

Sexual Assault Services Program—Grants to Culturally Specific Programs

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) was created by VAWA 2005, and is the first federal funding stream dedicated solely to direct intervention and related assistance for victims of sexual assault. SASP encompasses four different funding streams for states and territories: tribes; tribal organizations and nonprofit tribal organizations; state, territorial, and tribal sexual assault coalitions; and culturally specific organizations.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES CULTURALLY Specific Grant Program (SASP-CS) is to establish, maintain, and expand sustainable sexual assault services provided by culturally specific organizations. Grantees are nonprofit organizations that focus primarily on culturally specific communities and have experience in the area of sexual assault, or who partner with an organization having such expertise. They provide intervention, advocacy, accompaniment (e.g. accompanying victims to court, medical facilities, and police departments), support services, and related assistance for adult, youth, and child victims of sexual assault; non-offending family and household members of victims; and those collaterally affected by sexual assault.

31 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015, 31 unique grantees reported activities funded by the SASP-CS Program.

1,069 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 1,069 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

277 Secondary Victims Served

On average, grantees served 277 secondary victims during each 6-month reporting period.

In a national survey, providers (at legal services, social services, and domestic violence and sexual assault programs) who serve immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking related that, when victims called law enforcement, responding officers were able to identify the language spoken by victims in fewer than half of the cases and, in 30% of those cases, unqualified interpreters were used. They further reported that clients experienced bias when courts and law enforcement relied on inappropriate or unqualified interpreters who may intentionally or unintentionally misrepresent the victim's statements.²⁹⁷



WA • Grantee Perspective

For a grass-roots community based organization like ours, SASP-CS grant funding was extremely instrumental in our ability to successfully implement and grow our sexual assault program. API Chaya has been able to focus on and broaden our sexual assault outreach and services due to SASP funding over a multi-year period. In particular, the flexibility of the funding allows us to adapt quickly to the needs of communities we serve and our organization.

API CHAYA, WASHINGTON



CA • Grantee Perspective

SASP-CS grant funding has dramatically boosted CPAF’s ability to respond to the needs of sexual assault victims in the Asian and Pacific Islander community. SASP funding has also enabled CPAF to build deeper relationships with community partners who help in guiding CPAF’s approach when designing culturally specific services. CPAF has increased the number of sexual assault victims that it serves at its community center, as well as at its shelters, compared to the previous years. CPAF has also expanded program offerings for victims of sexual assault, some of whom may have graduated from the shelter program but are still in need of additional support and healing.

CENTER FOR THE PACIFIC ASIAN FAMILY, CALIFORNIA



NY • Grantee Perspective

Over the last 26 years of Sakhi’s existence, we have not had the opportunity to address such a critical need as sexual assault in the South Asian community. With this funding we are able to introduce new initiatives which are more holistic, hire appropriate personnel, and adjust the way we do our work. It has enabled us to engage in critical conversation and community-building strategies with the goal of ending sexual and other gender-based violence against women.

SAKHI FOR SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN, NEW YORK

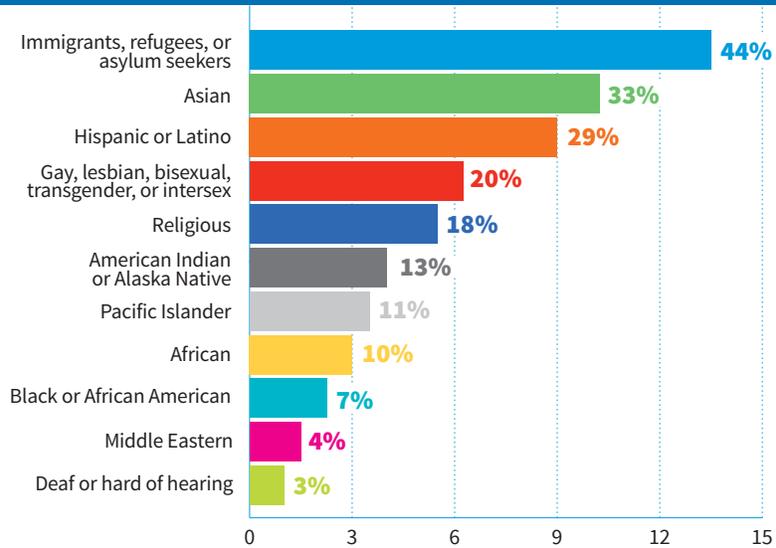
VAWA 2013 clarified that victim services and legal assistance include services and assistance to **victims of domestic/sexual violence who are also victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons**. VAWA 2013 also modified the focus of SASP-CS by redefining “culturally specific” to mean primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act (“American Indians [including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts]; Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics”).

