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# **Accomplishments of the Office on Violence Against Women**

**January 2009 to January 2017**

**January 2017**

This document presents eight years of key achievements of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Between 2009 and 2017, OVW made 6,252 awards totaling more than \$3.4 billion. This investment in communities across the nation funds services for victims, the justice system's response to crimes of domestic and sexual violence, and many other efforts to [address sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking](#). OVW also provided expert assistance to legislators leading up to the passage of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013) and plays a leading role in its implementation.

## Groundbreaking VAWA 2013 Provisions

### ***Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Community Receives Federal Civil Rights Protections***

VAWA 2013 explicitly prohibits grantees from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. OVW worked with Congress to include this landmark provision, which helps ensure equal access to services for LGBT victims and protects LGBT employees in programs that receive VAWA funding. The Department of Justice (DOJ) issued answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to help current and prospective grantees understand their obligations under this provision.

OVW funds technical assistance (TA) programs through LGBT organizations to support grantees in making their services accessible to LGBT communities. OVW also funds community-based LGBT organizations that help victims navigate unique barriers that these victims face in pursuing safety and justice.

### ***Restoration of Tribal Authority to Prosecute Non-Indians who Commit Domestic Violence on Indian Lands***

OVW worked closely with bipartisan leaders in Congress, tribal leaders, and advocates to ensure that the 2013 reauthorization of VAWA recognized tribes' inherent power to exercise criminal [jurisdiction](#) over certain defendants, regardless of their Indian or non-Indian status, who commit acts of domestic violence against an Indian spouse or dating partner or violate a protection order in Indian country. In restoring tribes' authority to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence offenders in these cases, VAWA 2013 closed a jurisdictional gap that had long compromised Native American women's safety and access to justice.

[OVW launched a \\$2.5 million grant program](#) in 2016, funding seven tribes to assist them in exercising this jurisdictional authority. OVW also funds TA to help tribes incorporate systemic changes to ensure victim safety and offender accountability in cases falling under this reinstated jurisdiction.

## Critical Policy Changes Improve the Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence

### ***Definition of Rape Used to Count Crimes was Corrected to Reflect the True Scope and Nature of Sexual Assault***

In 2011, OVW led a national effort to [change the Uniform Crime Report \(UCR\)'s definition of rape](#). OVW worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and convened leading law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and advocates to draft a revised definition of rape, which was [announced](#) by Attorney General Eric Holder in 2012. The previous definition, established in 1927, was: “the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will.” The [new definition](#) includes forms of sexual assault other than penile-vaginal penetration, better aligns with state criminal codes, and results in national statistics that more accurately reflect the true scope and nature of crimes of rape. It accounts for rapes committed by and against both men and women, includes instances in which the victim is incapable of giving consent because of mental or physical incapacity, including due to the influence of drugs or alcohol, or because of age, and does not require physical resistance from the victim to demonstrate lack of consent. OVW funded the Police Executive Research Forum in 2012 to provide technical assistance to states and LEAs to implement the new definition.

### ***Workplace Policies on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking***

President Barack Obama signed a [memorandum](#) in 2012 directing federal agencies to establish policies addressing domestic violence in the workplace. OVW worked with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop a model policy and online training that is now available to all federal employees. OVW also initiated the development of the [DOJ's policy](#) on workplace responses to sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, which was [released in 2013](#) and became the [model](#) for other government agencies. Additionally, OVW funded a consortium of nonprofit organizations to create an [online resource center](#) that provides interactive training and customized model policies for employers.

## Leadership in Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault on Campuses

### ***White House Task Force Convened to Protect Students from Sexual Assault***

OVW has collaborated with the [White House](#) since 2014 to lead a federal effort to address sexual assault on campus. OVW brought together deans and administrators, students (including sexual assault victims and members of fraternities and sororities), and athletes and coaches to identify the resources and guidance that institutions of higher education need to keep students safe and respond effectively to sexual violence on their campuses. OVW drafted or helped create many of the tools now available, including:

- [Building Partnerships with Local Rape Crisis Centers: Developing a Memorandum of Understanding](#) (April 2014)

- [Building Partnerships among Law Enforcement Agencies, Colleges and Universities: Developing a Memorandum of Understanding to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assaults](#) (January 2015)
- [Bystander-focused Prevention of Sexual Violence](#) (April 2014)
- [Establishing Prevention Programming: Strategic Planning for Campuses](#) (April 2014)

### ***OVW Nearly Doubles the Number of Campus Grants Awarded***

OVW provided \$20 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 to colleges and universities to address sexual violence, up from \$12 million the previous year.

