

Grants to Support Families in the Justice System Program

VAWA 2013 authorized the Grants to Support Families in the Justice System Program (Justice for Families or JFF Program), which consolidated two pre-existing VAWA-funded programs: the Court Training and Improvements Program (Courts Program), and the Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Program (Supervised Visitation Program), and added new purpose areas as well.

JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES GRANTEES SEEK TO IMPROVE THE RESPONSE of the civil and criminal justice system to families with a history of domestic/sexual violence or child sexual abuse. JFF grantees do this by promoting the development of supervised visitation and exchange centers, improving civil and criminal court responses to victims of domestic/sexual violence, and training court-based and court-related personnel on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The last grants made under the Courts and Supervised Visitation programs were awarded in FY 2013.ⁱ

112 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 112 unique grantees reported activities funded by the JFF Program.

4,537 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 4,537 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

78,457 Supervised Visitations

Grantees provided a total of 78,457 supervised visitation and exchange services to an average of 1,891 families.

In specialized courts, trained advocates can provide support throughout the proceedings and share information with victims; and judges demonstrate knowledge of domestic/sexual violence and respectful treatment of victims. These practices can help victims as they navigate legal proceedings. These courts have also been shown to reduce rearrests for any criminal charges, inclusive of domestic violence charges, among convicted offenders who were subject to policies such as judicial supervision and sanctions for noncompliance (Anderson, 2015; Bell et al., 2011; Cissner et al., 2015).

ⁱ Justice for Families was authorized by VAWA 2013 in March of 2013, and Congress appropriated funds for this new program. However, OWW had already accepted applications under the former Supervised Visitation and Courts programs for FY 2014 funding, so FY 2014 Justice for Families awards were made to applicants that had applied under the two programs' solicitations.



ME • Grantee Perspective

Project partners report that this funding has led to increased victim safety, offender accountability, and additional legal supports for victims beyond their immediate safety concerns. It has created a safety net for victims, in part by serving as a catalyst to identifying and reaching out to other community partners to respond to victim needs when one agency cannot. The availability of Pine Tree Legal staff to provide consultations and legal advice, even when they cannot provide full representation, is specifically cited by advocates at partner agencies as a significant benefit of this project, leading advocates to “feel far more supported and confident in the court services that we can provide to clients,” according to the Family Violence Project advocate.

PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE, MAINE



ND • Grantee Perspective

These funds allow us to continue developing collaborative relationships with project partners involved in criminal and civil cases such as law enforcement, advocates, prosecution, probation, offender treatment program staff and court personnel. Collecting and analyzing data allows these project partners to identify trends and concerns and generate innovative ways to enhance victim safety and offender accountability. Many project partners have experienced recent personnel turnover and budget cuts, so project staff continued to work on developing and sustaining relationships through meetings, trainings, and other collaborative efforts. These funds allow us to bring in national trainers to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of violence dynamics, safety needs of victims, and best practices. Further, these funds allowed us to pursue the implementation of a specialty domestic violence court. We were able to receive technical assistance from the Center for Court Innovation and use their evaluation tools to conduct a readiness assessment to determine if our current system would be able to implement and sustain a domestic violence court.

**COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION CENTER,
NORTH DAKOTA**

The scope of the Justice for Families Program is vast, as required to accomplish these goals. Purpose areas include:

- Provide supervised visitation and safe exchange of children and youth by and between parents in situations involving domestic or dating violence, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, or stalking;
- Educate and train court-based and related personnel on issues relating to victims’ needs, perpetrator behavior, and offender accountability;
- Provide resources in juvenile court matters to ensure victims receive necessary services;
- Provide civil legal assistance to victims and non-offending parents (where the other parent is represented by counsel);
- Enable courts or court-based or related programs to develop new or enhanced:
 - Court infrastructure;
 - Community-based initiatives within the court system;
 - Offender management/monitoring/accountability programs;
 - Safe and confidential information storage and sharing databases;
 - Education and outreach to improve community access to the courts; and
 - Other projects to improve court responses to domestic/sexual violence.

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.**

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **112** individual grantees for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period.

- **9** (8%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.
- Grantees most frequently addressed the following purpose areas:
 - Provide supervised visitation and safe exchange of children and youth;
 - Educate court-based, court-related, and court-appointed personnel and child protective service workers; and
 - Provide civil legal assistance and advocacy services.

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide supervised visitation and safe exchange for children; develop community consulting committees; engage in issuing protection orders or helping victims obtain them; support victims in family matters and/or criminal cases; and establish statewide training and technical assistance projects to increase supervised visitation and safe exchange options. They provide training, supervised visitation, victim services, offender management, and support criminal and civil courts. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- **103** (92%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **168** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support supervision staff and program coordinators.

Table 1 | Staff supported with JFF grant funds, July 2015–June 2017: **Selected groups**

Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	168	
Supervision staff	54	32%
Program coordinators	37	22%
Victim advocates	17	10%
Administrators	14	8%
Security staff (including court security)	12	7%
Attorneys	8	5%
Case/docket managers	8	5%

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

Training

Grantees train law enforcement, court personnel, legal personnel, prosecutors, probation officers, guardians ad litem, victim advocates, child welfare workers, and other social service agency staff to help improve the response to victims, children, and families with a history of domestic/sexual violence or child sexual abuse. **This training enables visitation staff to meet the safety needs of all family members and improves the professional response to victims while increasing offender accountability.**

- **85** (76%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **542** training events.
- Grantees trained a total of **10,019** people.
- Most often these trainings reached court personnel (**20%**), victim advocates (**14%**), attorneys/law students (**11%**), and mental health professionals (**7%**).



MI • Grantee Perspective

Funding has allowed us to employ a Grant Project Coordinator, which our program never had before. This position has enabled us to increase community outreach, and build and strengthen relationships with new and existing referral sources, thus increasing referrals and the number of families accessing our services. Additionally, having a Grant Project Coordinator allowed us to provide training to community groups, attend community collaborative meetings and update and create new program materials for referral sources and parents.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN



OR • Grantee Perspective

Having a part-time advocate devoted to working with adult victims connected to our program is a huge benefit to victim safety and improved outcomes. We have been able to leverage the funding to provide additional hours for our advocate, expanding the time she can work with our clients from 6 hrs per week to 16 hours per week.

