

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

Over the past ten years, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), has brought together the criminal justice, social service and public health systems in an effort to intervene and prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in our communities.

Local, state and national laws have changed; services, businesses, and communities are responding to victims' needs; and studies show that victims seeking services and reporting of crimes has increased.

Congress and the Administration have recognized the importance of VAWA programs by reauthorizing the law and increased federal funding three times over the past ten years. This commitment not only protects lives now but prevents future violence and saves our communities billions of dollars in intervention services.

## History of VAWA

**VAWA 1994** - With its initial passage in 1994, VAWA brought together, for the first time, the criminal justice system, social services, and private non-profit organizations responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. VAWA provided: federal prosecution of interstate domestic violence and sexual assault crimes; the interstate enforcement of protection orders and the first protections for battered immigrant victims in danger of being deported after reporting crimes against them. VAWA also began to focus on underserved populations and Native victims.

**VAWA 2000** - In 2000, Congress reauthorized VAWA to provide additional resources and protections for victims of violence. VAWA 2000 identified the additional related crimes of dating violence and stalking and provided for additional resources to prosecute these crimes and provide services to survivors. Also created was a much-needed legal assistance program, as well as programs to address problems surrounding child custody and visitation for families experiencing violence. VAWA also continued to expand protections for battered immigrants.

**VAWA 2005** - The reauthorization of VAWA in 2005 continues existing life-saving programs and created new programs to build a range of prevention and intervention efforts to support women, men and children to live healthy, safe lives. VAWA 2005 addresses gaps in prevention services, housing, health care responses and employment issues related to domestic and sexual violence. VAWA 2005 brings services to more individuals and communities including children and teens, Native women and victims of sexual assault.

## Statistics

- Since 1996, the National Domestic Violence Hotline has answered over 1 million calls. The Hotline answers over 16,000 calls a month and provides assistance in 139 languages.
- More victims are reporting violence: among victims of violence by an intimate partner, the percentage of women who reported the crime was greater in 1998 (59%) than in 1993 (48%).
- Studies show that in the first 5 years of VAWA, an estimated \$14.8 billion was saved on medical, legal and other victimization costs by spending only \$1.6 billion for VAWA programs.
- States have passed more than 660 laws to combat domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- Rape victims are increasingly stepping forward and reporting these heinous crimes to the authorities. From 1993 to 1995 only 30.8% reported their attacks.
- All states have passed laws making stalking a crime and changed existing laws that often treated date or spousal rape as a lesser crime than stranger rape.
- VAWA doubled federal penalties for repeat sex offenders.
- The number of women murdered by an intimate partner was steady for two decades but declined by 22% from 1993 to 2001.

## For More Information on VAWA:

- Download the full text of VAWA 2005, a summary of the specific existing and new programs and fact sheets, and information on the authorized funding levels.
- See the legislative history of VAWA by downloading a chart comparing all three reauthorizations of VAWA.
- Read Congressional testimony, reports on VAWA successes and other statistics related to domestic and sexual violence.
- Learn more about your state's domestic violence and sexual assault statistics and local programs.

Visit [www.NCADV.org](http://www.NCADV.org) and [www.VAWA2005.org](http://www.VAWA2005.org)  
or call (202) 745-1211, email: [publicpolicy@ncadv.org](mailto:publicpolicy@ncadv.org)

## **VAWA 2005 includes the following programs (\* denotes new program authorized in 2005)**

### **Enhancing Judicial and Law Enforcement Tools to Combat Violence Against Women**

- Improvements to STOP Grants, Grants to Encourage Arrest and Enforce Protection Orders, Legal Assistance for Victims, Court Improvements and the reauthorization of Federal Victim Assistants and Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program
- Sex Offender Management\* and Stalker Database
- Privacy Protections for Victims of Domestic and Dating Violence and Stalking\*
- Grants for Law Enforcement Training Programs (Trafficking)\*

### **Improving Services for Victims of Violence**

- Sexual Assault Services\*
- Amendments to the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Enforcement Assistance Program
- Support for Abused and Exploited Women with Disabilities and Elderly Women
- Training and Services to End Violence Against Women in Later Life
- Strengthening of the National Domestic Violence Hotline

### **Services, Protection, and Justice for Young Victims of Violence**

- Rape Prevention and Education
- Services to Advocate for and Respond to Youth\*
- Supporting Teens through Education and Protection\*
- Access to Justice for Youth\*
- Training and Collaboration on the Intersection between Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment\*
- Grants to Reduce Violence Against Women on Campus
- Safe Havens (expands availability of supervised child custody visitation centers)

### **Strengthening America's Families by Preventing Violence**

- Grants to Assist Children and Youth Exposed to Violence\*, Development of Curricula and Pilot Programs for Home Visitation Projects\*, Engaging Men and Youth in Prevention\*, Study Conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\*

### **Strengthening the Healthcare System's Response to Violence Against Women**

- Training and Education of Health Professionals\*, Grants to Foster Public Health Responses\*, Research on Effective Interventions in the Healthcare Setting\*

### **Housing Opportunities and Safety for Battered Women and Children**

- Grants to Develop Long-Term Housing for Victims\*, Combat Violence Against Women in Public and Assisted Housing\* and Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims

### **Providing Economic Security for Victims of Violence**

- Grant for National Clearinghouse and Resource Center on Workplace Responses to Assist Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence\*

### **Protection of Battered and Trafficked Immigrant Women**

- Enhances protections to stop deportation of victims, extends immigration relief to larger group of family violence victims, provides economic security for trafficking victims, strengthens VAWA confidentiality enforcement, and provides economic security for immigrant victims and their children.

### **Safety for Indian Women**

- Grant to Track Violence Against Indian Women\*, Grant to Research Violence Against Indian Women\*, grants to Tribal Governments and creates a Tribal Deputy in the Office of Violence Against Women.