### ***Useful Tools Created for Addressing Sexual and Domestic Violence on Campus***

- OVW launched the [Center for Changing Our Campus Culture](#) (ChangingOurCampus.org), an online clearinghouse for college students and administrators to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The website houses sample policies, protocols, and evidence-based practices, as well as information on OVW training opportunities.
- OVW partnered with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to develop and validate a [tool](#) to assess sexual assault victimization at their schools. The [Campus Climate Survey Validation Study](#) released in early 2016, shares the findings from a nine-school pilot study involving more than 23,000 undergraduates. OVW created an [Action Packet](#) with tools to help schools conduct climate surveys, and held webinars for students and administrators on how to administer those surveys and use the results to make meaningful changes at their schools.

### ***Roundtables on Addressing Sexual Assault, Dating Violence and Stalking in the Campus Student Conduct Process***

OVW, in partnership with the Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Victim Rights Law Center, convened two roundtables in October and December 2015 to gather information on processes used by colleges and universities to handle student conduct matters. The principal goal of the discussions was to better understand the range of methods used to arbitrate reports of student misconduct, including sexual misconduct, and learn what strategies might be most effective. A report from the roundtables is forthcoming.

### ***Roundtable on Addressing the Impact of Sexual Assault and Dating Violence on LGBT College Students***

OVW convened a roundtable in June 2016 to address the impact of domestic and sexual violence on LGBT students, learn from leaders in the field about best practices in responding to students' needs, and identify gaps in the provision of culturally specific prevention services and resources. OVW gathered LGBT advocates and survivors working on and off campuses, college administrators, and researchers for this discussion. A report from the roundtable will be released in early 2017.

## Improving Response to Sexual Assault

### ***Protocols Establish a National Standard and Best Practices for Providing Medical Forensic Care for Sexual Assault Victims***

Through efforts led by OVW, the Attorney General released three documents presenting best practices for providing medical forensic exams for victims of sexual assault and abuse. The protocols are the DOJ's authoritative guidance on conducting medical forensic exams using evidence-based approaches and promoting high-quality, compassionate, and supportive care for victims:

- [A National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations: Adults/Adolescents](#), updated in 2013, reflects current best practices for serving populations with unique needs, including people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, American Indians and Alaska Natives, members of the military, and LGBT individuals.
- [Recommendations for Administrators of Prisons, Jails, and Community Confinement Facilities for Adapting the U.S. Department of Justice's A National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations, Adults/Adolescents](#) is a guide to assist administrators of prisons, jails, and community confinement facilities in drafting or revising protocols for an immediate response to incident of sexual assault.
- [A National Protocol for Sexual Abuse Medical Forensic Examinations: Pediatric](#), released in 2016, addresses the acute and long-term needs of children who are victims of sexual assault and abuse.

### ***Improving Sexual Assault Prosecution***

OVW launched the Sexual Assault Justice Initiative (SAJI) in 2015 to improve how the justice system in general, and prosecution in particular, handles sexual assault cases. Seven pilot sites were awarded a total of \$2.8 million to implement a forthcoming set of performance measures that look beyond conviction rates to measure success in prosecuting sexual assault. Through this initiative, prosecutors' offices are receiving TA for implementing effective prosecution strategies and corresponding performance measures. An independent evaluator will study the impact of the measures on charging decisions, case outcomes, and victims' perceptions of justice.

### ***Reducing the Backlog of Untested Sexual Assault Kits***

Since 2010, OVW has collaborated with Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to address untested sexual assault kits (SAKs). OVW held a [roundtable](#) in 2010 to hear from experts about unsubmitted and backlogged SAKs. Subsequent discussions and grantmaking have focused on learning from jurisdictions that have undertaken major SAK testing initiatives (i.e., Detroit and Houston), and encouraging approaches to reducing volumes of unsubmitted SAKs that build on the lessons learned from those communities, including ways that they notify, reengage, and make services available to victims.

Additionally, OVW [issued a white paper](#) in January 2017 to help communities balance public safety and victim safety as they embark on efforts to process untested SAKs. Specifically, the white paper articulates OVW's position that it should not be standard procedure for an LEA to test SAKs in cases in which the victim has not reported a crime to law enforcement or otherwise consented to the kit being tested. The paper briefly describes alternative reporting options and identifies resources on providing victims with medical forensic care, processing SAKs, investigating the associated cases, and reaching out to victims.

