

# Technical Assistance Program

The Technical Assistance Program (TA Program) provides VAWA grantees with training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies to address the diverse needs of victims of domestic/sexual violence. Technical assistance (TA) providers are national, tribal, or statewide agencies; or governmental, academic, or other nonprofit organizations with the capacity to provide nationwide training and technical assistance. This may include:

- Educational opportunities;
- Conferences, seminars, and roundtables;
- Peer-to-peer, individualized consultations;
- Policy development; and
- Site visits.

**THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE TA PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE A WIDE** range of direct technical assistance to VAWA grantees and subgrantees, so that they can successfully implement grant-funded projects. In addition, the TA Program focuses on building the capacity of criminal justice and victim services organizations to respond effectively to domestic/sexual violence. Providers seek to support grantees in fostering partnerships among organizations that have not traditionally worked together to address these forms of violence, such as faith- and community-based organizations.

## 285 Projects

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, the TA Program funded 285 projects.

## 97,261 TA Activities

Grantees provided a total of 51,020 consultations, and responded to 37,730 requests for information.

## 253,460 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 253,460 people.

The Technical Assistance (TA) Program provides grantees with training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies so they can better address domestic/sexual violence. TA projects may offer in-person or online educational opportunities, peer-to-peer consultations, site visits, and more, so that grantees can work with experts and one another.



### D.C. • Grantee Perspective

AEquitas has committed to working with jurisdictions to review and end practices that may be harmful to the safety of victims. Requests for technical assistance are addressed 24/7 by an AEquitas attorney who communicates directly with the requester to elicit detail about the specific need. In this way, AEquitas can best determine an appropriate solution, taking into account such considerations as whether and how the immediate issue and possible solutions may impact, or may be impacted by, other issues or future events. By taking this individualized approach to support, AEquitas is able to provide the most relevant and beneficial response to the requester, a response that is data-driven, nuanced, and tailored to the needs of the particular jurisdiction and discipline at issue.

**AEQUITAS, WASHINGTON, D.C.**



### MT • Grantee Perspective

Participants walk through an action planning process at the end of our training. Many participants articulate plans to review policies that compromise safety, provide more intentional time for staff development and supervision, and review overall strategies for providing a more humanistic and engaged model of visitation that supports safety and change for families.

**INSPIRE ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, MONTANA**



### IA • Grantee Perspective

Coalitions continue to appreciate the support they receive from the Resource Sharing Project (RSP). In this reporting period, they told us, “We wouldn’t be where we are without the help and expertise of RSP!!” and “No one else does such good and relevant work.” We saw some evidence of RSP publications’ value to coalitions when we saw staff posting RSP resources in response to listserv questions and referring their peers to RSP staff for help. Workshop participants also appreciated the approach and content knowledge of RSP staff, with one participant saying, “I loved the modeling of allyship in this facilitation, the way you highlighted things that didn’t get a lot of attention in mainstream media.”

**IOWA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT**

## General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **285** individual projects, located in **93** provider agencies for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period. Providers may deliver technical assistance in discrete issue areas related to a specific knowledge gap or promising practice, or may manage multiple projects spanning a variety of topics.

- TA projects funded an average of **298** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- **198** (69%) individual TA projects used funds to specifically address underserved populations.

## Training

TA providers offer training events to other VAWA grantees to enhance services for victims of domestic/sexual violence, to improve offender accountability, and to promote coordinated community responses to reduce violence. **This training helps grantees successfully implement projects supported by VAWA grant funds.**

- **221** (78%) TA projects used funds for training.
- TA providers convened a total of **4,037** training events.
- TA providers trained a total of **253,460** people.
- Most often these trainings reached dual sexual assault and domestic violence program staff (**11%**), domestic violence program staff (**10%**), multidisciplinary staff at the same training (**10%**), and law enforcement officers (**9%**).

## Technical Assistance

TA providers deliver technical assistance through site visits, consultations, information request responses, and referrals. Assistance may include guidance on developing, revising, and implementing policies, protocols, and procedures; building a coordinated community response and community support; and overcoming barriers to effective service delivery.

- **223** (78%) individual TA projects used funds for technical assistance.
- TA providers delivered a total of **97,261** technical assistance activities.

**Across the 2-year period, TA providers delivered the following forms of assistance:**

- A total of **51,020** consultations;
- A total of **37,730** information request responses;
- A total of **7,277** referrals; and
- A total of **1,234** site visits.

## Products

To provide standardized best practices to professionals and organizations, TA providers develop, revise, and distribute a variety of products about domestic/sexual violence, including training curricula, reports, tool kits, and other materials.

- **238** (84%) individual TA projects used funds for products.
- TA providers developed or revised a total of **5,696** products.

## Remaining Areas of Need

The needs expressed by technical assistance providers were as **diverse as the organizations they serve**. However, across the array of sexual assault and domestic violence services, technical assistance providers most frequently reported the need to **help grantees provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and resources to diverse groups of victims**, including:

- Immigrant victims, including undocumented immigrants;
- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- Victims with disabilities, including Deaf or hard of hearing populations;
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated victims;
- LGBTQ populations;
- American Indians/Alaska Natives;
- Racial minorities;
- Homeless youth; and
- Seniors.

