexual Assault Justice Initiative](#), which was then intended to improve how the justice system in general, and prosecution in particular, handles sexual assault cases. Seven pilot sites were awarded a total of \$2.8 million to implement a forthcoming set of performance measures that look beyond conviction rates to measure success in prosecuting sexual assault.
- Working with the DOJ Civil Rights Division (CRT), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), law enforcement leaders, and victim advocates, OVW helped develop guidance addressing potential gender bias in policing through the articulation of principles for sexual assault and domestic violence investigations. The guidance was released in December 2015.
- In 2015, OVW awarded \$1.6 million to the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to launch the [National Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Initiative](#), which was then intended to build on specialized training and partnerships between the criminal justice system and victim advocates to deter

domestic violence. A demonstration pilot in three cities was planned for through the end of 2017.

B. Communities of Color

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted that communities of color need better access to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking services, and that both law enforcement and service providers need to better understand the particular needs and challenges faced by these communities. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Despite high rates of victimization, women in communities of color can be less likely to reach out to law enforcement, receive domestic violence services, or report an abuser due to possible bias or discrimination within the social services and law enforcement systems.
- Creating an environment where victims feel comfortable contacting law enforcement when they have experienced violence would help improve access to resources for victims.
- Service providers should collaborate with community groups, religious organizations, and law enforcement about the particular challenges faced by communities of color.
- Law enforcement officers should be trained on how to determine the “primary aggressor” in domestic violence cases. Also, law enforcement and victim service providers should be aware of the racial bias and multifaceted barriers that women of color often face.
- Having women of color in leadership positions, particularly in state coalitions and policy committees, is a promising practice that helps ensure that the needs of communities of color are addressed.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW administered [Grants to Enhance Culturally Specific Services for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking](#) (Culturally Specific Services Program) pursuant to the 2005 and 2013 reauthorizations of the Violence Against Women Act. VAWA 2013 limited eligible applicants to organizations that provide culturally specific services to ethnic and racial minorities. In implementing this program, OVW worked to ensure that grantees engage in meaningful partnerships to provide

services that are relevant to the diverse and unique needs of victims from communities of color. Services were intended to be “by and for” the communities they serve.

- OVW provided funding to the National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA), the Women of Color Network (WOCN), Casa de Esperanza (Casa), the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence (APIGBV), the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) and others that was then intended to provide TA to grantees offering culturally specific services.
- In September 2014, the former Attorney General [announced a second phase of OVW’s Homicide Reduction Project](#) that was then intended to evaluate the effectiveness of two domestic violence homicide prevention models: the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team model. Participating sites adapted tools and developed interventions that are culturally relevant and appropriate for their communities. DOJ worked with IDVAAC, Casa, APIGBV and other experts to support the effective implementation of these tools with racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Black Women’s Blueprint and SCESA were funded by OVW to develop a Culturally Specific Bystander Intervention Curriculum for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as part of a Comprehensive Primary Prevention Model. The intended goal of this effort was to empower students, faculty, staff and administrators to prevent violence against women at HCBUs.
- OVW collaborated with the former White House Initiative on HBCUs on a webinar for HBCUs to provide an overview of OVW’s Grants to Reduce Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking on Campus Program (Campus Program), and to share practices from Campus Program grantees on how to develop a comprehensive campus program to prevent and respond to these crimes.
- On March 10-11, 2016, OVW, in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Girls Initiative, convened a [roundtable with advocates representing reform efforts related to violence against women](#) and the juvenile justice system. The discussion focused on the unintended consequences of domestic violence mandatory arrest and pro-arrest policies on girls and young women, as well as the wider and disproportionate impact on communities of color.

C. Elder Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted that the elderly are at an elevated risk for victimization of all kinds, including domestic and sexual violence, and that the number of elder abuse cases will increase

as the “baby boomer” generation ages. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Older victims of domestic and sexual violence often have specialized needs and medical issues that service providers, particularly shelters, are not equipped to handle. When service providers cannot meet these specialized needs, victims may have no alternatives.
- Service providers are more likely to focus their resources on youth and teens than the elderly, which contributes to a lack of services for victims in later life.
- As with many other diverse populations, looking at how to do outreach, how to provide services, and the similarities and differences between working with the elderly and “traditional” victims can expand the ability of providers and responders to serve older victims.
- Coordination among TA providers, state coalitions, and local service providers across different regions who serve victims with diverse characteristics could leverage existing resources and expand knowledge about working with diverse victims.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- Through OVW’s [Enhanced Training and Services to End Abuse Later in Life Program](#), grantees were asked to address elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, against victims 50 years of age or older. In implementing this statutorily authorized program, OVW required grantees to use a multidisciplinary approach to bring together community stakeholders to address the unique needs of older victims. This included training service providers that was then intended to enhance their expertise on providing services to older victims and assist them in training their peers on the local level. Grantees of the program worked closely with OVW, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, and other OVW TA providers to tailor outreach and services for older individuals.
- OVW worked with the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, directed by the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), to coordinate federal government activities related to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- In March 2016, OVW, HHS, and the National Clearinghouse on Abuse Later in Life convened a roundtable with national, state, and local leaders and older survivors to discuss the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of older victims. This roundtable was then intended to address abuse across the lifespan and provide critical information that was used in a newly developed [toolkit](#).