### ***Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative***

OVW launched the [Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative](#) (SADI) to improve victim services in areas where there is no specialized rape crisis center. The six diverse sites that participated in SADI [engaged in a process](#) to assess, plan, and implement services designed to be more effective, meet sexual assault survivors' needs across the lifespan, and develop organizational and individual capacity to deliver those services. Lessons learned from SADI can be found in the [final report](#) and on the [project's website](#), published by the National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

## Safety and Justice in Indian Country

### ***Maintaining and Expanding Government-to-Government Relationships with Tribes***

OVW maintains regular contact with Indian tribal governments on how OVW can best support tribes and their efforts to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and sex trafficking. Each year, OVW holds a Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation to gain a better understanding of the challenges, needs, and successes in supporting American Indian and Alaska Native victims. OVW submits a [Report to Congress](#) annually on recommendations made during these government-to-government consultations.

At OVW's 2015 tribal consultation, tribal leaders from Native villages in Alaska discussed the unique needs and hardships in their communities and requested that OVW convene a forum with tribes in Alaska. OVW subsequently conducted a special listening session in Fairbanks in 2016 to focus on issues particular to tribes in Alaska. [A report](#) summarizes the testimony offered at the session.

OVW also meets with tribal leaders to discuss specific issues as they arise. For example, in 2009 OVW partnered with the National Indian Justice Center to hold a conference, [Mutual Solutions for the Safety of Indian Women in Public Law 280 States](#). The conference focused on improving the response to violence against Indian women in states affected by Public Law 280, which transferred jurisdiction from the federal government to states and significantly impacts the response to violent crime on tribal lands. Another summit, *Journey to Justice: A Summit on Violence Against Indian Women in Oklahoma*, was held that same year in conjunction with the Institute for Native Justice at the American Indian Resource Center.

### ***Increasing Access to Justice for Victims in Tribal and Federal Court***

In 2012, OVW launched an innovative initiative to increase access to justice for victims in Indian country who had been raped or abused. [OVW funded tribal prosecutors](#) to pursue cases in both tribal and federal courts and enhance collaboration between tribal officials and federal prosecutors. Tailored to meet the particular needs of each of the four participating tribes, this project aimed to improve the quality of cases, coordination of resources, and communication among federal and tribal prosecutors and LEAs.

### ***Responding to a Sudden Increase in Service Needs in the Bakken Region***

In 2013, in response to reports of increasing violence against women associated with the spike in population tied to gas and oil exploration in the Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana, OVW representatives visited local and tribal advocates, law enforcement, tribal leaders, victim services, local FBI agents, and federal prosecutors to learn about the impact of the oil boom in the region. To help address the need for resources and leadership to deal with increases in crime and growing service needs, OVW launched a [two-pronged special initiative](#) and research project:

- *The Bakken Region Initiative: Enhanced Responses to Victims* supported projects addressing the unique challenges faced by victims, responders, and service providers in this rural area, including challenges of geographic isolation, transportation barriers, economic structure, high cost of living, and homelessness.
- [The Bakken Region Initiative: Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney](#) provided funding to support two Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys with the goal of increasing the successful prosecution of violence against women in Indian country, including in the Bakken region.
- OVW collaborated with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to support research on the impact of the growing oil industry in the Bakken region on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The findings were published in [a 2016 report](#).

### ***Launching a Comprehensive Resource on Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention in Indian Country***

OVW announced the [National Indian Country Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault](#) (NICCSA) in 2013. It is a one-stop source for information on sexual violence in Indian Country, operated by the Southwest Center for Law and Policy.

### ***Developing Multimedia Resources on Violence Against Alaska Natives***

OVW collaborated with the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and U.S. Attorneys to create [A Healing Journey for Alaska Natives](#), a series of videos designed for victim service providers, justice professionals, and others to illustrate the challenges that tribes face in responding to domestic and sexual violence against Alaska Natives, and the supportive role of culture and tradition in pursuing safety, justice, and healing. The [videos and accompanying resource materials](#) present concrete strategies for enhancing the response to violence against Alaska Natives and underscore the need for a collaborative, multidisciplinary, and multijurisdictional response to these crimes.

