

# Carrying the Water, Demanding Justice

**More Than 20 Years of VAWA in Indian Country and Alaska**

January 2026

United States Department of Justice  
**Office on Violence Against Women**

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## Letter from the Acting Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs

Bošho tvayek (Hello everyone),

It is with great humility that our Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Tribal Affairs Division (TAD) and Performance Assessment Research and Evaluation (PARE) teams present the enclosed report. It documents, in Tribal grant recipients' own words and data, the desperate needs of our Tribal communities faced with epidemic rates of domestic violence and sexual assault. It also spotlights that when our Tribal communities have access, sustained access, we can create effective programs to support victims seeking safety and justice and hold offenders accountable. Our effective programs are not just achievable, our effective programs become common.

Twenty years ago, Native advocates demanded that VAWA 2005 be specifically responsive to Tribal needs and its passage ushered in a whole host of changes to how the Federal government addresses domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in Tribal communities. The Native advocates were clear, to address these crimes in Tribal communities, we need specific provisions, grant programs that are specific to Tribal communities, roles and divisions within the Federal offices that are focused solely on addressing these crimes, and requirements for regular communication between the Federal government and Tribal leaders on these specific issues. Congress agreed and found "the unique legal relationship of the United States to Indian Tribes creates a Federal trust responsibility to assist Tribal governments in safeguarding the lives of Indian women." Twenty years later, we can see it is working.

We still have much work to do but, in these pages, we can see the progress the communities that have received funding are making, the programs that are being developed, the advocates that are being funded, the systems that are being trained, and the lives that are being changed and saved. We can see the difference our Tribal communities are making! This report is for those Native advocates, the Coalition leaders, the Tribal leaders, each and every individual who carries the water on a daily basis to end domestic violence and sexual assault in our Tribal and Alaska Native communities. Personally, I'm humbled to be a small part of that and to have the honor to bring this report forward. It is with my deepest heartfelt appreciation I say Igiwien to Ms. Olivia Storz of the PARE Unit for her work on this report; Ms. Renee Stapp with the OVW Tribal Affairs Division for her guidance and edits along the way; the team at the VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative at the University of Southern Maine for their invaluable contributions; Ms. Frances Cook, our Acting General Counsel; and Ms. Ginger Baran Lyons, our Deputy Director for Grants Management and Development and Supervisory Official.

Nin se (that is all from me),

Rebekah Jones  
Acting Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs  
Tribal Affairs Division  
Office on Violence Against Women  
U.S. Department of Justice

# About OVW and OVW's Tribal Affairs Division

**The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)** provides federal leadership in developing the national capacity to reduce violence against women and administer justice for and strengthen services to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking.

**The Tribal Affairs Division (TAD)** within OVW is responsible for the administration of Tribal-specific grant programs and initiatives, management of Tribal-specific training and technical assistance, and coordination with other federal departments and DOJ offices on matters relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking in Tribal communities.

## Notes to the Reader

- This report generally uses the terms and definitions within the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), codified at 34 U.S.C. § 12291.
- VAWA's scope with regard to Tribal programs includes domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking. When discussed generally, these crimes are referred to as "VAWA crimes."
- Tribal grantees report to OVW about the status and performance of their award every six months (reporting periods: January to June and July to December). These reports include narrative and numerical data. Data are generally shared alongside the year in which they were reported.
- All numerical data shared in this report are reported by grantees and should be treated as general estimates. This means that the OVW has not independently confirmed the accuracy of data.
- The most comprehensive, best available performance report data from Tribal entities begin in 2007, following the enactment and implementation of VAWA 2005, which included Title IX: Safety for Indian Women.
- Narrative quotes are drawn from performance reports and other archival material spanning from 2004 to June 2025. Quotes are shared alongside the year, entity, and grant program. The information that grantees report to OVW is information that they choose to share with the federal government and only covers activities funded with VAWA funds. It is not a comprehensive description of all funded activities but rather offers insight into a particular aspect of their work.
- This report focuses on grant programs authorized under VAWA and administered by OVW's Tribal Affairs Division. It does not capture Tribal governments and organizations who are funded through other discretionary, non-Tribal-specific funding streams, nor does it capture grantees who are not Tribal entities who report serving Tribal populations.
- For readability, VAWA and its subsequent reauthorizations are referred to as VAWA and the year of referenced reauthorization (for example VAWA 2005), without reference to the specific title of the statute. When used generally, VAWA refers to the Act, as amended.
- Throughout the report, the terms "Tribal" and "Tribe" are capitalized.
- When relevant, this report uses the original spelling and terminology used by the speaker or writer. For example, when referencing historical performance reports this report uses the name submitted at the time of the performance report, which may have changed in the intervening years.

## Principles

Consistent with the Attorney General Guidelines Stating Principles for Working with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes,<sup>1</sup> this report:

- reflects a commitment to furthering the government-to-government relationship with each Tribe, which forms the heart of federal Indian policy;
- respects and supports Tribes' authority to exercise their inherent sovereign powers, including powers over both their citizens and their territory;
- promotes and pursues the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- reflects a commitment to Tribal self-determination, Tribal autonomy, Tribal nation-building, and the long-term goal of maximizing Tribal control over governmental institutions in Tribal communities, because Tribal problems generally are best addressed by Tribal solutions, including solutions informed by Tribal traditions and customs.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Attorney General. (2014, December 12). *Attorney General guidelines stating principles for working with federally recognized Indian Tribes* (AG Order No. 3481–2014). U.S. Department of Justice; Federal Register. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2014-12-12/pdf/2014-28903.pdf>

# “VAWA Can Help”

## INTRODUCTION

On September 19th, 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice convened its first Tribal Consultation on Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women at Mystic Lake on the lands of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Tribe. The Vice Chairman of Shakopee opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and remarking, *“This is a difficult subject to talk about. But sadly, violence against Indian women continues to happen today and the statistics are staggering [...] Fortunately, there is some good news—that is the Violence Against Women Act can help.”*<sup>2</sup>

This report chronicles the work that VAWA has funded across Indian country and Alaska Native villages, as well as the work that is left to do. As a federal funder, OVW is a custodian of information about the activities, challenges, and stories of Tribal grantees who are implementing VAWA-funded programs. This report represents OVW’s efforts to share information with sovereign Tribal governments and steward these data to advance safety and justice. As OVW grantee Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes wrote in 2005, *“These stories will be collected and help us analyze gaps in services, improve response, and provide services.”*

This report also commemorates 20 years since the passage of the Safety for Indian Women title (Title IX) in VAWA 2005 and presents a snapshot of the work that Title IX made possible. It uses performance reporting numbers and grantees’ own words to summarize the ways that VAWA-funded programs help victims, hold offenders accountable, and work collaboratively to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2006). *First Annual Government to Government Tribal Consultation: Transcript*. Department of Justice Archives.