D. Faith-Based Communities

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted the unique responsibilities of faith-based service providers in providing services to victims, and identified some of their unmet training needs. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Victims who are members of faith communities often turn to community leaders and organizations before reaching out to law enforcement. However, many of these leaders and organizations are not equipped to respond to victims or trained in how to refer them to victim service providers.
- Training faith leaders about domestic and sexual violence and on how to coordinate with victim service providers can improve responses to victims living in rural areas, communities of color, and immigrant communities.
- Law enforcement and service providers could use more training in how to work with victims who engage in a variety of religious practices. Some service providers, such as shelters, are not able to accommodate the specialized needs of all religious groups.
- Several participants voiced concerns that changes made by VAWA 2013 to OVW's Culturally Specific Services Program would render some religious organizations ineligible to apply for these grants.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- Grantees, particularly those that received funds under the [Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program](#) (Rural Program), worked with faith-based organizations and provided trainings to faith leaders.
- OVW provided TA to improve grantee responses to faith communities. OVW funded Third Sector New England's Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence to support outreach to faith-based organizations. KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights also was funded to develop TA on building effective partnerships with the Muslim faith community and providing culturally appropriate services.
- Faith-based organizations applied for grants through OVW's [Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations Program](#) to address the unique needs of underserved members of faith-based communities.

- Faith-based organizations were fully eligible to apply for OVW grant programs, just as were other nonprofits meeting the qualifications to apply for a given OVW program. A variety of faith-based organizations received funding across OVW programs.

E. Victims Facing Housing Barriers

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants identified shelter and housing as urgent, overarching needs experienced by victims and their children. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Survivors with specialized needs, such as those with disabilities, can have difficulty finding adequate housing because providers often lack funds to provide specialized services. Some providers have contracted with local hotels to meet the shelter needs of specific populations, but hotels may be inadequate for safety and service provision.
- There have been reports of shelters turning away male and transgender domestic violence survivors due to the discomfort of other survivors or bias of service providers. This problem can be compounded when a victim has other special needs, such as a disability or the need for culturally specific services.
- Conferral participants reported an emerging trend of housing programs using housing assessments as a tool to respond to the safety needs of victims.
- Participants voiced concerns that the availability of emergency housing funds has diminished, which makes it more difficult to address immediate victim safety needs. Also of concern was the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) focus on rapid rehousing, and how that policy initiative affects domestic violence victims who need longer term transitional housing and support services to obtain stable housing.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW administered the [Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program](#), which was then intended to provide funds for transitional housing, short-term housing assistance, and support services that improve the ability of domestic and sexual violence victims to access housing. In implementing this statutorily authorized program, OVW required grantees to provide comprehensive, voluntary services to assist victims in transitioning to permanent housing, including at least three months of follow-up services after the transition.

- OVW co-chaired the Domestic Violence Sub-Committee of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness with the HHS Family Violence Prevention Services Office. OVW also worked with HUD to implement VAWA 2013's new protections for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors in public and other subsidized housing.
- OVW and HUD's Office of HIV-AIDS Housing collaborated to provide [grants totaling more than \\$9 million](#) to support eight local programs that were then intended to help prevent victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking living with HIV/AIDS from falling into homelessness.
- In 2015, DOJ, HUD and HHS launched a federal [Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium](#) that was then intended to address the critical housing needs of victims of domestic violence and their children. Together, the three federal agencies awarded a total of \$2.3 million in grant funding to four organizations to form a national consortium focused on fostering increased collaboration among domestic violence and homeless service providers and providing national training, TA, and resource development on domestic violence and housing.

F. Immigrants and Refugees

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Immigrants and refugees were identified by conferral participants as populations that have particular difficulties reporting domestic violence and sexual assault to law enforcement and accessing victim services. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Fear of deportation and language barriers are two of the biggest reasons why victims do not report domestic violence and sexual assault to authorities or seek out victim services.
- Immigrant victims, service providers, and judicial system personnel often do not realize the immigration-specific consequences of reporting abuse (such as the perpetrator being deported or victim eligibility for visas). Both service providers and judicial system personnel could benefit from more training on immigration law, regulations, and special visas for victims.
- Service providers may lack training on how to approach domestic and sexual violence from a cross-cultural perspective, particularly in situations where cultural differences and stigma around abuse make victims reluctant to report crimes or seek out services.
- Immigrant and refugee victims can bring a history of trauma with them to this country, which is not always understood by service providers and law enforcement. When this

history is combined with a lack of cross-cultural sensitivity training, victims may be retraumatized.

- Offering holistic services that combine ongoing safety planning, crisis intervention, bilingual/bicultural case management, translation services, emergency housing, and legal services is a promising practice that can help address the challenges facing immigrant and refugee victims.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- All OVW grantees were required to take steps that were then intended to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to recipients' programs or activities, and OVW encouraged all grant applicants to allocate funds to support activities that help LEP victims have full and meaningful access to their programs.
- OVW grant solicitations emphasized language access requirements for grantees. OVW staff received intensive training on language access that was then intended to assist grantees in developing language access plans.
- OVW's Culturally Specific Services Program provided funds for culturally-specific, community-based organizations that were then intended to address the critical needs of survivors in a manner that affirmed a victim's culture and effectively addresses language and communication.
- OVW's [STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program](#) (STOP Formula Grant Program) provided funding for law enforcement training on how to use visas for victims of crime appropriately.
- Under OVW's Legal Assistance for Victims Program, some grantees provided services specific to applying for immigration benefits, included VAWA self-petitions, VAWA cancelation of removal, U visas, and T visas.