## ***Coordinating North American Leadership to Respond to Violence Against Indigenous Women***

In 2016, as part of the meeting of government leaders from the United States, Canada and Mexico at the North American Leaders Summit, all three countries agreed that the high levels of violence endured by indigenous women and girls across the region warrant increased attention and coordination, resulting in the formation of the new [North American Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (the Working Group). When the Working Group met for the first time in October 2016 in Washington, DC, the Attorney General joined the ministers of justice from Canada and Mexico, along with OVW and other government representatives. The three nations committed to work together to strengthen efforts to reduce trafficking of indigenous women and girls across borders and exchange knowledge of comprehensive policies, programs and promising practices to prevent and respond to violence against indigenous women and girls through increased access to justice and health services with a human rights and multicultural approach.

## Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention

### ***Establishing a Special Initiative to Prevent Domestic Violence Homicide***

OVW awarded \$2.3 million to 12 sites across the country in 2013 as part of the [Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Demonstration Initiative](#) (DVHPI), which aims to help state and local jurisdictions reduce domestic violence homicides by identifying potential victims and monitoring high-risk offenders. In 2014, the Attorney General [announced](#) a second phase of the DVHPI to [evaluate the effectiveness](#) of two promising models: the Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Program and the Domestic Violence High Risk Team model. The participating sites adapt tools and develop interventions that are culturally relevant and appropriate for their communities. OVW further advanced the project in 2016 with a \$1.6 million grant to the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to launch the [National Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Initiative](#). A demonstration pilot in three cities will replicate a strategy that has been shown to deter domestic violence.

### ***Addressing the Role of Firearms in Domestic Violence***

Domestic abusers and firearms are a deadly combination. OVW funded several organizations to develop an online resource for attorneys, court personnel, law enforcement, and communities to help prevent firearm homicides in domestic violence situations. OVW also hosted a summit on firearms and domestic violence in 2015, and, in 2016, [launched](#) the National Domestic Violence and Firearms Resource Center ([PreventDVGunViolence.org](#)), which supports implementation and enforcement of firearms prohibitions intended to keep guns out of offenders' hands. OVW announced the website at a [panel discussion](#) with national experts.

## Supporting Effective Policing and Identifying Emerging Issues

### ***Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Policing***

Working with the DOJ Civil Rights Division, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and OVC, OVW led an [initiative to develop guidance](#) to help law enforcement identify and prevent gender bias in policing. [The guidance](#), issued by the



Attorney General in 2015, highlights the need for clear policies, robust training, and accountability mechanisms. In 2016, OVW and the Battered Women's Justice Project convened a roundtable with experts in law enforcement, advocacy, and criminal justice research [to discuss and develop concrete recommendations](#) and strategies for implementing the eight principles outlined in the guidance. [OVW and OVC also awarded over \\$9 million](#) to nine grantees to implement the guidance, provide training and TA, and evaluate ways of putting the guidance into practice.

### ***Balancing Victim Privacy and Police Accountability in Implementing Body Worn Camera Policies and Procedures***

With support from OVW, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) hosted a roundtable in 2016 to discuss how law enforcement's use of body worn cameras presents opportunities to improve the police response to violence against women, as well as complex challenges to protecting victim safety and privacy. The roundtable report, [Deliberations from the IACP National Forum on Body-Worn Cameras and Violence Against Women](#), highlights the importance of accounting for victims' needs when equipping law enforcement officers with body worn cameras, recommending that associated policies and procedures be developed in collaboration with victim advocates and other community and criminal justice partners.

### ***Maintaining Privacy and Safety for Victims in Open Police Data Initiatives***

In 2016, OVW and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) brought together victim advocates, experts on victim privacy and safety, researchers, and data experts to discuss the utility of open data and how police open data initiatives can affect victims' privacy and safety. NNEDV, in collaboration with OVW and the Police Foundation, subsequently published [How Law Enforcement Agencies Releasing Open Data Can Protect Victim Safety and Privacy](#). The document explores issues to consider as communities use data to increase transparency in policing while avoiding any compromise of victim confidentiality.

## **Improving Access for Underserved Populations**

### ***Expanding Available Funds to Address Underserved Populations and Communities of Color***

VAWA 2013 expanded the statutory definition of "underserved populations" to include populations who are underserved because of sexual orientation and gender identity. It created the new [Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations](#). It also added a new purpose area to the STOP Program so that states can use funds to improve responses to LGBT victims. Addressing underserved populations has been a consistent office-wide OVW priority.

OVW provides TA funding to the National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault, the Women of Color Network, Casa de Esperanza, the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence, the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, and others to train and assist grantees in providing culturally specific services. These organizations also help "mainstream" organizations better address the needs of communities of color and other culturally specific or underserved communities.

## ***Ending Abuse of People with Disabilities***

OVW has consistently worked with grantees to identify and reach groups that face barriers to accessing victim services and legal protections, including victims with disabilities and Deaf victims.