DESCHUTES COUNTY, OREGON



ND • Grantee Perspective

In addition to collecting data, these funds allow us to coordinate meetings, trainings, and other collaborative efforts. For example, our district court has experienced an unprecedented turnover of judges and prosecution over the past two years, including another judicial officer who is leaving this August. JFF funds will allow us to bring in national trainers to provide training to both new and existing judges and court personnel. The training will provide participants with a better understanding of violence dynamics, the safety needs of victims, and best practices.

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION CENTER, NORTH DAKOTA



CA • Grantee Perspective

Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project (DVLAP) and its project partners are continuing to develop a service provision model focused on working together as a community to increase access by bringing services to the community. This collaborative working model marks an unprecedented shift in the approach of community-based capacity building and sustainability. All partner organizations work together, learn from each other, and provide cross-technical assistance to achieve a service provision model that increases access for LGBTQ survivors who are the most in need. LGBTQ survivors gain the benefit of having increased responsiveness and can seek services where they are more inclined to and/or comfortable through this collaborative offsite model. What is more, the simultaneous opportunity to train court-based and court-related personnel across a large and vast county such as Los Angeles, adds a holistic wrap-around approach to enacting systemic change. These objectives work in tandem toward achieving profound and desperately needed changes to the way LGBTQ survivors access court systems.

LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER, CALIFORNIA



AZ • Grantee Perspective

The Justice for Families funding allows us to continue victim outreach within City Court. Victims who used to attend with the offenders and sit in the back of the courtroom unrecognized are now regularly referred to advocates for safety planning and directly addressed by the judge. With this change, we have seen victims continue to return to court, knowing that their voices will be heard and that the system is responsive. We hope that this encourages the victims who haven't left their offenders to connect with victim services and to know that the justice system will be responsive if they decide to engage with it in the future. We've had judges from around the state of Arizona come to sit in on Judge Million's court sessions, as the funds have allowed us to become a model for DV courts statewide. The funding for additional security has made the court a safer place for victims and their children and has made everyone aware of the safety concerns in these situations.

TUCSON CITY COURT, ARIZONA

Victim and Family Services

Victim Services

Grantees provide an array of services to victims navigating the court and legal system. These services may include legal advocacy to secure a protection order or custody, civil legal assistance, criminal justice advocacy, and victim advocacy, including safety planning. **These comprehensive support services address a wide variety of needs to help victims become and remain safe from violence.**

- **35** (31%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **4,537** victims during each 6-month period.
- **99%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

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

Advocacy services:

- Victim advocacy to **1,857** victims;
- Civil legal advocacy to **1,818** victims; and
- Criminal justice advocacy to **900** victims.

Other services:

- Victim-witness notification/victim outreach services were used a total of **8,673** times; and
- Grantees made a total of **2,001** referrals to governmental victim services and **11,996** to non-governmental victim services.

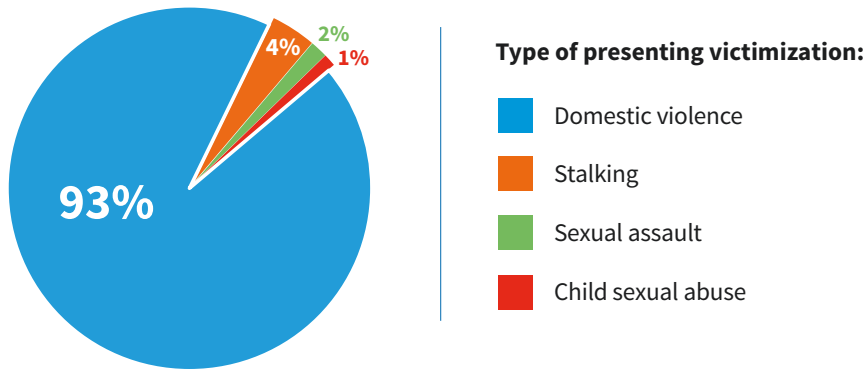
Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victims of **domestic violence/dating violence** (93%).

Figure 1 | Provision of victim services by JFF Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

Victims served and partially served by type of victimization (6-month average)



WA • Grantee Perspective

JFF money has allowed us to grow a robust CourtWatch program in King County. The program has the respect of judges and other criminal justice personnel. The data gathered has enabled us to make some practical and powerful legislative changes that enhance victims’ access to legal remedies. While the program focuses on local information, it has had statewide positive impacts. Not a week goes by without the program receiving calls from across the US from people who are contemplating a similar program. We are so grateful for this grant!

KING COUNTY SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCE CENTER, WASHINGTON

Table 2 | Victims seeking services with JFF grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	4,590	
Victims served	4,429	96%
Victims partially served	108	2%
Victims not served	54	1%

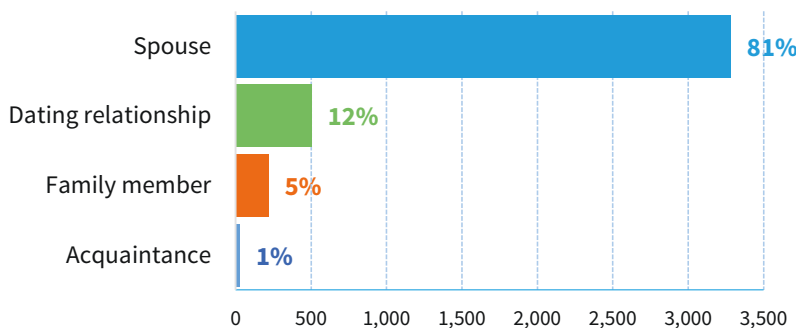
NOTE: “Partially served” represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the JFF Program grant. “Not served” represents victims who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services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

Victims’ Relationship to Offender

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of victims served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (79%).
- The remaining victims were most often victimized in the context of a **dating relationship** (12%) or by a **family member** (7%).

Figure 2 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Domestic/dating violence** (6-month average)





CA • Grantee Perspective

Without the Project funding provided by the OVW grant, the Court would be unable to extend the free legal services that the Staff Attorney position currently provides to low-income DV victims. These services have proven crucial in assisting protected parties with family issues consisting of civil restraining orders and residence exclusions, custody and visitation disputes, divorce, legal separation, support, and parentage cases. Court data shows that there is a high demand for free legal assistance services across the board, with approximately 35,000 Court users seeking legal assistance in the Self Help Center in calendar year 2016. There are a limited number of agencies in the County that offer free attorney-provided legal assistance to low-income individuals, and fewer that focus on assisting DV victims.