# VAWA Tribal Grant Programs Over the Years

Tribal grant programs authorized by VAWA have expanded and changed with each VAWA reauthorization in response to identified needs and the advocacy of Tribal leaders.<sup>3</sup>

## Before VAWA

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities worked to prevent and address violence against women long before federal funding became available. For example, a Tribal leader from Emmonak, Alaska remarked at Tribal Consultation in 2006, *“The village government helped to open the first and only native shelter for battered women in the state of Alaska [in the 1980s]. The shelter was opened without any support from outside the village. The village government provided the building and community members donated everything needed to operate the shelter.”*<sup>4</sup>

## 1994

Congress first passed VAWA in 1994, answering the call from those who testified and wrote to lawmakers urging them to improve legal protections and increase access to services for victims.<sup>5</sup> With the enactment of VAWA 1994, the federal government also emphasized its commitment and obligation to address VAWA crimes in Indian country and Alaska Native villages.<sup>6</sup>

3 This brief historical review focuses only on Tribal-specific grant programs administered by the OVW's Tribal Affairs Division. This review also does not capture legislation or grant programs that are not administered by OVW.

4 U.S. Department of Justice. (2006). *First Annual Government to Government Tribal Consultation: Transcript*. Department of Justice Archives.

5 Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1796 (1994).

6 Kemper, N., & Sacco, L. N. (2019, April 23). The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): Historical overview, funding, and reauthorization (CRS Report No. R45410). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45410>

Initially, VAWA 1994 included a four percent dedicated funding stream for “developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing the needs and circumstances of Indian Tribes in dealing with violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault.”<sup>7</sup> This program became the **STOP Violence Against Indian Women Program (STOP VAIW)**, and the first grants for this program were issued in 1995.<sup>8</sup>

## 2000

The VAWA reauthorization in 2000 increased funding for the **STOP VAIW**, created the **Tribal Coalitions (TC)** grant program, and provided details regarding Tribal court protection orders and enforcement.<sup>9</sup>

## 2005

Title IX-Safety for Indian Women in VAWA 2005 created several programs and initiatives designed to address and prevent VAWA crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.<sup>10</sup> For example, VAWA 2005 required the U.S. Attorney General to conduct an annual consultation with Indian Tribal governments to address the federal administration of all Tribal funds and programs established under VAWA and its reauthorizations. It established a Deputy Director for Tribal Affairs position within OVW, expanding the office's ability to collaborate with Tribes. VAWA 2005 created the Grants to Indian **Tribal Governments Program (TGP)** to bolster Tribes' capacity to respond to violence against Native women, with increased funding for Tribal-specific work. These grants combined and streamlined various previous funding sources to support law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, legal assistance, supervised visitation, and prevention programming—all consistent with Tribal law and custom.

**"There is no one to call and the troopers are an hour away, if they are on duty. Victims end up getting victimized and nothing happens."**

— Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium, Tribal Governments Grantee, 2013

VAWA 2005 also created the Sexual Assault Services Program, which includes the **Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP)**, to address the unique needs of sexual assault victims.<sup>11</sup>

7 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, § 40121(a)(3), 108 Stat. 1796, 1910 (1994).

8 Kemper, N., & Sacco, L. N. (2019, April 23). The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): Historical overview, funding, and reauthorization (CRS Report No. R45410). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45410>

9 Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, §§ 1101(b)(4), 1103(b)(2)(B), 1103(b)(2)(D), 114 Stat. 1464, 1492, 1496 (2000).

10 Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-162, 119 Stat. 2960 (2006).

11 TSASP provides funding to Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and nonprofit Tribal organizations for the operation of sexual assault programs or projects in Indian Tribal lands and Alaska Native villages to support the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of programs and projects to assist those victimized by sexual assault.

### 2004 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"We are collecting information from our elders regarding the history of violence against women. This is crucial to our understanding of how violence against women has become interwoven into our culture. With a growing understanding of its origins we will be better able to counteract it."*

**SHOONAQ' TRIBE OF KODIAK (STOP VAIW)**

### 2003 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The establishment of a Native operated shelter has been so important to our clients. Never before have they had access to emergency shelter that not only allowed but encourages participation in traditional activities, including sweats, smudging, and talking circles."*

**SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS (STOP VAIW)**

### 2004 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Revisions to the existing Code allowed for the creation of a new Chapter in the Choctaw Tribal Code to address both criminal and civil procedures in dealing specifically with domestic violence. The issue of domestic violence was brought into the forefront as a key issue on the Choctaw Reservation."*

**MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS (STOP VAIW)**

### 2004 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The women are coming forward and reporting incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking cases. Formal relationships with the Federal Bureau of Investigations have greatly improved compared to three years ago as there was no relationship with the victim services targeting cases of domestic violence and sexual assault."*

**SHOSHONE AND ARAPAHO JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL (STOP VAIW)**

### 2006 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"There is a need for increased cross-jurisdictional coordinated community response. Offenders slip through the cracks of the judicial system by taking advantage of the unique jurisdictional situation in Akwesasne."*

**ST. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE (STOP VAIW)**

Following input gathered during the Department of Justice's (DOJ) 2009 Tribal Nation Listening Session on Public Safety and Law Enforcement and the annual Tribal Consultation on Violence Against Women, the DOJ created the **Violence Against Women Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Initiative (T-SAUSA)**. The T-SAUSA Initiative funds Tribal prosecutors to be cross-deputized to charge domestic and sexual violence cases in Tribal and federal courts.

## 2013

VAWA 2013 built on earlier efforts to curb high rates of violence against AI/AN women by recognizing the inherent authority of Tribes to exercise special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) over certain crimes committed in Indian country by non-Indians, provided the required due process protections were afforded to the defendant.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, VAWA 2013 established a grant program, the **Tribal Jurisdiction Program (TJ)**, to support Tribes preparing to implement and ultimately exercise SDVCJ. Funding included not only investigation and prosecution but also the provision of legal counsel for indigent defendants, inclusion of non-Indians in Tribal courts' jury pools, and revisions to Tribal laws. DOJ established an Intertribal Technical Assistance Working Group to help Tribes implement SDVCJ.