- In 2015, OVW funded the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) to develop the [first website \(endabusepwd.org\) dedicated exclusively to ending the abuse of people with disabilities](http://endabusepwd.org). The website is a resource for victim and disability service providers, self-advocates, and policymakers. It features an interactive and searchable map of the people, programs, and projects across the country working in this area, as well as best practice materials.
- In January 2017, [OVW awarded \\$500,000 to Vera's Center on Victimization and Safety](#) to plan a National Deaf Service Line that will enable Deaf victims to speak directly with a Deaf advocate or an individual who is fluent in their preferred mode of communication via video phone—any time, day or night.

## ***Access to Services for Immigrants (Tri-agency Letter)***

To successfully escape abuse and break the cycle of violence, immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or trafficking need access to services necessary for life or safety, as well as to obtain assistance to pursue the special immigration remedies that Congress enacted through VAWA and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. OVW, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) collaborated to draft a joint letter that reiterates and consolidates the long-standing policies of all three agencies that [recipients of federal funding cannot deny access to certain services on the basis of immigration status](#). The [joint letter, signed by the Attorney General and the Secretaries of HUD and HHS, was issued in August 2016](#) and clarifies that service providers should not turn away immigrant victims, on the basis of their immigration status, from certain services necessary for life or safety—services such as emergency shelter, short-term housing assistance (including transitional housing), crisis counseling, and intervention programs.

## ***Ensuring Meaningful Access for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency***

OVW solicitations announcing the availability of grant funds inform applicants that, as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, they must acknowledge and agree that they will not discriminate on certain prohibited grounds, including national origin, in the delivery of services. They are advised that this includes an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to grantees' programs and activities. OVW discusses ensuring language access in grantee orientations and has been funding national technical assistance projects to assist grantees in complying with language access requirements. In 2016, OVW conducted a mandatory training for all OVW staff on language access issues. OVW also updated its own language access plan, which is available on OVW's website.

## ***Abuse in Later Life***

OVW works with the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, directed by the Office of the Secretary of HHS, to coordinate federal government activities related to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In March 2016, OVW, HHS, and the National Clearinghouse on

Abuse Later in Life convened a roundtable with national, state, and local leaders and older survivors to discuss the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of older victims. This roundtable was part of a continued effort to address abuse across the lifespan and provided critical information that was used in a new HHS [toolkit](#).

## Housing and Homelessness

### ***U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness***

OVW collaborated with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed by the Attorney General and the Secretaries of HHS, HUD, and the Departments of Education and Labor, to enhance strategic interdepartmental coordination and collaboration to end family and youth homelessness. The MOU formally establishes the Interagency Working Group to End Family Homelessness and the Domestic Violence Subgroup, which is chaired by OVW in conjunction with the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA Office) of HHS.

### ***Victims of Domestic Violence Living with HIV/AIDS***

To help prevent victims living with HIV/AIDS from falling into homelessness, OVW and HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, collaborated to provide [grants totaling more than \\$9 million](#) to support eight local programs working to protect and house these victims.

### ***Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium***

DOJ, HUD, and HHS launched a national [Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium](#) to better address the critical housing needs of victims and their children. Together, the three federal agencies awarded a total of \$2.3 million to four organizations to form a national consortium focused on fostering increased collaboration among domestic violence and homeless service providers and providing training, TA, and resource development on domestic violence and housing.

### ***Expanding Housing Protections***

To address the link between violence and housing instability, VAWA 2013 included new protections for sexual assault survivors in public and other subsidized housing. Among other housing protections, the law now requires that survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking be permitted to transfer to other available housing, if necessary. To foster its implementation, OVW worked closely with HUD to enforce protections. For example, OVW and HUD collaborated on [HUD's issuance](#) in October 2016 of a [new rule](#) to protect the victims' housing rights.

### ***Mitigating the Impact of Nuisance Abatement Ordinances***

Victims of domestic violence in some communities are [threatened by eviction from their homes](#) if they call for emergency services on multiple occasions, due to nuisance abatement ordinances. These ordinances often limit the number of times a person can call for emergency help, regardless of the reason for the call. DOJ and HUD are collaborating to raise awareness about the unintended consequences of nuisance abatement ordinances, and, on several occasions in 2016, OVW and HUD jointly briefed local government officials, law enforcement, and advocates. In September 2016, HUD [issued Fair Housing Act guidance](#) on nuisance abatement ordinances, and, two months later,

OVW and COPS convened law enforcement representatives for a discussion on keeping housing both safe and fair.