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Figure 3 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Stalking** (6-month average)

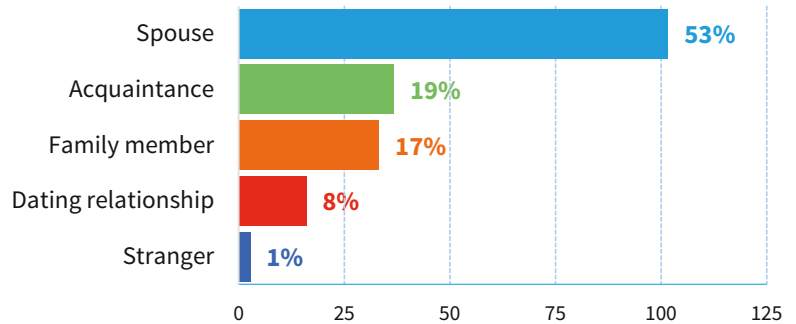


Figure 4 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault** (6-month average)

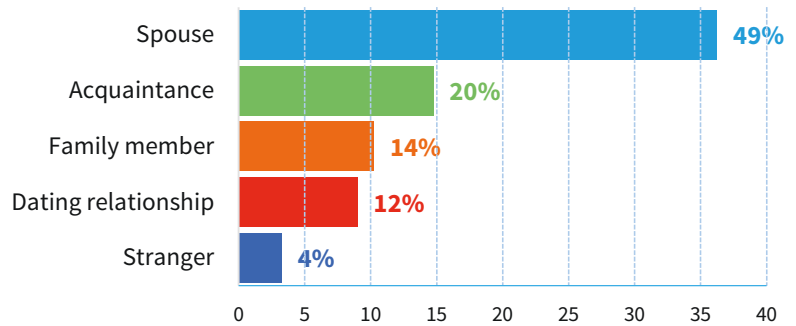
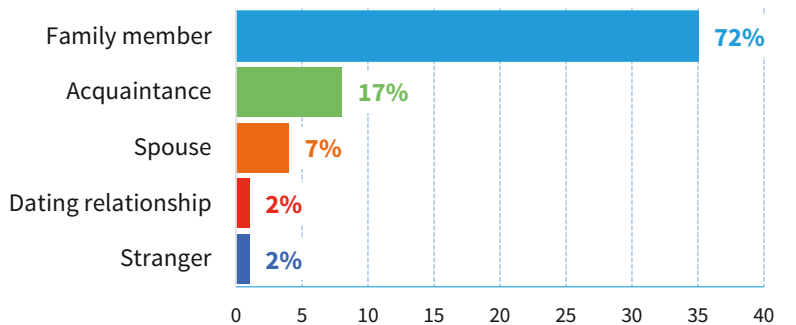


Figure 5 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Child sexual abuse** (6-month average)



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:

- Program unable to provide service due to limited resources;
- Conflict of interest;
- Services not appropriate for victim; or
- Victim did not meet statutory requirements.

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **4,537** victims during each 6-month period. The majority of those victims were **white** (51%), **female** (87%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (76%).



CA • Grantee Perspective

One of the goals for the Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project (DVLAP) has been to make LGBTQ civil legal assistance and advocacy more geographically and culturally accessible. DVLAP continues to increase access for survivors across the greater Los Angeles County area, including access for the Black/African American and Latinx communities. In fact, 78% of victims/survivors identified with non-white races and ethnicities, 48% of which identified as Hispanic/Latino, a 19% increase from last reporting period, and 26% of which identified as Black/African American, an 8% increase from last reporting period. DVLAP tracked victims/survivors for the following underserved identities: non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-cisgender, non-U.S. citizen, over 60 years old, having a disability, or being a limited English proficient person, and found that 91% of victims/survivors identified with at least two of those identities. Not surprisingly, the victims/survivors that were the most underserved/underserved were those with multiple marginalized identities, 52% of which had at least three and 35% of which had at least four of those identities. DVLAP also set a goal of increasing access for LGBTQ women, who are disproportionately impacted by violence. DVLAP held off-site legal clinics at the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center's Women's Wellness initiative, which provides wrap-around holistic services. DVLAP reports that 69% of victims/survivors identified as women and 9% identified as transgender women. Many clients received services that, otherwise, they would have not received.

LOS ANGELES LGBTQ CENTER, CALIFORNIA

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

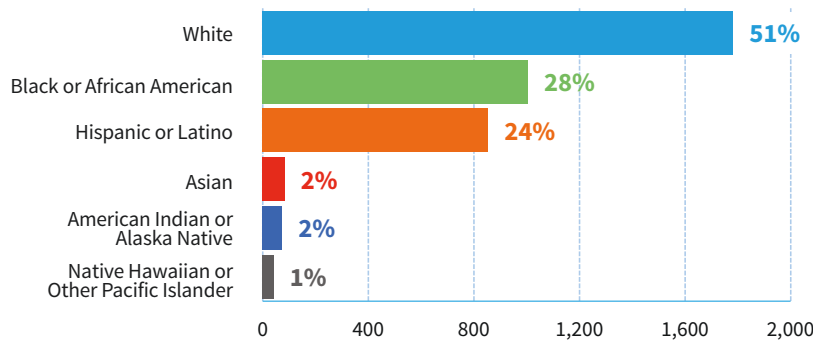


Figure 7 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

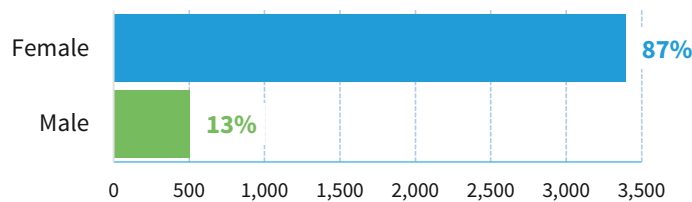
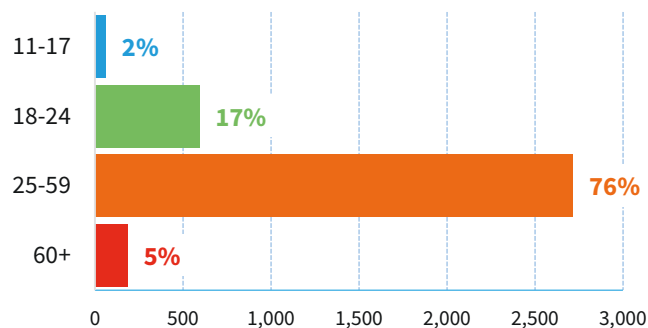