According to TA providers, grantees have **faced challenges in meeting the mandates for inclusion and cultural responsiveness as outlined in VAWA 2013**.

The need to provide **linguistically appropriate, culturally informed** services was particularly pronounced for **immigrant victims and victims with limited English proficiency (LEP)**. According to TA providers, **needs of immigrant and LEP victims included**:

- Training for law enforcement on cultural sensitivity and providing adequate translation and interpretation services;
- Training for service providers, court personnel, and attorneys on immigration proceedings, including the U visa application process;
- Improved translation and interpretation services; and
- More bilingual advocates and service providers.



### MN • Grantee Perspective

There is a gap between organizational or mainstream model perspective and how communities experience violence on the ground and in their individual homes. More light should be shed on culturally competent and trauma-informed approaches to domestic violence by viewing the victim/survivor as the expert of their experience and what might work for them that may not work for another victim/survivor. This can be done through community and cultural nuances that are led by members of the community, such as community resource mapping listening sessions, etc. Additionally, organizations should be crediting community work through partnership and collaboration by engaging community directly to be a part of leadership within these organizations that will support ground level empowerment of victims/survivors. When members of the organizations are a part of the community as opposed to servicing the community, the victim/survivor has an increased ability to relate to a systemic based service through the individuals that have shared socio-cultural experiences.

**INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY, MINNESOTA**



### IL • Grantee Perspective

The new requirements and expanded areas of VAWA 2013, including the changes to the STOP Implementation Planning Process and PREA, have seen progress since the adaptation but continue to be an area of need. STOP Administrators continue to need ongoing TA related to the documentation of collaboration and the nuts and bolts of “meaningfully incorporating” the voices of those who are underserved into the STOP Planning processes, especially Tribes. Inclusion of culturally specific organizations at the planning table as well as within funding streams also continues to be a challenge, as state/territory budgets for the victim services are shrinking. Supporting culturally specific service providers to manage large state/federal grants also is an area of need. Identifying the intersectionality of the work in which Administrators provide funding for culturally specific service providers will help prioritize the issues and needs most important to the residents within their jurisdictions.

**ALLIANCE OF LOCAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, ILLINOIS**



### D.C. • Grantee Perspective

During this grant reporting period we have received various technical assistance requests for more guidance and information regarding eligibility and options for immigrant survivors who are not citizens accessing transitional or emergency housing. Confusion in the field exists for grantees that provide services at shelters or other emergency housing programs. Specifically, providers are unaware a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking and other survivors who are homeless can access the shelter or emergency housing when the survivor is undocumented, when they are in the process of waiting for immigration application to be approved, when they are in mixed status families, and when they become Lawful Permanent Residents. Often, undocumented survivors lack the particular form of identification, work authorization, and/or Social Security Number the shelter requests. Transitional housing programs request specific documents that are not legally required and then uses the fact that an immigrant victim does not have that documentation to turn immigrant victims away. Grantees need further education to understand that immigration status should not be a factor in admission to transitional housing and learn how to advocate for admission to transitional housing programs so that they don't inadvertently turn away immigrant survivors.

**NATIONAL IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ADVOCACY PROJECT,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**



### MN • Grantee Perspective

One of the most significant areas of remaining need with regard to increasing victim/survivor safety and offender accountability is ensuring that OVV grantees have the organizational capacity to manage and operate/sustain their organizations. Specifically, for grantees under the OVV CSSP, Underserved, Rural, and Tribal programs, organizational sustainability can be a challenge because of limited resources, familiarity with federal grant management, and cultural realities of the survivors they support that do not always fit the traditional service models. In the development of our training curriculum, partners have placed attention on organizational resource building, understanding how to work with federal funders, and how to incorporate and uplift culture in their organizational practices to strengthen their work. By strengthening these grantees' organizational capacity, we hope that they will be better able to increase victim/survivor safety and offender accountability.

**CASA DE ESPERANZA, MINNESOTA**

TA providers discussed the need to **assist service providers, especially non-profit organizations, with organizational management** in order to ensure their long-term sustainability. These needs included:

- Providing adequate staff training and development opportunities;
- Increasing organizational capacity through technical assistance;
- Providing alternative modes of training, including more online and remote training opportunities; and
- Assisting organizations with day-to-day administrative tasks, including grant management and data tracking.

In the criminal justice arena, TA providers detailed a number of **training and TA needs for law enforcement**, including:

- Protocol for strangulation cases;
- Trauma-informed practices;
- The U visa certification process;
- Working with victims with limited English proficiency;
- Best practices in sexual assault response and investigation; and
- Identification of the primary aggressor.

Grantees also reported the need to **provide training and TA to prosecutors and judges** in order to **enhance offender accountability** and **achieve justice for victims**. Training needs included:

- Strategies for prosecuting non-stranger sexual assault cases;
- Training in consumer law to help victims with credit problems or significant debt;
- TA and training for attorneys working in complex family law cases;
- TA and training for judges and attorneys in cases involving interstate custody;
- Training on immigration law and the U visa process; and
- Basic training in trauma-informed practices.

Grantees also underscored the need to assist service providers in their efforts to **educate youth and community members** about **healthy relationships and violence prevention**.

Finally, TA providers emphasized the need to **support grantees in their efforts to collaborate with other service providers** in order to provide holistic services for victims.