**"If it was not for this grant, there would have been several that would have gotten away with domestic violence."**  
— Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Tribal Jurisdiction Grantee, 2024

VAWA 2013 also included sex trafficking as a covered crime in Tribal grant programs. Furthermore, the reauthorization expanded the purpose areas for grants for TGP and TC to include the development of policies that enhance best practices for responding to violent crimes against Indian women.

## 2022

The 2022 reauthorization of VAWA further expanded recognition of inherent Tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians to include additional crimes, including those involving sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, and violence against children, renaming the jurisdiction "special Tribal criminal jurisdiction" (STCJ).<sup>13</sup> VAWA 2022 included policies and programs that strengthen support for Tribal communities' efforts to prevent and respond to VAWA crimes, authorized a **Tribal Reimbursement Program** that covers expenses Tribes incur in exercising STCJ, and recognized the authority of Tribes occupying villages in Alaska to exercise STCJ through a pilot program administered by DOJ.

### 2013 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Victim reporting is low for domestic, sexual, and stalking crimes in Indian Country and Indian women are assaulted at a rate of three times the average population. Even when victims do come forward with crimes, they hardly prosecute due to criminal justice limitations. There are very weak penalties for offenders; only up to a year in county jail and/or a \$1000 fine. We have many repeat offenders; multiple women or the same women many times. They do it because they can."*

**PAWNEE NATION OF OKLAHOMA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2016 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The Intertribal Working Group is very helpful in disseminating the most relevant information to tribes implementing the Special Criminal Domestic Violence Jurisdiction grant. This Tribal Jurisdiction Program has been instrumental in allowing the Yurok Tribe to set up an initial infrastructure to support the tribal court's exercise of criminal jurisdiction in an area where it has historically lacked funding for court/law enforcement development."*

**YUROK TRIBE (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

### 2021 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Our staff members are familiar with the people in communities and can offer insight into customs and traditions that otherwise would not be known/understood by non-tribal members."*

**MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS (TSASP)**

### 2018 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Claiming jurisdiction over non-Native men who commit crimes of domestic/dating violence, or who violate a protection order against a victim who lives on tribal land, is instrumental in keeping Native women safe."*

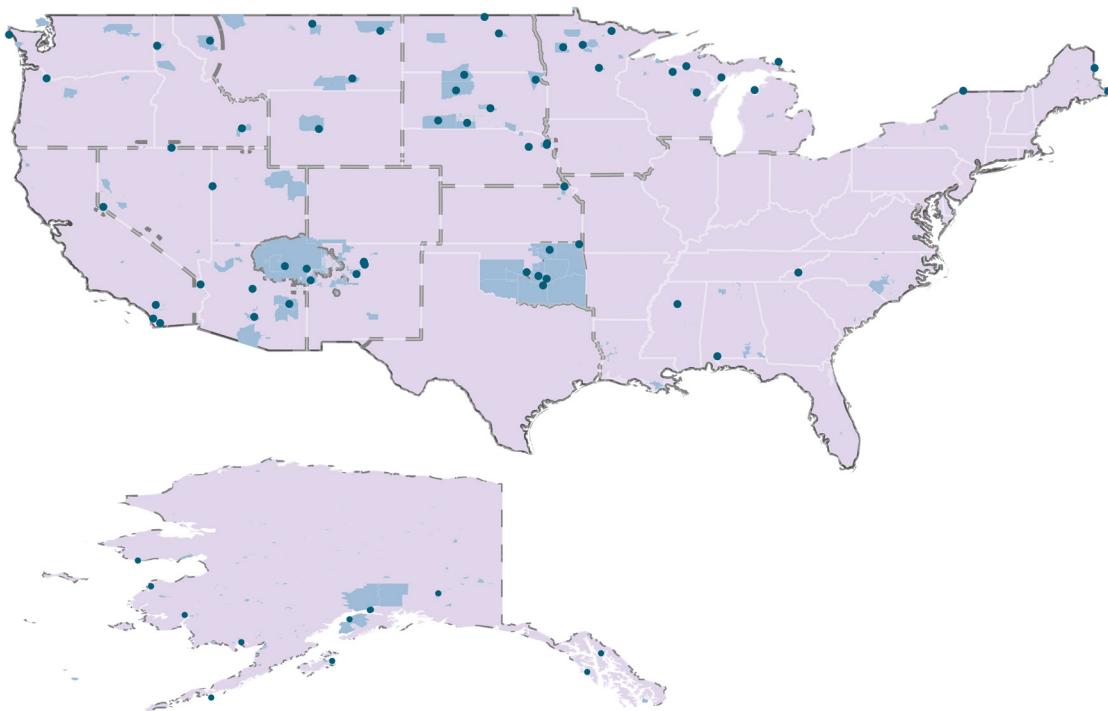
**PORT GAMBLE S'KLALLAM TRIBE (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

12 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-4, 127 Stat. 54 (2013).

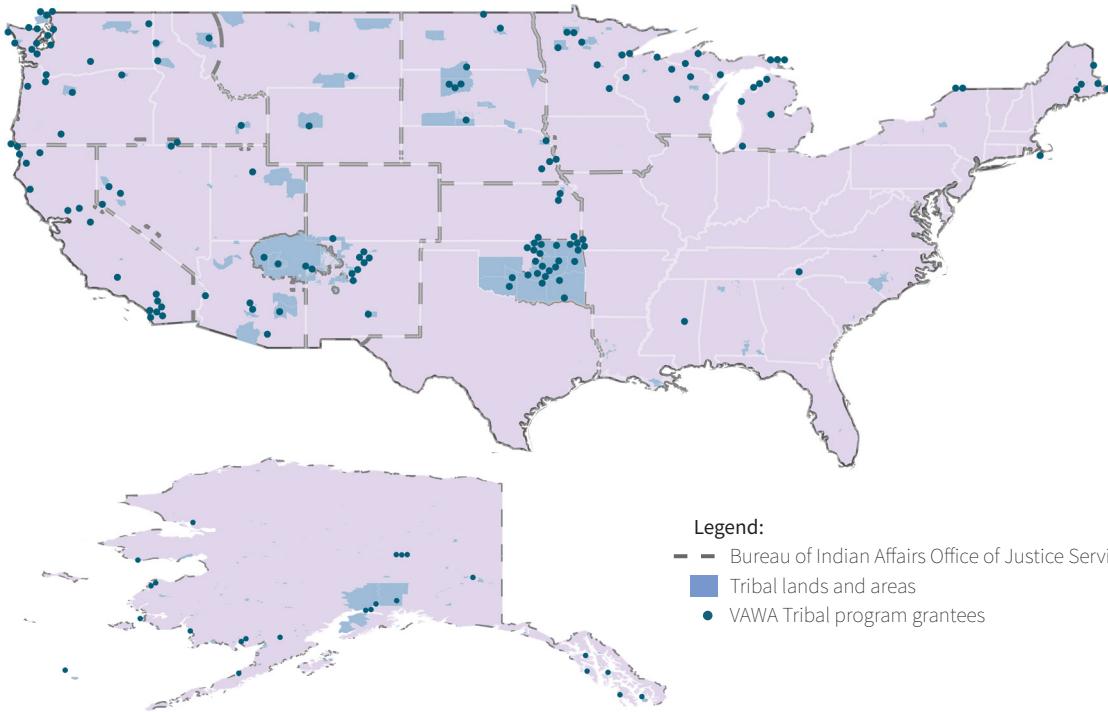
13 Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-103, div. W, 136 Stat. 49, 840 (2022).