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **31** individual grantees for the July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015 progress reporting period.

- **2** (6%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.

Figure 1 Grantees serving culturally specific populations by type of population, July 2013–June 2015 (6-month average)



Staff

Grant-funded staff primarily establish, maintain, and expand coordinated community responses within their catchment areas; and provide victim services, including advocacy, crisis intervention, legal assistance, court and hospital accompaniment, and transportation. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- **31** (100%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **31** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support victim advocates and program coordinators.

Table 1 Staff supported with SASP-CS grant funds, July 2013–June 2015: Selected groups		
Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	31	
Victim advocates	11	35%
Program coordinators	7	23%
Counselors	7	22%
Administrators	3	10%

NOTE: Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥5%).

Victim Services

Grantees address the specific cultural needs of victims, and may provide crisis intervention, safety planning, and services such as legal advocacy, medical and counseling services from healthcare professionals, and accompaniment to forensic exams and to court. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- **31** (100%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **1,069** victims during each 6-month period.
- **99%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.



CA • Grantee Perspective

SASP-CS funding has allowed our agency to hire culturally sensitive promotoras who are specifically engaging with victims of sexual assault and their families. The funding that we receive gives us the flexibility to serve secondary victims and not limit services. We have identified that the crisis intervention that our staff provides, as well as their increased knowledge of community resources, plays a major role when assisting those that feel that all doors have been closed to them. CLFA staff is also able to expand to other areas and take this sensitive information to various underserved parts of the county and give it that culturally specific attention that will encourage community involvement and promote services and information.

CLFA CENTRO LA FAMILIA ADVOCACY SERVICES, INC., CALIFORNIA

The lack of culturally sensitive and appropriate services can pose daunting barriers to safety, justice, and healing. Victims may choose not to engage in services or may terminate services early if programs fail to incorporate issues of culture and heritage.

Grantees used 24 specific languages for these activities: Bambara, Bangla, Burmese, Cantonese, Chinese, English, French, Fulani, Gujarati, Hindi, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Lakota, Mandarin, Marathi, Moore, Nepali, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

Grantees used 4 specific languages when responding to these requests for information or assistance: English, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish.



NY • Grantee Perspective

This reporting period, Sauti Yetu served 30 victims by providing short-term crisis intervention, 12-14 weeks of cognitive behavioral therapy, and advocacy and interpretation. These services would not have been possible without the SASP-CS funding. In addition to the services, we have been able to conduct language-specific outreach in Fulani, Soninke, Bambara, Mandingo, and Moore, just to mention a few. Clients tell us that hearing of services in their own languages has reduced their isolation and the stigma of speaking out against sexual assault.

**SAUTI YETU CENTER FOR AFRICAN WOMEN, INC.,
NEW YORK**

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided:

- Support group/counseling services to **646** victims;
- Victim advocacy services to **514** victims;
- Crisis intervention services to **482** victims;
- Transportation services to **176** victims;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **174** victims;
- Language services (i.e. interpretation or translation) to **122** victims; and
- Civil legal advocacy services to **120** victims.

Other services:

- Victim-witness notification/victim outreach services were used a total of **2,271** times;
- Grantees received a total of **6,851** hotline calls; and
 - The majority of these calls (**43%**) came from victims.

During each 6-month period, on average, grantees provided assistance with the following immigration matters:

- U visa services for **28** victims;
- VAWA self-petition services for **8** victims;
- T visa services for **2** victims;
- Work authorization services for **2** victims;
- Cancellation of removal matters for **1** victim; and
- Other immigration matters for **6** victims.

Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of sexual assault.

Table 2 | Victims seeking services with SASP-CS grant funds, July 2013–June 2015

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	1,083	
Victim served	1,046	97%
Program partially served	23	2%
Victims not served	14	1%

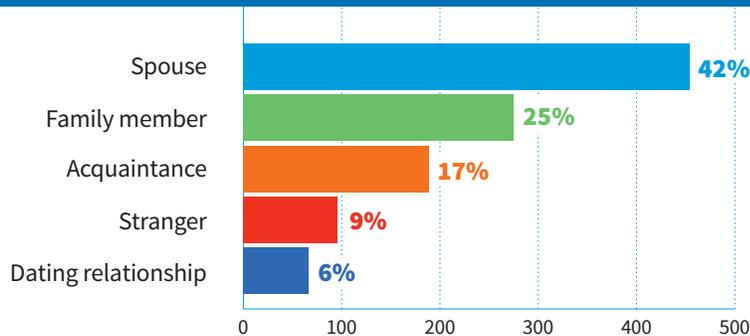
NOTE: "Partially served" represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the SASP-CS grant. "Not served" represents victims who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services were funded under the SASP-CS grant.