Figure 8 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)



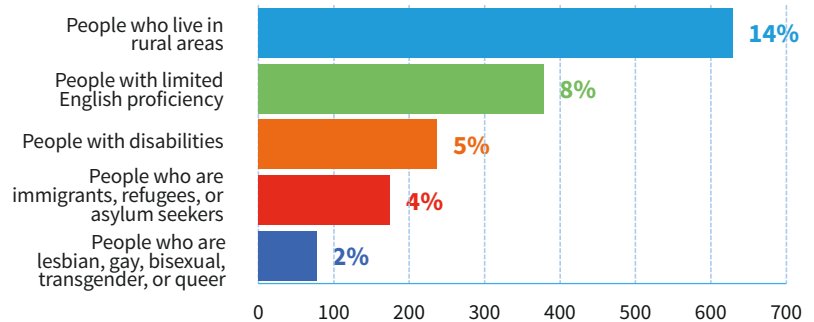


CA • Grantee Perspective

Victims need affordable legal services that are accessible, relevant and provided by those with expertise in DV. With this grant funding, OVV Staff Attorneys are able to meet with litigants on the day of court before their court hearing to explain court process, ensure compliance with court procedures, address pending matters such as custody and visitation, and connect victims with on-site domestic violence advocates from community-based organizations. Without Justice for Families funding, the Court would be unable to provide effective coordination with advocates from the Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative (DVIC) and the YWCA. Without the information provided by the Staff Attorneys and the partnership between the agencies and the Court enriched by the Justice for Families grant, these services would not be successfully delivered to DV victims on their court day.

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Figure 9 | Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Other** (6-month average)

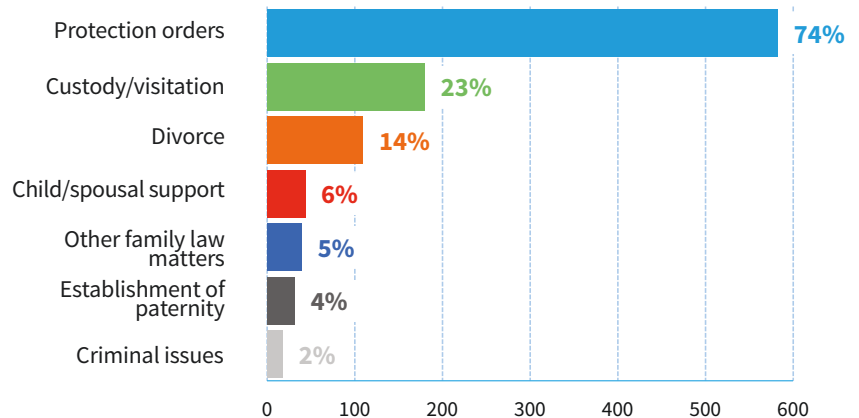


Legal Services

Grantees began providing legal services to victims and non-offending parents on July 1, 2014. These services, which were provided by grant-funded attorneys or paralegals, can include representing non-offending parents in matters of child sexual abuse, providing assistance to victims in divorce and custody cases, and helping victims obtain protection orders against their abusers. Between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017:ⁱⁱ

- **17** (15%) grantees used grant funds for legal services.
- Grantees addressed an average of **1,063** legal issues during each 6-month reporting period.
- Grantees provided multiple instances of legal services to an average of **264** victims (34% of those receiving services).
- Grantees achieved a total of **1,941** legal outcomes.
- Grantees most frequently provided legal assistance with protection orders and custody/visitation.

Figure 10 | Victims who received assistance with legal issues addressed by JFF Program grantees, July 2016–June 2017 (6-month average)



ⁱⁱ Prior to July 1, 2016, grantees reported legal services activities on separate attachments, which are not included here. Therefore, legal services data only reflects the July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 reporting periods.

Table 3 | Outcomes of legal issues addressed by JFF Program grantees, July 2016–June 2017

Legal matter	Outcomes (N=1,941)		Information/ referrals/ advice	Court decision	Brief services	Negotiated resolution/ filed action
	N	%				
Protection order	813	42%	37%	52%	0%	6%
Other family law matters	308	16%	9%	87%	2%	1%
Child custody/ visitation	290	15%	39%	41%	11%	7%
Divorce	269	14%	26%	38%	24%	6%
Child/spousal support	92	5%	28%	43%	20%	4%

NOTE: Outcomes data represent issues disposed of, not the number of victims. Percentages for outcomes are based on the number of issues disposed of in each category; not all categories of outcomes or legal matters are included. Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥5%).

Services for Families

Grantees provide one-to-one supervised visits, group supervised visits, and supervised exchanges. Before providing services, grantees conceptualize and develop supervised visitation and exchange services through community-based consulting committees. **This comprehensive, collaborative planning process ensures the safety of adult victims of domestic/sexual violence and their children during visitation or exchange.**

- **57** (51%) grantees used funds to provide supervised visitation and safe exchange services to families.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **1,891** families during each 6-month period.
- **95%** of families who requested services received them during each 6-month reporting period.



PA • Grantee Perspective

This funding has allowed Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR) to maintain and promote a new support group for survivors of sexual assault aimed specifically at addressing legal process questions and traumatic stress management. Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA) was able to hire a full-time paralegal based primarily in Philadelphia's Family Court Help Center who is fluent in Spanish. Both Court-based Advocates are Spanish speakers which allows us to better serve this population. Both Advocates now have access to Language Line to aid other limited English proficiency clients. We are now able to provide on-site legal services at Family Court, which eases the burden on litigants and affords litigants the ability to receive services more quickly and without going through each agency's intake process. We are now also able to better screen for domestic violence and sexual assault at the beginning of litigants' cases, and better inform litigants of their legal options when facing IPV, sexual assault, and/or child sexual abuse.

**PHILADELPHIA LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTER,
PENNSYLVANIA**

For many victims of domestic violence, leaving the relationship does not end the abuse perpetrated by their partners. The risk of abuse to the non-abusing parent and children during separation and after divorce often continues or increases; in some cases, abusers may kill their partners and children during this escalating period of violence. After separation, children are often exposed, directly or indirectly, to violence, threats, intimidation, manipulation, and coercive controls, which can profoundly compromise their emotional stability and psychological wellbeing (Crossman et al., 2016; Ellis, 2017; Jaffe, Campbell, Reif, Fairbairn, & David, 2017).