The work funded through these reauthorizations expanded and deepened the reach of VAWA funding across many Tribal Nations.

### Tribal Program Grantees Reporting in 2007



### Tribal Program Grantees Reporting in 2024



#### Legend:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services District lines<sup>14</sup>
- Tribal lands and areas
- VAWA Tribal program grantees

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. "BND – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Regional Boundaries (DOI)." Presents BIA Regional Boundaries as delineated by the U.S. Department of Interior. Data Steward U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Content Item: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Mission Support. Updated 2022. Retrieved from [https://services.arcgis.com/cJ9YHowT8TU7Dlyn/arcgis/rest/services/BND\\_\\_Bureau\\_of\\_Indian\\_Affairs\\_Tribal\\_Boundaries\\_\\_Areas\\_\\_DOI\\_\\_/FeatureServer](https://services.arcgis.com/cJ9YHowT8TU7Dlyn/arcgis/rest/services/BND__Bureau_of_Indian_Affairs_Tribal_Boundaries__Areas__DOI__/FeatureServer) on 08/14/2025.

# Saving Lives:

## THE SUCCESS OF VAWA TRIBAL GRANT PROGRAMS

VAWA funding is administered by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and is distributed nationwide through discretionary and formula grant programs. VAWA grantees use this funding to serve victims and to improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and stalking using evidence-based interventions.

From 1995 to 2025, federal funding has supported Tribal Nations and Alaska Native villages in serving victims and improving the response to VAWA crimes across Indian country and Alaska Native villages. Grantee-reported performance data demonstrate the achievements of Tribal Programs over the years.

**"I have had many clients who have expressed that this program **saved their life**. I hope that statement holds as much weight to government officials as it does to me."**  
— Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Tribal Governments Grantee, 2024

### OVER 20 YEARS...

 *Tribal Program grantees provided more than 1.9 million HOUSING BED NIGHTS*

 *Tribal Program grantees answered more than 512,000 HOTLINE CALLS*

 *Tribal Program grantees assisted victims in obtaining more than 72,000 PROTECTION ORDERS*

These numbers reflect grantee-reported data for the STOP Violence Against Indian Women Program (January 2004-June 2010), Tribal Governments Program (July 2007-June 2022, July 2024-June 2025), Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (July 2010-June 2022, July 2024-June 2025), Tribal Jurisdiction Program (July 2016-June 2022, July 2024-June 2025), and the Tribal COVID Special Initiative (January 2022-June 2022).

### IN JULY-DECEMBER 2024 ALONE...

 *Tribal Program grantees provided services to more than 4,350 VICTIMS*

including providing:

 **TRANSPORTATION**  
3,500 *times*

 **CULTURAL ADVOCACY**  
3,180 *times*

 **CIVIL LEGAL ADVOCACY**  
2,520 *times*

Among other activities, Tribal Program grantees:

 *provided more than 43,210 HOUSING BED NIGHTS*

 *answered more than 9,000 HOTLINE CALLS*

 *assisted victims in obtaining more than 1,480 PROTECTION ORDERS*

These numbers reflect grantee-reported data for the July-December 2024 reporting period for the Tribal Governments Program, Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program, and Tribal Jurisdiction Program.

## Depth of the Work Funded

Every six months, Tribal grantees share updates about their work with OVW through performance reports.<sup>15</sup> These reports are a testament to how Tribal grantees use VAWA funds to support a wide range of activities, which looks different in each Tribal Nation. It can mean prosecuting a case or setting up a new database to track cases. It can mean providing transitional housing or supervised visitation services, or offering a community workshop during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

### **What is clear is that there have been many achievements in serving victims and improving the response to VAWA crimes.**

Over many years, most Tribal grantees shared that they used their grant funds to provide **victim services**. Grantees noted that grant funds allowed them to sustain existing services, expand the services they were able to offer, or start entirely new victim services programs. These programs provide **advocacy** for victims, which can help them navigate housing, healthcare, and legal issues, or provide a listening ear. Many grantees highlighted the benefit of being able to provide these services, taking into account their Tribes' histories and customs, and integrating traditional healing practices into their services. These cultural workshops and events make spaces for community and healing. For example, the Bay Mills Indian Community organized an ash basket workshop, a moccasin workshop, and a beading workshop in 2022.

Among the most frequently mentioned services provided by grantees were **shelter services and transitional housing** as well as **material and financial assistance**. Grantees noted how these services allow victims and their children to get out of dangerous situations quickly, recover from abuse, and reduce risk of future violence. Grantees described how grant funding allowed them to provide short-term emergency shelter, longer-term transitional housing, or rental assistance to victims, offering them a place to heal and build stability over time. Grantees also emphasized the benefit of using grant funds to provide **food, clothing, or cell phones**, and other financial assistance, such as **gas money, utility payments, or child care**. This assistance helps victims meet their basic needs in the short term, which allows them to chart their own paths to safety and healing.

VAWA-funded advocates also connect victims to other resources such as **employment and educational opportunities, food assistance, and public benefits**. For example, the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians used VAWA funds to provide support with emergency housing, moving costs, clothing, food vouchers, and gas to victims in early 2025.