Victims' Relationship to Offender

Grantees serve victims of sexual assault. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (42%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by another **family or household member** (25%) or by an **acquaintance** (17%).

Figure 2 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault**



Reasons Victims Were Not Served or Were Partially Served

During each reporting period, grantees most frequently noted the following barriers as reasons why victims were not served or were only partially served:

- Limited resources;
- Transportation;
- Program reached capacity;
- Services were not appropriate for victim;
- Program rules not acceptable to victim; or
- Victim did not meet statutory requirements.

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **1,069** victims during each 6-month period. The majority of those victims were **Hispanic or Latina** (36%), **female** (94%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (70%).



OH • Grantee Perspective

Immigrants in general and Asian and Pacific Islanders (APIs) specifically, find sexual violence is still considered a taboo subject. A seminal report showed that APIs feeling shame or fear of losing face in the eyes of community is a major factor to under-reporting of sexual abuse. Despite the alarming statistics regarding sexual assault issues in the API communities and critical needs for services, there are very limited sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking services for immigrant APIs in the region. The primary sexual assault services agency, the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center who is also a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partner for Project: Together, serves over 18,000 clients annually, but only a small fraction of one percent of their clients are API victims. This is in large part due to low percentage of victims seeking help, and the unavailability of culturally specific services.

ASIAN SERVICES IN ACTION, INC., OHIO



MA • Grantee Perspective

We have been able to provide legal advocacy, emotional support, housing help, criminal justice advocacy, crisis intervention, employment counseling, accompaniments to healthcare centers, job training, material assistance, transportation, and victim advocacy to victims who might not have felt comfortable at mainstream rape crisis centers. We have been able to train our DV advocates on sexual assault and its prevalence in the LGBT communities. We have noticed that many of our DV victims also present with a history of sexual assault and sexual violence -- now we have both programs within one agency. We have been able to advertise our services to LGBT and mainstream organizations. This has lead to a greater system-wide capacity to serve LGBT victims as providers and community organizations have become aware of this resource available for victims.

GAY MEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROJECT, MASSACHUSETTS

Figure 3 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Race/ethnicity** (6-month average)

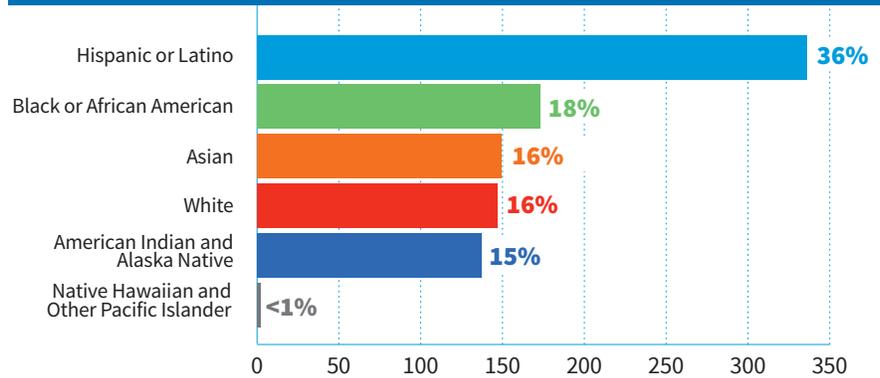


Figure 4 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

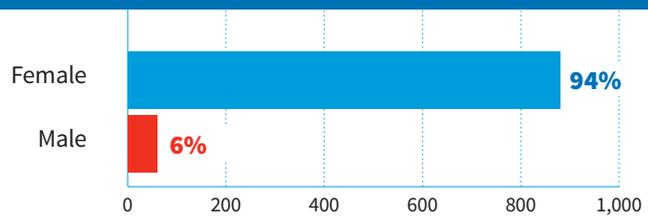


Figure 5 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)

