

Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program

The Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (T-SASP) was created by VAWA 2005, and is the first federal funding stream dedicated solely to developing culturally relevant services that are specifically responsive to sexual assault victims within tribal communities. Because tribes reflect great diversity of history, geographic location, language, socioeconomic conditions, and retention of traditional spiritual and cultural practices, the T-SASP tribal grantees are strongly encouraged to incorporate cultural and traditional practices (e.g. talking circles, healing ceremonies, and sweat lodges) for those who have been sexually victimized.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF T-SASP IS TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, and expand culturally specific intervention and related assistance for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) victims of sexual assault. Grantees are Indian tribes, tribal government organizations, and nonprofit tribal organizations. 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.

37 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2017, 37 unique grantees reported activities funded by the T-SASP Program.

555 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 555 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

261 Secondary Victims Served

On average, grantees served 261 secondary victims during each 6-month reporting period.

Many Native Americans do not live near a facility offering SANE or SART services. Research shows gaps in sexual assault services and coverages for more than two-thirds of Native American lands, and some communities have no coverage at all. Efforts are underway to improve interagency coordination and develop tribal-centric SARTs to address the particular needs of AI/AN victims of sexual violence. These efforts were facilitated by the SDVCJ provisions of VAWA 2013 (Deer, 2017; Juraska et al., 2014).



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

Without T-SASP funding we would still be living in an era where sexual violence is taboo and not to be talked about. We have young women coming forward sharing their experiences as well as our grandmothers telling their stories. We are holding perpetrators accountable for their behavior. We are not making excuses for their behavior. T-SASP funds have allowed us to become a healthier Nation. We have taken just baby steps but those would not have been possible without T-SASP's funding. Our women are learning to become sacred again! In the past that sacredness was often overlooked or not even thought about. We are creating a healthier nation where every woman, man, boy, or girl should never have to suffer the traumatization of sexual assault.

PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

T-SASP grant funding has allowed for the continued employment of one full-time clinical social worker (CSW) dedicated solely to the provision of outpatient therapy services to Sault Tribe survivors of sexual assault or sexual abuse. The CSW position is able to provide the following advocacy supports that are above and beyond traditional outpatient therapy service provisions: accompaniment to medical appointments to assist with appropriate medication and expression of mental health concerns, including follow-up appointments for medication check-ins; STI/STD appointments made on behalf of clients to ease embarrassment and fear; referral assistance for PAP exams and education about the importance of well woman exams; and psychological testing referrals. Psychiatric referrals are made for many clients due to severe trauma and mental health concerns. Telepsychiatry is offered one day per week at the Tribe's Health Center where therapy is offered as well. The CSW will attend the first appointment with the client and will usually attend the follow-up appointments as well if clients have difficulty talking with a stranger about their trauma and mental health.

SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS

VAWA 2013 added the following new purpose area to this program:

- Address the needs of youth victims, including providing support to their non-abusing parent or caretaker.

In addition, 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.**

These changes were implemented in FY 2014, meaning that grants made on or after October 1, 2014 could specifically address them. If an activity falling under the added purpose area could not be captured in sections of the existing form that grantees use to report, they could describe their accomplishments in narrative sections of the form.

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **37** individual grantees for the July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 progress reporting period.

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.**

- **35** (95%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **27** 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 T-SASP grant funds, July 2015–June 2017:
Selected groups

Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	27	
Victim advocates	17	63%
Program coordinators	3	11%
Administrators	2	7%
Counselors	2	7%

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

Victim Services

Grantees address the specific cultural needs of AI/AN victims, and may provide crisis intervention; safety planning; 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.**

- **32** (86%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **555** victims during each 6-month period.
- **99%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

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

- Victim advocacy services to **325** victims;
- Support group/counseling services to **266** victims;
- Transportation services to **258** victims;
- Material assistance (e.g. clothing, food, or personal items) to **252** victims;
- Crisis intervention services to **243** victims;
- Cultural advocacy services to **141** victims;
- Criminal justice advocacy services to **121** victims; and
- Civil legal advocacy services to **106** victims.

Other services:

- Victim-witness notification/victim outreach services were used a total of **4,749** times;
- Grantees received a total of **3,254** hotline calls; and
 - The majority of these calls (**82%**) came from victims.

Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of sexual assault.