## Families, Children, and Youth

### **Family Court Enhancement Project**

OVW leads an [initiative designed to improve custody and visitation](#) decision-making for families who have suffered domestic violence. OVW funded four courts to participate in the [Family Court Enhancement Project](#) and developed [Guiding Principles for Effectively Addressing Child Custody and Parenting Time in Cases Involving Domestic Violence](#), which communities can use to shape safer and more effective ways of deciding custody cases in which domestic violence is an issue.

### **Text Helpline for Dating Abuse**

OVW provided funding to enhance [Love Is Respect, the National Dating Abuse Helpline](#) so it could provide service through text messages and online chats. Teens can now text “LOVEIS” to 77054 to talk to a peer advocate.

### **Outreach and Education on Dating Violence**

OVW funded a Public Service Announcement as a part of the Office of the Vice President’s [1 is 2 Many Campaign](#) that focused on dating violence and sexual assault. OVW also funded and collaborated with Futures Without Violence (Futures) to launch [That’s Not Cool](#), an interactive website about abuse perpetrated online and through digital media. The website asks teens, “Where do you draw your digital line?” and helps them define the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The website won the 2016 Webby Award in the category of Charitable Organizations/Non-profits.

### **National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women**

OVW reestablished the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women (NAC). In its [final report](#), the NAC made recommendations and identified guiding principles for preventing and intervening in child and youth exposure to violence against women.

### **Roundtable on Ending Child Sexual Abuse**

In partnership with the [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#), a national movement-building effort designed to initiate, cultivate, and fund strategic efforts to end child sexual abuse, OVW and OVC hosted a roundtable in December 2016 to facilitate a critical discussion about drawing on the leadership of survivors in working to ending child sexual abuse, while highlighting the necessity of community-based, culturally specific approaches.

## Expanding Options for Pursuing Safety and Accountability

OVW maintains a strong commitment to improving the criminal justice system’s response to victims that seek its assistance. Many victims turn to the justice system for assistance, and OVW has made a significant investment in building capacity in LEAs, prosecution offices, and courts to respond to domestic and sexual violence in ways that bolster victim safety and hold offenders accountable. At the same time, there is a growing recognition

that, for myriad reasons, many survivors do not contact law enforcement. OVW and its colleagues in the field have identified a need for alternative ways to pursue safety and accountability, including those that do not involve systems that administer criminal justice. OVW has sponsored roundtables to bring stakeholders together, explore innovative strategies, and examine promising practices. The roundtables have had a consistent focus on addressing the needs of marginalized and underserved populations.

### ***Restorative Justice Roundtable***

This roundtable, held May 17-18, 2016, was an opportunity to discuss restorative justice approaches to repairing the individual and community harm caused by domestic and sexual violence. Participants also discussed the need to involve survivors in shaping restorative justice programs and long-term goals of changing community norms and attitudes about domestic and sexual violence. The roundtable report, [\*Can Restorative Practices Address Intimate Partner Violence?\*](#), available from the Center for Court Innovation, summarizes key themes. Additionally, OVW released a solicitation in January 2017 for the first phase of the [\*Restorative Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Dating Violence on Campus Demonstration Initiative\*](#), which is intended to increase the options available to victims on college campuses.

### ***Judges' Roundtable on Mediation***

Futures and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), in partnership with OVW, convened a roundtable in August 2016 to hear from judges and others about the complexities surrounding the use of mediation in domestic violence cases. Participants agreed that mediation can potentially meet the needs of domestic violence victims if it is voluntary, informed, includes strong safeguards, and is preceded by appropriate screening and comprehensive training for mediators, all of which is described in the summary report, [\*Judicial Roundtable Discussion: Mediation\*](#).

### ***Impact of Incarceration and Mandatory Minimums on Survivors***

In September 2015, OVW convened a roundtable with survivors, scholars, advocates, and community activists who focus on sexual and domestic violence to examine how criminal laws and policies affect the lives of Black women and girls. Participants discussed policy recommendations and new initiatives to reduce or eliminate the harm that Black women and girls who are victims of domestic and sexual violence endure in the criminal justice system. The roundtable report, [\*The Impact of Incarceration and Mandatory Minimums on Survivors: Exploring the Impact of Criminalizing Policies on African American Women and Girls\*](#), also provides a summary of related actions that OVW has taken in the year since the roundtable to advance its commitment to addressing the critical issues raised at this roundtable.

### ***Impact of Domestic Violence Mandatory and Pro-arrest Policies and Practices on Girls and Young Women***

OVW, in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, as well as the National Girls Initiative, convened a roundtable in February 2016 with advocates representing reform efforts related to violence against women and the juvenile justice system. The discussion focused on the unintended consequences of domestic violence mandatory arrest and pro-arrest policies on girls and young women, as well as the wider and disproportionate impact on communities of color. A report summarizing the

discussion and recommendations, [\*Unintended Consequences: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence Mandatory and Pro-arrest Policies and Practices on Girls and Young Women\*](#), was published by the National Girls Initiative.

### ***Reflections from the Field on Victim/Survivor Advocacy***

Victim advocacy requires that advocates address the realities and needs of all survivors at the individual, system, and community levels. OVW convened a roundtable of victim advocates in October 2016 to hear about current advocacy practices and trends. The convening also delved into barriers that impede the provision of effective and holistic advocacy, and obstacles that compromise efforts to engage in more robust, systems-level advocacy. A report from the roundtable will be forthcoming.

## Accounting for the Impact of Trauma on Men and Boys

### ***Engaging Men in Preventing Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence***

As part of OVW's [\*Consolidated Grant Program to Address Children and Youth Experiencing Domestic and Sexual Assault\*](#), OVW supports strategies that involve men as partners in prevention efforts, including the development of resources such as Vera House's recently released [\*To Be A Man\*](#) video, and hands-on mentorship to reach young men, change attitudes, and encourage them to lead efforts that oppose violence.

### ***Mobilizing Men and Boys Roundtable***

In August 2016, OVW [convened a roundtable](#) to discuss barriers and gaps in current strategies for engaging men and boys, explore ways of sharing the lessons learned from successful efforts to engage men and boys, and examine ways that federal agencies can support local organizations in those efforts. The roundtable resulted in several specific recommendations for mobilizing men and boys, which can be found in [\*Where We've Been, Where We're Going: Mobilizing Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence\*](#), a summary of the roundtable.

### ***Native Men's Gathering***

Also in August 2016, OVW [gathered](#) American Indian and Alaska Native men at the Oneida Nation, Green Bay, Wisconsin, to hear their perspectives and to discuss the work they are doing to reduce violence against women. The conversation centered around moving forward—motivating men to lead efforts to foster nonviolence and hold other men accountable for change, as well as addressing topics like responsibility and forgiveness. The proceedings were summarized in [\*Native Men's Gathering: Experiences that Shape Behaviors and Beliefs about Violence Against Women\*](#).

### ***Roundtable on Programs for Domestic Violence Offenders***

OVW, in partnership with OVC, held a roundtable on January 12 and 13, 2017, to discuss emerging issues in efforts to expand models for working with domestic violence offenders. While victim safety remains paramount, participants emphasized the need to integrate a more trauma-informed approach to working with offenders. A report from this roundtable is forthcoming.

## Developing the Evidence Base for VAWA Programs

### ***Research and Evaluation Initiative***

OVW launched a plan in 2014 to improve program evaluation and better integrate evidence-based practices into its grantmaking. After an extensive review of existing research and identification of gaps in knowledge about what works in responding to domestic and sexual violence, OVW [established a portfolio of research and evaluation studies](#) in October 2015. Nine studies totaling \$3.4 million were funded in the first year of the initiative, and they each focus on learning more about effective approaches for doing VAWA-funded work. The initiative emphasizes researcher-practitioner partnerships, and OVW is especially interested in supporting research on interventions designed to help victims from marginalized and/or culturally-specific communities.

### ***Measuring Stalking Victimization***

In 2009, OVW funded the Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct the [Stalking Victimization in the United States, a Supplemental Victimization Survey \(SVS\) to the National Crime Victimization Survey \(NCVS\)](#). This 2009 survey is one of the few national studies that has measured the extent and nature of stalking in the United States, and represents the largest comprehensive study of stalking conducted to date. OVW funded BJS's revision to the survey and its implementation in 2016, as well. The findings are forthcoming in late 2017.

## Outreach and Dialogue with the Field

### ***VAWA 20th Anniversary Listening Tour and Report***

Since passage of the original VAWA in 1994, OVW has awarded more than \$7 billion to support coordinated community efforts to keep victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking safe and make sure they receive justice. For the [20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VAWA](#), OVW staff visited 50 locations in 20 states—rural, urban, suburban, and tribal. The visits supported the federal government's efforts to document the use of VAWA funds, gather data to explain the impact of VAWA, continue to foster the use of coordinated community responses, and to identify the challenges and gaps. [Twenty Years of the Violence Against Women Act: Dispatches from the Field](#) summarizes the themes that emerged from the visits.