Across the 2-year period, grantees provided the following services:

- A total of **41,540** one-to-one supervised visits to an average of **1,218** families;
- A total of **31,224** supervised exchanges to an average of **515** families; and
- A total of **5,693** group supervised visits with an average of **212** families.

During the 2-year reporting period, grantees reported that the following safety and security problems occurred during supervised visitation and/or safe exchanges:

- **81** attempts to contact other party;
- **49** threats made;
- **28** violations of protection orders; and
- **16** times security staff were unavailable.

During each 6-month reporting period, nearly **one-third** (27%) of families receiving services completed services or services were terminated.

- **62%** of the families discontinued involvement because threats ceased, there was a change in the court order, mutual agreement, or treatment was completed; and
- **25%** were terminated because they habitually did not keep appointments, were incarcerated, did not comply with program rules, or were terminated due to supervisor’s discretion.

Families Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of domestic/sexual violence and their children. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017:

- The majority of families served or partially served were victims of **domestic/dating violence** (87%).



VA • Grantee Perspective

With Safe Havens funding, our grant is able to serve families who have cases in the Fairfax County Circuit Court, who are referred by the Department of Family Services when they are unable to provide safe supervised visitation, and when a court from a different jurisdiction refers a family because one parent lives in Fairfax County. We are able to have an increased security presence during visitation hours, and are able to provide safe transportation for clients who would otherwise have to travel by bus with small children, possibly along the same route as their abuser.

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

Figure 11 | Provision of family services by JFF Program grantees, by type of presenting victimization

Families served and partially served by type of victimization (6-month average)

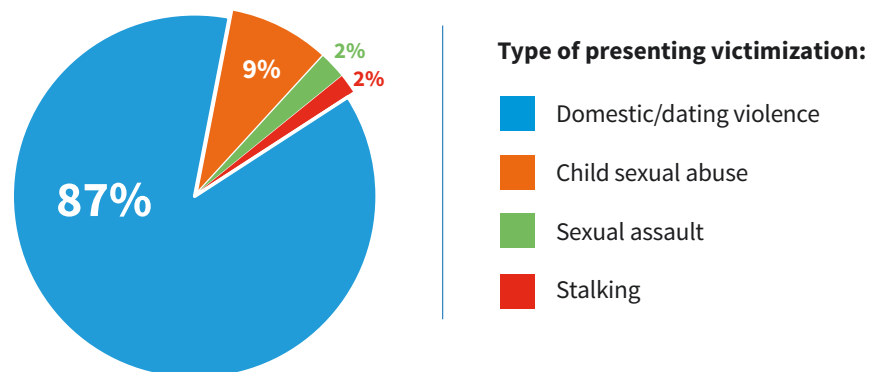


Table 4 | Families seeking services with JFF grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Families seeking services	6-month average	
Total families seeking services	1,987	
Families served	1,853	93%
Families partially served	38	2%
Families not served	97	5%

NOTE: “Partially served” represents families who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the JFF Program grant. “Not served” represents families who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services were funded under the JFF Program grant.

Families Referred to Supervised Visitation or Safe Exchange Programs

Grantees report on referral source and primary victimization for all families they serve or partially serve.

- The majority of families served or partially served were referred by a **family court order** (60%).
- The remaining families were most commonly referred by a **protection order** (17%) or a **domestic violence court order** (10%).

Table 5 | Average number of families using supervised visitation or safe exchange by primary victimization and referral source, July 2015–June 2017

Referral source	Number of families	
Family court order	1,131	60%
Protection order	316	17%
Domestic violence court order	189	10%
Child welfare agency	78	4%
Self-referral	61	3%

NOTE: Data presented for the most frequently reported categories only (≥50 families).

Reasons Families Were Not Served or Were Partially Served

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

- Program reached capacity;
- Family was not accepted into program;ⁱⁱⁱ or
- Hours of operation.

For those families who were not accepted into the program, grantees reported the following reasons:

- Client unwilling to agree with program rules;
- Situation was deemed too dangerous; or
- Conflict of interest.

ⁱⁱⁱ These are families who requested grant-funded services and were willing and able to partake in those services, but who were not accepted into the program.



MI • Grantee Perspective

The Justice for Families funding has allowed programs to continue to provide supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to survivors and their children, have flexible operation hours (Monday-Thursday 9:30am-8:30pm, Friday 9:30am-7:30pm and Sunday 3pm-7:30pm), and have a full-time program coordinator and two part-time monitors/staff. We do not have to turn survivors away due to funding/resources. Furthermore, the funding enables staff to follow up with custodial parents and children to assess safety, risks and needs. This funding also provides an opportunity for state-wide organizing around civil legal issues that impact the lives of survivors and their children. This funding provides valuable training regarding these issues and has helped to create much needed systemic change.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



AK • Grantee Perspective

Prior to this our community did not have a supervised visitation and exchange center. These funds allow us to continue to provide an invaluable service to enhance safety for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the Fairbanks community.

ALASKA COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Demographics of Families Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **1,891** families during each 6-month reporting period. The majority of custodial parents were **white** (75%), **female** (74%), between the ages of **25 and 59** (89%), with children between the ages of **7 and 17** (52%). Noncustodial parents were most likely to be **white** (70%), **male** (73%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (92%).