In addition, grantees emphasized the benefit of providing **transportation**, specifically in remote rural areas without available public transportation. In some cases, grantees used VAWA funds to purchase equipment, such as **boats or vehicles**, which allowed Tribes to respond more swiftly and effectively to

### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"One of our significant cultural programs is our cultural Hoop House which provides a space to plant traditional herbal medicines, grow food and flowers, and take pride in nurturing life. Our cultural classes teach participants to make traditional clothing, understand medicinal plants, and embrace their heritage. Without this grant, these programs would not be possible, the grant plays an essential role in holistic healing for our people."*

**SHOSHONE-PAIUTE TRIBES OF DUCK VALLEY INDIAN RESERVATION (TSASP)**

### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"We have been able to maintain and expand the number of safe homes across the region, providing crucial shelter and support services to victims."*

**KAWERAK, INC. (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2014 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Our clients do not have the credit history, current employment or ability to pay rent in any traditional rentals. Most of them have children and so the needs and costs are even greater. This often leads to hopelessness that puts them in further danger of returning to violent relationships."*

**SUQUAMISH TRIBE (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"One of our clients has made significant strides toward her goals, thanks to the collaborative wraparound services available through these partnerships. She has continued her education, sought employment, and secured stable housing. This success story is a testament to the powerful impact of our community collaborations, and we are proud to see her continue to thrive as she builds a brighter future."*

**STRONG HEARTED NATIVE WOMEN'S COALITION, INC (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

<sup>15</sup> This section is a general review of grantees' narrative answers to the "funding enabled" and "grant goals and objectives" questions on OVW performance reports from 2004 to 2025. Specific quotes are pulled from performance reports and reflect general thematic analysis of available data. This review is not comprehensive.

crime and connect victims to services. For example, in 2013, the TGP grantee Pascua Yaqui Tribe purchased a vehicle for advocates to use. They wrote: *"This has allowed the program to provide safe, comfortable, reliable transportation for those needing a ride to safe locations, resources, court hearings, etc."*

Over the years, grantees also shared how VAWA-funded **services support children, family members, and the community of victims and survivors of violence**. Grantees provided safe housing for children exposed to violence, helped their parents pursue stability, and worked to prevent cycles of violence. For example, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Family Violence Prevention program, a TSASP grantee, created a state-of-the-art advocacy program for child sexual abuse victims, including pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), forensic interviews, and emergency protection orders. As they described in 2022, *"The supportive services that are offered to children and families impacted by sexual violence have made a significant impact on children and non-offending parents and caregivers. Without advocacy and supportive services, families and children would have to navigate the criminal process alone, which can be a very challenging and overwhelming time. In addition to the supportive services that child sexual assault advocacy provides, service delivery includes helping families cope with trauma and understand the healing process. Another important component to sexual assault advocacy includes helping parents and caregivers understand how to appropriately respond to children who have experienced sexual abuse."* In just six months in 2024, TGP grantees served more than 1,800 children and other affected relatives of victims.<sup>16</sup>

Grantees provided **legal assistance** from lawyers and paralegals as well as **legal advocacy** from victim advocates or lay legal advocates. Lawyers help victims retain custody of their children, file for divorce, or secure safety measures. Legal assistance and support enable victims to navigate legal processes, often improving victims' participation in the criminal and civil justice system and giving victims a better chance at obtaining justice.<sup>17</sup> For example, protection orders can deter further abuse, increase victims' perceptions of their own safety, reduce victims' post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and have shown a cost benefit of tens of millions of dollars.<sup>18</sup>

From July to December 2024, TGP funds helped employ four full-time lawyers to provide legal services to victims. Overall, Tribal Governments Program grantees provided legal support with protection orders to more than 150 victims.

<sup>16</sup> Based on preliminary performance report data from July to December 2024, out of 85 grantees reporting that they provided victim services.

<sup>17</sup> Obtaining legal assistance has positive impacts on victims, from legal outcomes to increased psychological well-being. Cordier, R., Chung, D., Wilkes-Gillan, S., & Speyer, R. (2021). The effectiveness of protection orders in reducing recidivism in domestic violence: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(4), 804–828. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838019882361>; Renner, L. M., & Coppers Hartley, C. (2021). Psychological Well-Being among Women Who Experienced Intimate Partner Violence and Received Civil Legal Services. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36(7–8), 3688–3709. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518777552>; Rhodes, K. V., Dichter, M. E., Kothari, C. L., Marcus, S. C., & Cerulli, C. (2011). The impact of children on legal actions taken by women victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(5), 355–364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-011-9370-8>

<sup>18</sup> Legal Services Corporation. (2025). *The economic case for civil legal aid: A systematic review of economic impact studies* (Office of Data Governance and Analysis Research Brief) Legal Services Corporation. <https://lsc-live.app.box.com/s/0ldo54a34zc7s3dgp6ci2ra8r5qb61f>; Logan, T. K., Walker, R., Hoyt, W., & Faragher, T. (2009). *The Kentucky civil protective order study: A rural and urban multiple perspective study of protective order violation consequences, responses & costs* (Report No. 228350). University of Kentucky. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228350.pdf>; Weisz, A. N., & Schell, M. (2020). Responding to intimate partner violence: Urban women's decisions about getting personal protection orders when other resources are scarce. *Violence Against Women*, 26(10), 1242–1261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219854537>

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Transportation and accompaniment services are a critical component of our efforts, allowing dependable travel options for victims to attend court hearings, legal meetings, support group sessions, and medical appointments."*

**KETCHIKAN INDIAN COMMUNITY (TSASP)**

#### 2010 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"We were able to offer training to the staff of Bois Forte Headstart on signs of children witnessing violence. Staff attended and received information on signs and symptoms of children affected by domestic violence."*

**BOIS FORTÉ RESERVATION (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Often abusers use children as a way of exerting control over victims/survivors. Without an attorney this tactic can often be successful. With an attorney who knows how the legal system works fighting for the victim/survivor, the power imbalance is changed."*

**LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Grant funds helped our program participants access stable housing, along with 17 youth, thereby disrupting the cycle of abuse and preventing the perpetuation of abuse in childhood."*

**SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2022 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"We were able to settle one particularly longstanding custody case that we had been working on for nearly a year. The client was satisfied with the limited amount of visitation we were able to hold the opposing party to, and the large child support order we were able to obtain for her in turn. Because the opposing party was represented in this case, if we did not have grant funding to provide this client with services, she very likely would have had to take on her case unrepresented, and would have likely wound up with a much less favorable outcome."*

**ALASKA NATIVE JUSTICE CENTER (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

Grantees often emphasized how grant funds sustain **staffing** within their organizations and ensure agencies can meet the needs of victims and to hold offenders accountable. Grant funds allowed grantees to fill open positions, increase the number of staff positions, or provide training and support to prevent staff burnout and turnover. For example, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation shared in 2024: “*Our [VAWA-funded] secretary is the heart and often first contact for our program plus she is a longtime member of the Tribe, she knows almost everyone and quick to initiate conversation and laughter.*” VAWA funds sometimes ensure that a community can hire for critical roles such as a victim advocate, shelter director, prosecutor, SANE, or other essential services.

