

# Sexual Assault Services Program—Grants to Culturally Specific Programs

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

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

## 43 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019, 43 unique grantees reported activities funded by the SASP-CS Program.

## 1,143 Victims Served

On average, grantees served 1,143 victims during each 6-month reporting period.

## 369 Secondary Victims Served

On average, grantees served 369 secondary victims during each 6-month reporting period.

*In a national survey, providers (at legal services, social services, and domestic violence and sexual assault programs) who serve immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking related that, when victims called law enforcement, responding officers were able to identify the language spoken by victims in fewer than half of the cases and, in 30% of those cases, unqualified interpreters were used. They further reported that clients experienced bias when courts and law enforcement relied on inappropriate or unqualified interpreters who may intentionally or unintentionally misrepresent the victim's statements (Lee et al., 2013).*





Both researchers and service providers point to the need for more community-based, participatory research to better determine the prevalence of sexual violence as it relates to race and ethnicity, and to develop culturally appropriate interventions. Researchers often fail to recruit samples large enough to achieve significance or to appropriately analyze race- and ethnicity-related demographic data and therefore present findings that are either inconclusive or misleading (Gill, 2018; Hamby, 2015; Robertson et al., 2016; Shaw & Lee, 2019).



**MO • Grantee Perspective**

SASP Culturally Specific Program funding has allowed Hand In Hand Multicultural Center (HIHMC) to expand coordination and cross-referrals with sexual assault agencies in Southwest Missouri in order to provide comprehensive, culturally specific interventions and related assistance and services for Hispanic/Latino victims/survivors and their families. HIHMC also provides legal and immigration advice to victims/survivors and their families. This funding has allowed HIHMC to continue being an organization with two representatives accredited by the DOJ's Executive Office for Immigration Review. HIHMC is the only organization recognized by the EOIR in the 4th, 7th, and 8th Missouri Congressional Districts.

**HAND IN HAND MULTICULTURAL CENTER, MISSOURI**



**CA • Grantee Perspective**

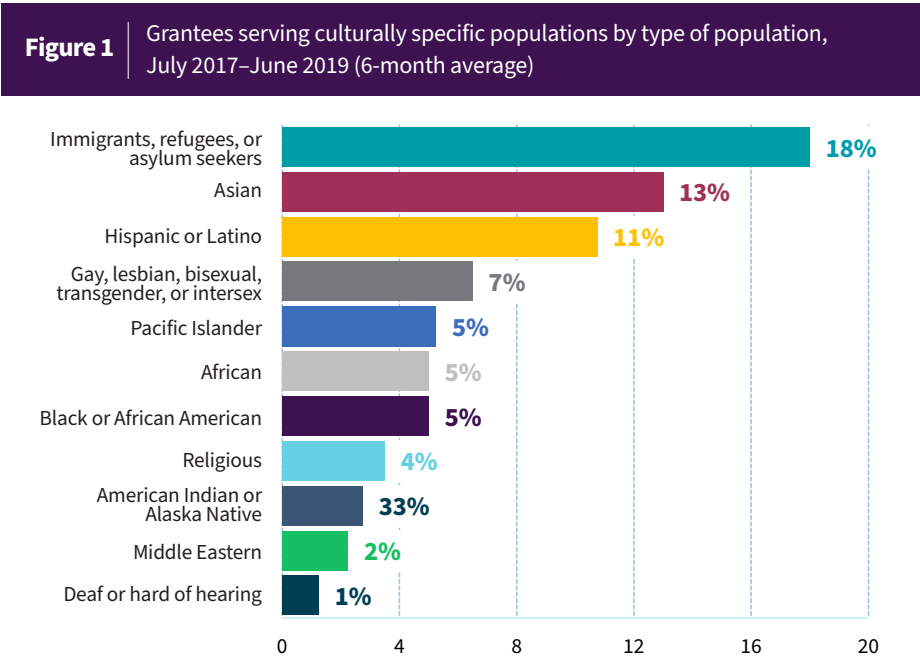
Prior to receiving SASP-CS funding, Korean American Family Services (KFAM) didn't have enough funds to officially develop a program just for sexual assault. With this funding, we were able to hire a victim advocate just for SA, and to commit our staff time and effort in order to provide services around SA in the Korean American community. SA has been a shameful issue to discuss in the community, so there is a lot of work to be done in order to break the silence and to bring awareness. KFAM started working with the faith community in the SA context, and building networks with other SA agencies in order to provide hard-to-reach Korean victims with culturally and linguistically specific services. During the grant period, KFAM will continue to work with the community and mainstream agencies to break the silence and to make the community a safer space for victims of SA.

**KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICES, CALIFORNIA**

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **43** individual grantees for the July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019 progress reporting period.

- **2** (5%) grantees reported that their grants specifically addressed tribal populations.



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.**

- **42** (98%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **37** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support victim advocates, counselors, and program coordinators.

Table 1   Staff supported with SASP-CS grant funds, July 2017–June 2019: Selected groups		
Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	37	
Victim advocates	15	41%
Counselors	7	19%
Program coordinators	7	19%
Administrators	4	11%

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

## Victim Services

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

- **42** (98%) grantees used funds for victim services.
- Grantees provided services to an average of **1,143** victims during each 6-month period.
- **99%** of victims who sought services received them during each 6-month period.

On average, during each 6-month reporting period, SASP-CS Program grantees provided services to **1,143 INDIVIDUALS**.

### Services include:

753  
individuals received  
**SUPPORT  
GROUPS/  
COUNSELING**

641  
individuals received  
**VICTIM  
ADVOCACY**



8,700  
**VICTIM-WITNESS  
NOTIFICATION/VICTIM  
OUTREACH SERVICES**

501  
individuals received  
**CRISIS  
INTERVENTION**

327  
individuals received  
**TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES**



11,481  
**HOTLINE CALLS**

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

- U visa services for **43** victims;
- VAWA self-petition services for **26** victims;
- Work authorization services for **18** victims;
- T visa services for **16** victims; and
- Cancellation of removal services for **2** victims.

*The lack of culturally sensitive and appropriate services can pose daunting barriers to safety, justice, and healing. Victims may choose not to engage in services or may terminate services early if programs fail to incorporate issues of culture and heritage (Mose & Gillum, 2015).*



### IL • Grantee Perspective



This funding has allowed us to expand our services. Survivors have the opportunity to address the trauma of sexual violence and mental health issues in a culturally appropriate setting. The services are delivered by a trained, compassionate staff that provides services in a language and space appropriate for the needs of the survivors. The lack of culturally appropriate services are a great challenge for Latinos seeking therapy. Without this type of service, many of our participants would continue to experience the negative impact of the trauma of sexual violence.

**MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION, ILLINOIS**

### CA • Grantee Perspective



SASP-CS Program funding allows culturally-grounded organizations like the Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) to address sexual assault in our communities through healing modalities that originate from our communities. Rather than approaching our communities with Western traditional talk therapy or counseling-oriented services, CPAF is identifying ways in which our communities know how to heal and offering support for those ways. CPAF is fortunate to have SASP-CS funding because it allows communities of color to own our healing and address the issue of sexual assault in ways that will help open up and not close off opportunities to receive healing.

**CENTER FOR THE PACIFIC ASIAN FAMILY, CALIFORNIA**



### TX • Grantee Perspective

Our promotora de salud goes out to the community providing information on services available to survivors. Our recruited lideres are also bridges for victims/survivors. They are well known, trusted, and established in their colonias or communities and many times, victims/survivors seek them out for assistance.

Lideres are an essential part of the program Un Nuevo Manana, allowing for sustainability across colonias and across Hidalgo County. The underserved Latino population we serve faces many barriers when seeking help and/or services and is unaware of resources and organizations that can help them. With the funding from SASP-CS, we have been able to refer survivors to services they were previously unaware of and would have otherwise gone without. Some of the barriers they are facing when seeking victim/survivor services are the lack of available culturally specific services and/or not being able to communicate in their language with the organizations. Through the funding provided by the SASP-CS, we have been able to specifically focus on outreach to victims/survivors of sexual assault and assist survivors who only speak Spanish who had not sought out services prior to our contact with them.

MHP SALUD, TEXAS



### NY • Grantee Perspective

The SASP-CS grant has allowed us to conduct culturally specific outreach with communities and community organizations that would have otherwise been difficult to reach. As such, the grant has allowed us to provide culturally sensitive services to families who otherwise might not have had someone to speak to. Our SASP-CS-funded staff conduct the majority of our presentations in Mandarin and provide a cultural perspective when discussing child sexual abuse. The familiarity of culture and language allows the topic to become accessible to the audience and there is a significant increase in interaction and engagement. Recognizing the cultural stigma around sexual violence, we have modified our presentations to be sensitive to that taboo such that we are able to discuss consent, boundaries, and appropriate and inappropriate touch from a perspective that does not offend the sensibilities of our audience. As a result of this approach, we are receiving more requests to conduct presentations in schools and neighborhoods that cater to the Asian community.

NEW YORK ASIAN WOMEN'S CENTER

## Victims Seeking Services

Grantees serve victims of sexual assault.

**Table 2** | Victims seeking services with SASP-CS grant funds, July 2017–June 2019

Victims seeking services	6-month average	
<b>Total victims seeking services</b>	<b>1,152</b>	
Victims served	<b>1,111</b>	<b>96%</b>
Victims partially served	<b>32</b>	<b>3%</b>
Victims not served	<b>9</b>	<b>1%</b>

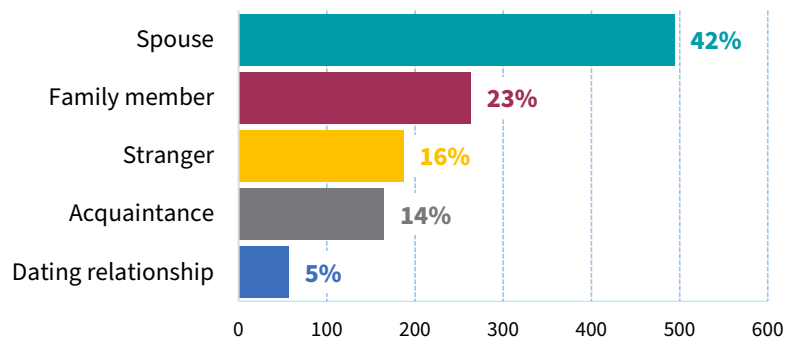
**NOTE:** "Partially served" represents victims who received some but not all of the service(s) they requested, provided those services were funded under the SASP-CS grant. "Not served" represents victims who sought services and did not receive the service(s) they were seeking, provided those services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

## Victims' Relationships to Offenders

Grantees serve victims of sexual assault. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019:

- The victims most frequently served or partially served were victimized by a **spouse or intimate partner** (42%).
- The remaining victims were most commonly victimized by another **family** or **household member** (23%) or by a **stranger** (16%).

**Figure 2** | 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:

- Program unable to provide services due to limited resources;
- Transportation;
- Hours of operation;
- Services were not appropriate for victim;
- Lack of childcare; and
- Program rules not acceptable to victim.

## Demographics of Victims Served and Partially Served

Grantees served or partially served an average of **1,143** victims during each 6-month period. The victims most frequently served or partially served were **Hispanic or Latina** (35%), **female** (93%), and between the ages of **25 and 59** (71%).



*A national survey found that service providers who reported collaborating with law enforcement on outreach to culturally specific, immigrant, and low English proficiency communities, reported that law enforcement used qualified interpreters and language lines more often than those who did not report such partnerships (Lee et al., 2013).*



### CA • Grantee Perspective

SASP Culturally Specific Program funding has allowed Casa de la Familia to reach more victims of sexual assault and/or abuse in a targeted and meaningful way. Before we received this funding, we were limited to providing counseling to victims who reached out to us for help. This limited us greatly in many ways. SASP-CS grant funding has also allowed us to target specific communities that are marginalized and underserved, in the Watts area of Los Angeles County, for example. Through this grant funding, we were able to meet with the counseling team and principal of a school in Watts, and the 13 Reasons Program was well received. We then formalized an MOU with this school and launched our first support group in May. The school site was 100% supportive, and we are looking forward to hosting more support groups throughout the grant period.

CASA DE LA FAMILIA, CALIFORNIA

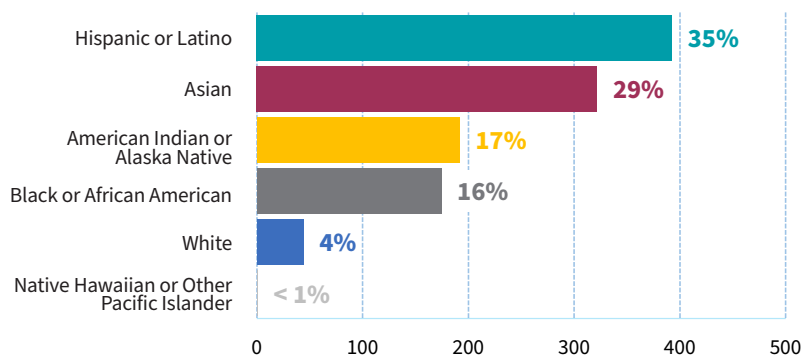


### NJ • Grantee Perspective

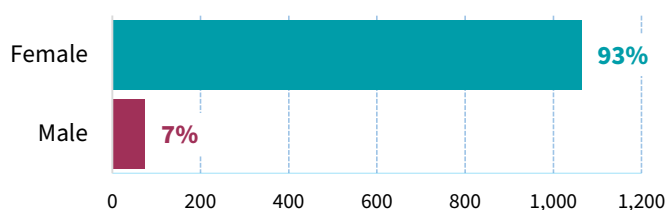
With the help of the SASP-CS grant we are able to develop partnerships with other organizations and coordinate workshops in diverse South Asian communities in New Jersey. With these partnerships we are able to spread awareness about sexual assault on a larger scale and in different demographics. With the help of this grant, Manavi has been able to develop a culturally and linguistically appropriate sexual assault support services program to cater to the needs of South Asian survivors of sexual assault. We have also been able to create two separate posters that demonstrate the effects of sexual violence on South Asian women. The materials have been distributed to diverse communities and have allowed us to spread awareness about sexual assault.

MANAVI, INC., NEW JERSEY

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



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





Nearly half of the transgender respondents in a recent survey reported that they had been sexually assaulted in their lifetimes. Victimization rates were even higher for transgender respondents who were American Indian (65%), multiracial (59%), Middle Eastern (58%), and Black (53%). These figures underscore the importance of a coordinated community response to sexual violence that takes into account the multiple layers of victims' identities (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2019; White et al., 2019).



#### CA • Grantee Perspective

SASP-CS funding has allowed us to provide direct services and advocacy to victim/survivors of sexual assault. Victim Advocates assist victim/survivors with filing restraining orders, and provide court accompaniment, safety planning, case management, and linkages. As a result, victims are able to navigate the criminal justice system with support and without fear. Through safety planning, victims/survivors can address any fears they have and build a support system with their families and friends. These activities allow victims to participate in the criminal justice process with someone they trust. As a result, staff have seen an increase in requests for services and follow through.

CENTRO LA FAMILIA ADVOCACY SERVICES, INC.,  
CALIFORNIA

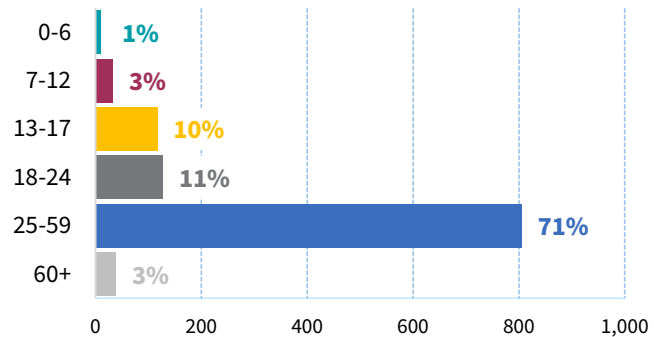


#### NY • Grantee Perspective

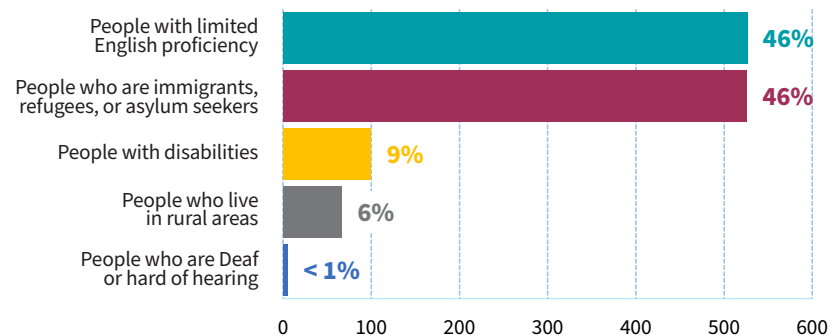
Our clients report several structural and cultural barriers both at the policy and implementation level that lead to unreported crimes, re-traumatization, and marginalization. Given the current political environment, the highest need has been for language access and cultural humility in law enforcement and legal systems. Due to the intersectionality of sexual violence with immigration and socio-economic status, many victims refrain from reporting the crime and entering the legal system with the fear of being exposed to immigration related issues, job loss, and even arrest.

VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM, INC.,  
NEW YORK

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



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



## Secondary Victims

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

- Grantees provided services to an average of **369** secondary victims during each 6-month period.

## Remaining Areas of Need

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

- Cultural taboos around discussions of sexual violence;
- Familial pressures to refrain from reporting or disclosing sexual assault;
- Mistrust of law enforcement and fear of deportation;
- A lack of confidentiality and anonymity within some communities;
- Financial and social dependence on abusers;
- Insufficient knowledge of legal rights; and
- Insufficient legal accountability for offenders.

Grantees also noted **there is a tremendous lack of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services** across the spectrum of providers. To better serve victims there is a great need for:

- More qualified interpreters;
- More bilingual advocates;
- Culturally and linguistically specific mental health services; and
- Cultural competency training for service providers.

Grantees called for **more community education and outreach** in order to:

- Inform victims of their legal rights;
- Educate communities about sexual assault and healthy relationships;
- Combat victim-blaming and negative stereotypes about victims; and
- Publicize available resources.

Grantees frequently cited challenges in **assisting victims in meeting basic needs**, such as:

- Shelter and housing;
- Mental health services;
- Transportation;
- Civil legal assistance; and
- Employment and job training.

Finally, grantees noted a need for **greater awareness of and improved services to underserved victims within their communities**, including:

- Immigrant victims;
- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- Youth victims; and
- LGBTQ victims.

#### MN • Grantee Perspective



Lack of interpreter services for the Latino community is a concern. Court interpreters only interpret during the court hearing but after the court hearing is done, no one is there to clarify questions or concerns. In addition, emergency housing options (shelters) for victims/survivors and children following an immediate crisis or assault are needed. Most Latino survivors do not have family or additional support in the state. This results in survivors staying in a home where the abuse/assault takes place because it is the only option they have. Providing a safe space and distance from where the assault took place allows survivors to heal and begin focusing on the next steps following an assault.

COMMUNIDADES LATINAS UNIDAS EN SERVICIO,  
MINNESOTA

#### NY • Grantee Perspective



There is a significant need for early education and violence prevention programs. To break down cycles of violence, we need to educate children about consent and healthy relationships from an early age. By doing so, we can help end cycles of violence and allow more people to live healthier, safer lives. An example would be a mentoring or peer-teaching program led by the Youth Community Project Team, in which members visit elementary, middle, and high schools to engage in activities with students on the topic of consent and sexual assault (depending on age). By educating our youth and focusing on prevention, we can help increase survivors' safety and enhance community response.

THE KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICE CENTER,  
NEW YORK



