

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES PROGRAM

Funding Need: \$50 million

The Need: Services for Sexual Assault Victims

Rape crisis centers and other organizations serving the needs of sexual assault victims historically have been hampered by a significant lack of resources. A shortage of state-level funding caused by budget cuts in recent years has led many rape crisis centers to reduce staff size, cut services such as counseling to victims and hotline hours, and cut programs to underserved populations, some of which experience sexual assault at a very high rate. Many victims of rape and sexual assault are unsure of their options or afraid of navigating the criminal justice process, the medical system and psychological aftermath alone. However, rape crisis centers and other organizations help ease the confusion and fear by offering medical, legal, and psychological support to victims and their families and friends.

The Solution: Available, Comprehensive Services

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) is a new program created through VAWA 2005. This program provides the first federal funding stream dedicated entirely to the provision of *direct* services for victims of sexual violence. Full funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program is crucial in order to begin implementation of the program. It is imperative that rape crisis centers, state, territorial and tribal coalitions, and culturally specific organizations gain access to federal funds that can be used to provide services to sexual assault victims.

SASP funds are distributed to:

- States, Territories and Tribes to assist in their efforts to provide services to adult and minor sexual assault victims and their family and household members, as well as those collaterally affected by the crime.
- State, territory and tribal sexual assault coalitions whose assistance is invaluable to service providers nationwide.
- Culturally specific organizations that can provide intervention and related assistance for victims within their communities.

Grants can be used for general intervention and advocacy, including accompaniment through medical, criminal justice and social support systems, related assistance, and support services. SASP funds can also be used to provide training and technical assistance relating to sexual assault for various entities, including:

- Government and law enforcement agencies;
- Courts;
- Nonprofit organizations;
- Faith-based organizations; and
- Professionals working in legal services, social services, and health care.

Fully funding this program at \$50 million will address the critical needs of victims of sexual violence nationwide.

For more information, contact Ellen Fern, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, (202) 289-3900; Ilse Knecht, National Center for Victims of Crime, (703) 732-2446; Diane Moyer, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, (717) 728-9740; or Luz Marquez, National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault, (860) 693-2031, for questions relating to SASP's culturally specific grants.