



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault at the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)

FY 2025 Request: \$30 million for a demonstration program to support comprehensive and collaborative service delivery for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and sexual assault survivors while deepening capacity and technical assistance at the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services.

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.
- 43.6% of women have experienced some type of contact sexual violence.

While significant investments have been made to improve the criminal justice response to survivors, similar efforts are needed to build partnerships between sexual assault programs and health and human services agencies at the local, state, and national level.

Survivors accessing community health, mental health, substance use treatment, and housing need connections to healing services and providers need training in responding to those survivors.

Funding is needed for a new demonstration project to provide discretionary grants to a geographically diverse group of community based sexual assault programs including culturally specific and tribal programs to enhance partnerships and healthcare systems advocacy for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and sexual assault survivors and increasing program capacity at HHS along with robust technical assistance support.

Sexual Assault & Health are Inextricably Linked

The short- and long-term effects of sexual violence can undermine a person's physical and mental health.

- Based on an analysis of studies from 1980-2008, survivors of sexual violence have a significantly higher prevalence of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide attempts.
- According to the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, survivors of sexual violence are more likely to suffer from asthma and joint conditions. Studies have also found an increased risk of cervical cancer and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Among both women and men, previous non-consensual sex was associated with health conditions such as high cholesterol, stroke and heart disease while sexually victimized women were more likely to report having had a heart attack or heart disease than non-victims.
- A study of Kansas adults found a significantly higher prevalence of health risk behaviors (heavy drinking, binge drinking and current smoking) among women who had experienced sexual assault.

The Cost of Sexual Violence is High

According to a 2017 analysis, the estimated lifetime cost of rape was \$122,461 per victim, or a population economic burden of nearly \$3.1 trillion (2014 U.S. dollars) over victims' lifetimes.

Rape Crisis Centers/Sexual Assault Programs

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 2023 survey by NAESV:**

- Nearly 70% of programs saw an increased demand for services.
- 33% of programs report a waiting list for critical services.
- 57% of programs experienced a reduction in staffing.
- 48% of programs lack a therapist on staff.

Training & Technical Assistance is Critical

In 2023, OFVPS made a historic commitment addressing sexual assault by creating two sexual assault capacity building centers at NAESV and Respect Together. OFVPS also continued funding for several culturally specific sexual assault centers. NAESV is proud to collaborate with the other capacity building centers supporting sexual assault coalitions, FVPSA Administrators, tribal nations, and local sexual assault programs through listening sessions, webinars, consultation, and more. **\$5 million in funding is necessary to continue this essential work.**

Our Technical Assistance Partners

Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC)

Mujeres Latinas en Acción

National Organization of Asians & Pacific

Islanders Ending Sexual Violence (NAPIESV)

National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA)

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), a division of Respect Together

Ujima, The National Center on Domestic Violence in the Black Community

For more information, contact Terri Poore, terri@endsexualviolence.org

Sources

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