Grantees used VAWA funds for **public education and outreach activities**, including prevention efforts with youth and community events. This work is aimed at building awareness of VAWA crimes, letting victims know about available support services, and reducing barriers to victims seeking those services when they are ready. Sometimes, these community services also served as a space to honor victims and grieve loss.

Grantees described how grant funds helped them **improve or formalize their cooperation with community partners to advance a coordinated response** to the VAWA crimes. In some cases, grant funds made it possible for different groups to come together through roundtable discussions, conferences, and working meetings. Due to the complexities of Indian country jurisdiction, collaboration, training, and partnerships with law enforcement are a key piece of fostering victim safety. During an emergency in Indian country, law enforcement may need to determine the type of crime, the exact location of the crime, and the status of the victim and offender, to determine with whom or where assistance lies. Building these relationships on the front end mitigates a barrier to safety for AI/AN victims.

Some grantees shared that more cooperation with local law enforcement increased case referrals and improved investigations into VAWA crimes. Grantees also used funds for **training** for law enforcement, victim advocates, and other professionals to enhance their response to victims.

Furthermore, Tribal programs described how grant funds were used to improve the **criminal justice response** to VAWA crimes by funding specialized personnel in law enforcement and prosecution, improving court proceedings, or creating abuser intervention programs. Funds were used to help Tribes create the infrastructure to exercise their jurisdiction as sovereign nations. For example, in 2022, the Gila River Indian Community used TJ funding to pay for inmate housing and medical costs.

Grantees also developed and revised **policies and codes**, to advance offender accountability. For example, the Confederate Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, reported in 2022 that “*the Tribe was able to review and revise the domestic violence codes and programs, and build tribal justice systems to support more comprehensive court services and capacity.*”

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*“A large portion goes to fund and staff the emergency domestic violence shelter the Nation operates. The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week. Advocates on staff for the shelter facility are responsible for answering hotline calls.”*

**SAC AND FOX NATION OF MISSOURI IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2014 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*“This program has been effective in bringing awareness within the tribal community that domestic violence is not okay. There is help and hope available for survivors that had never been available before within the reservation.”*

**SAC AND FOX NATION OF MISSOURI IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2022 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*“We are very excited to continue to grow our working relationship with our Tribal Law Enforcement and Tribal Prosecutor’s Office as we work toward the Nation’s efforts to end domestic violence against Native American women.”*

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*“All the work that is completed by the Coalition, starts with the federal funding. The federal funding set the organization and basic infrastructure to help start performing all other activities.”*

**NATIVE WOMEN’S SOCIETY OF THE GREAT PLAINS (TRIBAL COALITIONS PROGRAM)**

#### 2022 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*“We have recently had our first prosecution utilizing this Special Jurisdictions Law. The feeling of being able to take care of [our] own women using this new law is fantastic.”*

**SWINOMISH INDIAN TRIBAL COMMUNITY (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

Grantees used funding to support SANE or Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) staff positions, provide trainings for SANEs, or provide accompaniment to **medical forensic exams** after an assault. Grantees provided training for other medical professionals, too. For example, in 2013 the Penobscot Nation used TGP funds to provide a training to all direct health staff at the Indian Island Health Clinic, from doctors to dentists, on how to respond to disclosures of violence and how to connect victims with services.

Finally, grantees reported using funds to fill gaps in systems that create the foundation for broader work, such as public safety infrastructure, computer systems, data collection, and standard operating procedures.

#### 2013 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The database allows us to better track offender information. With this database we are better able to track recidivism, the types of offenses that are occurring and what offenses each offender has on his record which could be extremely important when addressing the safety needs of victims. This database also allows us to see if there are gaps in our responses and where we can improve those gaps. Thus helping to ensure victim safety needs are being met."*

**HANNAHVILLE INDIAN COMMUNITY (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

## TRIBAL SAUSA SPOTLIGHT

One example of the reach of VAWA funding can be found in the T-SAUSA Initiative. This Initiative supports Tribes and United States Attorneys' Offices (USAOs) in their investigation and prosecution of VAWA cases in Indian country. Grant funds support salaries, training, travel, and supplies for dedicated Tribal prosecutors who are cross-designated as T-SAUSAs to work directly with USAOs. The goals of the Initiative are to fill gaps in jurisdictional coverage; increase communication and coordination among Tribal, federal, and state law enforcement agencies; establish consistent relationships between federal prosecutors and Tribal leadership; and improve the quality of investigation and prosecution of VAWA crimes in Tribal communities. Available performance reporting data show that these programs can be highly productive. For example, between July and December 2024, **38 T-SAUSA cases reached disposition, and 23 of these cases resulted in a conviction or deferred adjudication, with a conviction rate of around 60 percent.**

Grantee quotes illustrate the importance of the program and the need it meets. For example, in 2024 the Colorado River Indian Tribes shared: *"The T-SAUSA Program grant has been pivotal in prosecutions leading to plea offers/convictions that involve more than just suspended time and probation. Historically the approach to domestic violence was not consistent in the office and resulted in dispositions that did not come with sufficient penalty or deterrent effect. In ten of the convictions obtained during this reporting period the defendants served actual time in jail rather than only the initial 72 hours. This sends a message to the community that domestic violence cases will result in actual time in detention."* The impact is borne out in recent convictions in tough cases.<sup>19</sup> For example, in 2025, a T-SAUSA in the Eastern District of Washington led the prosecution and sentencing of a Washington man for murder on the Colville Reservation.<sup>20</sup> As the Acting United States Attorney shared: *"My office's partnership with Tribal Nations and communities is integral to the work we do within the U.S. Attorney's Office. While the federal government has not always lived up to its treaty and trust obligations, we can and must do better to move forward. Ensuring public safety is a top priority for my office, and I am so grateful for the work we have been able to do over the past several years to rebuild trust with the Tribal Nations within the Eastern District of Washington."*