G. Incarcerated Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted particular difficulties in providing adequate services to incarcerated victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Many women who are in jail or are incarcerated have histories of abuse, but there are few resources to prevent further victimization. This can be particularly challenging for women of color, women from low-income backgrounds, and women with substance abuse problems. There is a need for accessible, trauma-informed, and culturally specific services for survivors who are arrested and incarcerated.
- Services are needed for inmates who are at risk of victimization and abuse while imprisoned. Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) compliance is one area where STOP Administrators are working on a coordinated response to improve services for incarcerated victims.
- More research is needed to both determine and promote promising practices on how to best serve incarcerated victims—men, women, and youth. This will help improve post-incarceration outcomes.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW funded several projects across the country that were then intended to provide services to incarcerated victims, assist correctional facilities with PREA compliance, and provide medical forensic exams for incarcerated victims. In addition, Just Detention International used OVW funds that were then intended to build the capacity of local rape crisis centers to provide sensitive services to incarcerated victims.
- VAWA 2013 added a purpose area to the STOP Formula Grant Program that allowed grantees to use funding to develop, enlarge, or strengthen programs addressing sexual assault against men, women, and youth in correctional and detention settings. OVW encouraged states to support projects under this purpose area. Many states used STOP funds for activities such as providing community-based victim advocacy support to victims in corrections, creating statewide victim support hotlines, improving police response to sexual assault in corrections, and supporting prevention efforts.
- OVW created a [fact sheet](#) and a [worksheet](#) to help STOP Formula Grant state and territorial administrators comply with PREA requirements.
- In April 2016, OVW's then-Principal Deputy Director and other OVW staff visited Federal Prison Camp Alderson in West Virginia. They were joined by colleagues from the DOJ Bureau of Prisons and the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women. During the visit, they met with a group of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and heard about their experiences of victimization prior to incarceration, as well as their need for support and programming while incarcerated and for reentry.

- In September 2015, OVW convened a roundtable with survivors, scholars, advocates, and community activists who focus on sexual and domestic violence to examine how criminal laws and policies affect the lives of Black women and girls. Participants discussed policy recommendations and new initiatives to reduce or eliminate the harm that Black women and girls who are victims of domestic and sexual violence endure in the criminal justice system.

H. Individuals with Disabilities

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants identified the following ways in which individuals with disabilities face obstacles accessing services, as well as areas of unmet need. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Individuals with disabilities are often afraid to report abuse by caregivers or family members lest it result in retaliation or withholding of care. When survivors do report abuse, community biases can make it difficult for them to access services.
- Addressing the needs of individuals with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) is an emerging issue that deserves more attention, including the development of best practices regarding the intersection of domestic violence and TBI.
- Additional research is needed on which disability-related interventions and health services work best for survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More organizations should be equipped to work with individuals with these types of disabilities.
- Staff working with individuals with developmental disabilities would benefit from more training on abuse prevention and risk reduction, healthy relationships, and sexuality. This is particularly true for staff working in institutional settings where there are often high levels of interpersonal violence, few options to escape the violence, and a lack of access to traditional domestic violence and sexual assault services.
- Deaf survivors of domestic violence often lack culturally appropriate services, particularly ASL interpreters trained in domestic violence. In some areas, lack of text or visual options for Deaf survivors creates barriers to accessing 911 service.
- There is an emerging trend of emergency departments replacing live interpreters for Deaf individuals with remote video relay technology, which can be problematic due to connectivity problems and missed information.

- To improve services to individuals with disabilities, conferral participants recommended that OVW enhance collaboration between grantees addressing abuse in later life, grantees addressing disabilities, and TA providers to ensure that the needs of disabled individuals aging into the elder-care system are met.

OVW Policies and Actions

To help ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to appropriate support services, OVW has undertaken multiple projects. During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW administered the [Training and Services to End Violence Against Women with Disabilities Program](#), which was then intended to support education, cross training, services, capacity building, and the establishment of multidisciplinary teams at the local level. In implementing this statutorily authorized program, OVW required new grantees to engage in a planning and assessment process that was then intended to ensure that their projects were responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and truly enhance the capacity of service providers.
- OVW placed a special condition on all TA awards requiring TA providers to attend a training to ensure that their products, meetings, trainings, and webinars were accessible to individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals. The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) also worked with OVW-funded TA providers to enhance their capacity to be accessible and welcoming to people with disabilities and Deaf individuals.
- Vera conducted a two-day training for all OVW staff on accessibility so that OVW could ensure grantee products, trainings, and meetings were accessible to people with disabilities and Deaf individuals.
- In 2015, OVW funded Vera to develop a [website that was then intended to help end the abuse of people with disabilities](#) – EndAbusePWD.org. The website was a resource for victim and disability service providers, self-advocates, and policymakers. It featured an interactive and searchable map of the people, programs, projects, and practices across the country.
- Also in 2015, Vera released an OVW-funded [policy and practice brief](#) summarizing findings from working with the Deaf community for ten years and offering practical suggestions that were then intended to increase Deaf survivors' access to victim services and other support, including those offered by the criminal justice and medical systems.
- OVW funded the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services to create a [toolkit](#) for individuals with intellectual disabilities, as well as to develop safety plans for victims with disabilities and coordinate with rape crisis centers.

I. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted that the LGBT community is consistently identified as an underserved population. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- LGBT victims can find interactions with law enforcement and the court system to be challenging, particularly when law enforcement officers and court staff are not trained on how to serve LGBT victims, or if they demonstrate bias or discriminatory attitudes.
- Best practices, training, and guidance should be offered to members of law enforcement and the court system on how to best serve LGBT victims.
- The lack of tools to identify primary aggressors in same-sex relationships can make it difficult for law enforcement to appropriately respond to abuse between individuals of the same sex, and perpetuates the myth that abuse in same-sex relationships is mutual.
- An increase in the number of LGBT leaders in the victim services arena would encourage the implementation of LGBT-friendly services and help address the needs of LGBT youth who are victims of dating or sexual violence.
- Conferral participants recommended that OVW explicitly name transgender communities as eligible grant recipients and ensure that grant reports capture demographic information on sexual orientation and gender identity.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- In light of the 2013 amendments to VAWA, OVW [posted FAQs](#) in 2014 that were then intended to help grantees understand and comply with the VAWA nondiscrimination provision. OVW funded TA that was then intended to support grantees in making their services accessible to LGBT communities. OVW also funded community-based LGBT organizations working to help victims navigate unique barriers that these victims face in pursuing safety and justice.
- OVW funded FORGE with a grant that was then intended to provide basic and advanced training to OVW grantees on transgender survivor issues. FORGE used the grant money to conduct [webinars](#), workshops and conferences, the dissemination of monthly [tip sheets](#), and social media.
- OVW worked closely with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) to provide TA to victim service providers and the criminal justice system that was then

intended to serve LGBT survivors. In 2014 NCAVP used an OVW grant to produce a booklet, [*From Policy to Practice: Nondiscrimination and Inclusion of LGBTQ Individuals in Victims Services Programs*](#), which was then intended to provide victim service providers with a basic understanding of policies and practices that promote nondiscrimination and inclusion of LGBT individuals.

- OVW funded the American Bar Association's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence, in partnership with several other non-profit organizations, and those funds were then used to develop and implement an [LGBT Legal Capacity Building Program](#). The program was then intended to provide training and TA addressing civil and criminal legal services to LGBT survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- As stated above, OVW helped draft [guidance addressing potential gender bias in policing](#) through the articulation of principles for sexual assault and domestic violence investigations. The guidance was released in December 2015 and was intended in part to help law enforcement improve their responses to LGBT victims.
- In June 2016, OVW convened a roundtable that was then intended to address the impact of domestic and sexual violence on LGBT students, learn from leaders in the field about best practices in responding to students' needs, and identify gaps in the provision of culturally specific prevention services and resources.

J. Male Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants highlighted the ways in which male victims can be underserved by existing domestic violence and sexual assault support services. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Male victims of domestic violence and sexual assault sometimes do not seek out support services due to the belief that they are not the intended beneficiary of such services, a belief that can be reinforced by the low visibility of both male victims and the programs that serve them in society.
- Domestic violence service providers sometimes do not understand their obligation to provide services to all victims, are unwilling to provide services to men, or are fiscally constrained from offering targeted services, particularly housing, for male victims.
- Adult male victims can have difficulty finding services that meet their needs because some programs are tailored to the needs of female victims or a specific category of male victims, such as survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

- Male victims who also fall into other categories of underserved victim, such as older males, LGBT populations, Asian populations, or males with a disability, may face additional barriers in accessing support services that meet their unique needs.
- Conferral participants recommended several ways in which OVW can help improve services to male victims, such as (1) raise the visibility of programs that serve male victims; (2) provide further education for grantees on the requirement to provide gender-neutral services; and (3) reach out to more male allies, particularly those who are also members of other underserved populations.
- To better assist stakeholders providing support services to male victims, conferral participants suggested that OVW issue best practices or provide guidance in the following areas: the definition of victimization; tools for assessing male victims; housing teenage boys in shelters; and how to provide equitable housing to male victims when an organization lacks capacity.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- In the light that VAWA prohibits all recipients of OVW funds from discriminating on the basis of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation in the provision of services, OVW included information about the non-discrimination provision in every OVW grant solicitation, award document, and new grantee orientation. In fact, approximately 10% of all victims served by OVW grantees and subgrantees during the relevant time period were male victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking.
- In April 2014, OVW issued an [FAQ document](#) for prospective and current grantees that was then intended to provide guidance and explaining the VAWA nondiscrimination grant provision.
- OVW launched a TA project that was then intended to assess the service needs of male victims, as well as the barriers male victims faced in accessing effective and appropriate services. OVW used the project report and literature review to help ensure that its TA work could be more inclusive of male victims.
- OVW assisted Vera in launching a process that was then intended to better understand the unique experiences and unmet needs of [male victims with disabilities](#). Vera used OVW funds to convene experts from across the country for discussions about the experiences of male survivors and the implications for policy and practice in the field.