Table 6

Demographic characteristics of parents and children served with JFF grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Characteristic	6-month average					
	Custodial parent		Non-custodial parent		Children	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Race						
American Indian or Alaska Native	37	2%	42	2%	84	3%
Asian	42	2%	39	2%	86	3%
Black or African American	252	14%	321	18%	483	18%
Hispanic or Latino	207	11%	224	12%	387	15%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8	< 1%	4	< 1%	14	< 1%
White	1,367	75%	1,270	70%	1,939	73%
Unknown (missing)	80		77		163	
Gender						
Female	1,394	74%	506	27%	1,391	50%
Male	483	26%	1,348	73%	1,409	50%
Total	1,901		1,881		2,815	
Unknown (missing)	24		27		15	
Age						
0–6	–	–	–	–	1,350	48%
7–17	–	–	–	–	1,454	52%
11–17	5	< 1%	5	< 1%	–	–
18–24	171	9%	124	7%	5	< 1%
25–59	1,670	89%	1,697	92%	0	0%
60+	30	2%	28	2%	–	–
Total	1,901		1,881		2,815	
Unknown (missing)	26		27		6	
Other						
People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
People with disabilities	61	3%	135	7%	106	4%
People with limited English proficiency	78	4%	81	4%	60	2%
People who are immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers	68	4%	69	4%	33	1%
People who live in rural areas	407	21%	398	21%	588	21%

Criminal Justice

The Justice for Families Program promotes a coordinated community response that includes representatives from victim service agencies, child welfare agencies, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, probation, healthcare providers, and public and private community resources. To enhance protection for and services to victims within the court system, grantees work with criminal justice and social service agencies to address service gaps; provide training; ensure consistency in case handling; enhance case information flow among partner agencies to improve judicial decision-making and partner agency operations; and emphasize defendant monitoring and accountability.

Criminal Cases

JFF-funded courts use funds for dedicated dockets, specialized courts, and other practices to enhance case flow; information sharing; and successful prosecution of domestic/sexual violence and child sexual abuse.

- **19** (17%) grantees used funds for criminal case activities.

Case Dispositions

Table 7 | Dispositions of cases by JFF Program-funded courts, July 2015–June 2107

Type of case	Cases disposed of	Dispositions resulting in conviction	
		Number	Percent
All cases	9,895	6,353	64%
Misdemeanor domestic/dating violence	5,234	2,869	55%
Felony domestic/dating violence	1,213	782	64%
Violation of protection orders	1,155	849	74%
Violation of probation or parole	1,134	905	80%
Domestic/dating violence ordinance	719	576	80%

NOTE: Convictions include deferred adjudications.



FL • Grantee Perspective

Justice for Families funding allows for enhanced accountability and targeted responses for batterers. Prior to the funding, there was little to no informational tracking of injunctions or firearm affidavit tasks. At times, a limited legal intern would file orders to show cause in injunction when available. There is now a dedicated position to file orders to show cause and follow compliance hearings in injunction proceedings. Targeted responses to battering had not been provided to Community-Based Care and Child Investigation workers. Each staff reviews elements of power and control and evaluates safety responses and service coordination. Topics of consultation include use of weapons, GPS services, family or criminal court sanctions and orders, applications for injunction, chapter 39 injunctions, Batterer Intervention Program providers and coordination, safety planning, confidential safety plans with co-located advocate, why marriage and couples counseling is inappropriate, interviewing batterers and survivors separately, why anger management is not appropriate, high risk indicators, indicators for lethality, and previous Domestic Violence history.

FLORIDA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Criminal Protection Orders

Criminal protection orders are issued as bail conditions or as conditions of release to protect the victim during the pendency of a criminal case or following a conviction, or deferred adjudication, of the offender.

Table 8 | Criminal protection orders issued by JFF Program-funded courts by type of victimization, July 2015–June 2107

Type of case	Granted as a condition of:	
	Bail	Deferred disposition/probation
All cases	3,020	1,896
Domestic/dating violence	2,971	1,827
Stalking	47	67
Sexual assault	2	2



MN • Grantee Perspective

In the past six months, the surveillance officer has monitored 28 screened-in Domestic Violence Court (DVC) offenders. Of the 28 offenders monitored, 16 of them had no violations, with the remaining 12 having violations. Out of 250 total surveillance checks during this reporting period 25 were with violations and the remaining 225 without. The surveillance officer attends weekly compliance hearings for offenders in the DVC and works closely with the DOC agent assigned to the DVC. Together, they are able to monitor the offenders more closely which allows them the ability to hold offenders accountable.

PEARL BATTERED WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER, MINNESOTA



TX • Grantee Perspective

Without the funding, as we have discovered, our ability to monitor offenders during pre-trial becomes much more problematic. The court becomes less effective without timely information of how offenders are complying with pre-trial conditions of bond, victims become less safe, and offenders themselves have to endure more severe conditions, including incarceration, when other alternatives could have been available.

DALLAS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURT 10, TEXAS

Judicial Monitoring

Judicial monitoring occurs when the court schedules regular probation or court reviews to determine whether convicted offenders are complying with the terms of their sentences. Probation officers may meet with offenders in person, by telephone, or via unscheduled surveillance.

- An average of **1,045** offenders were monitored in each 6-month reporting period.
 - The overwhelming majority of offenders reviewed were domestic violence offenders (**nearly 100%**).
- A total of **10,858** judicial reviews of individual offenders were conducted across the 2-year period.

Judges monitor offenders to review progress and compliance with court orders. The data reported in Table 9 reflects the consequences imposed for violations of court orders. With each type of violation, the courts took no action in only **9%** of the cases and issued fines in **2%** of the cases. A significant number of cases resulted in the courts adding conditions (**20%**), or partially or fully revoking probation (**40%**). The courts issued a verbal or written warning in **30%** of the cases.

Table 9 Dispositions of violations of probation and other court orders by JFF Program-funded courts, July 2015–June 2017

Violation	No action taken		Verbal/written warning		Fine		Conditions added		Partial or full revocation of probation	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Protection order (N = 474)	59	12%	26	5%	30	6%	73	15%	286	60%
New criminal behavior (N = 261)	63	24%	7	3%	23	9%	70	27%	98	38%
Failure to attend mandated batterer intervention program (N = 963)	56	6%	442	46%	1	< 1%	146	15%	318	33%
Failure to attend mandated offender treatment (N = 339)	17	5%	222	65%	0	0%	57	17%	43	13%
Other condition of probation or parole (N = 880)	53	6%	171	19%	0	0%	238	27%	418	48%

NOTE: Other conditions include requirements such as substance abuse and alcohol treatment, parenting classes, and mandatory check-ins.

Civil Justice

Civil Protection Orders

Civil orders of protection, also known as restraining orders, are court-issued injunctions that prohibit or limit an offender’s contact with the victim and prohibit further abusive behavior. These orders may include custody and visitation directives, economic relief, and temporary restrictions on possession of firearms. Orders of protection are enforceable throughout the country, not solely in the issuing jurisdiction.

- **12** (11%) grantees used funds for civil protection order cases.