Table 2 | Victims seeking services with T-SASP grant funds, July 2015–June 2017

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
Total victims seeking services	559	
Victims served	521	93%
Victims partially served	34	6%
Victims not served	4	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 T-SASP 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 T-SASP grant.



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

T-SASP funding allows the program to help offset some of the financial strain experienced by victims of assault. Oftentimes, physical or emotional trauma prohibits victims from being able to function in a work setting. In many cases, victims are displaced from their homes, or are too traumatized to return to the area where the assault occurred, and are in need of safe and secure housing. By having this special pot of funding we are able to help victims of sexual assault by lessening the worry and concern of finances. We are able to promote healing through advocacy and through referrals to counseling. Being from a small tribe and a poverty-stricken area, this funding has created opportunities for victims to seek assistance and, more importantly, to have someone who believes them and has genuine concern for their well-being without them having to meet the burden of proof.

SEMINOLE NATION OF OKLAHOMA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

Tribal • Grantee Perspective

When the Lac Du Flambeau Sensitive Crimes Response Team (SCRT) began back in 2012 the word quickly spread throughout the community that we had a sexual assault program. By providing a lot of advertising and public education within our county, the number of sexual assaults being reported greatly increased. More people were using the crisis line to call in and report suspected child sexual abuse and date rape. Because the numbers of victims being presented were so high for the children/youth community we have been able to start creating an SCRT protocol for responding to this issue.

LAC DU FLAMBEAU DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SHELTER PROGRAM



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

The Tribal Sexual Assault Program funding has allowed our program to hire a full-time sexual assault advocate, part-time counselor, and supportive staff to continue direct services for victims/survivors of sexual assault and their collaterally affected loved ones. One brave young lady participating in our program finally got the courage to tell her mother that her step-father had been molesting her for many years. The jury trial was horrific for the victim and her family. The counselor and sexual assault advocate provided ongoing supportive services through every step of her journey. Although we prepared her on what to expect during her cross examination, no one was ready to hear the Public Defender's multiple attacks on her character, memory, etc. After suffering years of molestation and then re-victimized through the court system for over a year, her battle to seek justice ended in a hung jury. Fortunately, when the District Attorney decided to re-try the step-father, he settled for a plea bargain. During the course of the trial, many of the young lady's family members and friends requested supportive assistance from the sexual assault advocate. The young lady, her family, her new boyfriend, and other friends have greatly expressed their gratitude for our support. Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Victim Services is grateful that the T-SASP grant allows us to help our community members and their friends and family in times of need.

PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE TRIBE VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

Prior to receiving this funding, we could not serve the primary victims of sexual assault under eighteen. Now that we can, we are definitely seeing a service gap in our community being filled that was empty for a long time. Since expanding to serve those under eighteen, a large percentage of our clients coming in for these services are teenagers.

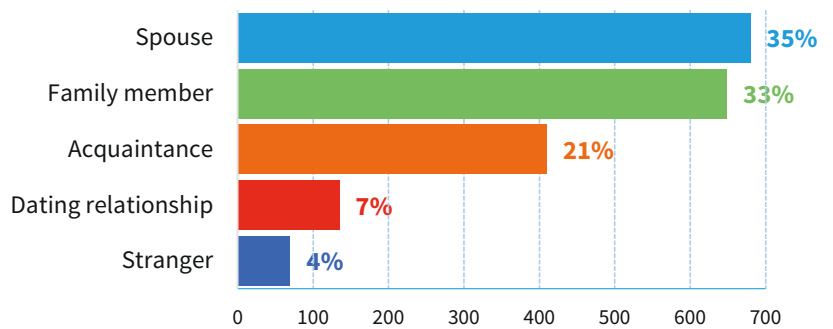
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF SILETZ INDIANS CARE PROGRAM

Victims' Relationship to Offender

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

- The victims most frequently served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (35%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by a **family or other household member** (33%) or by an **acquaintance** (21%).

Figure 1 | Type of victimization by relationship to offender: **Sexual assault** (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:

- Lack of child care;
- Services were inappropriate or inadequate for victims with substance abuse issues;
- Program was unable to provide services due to limited resources/priority setting;
- Services were not appropriate for victim;
- Transportation; or
- Services were inappropriate or inadequate for victims with mental health issues.

Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **555** victims during each 6-month period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **American Indian and Alaska Native** (93%), **female** (86%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (43%).

Figure 2 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Race/ethnicity** (6-month average)

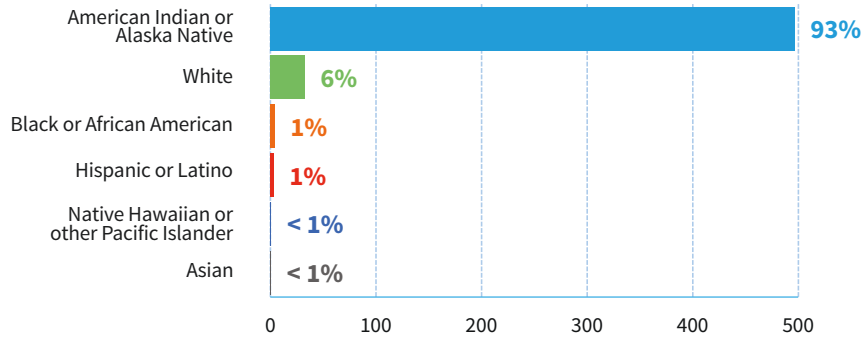


Figure 3 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Gender** (6-month average)

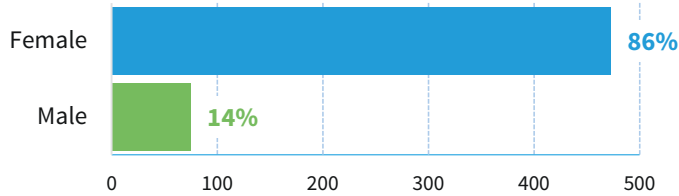
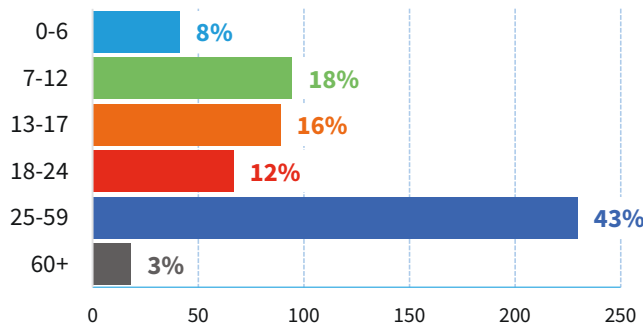


Figure 4 Demographics of victims served and partially served: **Age** (6-month average)



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

T-SASP has allowed Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) to employ a child advocate dedicated to working solely with child sexual assault survivors and their families. Child advocacy centers are very limited within our jurisdiction and historically, domestic and sexual violence advocacy programs have focused services on meeting the needs of adult survivors. With this funding we have developed and implemented a needed position that allows advocacy services for children and families. This funding has provided emergency food and clothing, utility assistance, and even assistance with gas for families traveling to seek safety and attend court appearances. During one court preparation meeting with a local district attorney's office, the District Attorney encouraged a child to bring her favorite stuffed animal to carry with her on the stand during court testimony. This led the child advocate to seek OVV approval to purchase stuffed teddy bears that bear the message "You are Stronger than You Believe...Loved More Than You Know." The bears have been and will continue to be provided to child victims of sexual violence when meeting with the child advocate to provide a sense of safety and security.

MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

The T-SASP funding allows the program to have an adequate number of trained advocates to meet the needs of our tribal community. The amount of domestic violence and sexual assault calls far outnumber any other township in Vilas county. This funding has allowed our program to build a sexual assault-specific program and hire a specialized sexual assault advocate, which the program did not have before. We are able to cross train all our advocates to respond to both DV and SA with nearly seamless 24-hour-a-day coverage.

LAC DU FLAMBEAU DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SHELTER PROGRAM



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

T-SASP funding allows the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma to help secondary victims. The program can help grandparents, boyfriends/girlfriends, and parents with this grant. Many times the program will provide services to a child only to find that the parent had also suffered sexual abuse in the past, and consequently lacks the tool set to provide the right support or any support to the child who may be victimized now. With this funding, we can provide services to a boyfriend who has seen his girlfriend raped and help him receive the services he needs to be a support system for his girlfriend. These are a few examples of how this program can and has helped individuals begin their healing process.