K. Native American and Alaska Native Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking are prevalent in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages, but the availability of comprehensive services does not match needs. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Community and cultural stigmas can prevent American Indian and Alaska Native women from reporting acts of domestic violence or sexual assault. When victims do report or seek out services, reservations often lack resources to provide a comprehensive response, especially when it comes to shelter options for women and children fleeing domestic violence.
- More legal advocates with experience in tribal proceedings are needed, particularly legal advocates who are effective at both protecting, and explaining the importance of, victim confidentiality to tribal leaders and law enforcement.
- Training is needed across disciplines to ensure that American Indian and Alaska Native victims are provided with consistent support by service providers and law enforcement officers who understand their unique needs.
- American Indian and Alaska Native victims have reported instances where they sought services outside of their reservation and the service provider did not understand their legal status or cultural background.
- Participants noted that training for non-tribal grantees on the intersection of VAWA and tribal sovereignty, particularly grantees involving courts, prosecution, law enforcement, and legal services to victims, would be beneficial.
- American Indian and Alaska Native women in leadership roles play a critically important role in developing and sustaining responses for Native American victims.
- Members of tribes implementing special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) over non-Indian offenders reported that the new jurisdiction has improved their tribes' ability to ensure people's safety, and that continued support for SDVCJ projects should be a priority.
- Participants recommended that OVW work with HUD to provide housing assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native women, with a focus on those who are victims of domestic and sexual violence.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW administered [four VAWA grant programs to help tribes improve victim services to and justice for American Indian and Alaska Native victims](#): the Grants to Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Program; the Tribal Governments Program; the Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program; and the Grants to Tribal Governments to Exercise Special Domestic Violence Jurisdiction. In administering funding for tribes, OVW emphasized culturally appropriate and traditional services and interventions, as well as training on the history and dynamics of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. In administering funding for tribes, OVW emphasized culturally appropriate, and often traditional, services and interventions, as well as training on the history and dynamics of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women.
- OVW TA providers, including the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, the Southwest Center for Law and Policy, and the Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition helped tribes respond to the needs of victims and focus on the customs and norms of tribes, provide training that was then intended to be inclusive of Native American traditions, and create coordinated community responses to violence. OVW also funded training and technical assistance for state grantees that were then intended to further effective consultation and collaboration with tribes, as well as tribal history, culture, traditions, and context.
- OVW funded a certification course for lay legal advocates representing sexual assault survivors in tribal courts. The course was free and consisted of 20 weekly webinars, student research papers, online examinations, and a week-long trial advocacy institute.
- OVW maintained consistent contact with tribes on how to best respond to the needs of domestic and sexual violence victims. OVW held [Violence Against Women Tribal Consultations in Indian Country](#) that were then intended to gain a better understanding of the challenges, needs, and successes in supporting American Indian and Alaska Native victims.
- OVW funded the Bakken Region Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Initiative, which was then intended to help Tribal Special U.S. Attorneys increase the successful prosecution of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in Indian country affected by the population boom in the Bakken region and associated increase in violent crimes against women. These cross-designated prosecutors were then intended to promote higher quality investigations, improved training, and better intergovernmental communication.
- OVW launched a new \$2.5 million grant program in May 2016, [funding seven tribes to assist them in exercising jurisdictional authority](#) granted to tribes under the 2013

amendments to VAWA. OVW also funded TA to help tribes implement this jurisdiction in their communities.

- OVW's Campus and Tribal units collaborated with the previous White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges on a webinar that was then intended to provide tribal colleges with information on how to apply for funding through OVW's Campus Program.

L. Rural Victims

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants identified rural residents as an increasingly underserved population that often lacks access to adequate services. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Survivors who live 100 miles or more from any kind of service provider have a particularly hard time accessing services. In some areas, such as rural Alaska, geography and weather combine to create additional barriers to service.
- Rural service providers serve a wide range of victims, but are often at risk for funding cuts because they lack mass capacity (e.g., they have only a few shelter beds). When cuts do happen, providers often lack buffer funds and can be forced to lay off staff or shut down altogether.
- Unmet needs in rural communities include training for law enforcement and sexual assault nurse examiners, and a shortage of qualified medical staff to handle sexual assault cases.
- Conferral participants recommended that OVW differentiate among "rural," "frontier," and "extremely remote" areas when discussing rural populations to acknowledge that different rural communities have different levels of need. Participants also suggested OVW allow rural states and communities to compete for grants under more flexible categories and develop events to bring rural grantees together.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW continued to administer its [Rural Program](#), which was then intended to enhance the safety of children, youth, and adults who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. OVW used the program to support projects that were then intended to address and prevent these crimes in rural jurisdictions.

- **OVW planned and implemented DOJ's statutorily required 2015 Annual Government-to-Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation in Seattle, Washington**, which was then intended to increase representation from Alaska Native Villages, many of which are in remote locations and face enormous barriers to ensuring victim safety. As part of this VAWA-mandated consultation, OVW gathered recommendations from tribal leaders on how best to support Alaska tribes' authority to carry out local, culturally relevant solutions to address the lack of law enforcement and victim services in their villages.
- In response to reports of increasing violence against women associated with the spike in population tied to the gas and oil exploration and drilling in the Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana, OVW launched a special initiative that was then intended to support projects that address the unique challenges faced by victims, responders, and service providers within this rural region. The initiative funded victim services as well as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys to support prosecution across federal and tribal jurisdictions.

M. Youth and Teens

Unmet Needs, Challenges, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted that youth and teens experience domestic violence (including dating violence), sexual assault, and stalking in multiple ways: as victims, witnesses, perpetrators, and through bearing the consequences of domestic violence or sexual assault experienced or perpetrated by family members. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- It is important to invest in violence prevention strategies, education, and research to reduce domestic and sexual violence among teens and youth, and to lessen the risk that they will perpetrate domestic and sexual violence in adulthood.
- Children and youth who are placed in foster care as a result of their exposure to domestic and sexual violence commonly do not receive adequate support to work through their trauma, leaving them at higher risk to be targeted for violence later in life.
- Male teen victims sometimes face extra barriers to service, including access to shelter. Several participants reported that families with teenage boys can have difficulty finding domestic violence shelters willing to accept them. This can leave families having to choose between accessing shelter without their male teenage member and not accessing the shelter at all.

- Teens who also fall into other categories of underserved populations, such as LGBT teens, generally face greater risks of victimization, and often have trouble finding culturally competent services.
- Using social workers to assist teen dating violence victims in obtaining protection orders and providing legal services to teens seeking justice through the criminal justice system are two promising emerging trends.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW administered a [Consolidated Grant Program to Address Children and Youth Experiencing Domestic and Sexual Assault and Engage Men and Boys as Allies](#) (Consolidated Youth Program) that was then intended to support comprehensive child and youth-centered prevention and intervention projects that maximize community-based efforts and trauma-informed practices. It also was intended to support projects that fund multifaceted prevention strategies engaging men and boys as partners in prevention, community organizing, outreach, public education, and mobilization.
- OVW funded TA providers such as the Alliance for Local Service Organizations, Men Can Stop Rape, and Break the Cycle that were then intended to develop age-appropriate prevention programs and increase understanding of youth in culturally specific communities.
- Shelters are required to serve individuals regardless of sex or age; it is impermissible to restrict teen boys' access to shelter. OVW's guidance on the VAWA nondiscrimination provision applies to all grantees.
- In 2014 and 2015, OVW TA providers held institutes for OVW grantees on prevention, intervention and treatment. The institutes included intervention models for children and youth exposed to, or experiencing, violence, and information on using healthy masculinity to engage men and boys in preventing gender-based violence.
- Men Can Stop Rape conducted OVW-funded trainings for Consolidated Youth Program grantees, which covered topics such as connecting domestic violence with responsible fatherhood, reimagining consent, and counter-stories of healthy masculinity.
- Break the Cycle used OVW funds to develop several school and organization [policy guides](#) that were then intended to provide direction for staff and volunteers, help shape institutional approaches to violence prevention, and create a climate of healthy, respectful relationships.
- In April 2016, OVW published the [National Protocol for Sexual Abuse Medical Forensic Exams—Pediatric](#) (Pediatric SAFE Protocol), that was then intended to address the

special needs of child victims. In addition to promoting a child's safety and healing, the evidence collected during an exam facilitates investigation and prosecution.

- OVW created a free tool that colleges and universities can use to assess sexual assault victimization at their schools. The [Campus Climate Survey Validation Study](#), released in early 2016, offered guidance for conducting a survey. It also provided results from the nine-school pilot survey, completed by over 23,000 undergraduate men and women.
- OVW launched an online clearinghouse for information about domestic and sexual violence on campus: the Center for Changing Our Campus Culture – [ChangingOurCampus.org](#). The website contained research, sample campus policies, protocols, best practices, and information on how to access training opportunities and TA.

III. Grants and Administration

Conferral participants raised areas for improvement across many aspects of OVW administration. They offered critiques and suggestions both broad and specific.

A. Grant Applications and Grant Management

Unmet Needs, Challenges, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants suggested several ways that OVW could improve grant application and management requirements. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- OVW should provide increased assistance with the application process and simplify applications. OVW should also help grantees understand compliance requirements such as closing out a grant.
- It would be helpful for OVW to provide federal formula grantees with a timeline that runs from the time of the application to close out, including a list of steps that should be followed throughout the process.
- The amount of documentation required to support grant applications can be burdensome and should be reduced. Gathering letters of support, letters of collaboration, and supplying the other documentation is often resource-intensive.
- OVW should provide assistance with basic questions such as registering for Grants.gov, how to set up a GMS account, how to write narratives, how to draft and develop a budget, guidance on program sustainability, how to develop a business plan, and how to submit grant applications and respond to award letters.

- It is important to ensure that VAWA 2013's new requirement that most nonprofit grantees have 501(c)(3) status does not create a barrier to grant applications for culturally specific and other small programs.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW tracked and reported performance measures related to grant management and customer service, including the time it took for OVW to respond to grant adjustment requests.
- OVW held annual grantee orientations for each of its grant programs. The orientations included training for grantees in the administration of their grants. Topics covered include federal regulations, OVW policy, grant reporting, payment of grant funds, and grant close-outs. The orientations included time for grantees to ask questions and seek assistance.
- OVW provided customer service lines for one-on-one assistance related to financial and technical support. This customer support allowed grant recipients a direct line of communication to get timely and accurate information.
- OVW recorded several webinars on critical grant compliance issues and posted them online for grantees to access at any time. These addressed issues such as grants financial management, civil rights compliance, and preventing waste, fraud and abuse.
- OVW provided a sample budget and other information online for grant applicants and held pre-application webinars and conference calls to share information with prospective applicants.
- To help STOP Formula Grant administrators fulfill their grant management responsibilities for STOP Formula Grant funds at the state or territory level, OVW funded the Alliance of Local Service Organizations to create a [handbook](#). The handbook provided information about management of STOP Grants at the State and Territorial levels including dissemination of STOP funds within the State/Territory and monitoring of subgrantees.
- OVW created [additional resources for grantees](#), particularly STOP and [Sexual Assault Services Program](#) (SASP) Formula Grant administrators. Among other documents, these resources included [STOP FAQs](#), [SASP FAQs](#), a toolkit, a template, a [checklist](#), and an FAQ on documenting the state/territory [planning process](#).

B. Funding

Unmet Needs, Challenges, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants voiced frustrations with – and offered suggestions to address – issues related to OVW grant funding. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Organizations with limited capacity need additional OVW assistance to comply with federal funding requirements.
- OVW should balance ongoing funding for high-functioning programs with supporting new and innovative programs, and balance funding for TA providers with funding for direct service providers.
- Participants expressed frustration with allocation restrictions based on DOJ requirements that remove discretion from grantees to determine how to most effectively meet victim needs.
- Participants requested targeted funding to address the needs of marginalized communities in several areas, including the Legal Assistance for Victims Program; the [Improving Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Grant Program](#) (also known as Grants to Encourage Arrest and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program); Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner programs; and the STOP Formula Grant Program. They noted that specific funds are needed to respond to low-income victims, people of color, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Existing set asides are insufficient to address the needs of marginalized communities.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW sought increased funding from Congress to better meet the diverse needs of victims and those serving them. Proposed VAWA funding in the President's Budget Request increased 19% from 2013 to 2016: from \$412.5 million in the fiscal year (FY) 2014 request to \$489 million in the FY 2017 request.¹
- OVW identified new grant program priorities that were then intended to support both existing services and innovative work. OVW also prioritized both evidence-based and evidence-building practices.

¹ The President's Budget Request to Congress is released early in the calendar year. The FY 2014 request was submitted to Congress in early 2013 and the FY 2017 request was submitted in early 2016.

- In order to effectively target grant funds, OVW employed new strategies to determine what activities to prioritize, what promising practices to evaluate or support, which grant programs to highlight in budget requests, and which individual grant applications to fund.
- OVW supported demonstration initiatives through which OVW selected practices to implement and evaluate. OVW solicitations incorporated and prioritized practices identified through interactions with practitioners and survivors, grantee monitoring, and research.
- OVW employed an external peer-review process that was then intended to objectively score grant applications. OVW engaged active or recently retired practitioners to evaluate the quality of grant proposals.
- For the 20th anniversary of VAWA and to hear directly from stakeholders across the country, in 2014 OVW staff visited 50 locations in 20 states—rural, urban, suburban, and tribal. [*Twenty Years of the Violence Against Women Act: Dispatches from the Field*](#) summarized the themes that emerged from the visits.

C. Effectiveness of Technical Assistance and Training

Unmet Needs, Challenges, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants made several requests regarding TA and training. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- TA is in high demand from direct service providers, advocates, law enforcement, and court personnel. Participants asked that OVW help maintain open lines of communication between TA providers and grantees in order to ensure that TA providers have the best understanding of training needs.
- Face-to-face training, rather than webinars, was suggested as the most effective way to improve individual and organizational responses to victims, particularly those with diverse backgrounds.
- OVW should help ensure that TA providers connect with state, tribal, and territorial coalitions and combine their expertise to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- OVW could encourage the use of evidence-informed training techniques and provide feedback on what training is most effective for adult learning across diverse audiences.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW's TA Program – which included in-person and online educational opportunities, peer-to-peer consultations, site visits, and tailored assistance – provided OVW grantees and prospective grantees with training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies. In shaping the TA Program, OVW sought input from grant recipients. OVW placed all TA information in one location – TA2TA.org
- OVW adjusted internal staffing to create a new team lead in the Office focused on coordinating TA and supporting TA providers.
- OVW sought ways to make TA accessible beyond current grantees. For example, OVW funded the development of a clearinghouse website, ChangingOurCampus.org, which was then intended to house the latest research, sample policies, protocols, and best practices to improve prevention and responses to campus sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.
- In 2015 Vera began working with several Deaf-specific domestic and sexual violence service providers to design and launch an OVW-funded TA project, the [Deaf Action to End Domestic and Sexual Violence Initiative](#), to increase the capacity of Deaf organizations to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in Deaf communities in the United States.

D. Data Collection and Reporting

Unmet Needs, Challenges, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants raised concerns and made suggestions on how to improve data collection and reporting. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Current data collection and population measures may undercount victims due to factors such as (1) distrust of the government among certain populations; (2) inattention to some communities; (3) the compartmentalization of ethnic groups; (4) language accessibility; and (5) fears surrounding immigration status and deportation.
- Participants highlighted the need for more studies focused on specific populations in order to draw more accurate conclusions about victimization rates and service needs of underserved or historically marginalized individuals.

- Due to existing coding options, the inability of grantee and federal reporting systems to capture multiple victimizations leaves a gap in data collection that results in a lack of knowledge regarding rates of victimization, motivations for crimes, and crime trends.
- Expanding OVW progress report forms to capture multiple types of victimization and include items such as transgender and gender non-conforming identities would help paint a clearer picture of victim trends and types of victims being served.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- In FY 2014, OVW launched a plan that was then intended to improve program evaluation and better integrate evidence-based practices into its grantmaking. After an extensive review of existing research and identifying gaps in knowledge about what works in responding to domestic and sexual violence, OVW established a portfolio of research and evaluation studies in October 2015.
- [Nine studies totaling \\$3.4 million](#) were funded in the first year of the initiative, and they each focused on learning more about effective approaches for doing VAWA-funded work. The initiative emphasized researcher-practitioner partnerships and interventions designed to help underserved communities.
- OVW began the process of expanding reporting forms to capture multiple types of victimization and reflect changes made by VAWA 2013.
- OVW progress report forms collected quantitative and qualitative data that offered a vivid picture of the scope and impact of the work conducted by grantees. OVW collected information to monitor individual grantees' progress and identify trends and challenges across programs and over time. A series of web-based trainings launched in 2016 by OVW and the VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative provided hundreds of participants with guidance on writing effective narratives about their work.

E. Oversight

Unmet Needs, Promising Practices, and Emerging Trends

Conferral participants noted the central role that OVW plays in grantee oversight and the importance of maintaining communication between grantees and OVW grant managers. In particular, conferral participants gave the following opinions:

- Open lines of communication between OVW and grantees are crucial to maintaining successful partnerships and ensuring distribution of accurate and useful information.

- OVW must ensure timely responses to grantee inquiries by OVW staff. Responding to grantees is crucial to the success of grantees and provides valuable feedback to OVW.
- Multiple participants mentioned site visits as important for grantees to have face-to-face contact with grant managers.

OVW Policies and Actions

During the relevant time period, OVW made the following efforts:

- OVW set monitoring priority levels for grants based on risk and used these levels to plan activities such as on-site visits, office-based reviews, and general contact via telephone and email. OVW attempted to respond to grantee inquiries as quickly as possible to help ensure grantee success.
- OVW's Grants Financial Management Unit improved the trainings for grantees and provided additional assistance on understanding the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Part 200.
- Through the Grants Challenges Working Group, the three DOJ grant-making components, OVW, COPS, and the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), met to discuss shared challenges and solutions in grant making. The three DOJ components used a process to coordinate management of grantees identified as posing the highest risk.
- OVW, COPS and OJP collaborated to develop a process for identifying and remedying grant solicitations that pose a risk of unnecessary duplication.
- OVW, OJP and COPS implemented GrantsNet, an effort that was then intended to improve the ability to share grant information and leverage resources that will improve customer service for grantees as well as strengthen grant management and oversight. GrantsNet captured the risk-assessment and monitoring processes in a single DOJ monitoring plan.
- OVW, OJP and COPS also implemented a single annual DOJ program plan accessible through the DOJ website. This allowed entities interested in DOJ funding opportunities to access information in one place.
- OVW enhanced its approach to assessing grantee performance in several ways. OVW used a web-based Grant Assessment Tool to assess risk and formulate an office-wide monitoring plan. OVW used the monitoring module in the Grants Management System for tracking grant monitoring activities, including office-based reviews and site visits.

IV. Conclusion

OVW prioritizes hearing from stakeholders throughout the year and takes varied approaches to do so. However, the conferral process is a unique and meaningful way to share and receive information. OVW thanks all conferral participants for their time, energy and insight.

Appendix 1: List of Conferral Sessions

In-Person Conferrals:

1. **Technical Assistance Providers**
November 13, 2013
OVW Technical Assistance Providers Meeting
2. **Territorial Coalitions**
June 24, 2014
OVW Territorial Coalitions Meeting
3. **Tribal Coalitions**
February 11, 2015
National Congress of American Indians, Violence Against Women Taskforce Meeting
4. **STOP Administrators and State Coalitions**
November 4, 2015
OVW STOP Administrators and State Coalitions Meeting

Online Conferrals, Invitation-only:

5. **STOP and SASP Administrators**
November 4, 2013
6. **State and Territorial Coalitions**
November 12, 2013
7. **Technical Assistance Providers**
December 17, 2013
8. **Tribal Coalitions**
February 6, 2014

Online Topical Conferrals, Public:

9. **STOP Formula Grants to States**
September 24, 2013
10. **SASP Formula Grants to States and Sexual Assault Issues Generally**
September 25, 2013
11. **Services and Access to Justice for Male Victims**
October 1, 2013
12. **LGBT Issues (First Session)**
November 6, 2013
13. **Vulnerable Populations and Victims Facing Barriers to Accessing Services or Justice (First Session)**
November 7, 2013
14. **Issues of Race and Ethnicity**
November 21, 2013
15. **Technical Assistance: Needs in the Field**
December 11, 2013
16. **Vulnerable Populations and Victims Facing Barriers to Accessing Services or Justice (Second Session)**
December 12, 2013
17. **LGBT Issues (Second Session)**
December 16, 2013
18. **Open Forum: Administration of Grants, Unmet Needs, Promising Practices in the Field, Emerging Issues, and Any Other Topics of Interest**
January 16, 2014