



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

## Sexual Assault Services Program

Funding authorized: \$40 million  
FY 2016 Appropriation: \$35 million  
FY 2017 Request: \$40 million

*“Now is not the time to be cutting back on funding forcing us to turn away survivors who are finding their voices for the first time with the help of this national focus.”*  
California rape crisis center director, 2015

*“So much healing came with every session until I felt strong again.”* A survivor in Florida, 2015

### Sexual Assault Victims Deserve Recovery Services.

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in the U.S. Department of Justice, was authorized in 2005 through the Violence Against Women Act as the first federal funding stream dedicated to the provision of direct services to victims of sexual violence. According to OVW’s most recent report to Congress on the SASP program:

- 40,000 survivors received services through SASP;
- 200 advocates and counselors were funded at local programs; and
- 60,000 hotline calls were answered.

*Across the country, SASP funds support the critical services victims need most.*

**SASP funds support services in every state.** Formula grants are awarded to states, territories and tribes to support efforts to provide services to adult and minor sexual assault victims and their families. Grants can be used for critically important intervention and advocacy services, especially accompaniment through medical and criminal justice systems.

**SASP funds support underserved communities.** Grants to culturally specific organizations help support intervention and related assistance for underserved victims and communities of color like *United Somali Women of Maine* and the *Hmong American Women’s Association* in Milwaukee.

**SASP funds ensure quality services.** Through support of coalitions which provide training and technical assistance, SASP helps ensure that victims receive high quality services and improved responses from the criminal justice system.

*Research shows these services increase prosecution and help victims recover.*

**Advocates help the criminal justice system respond better.** Research shows that when victims receive advocate-assisted services following assaults, they receive more helpful information, referrals and services and experience less secondary trauma or

re-victimization by medical and legal systems.

Rape survivors supported by advocates were 59% more likely to have police reports taken than survivors without advocates, whose reports were only taken 41% of the time.

**Advocates help victims heal.** When advocates are present in the legal and medical proceedings following rape, victims fare better in both the short- and long-term recovery, experiencing less psychological distress, physical health struggles, sexual risk-taking behaviors, self-blame, guilt, and depression.

*“SASP allowed us to finally open a comprehensive service rape crisis center in Dallas.”* Jana Barker, Executive Director, Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center

## **The Need is great.**

According to 2010 data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (CDC, December 2011):

- Nearly 1 in 5 women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape;
- Nearly 1 in 2 women have experienced some form of sexual violence;
- 1.3 million women were raped in the United States in the last 12 months; and
- 1 in 5 men have experienced a form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.

**Victims of sexual assault suffer.** They are more likely to struggle professionally, academically and from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and to contemplate suicide.

**Current funding levels are inadequate.** At FY 2014 levels, the entire state of Alabama received \$319,000 in SASP formula grant funds while Texas, with the second largest grant award, received \$580,000 for the whole state.

**Rape crisis centers struggle.** The nation’s 1,315 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims’ most basic needs. Attention to campus and military sexual assault as well as high profile cases has meant more victims have come forward needing recovery services. According to a 2015 survey by NAESV:

- Over 1/3 of rape crisis centers were forced to reduce staffing because of funding levels.
- **Almost one-half of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services.**
- Waiting lists for counseling were reported as high as 100 survivors with wait times as long as 3 months before a first appointment.

*“We work at full capacity 24/7/365. This work is never done. We could double our staff right now and put everyone to work fulltime if we had the resources to do so. The good news is we are here to help. The bad news is we need more resources to provide victim assistance and help with violence prevention.”* From a Texas rape crisis center, 2015

## **HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director at (850) 228-3428 or [terri@endsexualviolence.org](mailto:terri@endsexualviolence.org).