IOWA TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

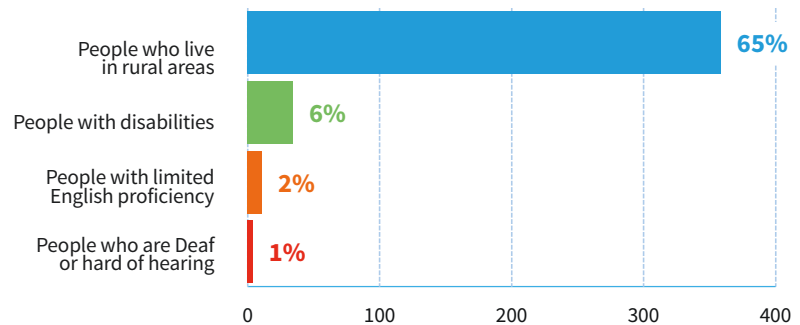


Tribal • Grantee Perspective

During our TA site visit in May 2015 we had several discussions which led to a significant breakthrough on why our program may be struggling to achieve our original goals and why our numbers served have been significantly lower than expected. During this discussion the TA provider shared the history of children in Indian Country being sexually exploited, which appeared to resonate with Native women in the group discussion. They discussed how in many tribal communities sexual assault was almost considered to be a norm, with many parents feeling as if “it happened to me, it’s something that just happens and we deal with it.” Not to say that this is the attitude of all tribal members, nor that it is the norm of members of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. However, this conversation brought up many ideas about why individuals are not seeking or accepting services. In further discussions with staff we discussed why programs like our Fatherhood and Motherhood is Sacred are important for all parents. This can strengthen their knowledge on appropriate boundaries and the sacredness of themselves, their spouse/partner and their children. Other cultural programs that we have, such as Purpose of Life, for youth, help them to explore their purpose, the purpose of family, and the sacredness that exists. We would like the opportunity to continue to provide outreach, awareness, and education to the community as a way to reach survivors and their families and provide services.

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE-SEWA UUSIM SYSTEM OF CARE

Figure 5 | 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 **261** secondary victims during each 6-month period.

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees most frequently cited **a need for more community education and outreach** in order to:

- Combat stigma associated with sexual violence;
- Encourage reporting of sexual assault;
- Increase awareness of available sexual assault services;
- Teach youth and adults about consent, healthy relationships, and how to respond to incidents of sexual assault; and
- Strengthen efforts toward increasing offender accountability.

Grantees stressed the importance of **holding offenders accountable**, through:

- Updating tribal legal code;
- Increased law enforcement presence on reservations;
- More arrest and prosecution; and
- Harsher sentencing.

Some grantees cited a need for more **ongoing support for victims**, including:

- Transportation;
- Legal services;
- SANE services;
- Emergency shelter and long-term housing; and
- Child care.

Grantees also frequently discussed the need for **culturally-sensitive mental health and substance abuse services** for child and adult victims of sexual assault



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

The most frustrating part of being a victim, for many of our clients, is the fact that so few of our offenders are arrested and tried for their crimes. The Troopers and local Police Department are often unable to get corroboration to back up the child's interview, so few cases are handed over to the District Attorney. Those that are are often a case of "he said/she said" and the DA's office are unable to prosecute, knowing that a jury won't be able to find enough concrete evidence of wrongdoing. The members of the CAC and Behavioral Health can talk to the victims and tell them they are not to blame and are believed, but it's difficult for a child to believe that when their offender is still living in the same small village. For this same reason, protective orders are offered to each non-offending caregiver during their time at the CAC, but they are rarely accepted. Additionally, with the current budget cuts, the trooper travel budget has been slashed to emergency only, leaving the family feeling very isolated after the incident.

KAWERAK, INC.



Tribal • Grantee Perspective

The need for outpatient behavioral health therapy for Native American victims/survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse within the Sault Tribe's seven county service area remains critical as evidenced by the consistently high case load maintained by the T-SASP Clinical Social Worker (CSW). This high client case load is composed of residents of only one of the Tribe's seven county service area. In order to fully meet the therapeutic needs of Native American sexual assault and sexual abuse victims/survivors throughout the Sault Tribe's service area, an increase in the current levels of federal funding allocations to support the wage, fringe, and operational costs of additional CSW positions would reduce this ongoing critical need.

SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS