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Attorney's Office: Eastern District of Washington. (2025, June 24). Wellpinit man sentenced to prison for violent assault [Press release]. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edwa/pr/wellpinit-man-sentenced-prison-violent-assault>

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Attorney's Office: Eastern District of Washington. (2025, April 4). Washington man sentenced to seventeen years in prison for murder on the Colville Reservation [Press release]. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edwa/pr/washington-man-sentenced-seventeen-years-prison-murder-colville-reservation>

## Because of VAWA

Supported by VAWA funding for more than 20 years, Tribal grantees have provided millions of hours of victim advocacy, helped file thousands of protection orders, rewritten dozens of Tribal codes, and prosecuted hundreds of offenders. Across Indian country and in Alaska Native villages, because of VAWA and the efforts of Tribal governments, community members, and victims, there is a shelter where a domestic violence victim can take her children in the middle of the night. Because of VAWA, many Tribal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and courts are better equipped to hold offenders accountable while making the justice system more transparent to victims navigating it. Because of VAWA, victims doing deeply personal work of healing from abuse can find a trusted advocate who understands their culture and traditions. Because of VAWA, there are more people in the justice system and in schools, hospitals, places of worship, health clinics, legal aid offices, and other community spaces who can respond to victimization with compassion and competence.

**“Our funding allowed us to provide the only available domestic or sexual assault services in our area. We are Native specific and are blessed to serve our community and I am confident in saying that we have saved lives.”**

— Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, Tribal Governments Grantee, 2013

# “Safe Relationships, Homes, and Communities”

## WHAT IS LEFT TO BE DONE

### Despite progress, the work of VAWA is not done.

“In small Tribal communities such as ours, the work to create **safe relationships, homes and communities** for Native women, children and men will only be achieved when all conditions adversely affecting the quality of life on the reservation are lessened as opposed to over represented in Native populations.”

— Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy Tribe, Tribal Governments Grantee, 2013

Grantees provide lifesaving services in creative ways. They maximize limited federal funding and navigate complex jurisdictional maps. While doing so, they witness the remaining areas of need in their nations and communities every day.<sup>21</sup>

### Continuing Violence

Grantees expressed dismay and grief about the persistence of violence against and within their communities. Grantees often shared their sorrow about missing and murdered community members and the overlap between sex trafficking, domestic violence, and murder. In addition, grantees highlighted the need to provide services tailored to the unique experiences of victims, such as adequately addressing sexual assault and sex trafficking. In responding to violence, grantees highlighted challenges with available data. For example, in 2010 the Hopi Tewa Women's Coalition to End Abuse wrote that they needed to *“determine the rate of domestic violence and sexual assault perpetrated against Hopi Tewa women for use in developing appropriate policies/response protocols, allocating limited resources, and supporting development of holistic healing practices/programs.”*

<sup>21</sup> This section provides a review of grantee responses to the “remaining areas of need” question in performance reports from 2004 to 2025, highlighting key trends. Specific quotes are pulled from performance reports and categories reflect general thematic analysis of available data. This is not a comprehensive summary.

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Alaska, with its vast and sometimes inaccessible terrain, poses significant challenges for law enforcement in rural and remote areas. In these regions, the lack of a strong police presence leaves victims, especially those in isolated communities, vulnerable. Having more officers in these areas would not only improve response times but would also foster a sense of security in communities that feel underserved."*

**CHICKALOON NATIVE VILLAGE (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

#### 2022 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Our clients are in desperate need for safe housing and thus our need for transitional housing services continues to go up. Without these funds we would not be able to give our clients the stability they need to rebuild their lives. However, it is essential that our funds be expanded to allow us to build a safe shelter or purchase tiny homes to be placed on tribal lands to give women safe shelter where we have tribal jurisdiction."*

**EASTERN SHAWNEE (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

#### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Transitional housing and emergency shelters are very scarce where our program is located. Our program must house victims in local hotels, where they are not as safe as they could be in a shelter or transitional house."*

**SUQUAMISH TRIBE OF PORT MADISON INDIAN RESERVATION (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

#### 2022 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The Tribe continued to advertise positions on our website and online job boards, as well as develop recruitment strategies to advertise these positions outside the rural communities in and around Shawnee. Despite our recruiting efforts for the grant staff we have not been able to fill the position of the Court Planner."*

**ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

## Criminal Justice Response and Jurisdictional Complexity

Grantees identified persistent **gaps in criminal justice responses to VAWA crimes**. Many described challenges with law enforcement follow-up, extremely delayed or non-existent law enforcement responses, and delayed or incomplete reporting of crimes.

**"The biggest barrier is concurrent jurisdiction issues and getting state law enforcement to view Tribal law enforcement as an asset."**

— Dot Lake Village, Tribal Jurisdiction Grantee, 2024

Grantees highlighted irregular prosecution and minimal consequences for offenders, even in cases involving serious or repeated harm. A lack of ability to monitor and track offenders was also cause for concern. In addition, failure to follow up on violations of no-contact orders was cited as contributing to **ongoing re-victimization and reduced trust in the justice system. Honoring Tribal sovereignty, coordinating across jurisdictions, enforcing protection orders, and holding offenders accountable continue to be areas of significant challenge**. Overall, Tribal grantees repeatedly called for a justice system that prioritizes victim safety and responds compassionately to victims, holds offenders accountable, recognizes Tribal sovereignty, and removes barriers to justice.

## Services for Victims and Families

The impact of VAWA crimes reflects and amplifies the needs present in the communities where those crimes are perpetrated. As a result, grantees consistently report a significant lack of services that meet basic needs. These include **emergency shelter, transitional housing, food, clothing, toiletries, and financial assistance**. A lack of available, affordable housing was persistently identified as a major barrier for victims, often compounded by limited employment opportunities. These gaps make it difficult for victims to move from crisis to stability and safety. For example, in Alaska, the extremely high cost of food and time-intensive logistics necessary to obtain food were highlighted as challenges experienced by grantees and the victims they serve.

Grantees also shared challenges related to specialized services for children, including a lack of available child care and mental health care to support children exposed to violence.

Grantees also reported **persistent staffing challenges** that directly impacted the delivery of victim services. High turnover, recruitment difficulties, and unfilled positions strained program operations, limited outreach, delayed service provision, and impacted the implementation of new programming. These staffing gaps significantly reduced grantees' capacity to meet the needs of victims.

## Civil Legal Services

Reflective of persistent staffing challenges, grantees reported a dearth of high-quality civil legal services. Across different communities, grantees repeatedly found that the need for civil legal services outpaced availability, citing a **shortage of lawyers and legal advocates** in rural areas who are well versed in navigating Tribal courts.

## Transportation and Infrastructure

Grantees identified the **lack of reliable and affordable transportation** as being among the greatest unmet service needs for victims and their families. They shared that victims in Tribal communities often lack access to transportation to attend court hearings, medical visits, or to reach emergency shelter. Public transportation options are limited or expensive in many rural Tribal communities, further complicating access to critical services. For example, in some Alaska Native villages lack of access to transportation can mean that help is hundreds of miles, a boat ride, and a flight away.

## Health and Well-Being

Grantees called for increased and better-quality **health care services**. Grantees emphasized the need for **mental health services** and substance use treatment services. They also identified barriers to access for other health care, such as emergency room care, post-sexual assault medical forensic care, or reproductive care.

## Community Education and Tribal-focused Resources

Grantees specifically highlighted the need to **expand community education** as a critical area for improving victim safety, increasing reporting, and reducing stigma. Many grantees reported a continued reluctance among victims to seek help, often due to fear of being judged or exposed within close-knit communities. Grantees emphasized the importance of education to increase understanding of VAWA crimes and **leverage the protective factors and strengths in traditional cultures**. Additionally, education about healthy relationships was also identified as a gap, especially for young people. Grantees shared that community-based education is critical to improving safety, breaking cycles of violence, and ensuring victims know where and how to access help.

Grantees highlighted a lack of Tribal-focused abuser intervention and offender treatment programs. In general, grantees stressed the importance of **developing programs that incorporate traditional practices** and promote healing, accountability, and behavioral change. However, many Tribal communities reported limited access to such programs, particularly in rural areas.

### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*[We need] enhanced legal advocacy services, particularly in rural and tribal areas, to help victims navigate the justice system, obtain protective orders, and access victim compensation programs."*

**KAWERAK, INC. (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2024 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"One major challenge is the geographic distribution of the Maliseet Tribal community. Many victims live in rural or isolated areas, making it difficult for them to access services such as legal aid, counseling, and housing support. While the court has worked with transportation providers, the physical distance remains a barrier. Expanding transportation options and providing satellite services in remote areas would ensure survivors have access to necessary resources."*

**HOULTON BAND OF MALISEET INDIANS (TRIBAL JURISDICTION PROGRAM)**

### 2010 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"We need trained SANE nurses in our Indian Health Services clinic."*

**SAGINAW CHIPPEWA INDIAN TRIBE (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2013 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"With the rise of heroin use, the need for advocate training in dealing with victims with drug addictions and how to best serve those with addictions is crucial. There is a noticeable increase in victims of domestic violence who are incarcerated that are there due to chemical dependency issues. Many more victims are coming forward that stay with their abuser because he is either supporting her drug dependency or threatening to turn her in to Law Enforcement or Family Services."*

**MILLE LACS BAND OF OJIBWE (TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

### 2016 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"Native American victims face unique cultural barriers, based upon historical and current events, and may be hesitant to seek help from non-Indian service providers."*

**NATIVE ALLIANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE (TRIBAL COALITIONS PROGRAM)**

## Training for Professionals

Grantees consistently identified **critical and ongoing training needs** across systems that respond to VAWA crimes in Tribal communities. Law enforcement, judicial personnel, and prosecutors were frequently cited as needing additional education on the dynamics of abuse, jurisdictional issues, and culturally appropriate approaches.

Grantees stressed the importance of protocols and evidence-based training to help law enforcement identify offenders, make appropriate arrests, and collaborate with Tribal advocates, especially in rural areas where responses may be very delayed.

They also emphasized the need for ongoing professional development for staff to stay current on best practices and called for sustained investment in training across the justice system and the victim services field to improve outcomes.

### 2010 Tribal Grantee Perspective

*"The number one problem outside of the violence occurring is the ongoing victim blaming by almost every agency in the criminal justice field. Officers do it. Prosecutors, Court Clerks, Judges. The problem is rampant. There is a serious need for community education - ongoing, consistent messages that lays the blame at the feet of the perpetrators. Until batterers are held accountable for their actions, and community members realize the powerlessness of victims, violence will continue in our communities."*

**SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA  
(TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS PROGRAM)**

## No One Solution

Across the 575 federally recognized Tribal Nations, the barriers, successes, and complexities of law enforcement response and victim services are as distinct as the Nations themselves. At any given time, a single issue, such as lack of jurisdiction, weak or nonexistent relationships, or limited Tribal law enforcement capacity may serve as a primary barrier. In other cases, it is the compounding of multiple historical challenges that impedes progress and limits a Tribe's exercise of its sovereign authority to protect its citizens. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

# “Support of Our Solutions”

## MOVING FORWARD

“We need support of our work, our voices, **our solutions**, and recommendations.”

— Sacred Spirits, Tribal Coalitions Grantee, 2010

This report highlights the achievements of VAWA grantees across Indian country and Alaska Native villages. The greatest achievements of VAWA funds, however, are lived and felt by victims every day. Sometimes, the success of VAWA is a well-trained prosecutor assigned to one’s case. Sometimes, it is time in safe transitional housing, or a boat ride to the hospital for a forensic exam. Sometimes, the success of VAWA funding means that complex systems work just a little bit better, a little more often.

Over more than two decades, Tribal governments and other Tribal grantees across the country have learned about and shared what works to address violence in their communities. Tribes have ideas and insights on solutions, and they have asked—at annual consultations under VAWA and in other fora—for continued federal investment in these efforts to fulfill the federal government’s trust responsibility to Tribal Nations. The work of ending violence against AI/AN women must move forward in a way that honors that trust responsibility by supporting Tribally driven solutions that respect each Nation’s sovereignty, history, and unique needs.

**This work remains unfinished, but it is ours to carry, together, to ensure that justice and safety reach all Tribal communities.**

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Carrying the Water,  
Demanding Justice

More Than 20 Years of VAWA in Indian Country and Alaska

