



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Sexual Assault Services Program

FY 2021 Appropriation: \$41 million

FY 2022 Appropriation: \$54 million

FY 2023 Request: \$100 million

"We never went away. Throughout this pandemic, our advocates are essential workers, providing in-person advocacy at hospitals and law enforcement 24/7." – an Iowa advocate

"I don't think I would be alive if it weren't for this program." – a Missouri survivor

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 on the SASP program](#):

- Over **55,000 individuals** received services annually through SASP;
- Over **300 advocates** and counselors were funded at local programs; and
- Almost **30,000 survivors** received medical or legal advocacy.

"This program provided the support and help I needed in my darkest moment. My life was truly changed" – a Colorado survivor

Rape crisis centers struggle. The nation's 1,500 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims' most basic needs. National attention to the problem of sexual assault, in addition to conditions created by the COVID pandemic, has meant more victims have come forward seeking recovery services. According to a 2021 survey by NAESV:

- **Almost 1/3 of programs report a waiting list for services with 2/3 of those programs reporting a waiting list for counseling.** some which are several months long.
- 45% of programs lack a therapist on staff.
- 76% of programs saw an increased demand for services in 2020.

The Need is great.

According to 2015 data from the [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#): **1 in 5 women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape.**

Rape crisis centers have seen an increase in demand for services, a uniquely difficult hiring environment, the loss of local funding as it has been diverted to address other pandemic needs and complex challenges to meeting prevention and support service needs. – an Illinois advocate

Due to issues around inflation, salary, COVID-19, etc. it has been difficult to keep trained staff for any length of time or to rehire for vacant positions at this time. This has caused significant delays in getting SA survivors into counseling or therapy services.

– a Pennsylvania Advocate

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. As an example, In FY 21, the states of Kansas and New Hampshire each received about \$400,000 for the entire state.

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 culturally specific

organizations. Grants support intervention and related assistance for communities of color by organizations 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 justice system.

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.

I feel like I can finally move forward in my life and I am so thankful for the opportunity to heal after feeling stuck for so long. This program made all the difference for me
-Ohio survivor

Congress can be an essential part of the solution by increasing appropriations for the Sexual Assault Services Program to \$100 million.

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director at terri@endsexualviolence.org.