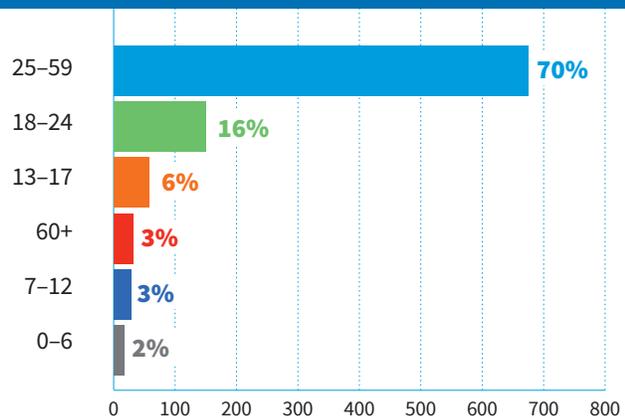
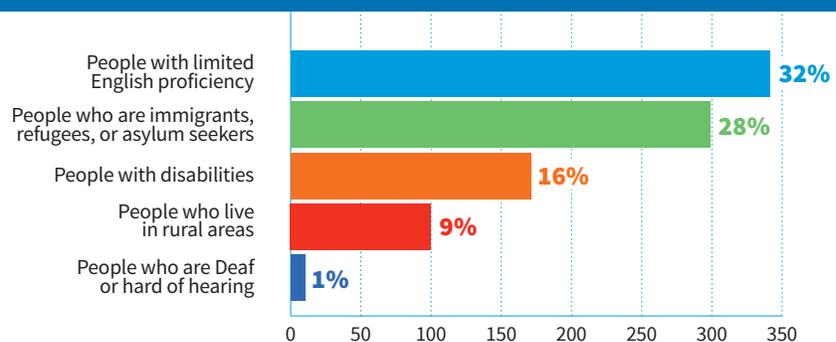


Figure 6 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)



Secondary Victims

Secondary victims are individuals who are indirectly affected by sexual assault, including children, siblings, spouses or intimate partners, parents, grandparents, other relatives, friends, and neighbors.

- Grantees provided services to an average of **277** secondary victims during each 6-month period.

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees most frequently cited **victims' reluctance to access services and report crimes** as their biggest obstacle to providing services. They attributed this reluctance to a number of factors, including:

- **Cultural taboos** around discussing sexual violence;
- **Familial pressures** to refrain from reporting or disclosing sexual assault;
- **Mistrust of law enforcement** and fear of deportation;
- **A lack of confidentiality and anonymity** within some communities;
- **Insufficient knowledge of victims' legal rights;** and
- **Insufficient legal accountability for offenders.**

Grantees also reported a need for more **culturally and linguistically appropriate victim services**.

Several grantees emphasized the need to provide **training to law enforcement, first responders, and service providers on culturally sensitive, trauma-informed practices**.

Grantees frequently mentioned the need to **assist victims with basic necessities**, such as:

- Shelter/housing;
- Transportation;
- Child care;
- Food; and
- Healthcare costs.

Many grantees also mentioned a need for more **culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental healthcare services**.

Finally, several grantees noted a need for **greater public awareness and understanding of the dynamics of sex trafficking** within marginalized communities.



IL • Grantee Perspective

There is a large need for an increase in the prosecution rate of those who commit sexually violent crimes. The number of arrests and charges for these crimes is woefully low. This impacts victims of sexual violence as well as the community on a variety of levels. For victims, it sends the message that the crime that was perpetrated against them is not one that merits consequences. Thus, victims end up feeling as if the criminal justice system failed them, or they feel victimized by a system that is supposed to protect them. For the community, it means that there are people living amongst them who were able to commit a crime and not be held accountable for their actions. This creates a dangerous living environment for everyone.

MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION, ILLINOIS



IL • Grantee Perspective

Language and services accessibility remain among the most-needed for immigrant victims. Our victims so often feel nervous and fearful to report to and interact with law enforcement and the court system, and have encountered low-quality translation services that significantly affect the case. Going to the hospital without understanding the medical terms, the examination procedures, and not being able to communicate with nurses, doctors, and staff is an intimidating and scary experience. Therefore, high quality and accessible interpretation services remain needed.

KOREAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN NEED, ILLINOIS



WI • Grantee Perspective

Continued efforts to improve the cultural competency and awareness of providers remains essential. It is vital that this continued awareness, education, and the resulting strategies of inclusion address individuals who do not conform to binary gender. While we are seeing more agencies opening their doors to transgender women, for example, most agencies are still unsure of how to work with victims who are gender non-conforming, gender fluid, or who otherwise do not identify as or express their gender in binary (male/female) ways.

FORGE, INC., WISCONSIN