### ***United State of Women Summit***

In June 2016, OVW participated in the White House Summit on the United State of Women. Over 5,000 people traveled to Washington, DC, from across the country and around the world, and many thousands more attended via livestream. Violence Against Women was one of the six areas of focus for the summit. Following the summit, OVW, in conjunction with OVC and the FVPSA Office of HHS, co-hosted a 400-participant event on topics including improving the criminal justice response to domestic and sexual violence, exploring alternative paths to safety and healing, enhancing the role of health care providers in prevention and intervention efforts, improving access to shelter and housing, economic justice, tribal sovereignty, and fostering youth leadership.

### **15th Anniversary Campaign**

In 2009, OVW launched a year-long [public awareness campaign](#) to commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VAWA. The campaign was designed to highlight the [accomplishments](#) achieved as a result of the legislation, and the extent to which violence against women continues.

## **Grant Oversight, Monitoring, and Management**

### ***Recovery Act and New VAWA Programs: Expanding the Reach of DOJ Grants for Combating Violence Against Women***

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided OVW with [\\$225 million for grants](#) to combat violence against women through five grant programs, which represented a 60 percent increase in OVW's typical annual funding at the time. These funds supported communities in ensuring that victims had access to lifesaving services, even in challenging economic times. Reports on Recovery Act grantmaking and performance can be found in Part B of each of these reports to Congress: [STOP Grants](#) and [Measuring Effectiveness Initiative](#).

### ***Grants Financial Management Unit***

One of OVW's critical improvements for grant oversight in the last eight years was the establishment of its Grants Financial Management Unit (GFMU), which has been both a programmatic and financial success. The services provided by GFMU include: 1) pre- and post-award financial grants administration; 2) technical assistance on financial issues and grants administration to OVW grant recipients, including a toll-free customer service line for direct assistance; and 3) financial grants management training to OVW grantees and program staff. GFMU's knowledge of OVW programs and grantees and familiarity with the challenges faced in the administration of OVW programs has also enabled OVW to more closely scrutinize budgets and identify other issues *before* they become problems, often before awards are even made.

### ***Program Solicitations***

OVW added a section to its program solicitations that requires applicants to respond to a number of questions regarding their expertise in addressing crimes addressed by VAWA, and their financial accounting practices. OVW uses this information to assess the capacity and financial capability of applicant organizations and to identify those organizations that require additional training and TA.

### ***Grant Monitoring Manual***

OVW monitors its grant awards to ensure financial and programmatic compliance and to avoid fraud, waste and abuse. Grant monitoring also identifies grantees in need of training and can help avert more serious potential problems. OVW has made considerable improvement to its grants monitoring efforts to help prevent grantees from running afoul of federal grant regulations. For example, the Monitoring Manual for Grants Program Specialists guides OVW program staff in working with grantees through the lifecycle of their grants.



### ***Grant Assessment Tool***

OVW created the Grant Assessment Tool (GAT), an automated system through which staff can carefully and impartially assess the risk that each grant award carries for financial or programmatic mismanagement and fraud, waste, and abuse. Using this tool, OVW Program Specialists set monitoring priorities based on a standard set of criteria. The GAT enables OVW to track risk assessments and better coordinate monitoring activities related to grantees receiving multiple awards. OVW now also uses the monitoring module in the Grants Management System (GMS) for tracking grant monitoring activities, including office-based reviews and site visits.

### ***Measuring Progress in Grant Administration***

OVW continually seeks to improve grant processes for applicants and grantees. OVW now tracks and reports performance measures related to grant management and customer service.

### ***Collaboration with other DOJ Grantmaking Components***

Examples of how OVW collaborates with other DOJ grantmaking components to enhance the collective impact of the funds we administer include:

- Through the Grants Challenges Working Group, OVW, OJP, and COPS meet to discuss shared challenges and solutions in grantmaking.
- While duplication of grant awards has not been a problem, the three DOJ grantmaking components collaborated to develop a process for identifying solicitations that present a potential risk of unnecessary duplication and eliminating that risk.
- OVW, OJP and COPS are implementing GrantsNet, an effort to improve the ability to share grant information and leverage our resources that will improve customer service for grantees as well as strengthen grant management and oversight. Through GrantsNet, the risk assessment and monitoring processes are captured in a single DOJ monitoring plan.