Table 10 Civil protection orders issued by JFF Program-funded courts by type of victimization, July 2015–June 2017

Type of case	Temporary orders	Final orders
All cases	10,804	4,668
Domestic/dating violence	7,243	2,848
Stalking	804	332
Sexual assault	2	56
Type of victimization unknown	2,755	1,432



CA • Grantee Perspective

A lesbian woman, who had substantial challenges in accessing resources prior to the Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project (DVLAP), sought DVLAP services during the last reporting period in responding to a protection order filed against her by an abusive ex-partner and continued receiving services in the current reporting period. DVLAP attorneys represented the client in multiple protection order hearings that continued into the current reporting period and ended with a favorable court decision. DVLAP also assisted the client in successfully defending against two small claims lawsuits and is currently assisting with another civil case, all of which were filed by the ex-partner to direct abuse toward the client.

LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER, CALIFORNIA



FL • Grantee Perspective

The Justice for Families funding enabled the court to establish a dedicated domestic court docket for intimate partner civil protection order cases. It enabled more consistent availability of advocacy and support in the Clerk of Courts intake centers. It enabled adequate court case management to launch a DV compliance monitoring system, which also includes firearm and ammunition surrender protocols.

SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA



NJ• Grantee Perspective

The Justice for Families Program funding enabled Essex County Family Justice Center to increase its onsite civil legal capacity and support for pro se victims/survivors in response to direct client feedback received via exit surveys and focus groups that identified civil legal assistance as one of the primary service gaps in Essex County. Prior to receiving the Justice for Families funding, Essex County Family Justice Center did not have a dedicated Civil Legal Screener to identify the civil legal needs of victims/survivors and coordinate onsite and offsite resources to address their needs, nor a dedicated Pro Se Victim Advocate to help prepare unrepresented victims/survivors for their Temporary or Final Restraining Order hearings and to accompany them to court, as requested.

ESSEX COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER, NEW JERSEY



MN• Grantee Perspective

The surveillance officer shared the advantage he has gained in observing an offender over time. This has opened his eyes to recognize patterns in the offender's behavior and he has gained the ability to observe the different tactics used by the offender to gain power and control over the victim. When monitoring jail phone calls, he can visualize the power and control wheel as he listens to the offender speaking to the victim directly or through a third party. The surveillance officer reported his confidence that utilizing voice recognition software has cut DANCO violations in half. The surveillance officer reported that this is invaluable to see the domestic violence as a pattern of power and control over time instead of only seeing it as an isolated incident, as he once did as a regular deputy. This has given him the opportunity to see domestic violence in a broader way and to see the bigger picture of the manipulation tactics, which may not have been possible before he became the DV Court surveillance officer. The surveillance officer is one of the main components of the Mille Lacs County Domestic Violence Court that has had a profound effect on the case outcomes of domestic violence cases. Without the surveillance officer as a part of this project, it is more likely victims would be contacted, offenders would disregard judicial conditions and the level of accountability needed wouldn't be realistically possible.

PEARL BATTERED WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER, MINNESOTA

Table 11 | Types of relief issued in final protection orders by JFF Program-funded courts, July 2015–June 2017

Types of relief	Number of protection orders/cases
Stay away/no contact	4,380
Firearms restrictions	3,543
Batterer intervention program (BIP)	1,158
Custody	53
Sole parental rights to petitioner	865
Sole parental rights to respondent	26
Shared parental rights	8
Allocated parental rights	151
Other offender treatment (e.g. substance abuse or other counseling, does not include BIP)	434
Supervised visitation/exchange	336
Economic relief (e.g. spousal support, debt assignment, payment of obligations and/or losses)	285
Child support	152

NOTE: Custody represents the number of protection orders in which custody was addressed but the specific outcome was not known.

Table 12 | Post-judgment/post-adjudication judicial reviews of civil protection order conditions, July 2015–June 2017

Type of case	Number of cases (6-month average)	Number of hearings (2-year total)
Civil protection order case reviews	916	4,870

Family Cases

The issues facing victims in family law matters — divorce, custody, child or spousal support, or parental rights and responsibilities — are complex. When criminal and/or protection order cases are also pending, the situation can be overwhelming and burdensome for victims, and competing or conflicting orders may place them at greater risk. Grantees may structure their dedicated docket or specialized court to include family matters where families are experiencing domestic violence. This could be a “one judge, one family” system in which one judge hears all matters relating to that family. Specially trained court staff who are aware of the dynamics of domestic violence will understand that some offenders use the court system to exert control over victims and force ongoing contact.

- **7 (6%)** grantees used funds for family cases.

Table 13 | Number of new and pending family cases addressed by the JFF Program, July 2015–June 2017

Type of case	Number of cases (6-month average)	Number of hearings (2-year total)
Divorce (children in common)	248	2,636
Divorce (no children in common)	97	1,002
Parental rights/responsibilities	37	504

Table 14 | Post-judgment/post-adjudication judicial reviews of family cases, July 2015–June 2017

Type of case	Number of cases (6-month average)	Number of hearings (2-year total)
Family case reviews	117	1,141



CA Grantee Perspective

The video conference advocate services allow the court and its project partners to assist rural, underserved residents in a cost-effective, convenient way. The free supervised visits are needed and appreciated by families struggling to overcome the devastating effects of DV. Neither of these highly beneficial services would be possible without this grant funding. This project has also provided a very high level of education, training, and technical assistance that would not have been possible without OWW support. The increased education has expanded local understanding of best practices that is improving responses to DV, and now human trafficking, in Fresno County.

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF FRESNO

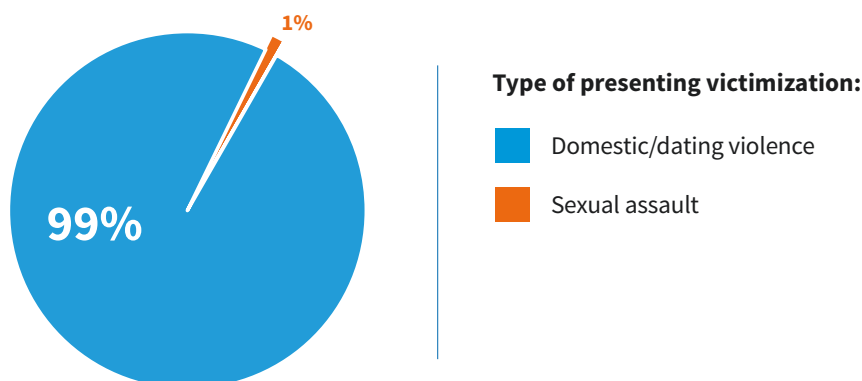
Court-Based Probation or Other Offender/Respondent Compliance Monitoring

Probation officers or other court-based compliance monitors conduct offender monitoring to determine whether offenders/respondents are complying with the terms of their court orders. Those orders could be pre-trial, bail, protection orders, probation, or other conditions of release.

- **12** (11%) grantees used funds for probation or monitoring activities.
- An average of **1,322** offenders were monitored during each 6-month reporting period.
- On average, grantees reviewed BIP information or contacted BIP staff for **411** offenders/respondents, and had meetings or contact with **340** offenders/respondents.
- As a strategy to increase victim safety, probation staff contacted an average of **178** victims in each 6-month reporting period.

Figure 12 | Offenders/respondents monitored by the JFF Program, by type of offense

Offenders monitored by type of offense (6-month average)





IL• Grantee Perspective

Despite our efforts almost 70% of victims with children in common with their abuser proceed pro se, with no lawyer, advocate or law student assistance. In these times of limited resources ensuring that those who must self-represent have litigant educational materials and a place for quick answers to commonly asked questions seems a priority that is emerging.

COOK COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT, ILLINOIS



LA• Grantee Perspective

Unfortunately, we continue to see families who have experienced domestic violence where the victim has lost custody. Certainly in these cases the victim remains at risk and often continues to experience post-separation violence. Additionally, the batterer has been emboldened and there is no change-agent or intervention in place. The center works to validate the victim's experience in these cases but the relationship with her children is often severed with no hope for recovery until much later in life. This continues to guide our efforts to educate not only court personnel but other service providers including those in the legal, mental health, law enforcement, housing, and legislative arenas. As we continue our efforts and conversations locally, regionally, statewide and nationally, around the seemingly complex circumstances contributing to this phenomenon it seems that it may actually be quite simple: people don't believe victims.

THE WELLSRING ALLIANCE FOR FAMILIES,
LOUISIANA



TX• Grantee Perspective

The most significant area of remaining need at this time in order to increase the safety of families is to increase offender accountability at the pretrial stage. Many offenders are released on bond and monitored by pretrial services, an arm of the court. However, there is little to no accountability when offenders violate the terms of their bond, even when doing so places the victim or family in danger. Pretrial services does not notify the victim, law enforcement, or judge, for example, when the offender violates the GPS restrictions by going near the victim. This leaves victims thinking they are protected when they are, in fact, not protected.

TRAVIS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL
ASSAULT SURVIVAL CENTER, TEXAS

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees most frequently reported the need for **pro bono or low cost civil legal services** for victims and for **improved legal resources for pro se litigants**.

Grantees also felt that **more training was needed on trauma-informed response and the dynamics of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault** among:

- Judges and court personnel;
- Prosecutors; and
- Law enforcement.

A number of grantees pointed to the need to **enhance offender accountability** through:

- Improved access to batterer intervention programs (BIP);
- Stricter enforcement of protective orders; and
- Enhanced pre-trial supervision.

Providers of **supervised visitation and exchange** underscored the need to improve access to services by:

- Opening satellite facilities;
- Expanding hours of service; and
- Increasing awareness of their services within their communities.

Grantees also highlighted the need to **improve coordination between courts and service providers and between jurisdictions** in order to improve outcomes for victims.



OH• Grantee Perspective

Regarding training, VAWA funds should be increasingly directed to support programs that highlight the complex nature of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, particularly as these acts/crimes intersect with other legal issues, such as custody and visitation, human trafficking, termination of marriage, offender supervision, and self-represented litigants. Training for courts should not be exclusively targeted to judicial officers, but should also take into account training for justice partners (e.g. guardians ad litem, probation, court interpreter, mediators, etc.) and court-led multidisciplinary team training. The latter approach to training has been beneficial and well-received in Ohio. It has not only built community capacity, but has also allowed many courts to see more ways to enhance victim safety and hold offenders accountable.

SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

Many grantees emphasized the need to provide **comprehensive services to victims in order to improve outcomes in criminal and civil proceedings.**

These services included:

- Emergency shelter and long-term affordable housing;
- Transportation;
- Child care; and
- Mental healthcare and substance abuse counseling.

These needs were especially pronounced in **rural areas.**

Grantees also mentioned the need to improve **legal and victim services for underserved populations**, especially:

- People with limited English proficiency;
- Immigrants and refugees;
- Native American victims; and
- People of color.



MN• Grantee Perspective

Clay County has shown that offenders in Domestic Violence Court who successfully complete nonviolence education are significantly less likely to commit another domestic violence offense within one year of the date of conviction. As such, more emphasis has been placed on trying to get defendants successfully through the program. However, despite the low cost of weekly groups, a number of defendants are terminated from the program for too many misses due to inability to pay. Therefore, the financial ability of offenders to pay for nonviolence education is another area of remaining need.

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, MINNESOTA



IL• Grantee Perspective

The first area of significant need is improved language access for Limited English Proficient victims/survivors and related litigants. As a result of many conversations with TA providers, we have identified needs related to access to justice. Although we were able to create bilingual signs for our new Domestic Violence Assistance Center (DVAC), many signs and documents across the courthouse remain only in English at this time. Additionally, we need more training for our staff on issues related to language access as well as cultural responsiveness specific to our DV/SA/Stalking victims

17TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, WINNEBAGO COUNTY, ILLINOIS



Tribal• Grantee Perspective

Due to our pending jurisdictional litigation with the State, there has been a moratorium of communication between our Tribal Court and the State Court systems pending resolution to the matter. Currently, County Courts are not disclosing when a DV incident occurs that involves a Tribal member. In turn, these cases get processed through State Court without utilization of the services that are available through the Tribe and its programs. More recently, State Courts are beginning to communicate with Tribal Court in cases that involve Tribal citizens who are Juveniles so that they can be provided culturally appropriate services while still being held legally responsible for their actions. With continued communication and education to professionals within these jurisdictions, it is the Project Coordinator's hope that we can develop a procedure to ensure that Tribal victims are ensured safety and resources and Tribal perpetrators are held accountable and receive culturally appropriate services.

LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BAND OF ODAWA INDIANS

