

Grants to State Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalitions Program

The Grants to State Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalitions Program (State Coalitions Program) funds state-level coalitions to collaborate and coordinate with relevant federal, state, and local entities. Coalitions consist primarily of organizational members (e.g. sexual assault programs, domestic violence programs, tribal victim services agencies, and other victim services agencies) but may also include individual members.

STATE SEXUAL ASSAULT COALITIONS AND STATE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE coalitions play a critical role in advancing the goals of VAWA, serving as a collective voice to end domestic/sexual violence through collaboration with federal, state, territorial, and local organizations.

87 Grantees Reporting

Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019, 87 unique grantees reported activities funded by the State Coalitions Program.

113,007 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 113,007 people.

74,804 Technical Assistance Activities

Grantees provided 71,889 consultations and 2,915 site visits.

Grantees engage in the following purpose areas:

- Coordinate state victim services activities; and
- Collaborate and coordinate with federal, state, and local entities engaged in domestic/sexual violence activities, including but not limited to:
 - Provide training and technical assistance (TA) to member agencies;
 - Expand the technological capacity of coalitions and/or member agencies; and
 - Bring local programs together to identify gaps in services and to coordinate activities.

Coalitions play a number of roles in responding to domestic/sexual violence: they serve as organizing bodies for local agencies; advocate for policy, legislation, or practice changes on behalf of their member agencies; and support collaboration between agencies building community relationships.



WV • Grantee Perspective

State Coalitions Program funding provides the coalition with the infrastructure to participate in the numerous collaboratives that are transforming the landscape for services for sexual assault victims in West Virginia. These include the SANE advisory board, the SAFE Commission, work with correctional facilities, the sexual assault kit initiative, and the most recent significant focus: the state's human trafficking task force. As State Coalitions Program funds provide significant financial support for core coalition staff, without it the coalition would not have the capacity to facilitate or participate in all of these time-intensive initiatives that are having such an impact on victim services and the service delivery system itself.

WEST VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR RAPE
INFORMATION AND SERVICES



VAWA-funded grantees offer training and technical assistance for those responding to the needs of victims, such as best practices in organizational structures, developing supportive work environments, managing secondary trauma (i.e., the trauma suffered when one hears about others' firsthand experiences of trauma), reducing compassion fatigue (i.e., reduced feelings of compassion toward those who have suffered, developing as a result of frequent exposure to other people's trauma), and improving self-care. Advocates who are well-trained are better able to support victims seeking to become and remain free from violence (Choi, 2016; Frey et al., 2017; Merchant & Whiting, 2015).



D.C. • Grantee Perspective

The State Coalitions Program funding allows the D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence to expand its advocacy and leverage staff time to focus on statewide policy issues that would otherwise not include domestic violence. This year, we have reviewed health education standards and explored healthy relationships programming for youth. We have adopted prevention as a key component of our work and drafted a healthy relationships curriculum for middle school educators, as well as continued our work with youth-serving organizations invested in trauma-informed supports for young girls. Funding has also allowed us to focus intensively on creative solutions and integral partnerships, and build trust to address the housing crisis for survivors fleeing abuse in D.C.

D.C. COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **87** individual grantees for the July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019 progress reporting period.

- **31** (36%) grantees reporting were domestic violence coalitions, **31** (36%) were sexual assault coalitions, and **25** (29%) were dual sexual assault/domestic violence coalitions.

Nearly all grantees use funds to develop or enhance standards of service for underserved populations, by identifying gaps in services and supporting member and community organizations in their provision of outreach to and services for victims.

- **85** (98%) grantees used funds to address underserved populations.

Staff

Grant-funded staff provide training, education, and technical assistance to help end domestic/sexual violence and hold offenders accountable. **Being able to hire staff is critical to the overall function and success of programs.**

- **87** (100%) grantees used funds for staffing needs.
- Grantees funded an average of **127** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- Grantees most often used these staffing funds to support program coordinators and administrators.

Table 1 | Staff supported with State Coalitions grant funds, July 2017–June 2019:
Selected groups

Staff funded	6-month average	
Total FTE staff funded	127	
Program coordinators	37	29%
Administrators	31	24%
Support staff	17	13%
Technical assistance providers	11	9%
System advocates	9	7%
Communication specialists	8	6%
Trainers	8	6%

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

Training

Grantees help train states, territories, and communities to develop coordinated responses to reduce domestic/sexual violence. **This training improves the professional response to victims and increases offender accountability.**

- **79** (91%) grantees used funds for training.
- Grantees convened a total of **4,164** training events.

In the two years covered by this report, VAWA-funded grantees trained:

113,007
PROFESSIONALS

across **multiple systems:**



**VICTIM
ADVOCATES**



**MULTIDISCIPLINARY
STAFF**



**LAW
ENFORCEMENT**

Technical Assistance

Grantees provide technical assistance to member programs through site visits and other consultations. Consultations may include in-person, telephone, electronic, or other types of contact with programs. The goal of technical assistance is to improve the response of professionals and organizations to victims of domestic/sexual violence, by improving organizational infrastructure; developing, revising, and implementing policies, protocols, and procedures; and providing materials on relevant issues.

- **85** (98%) grantees used funds for technical assistance.
- Grantees provided a total of **74,804** technical assistance activities.

Across the 2-year period, providers most frequently delivered the following forms of assistance:

- A total of **71,889** consultations; and
- A total of **2,915** site visits.

When health care providers ask questions about interpersonal violence during confidential, routine medical examinations, they provide opportunities for victims to disclose abuse and receive appropriate services and referrals (Pagels et al., 2015). Research shows that health care providers who receive training on screening for and identifying victims of domestic violence improve their practice, professional attitudes, and comfort in asking about violence in the patient's home (Alvarez et al., 2017; Ambuel et al., 2013; Zachor et al., 2018).



HI • Grantee Perspective

The State Coalitions Program funding has allowed Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) to continue to provide training and education to member programs, community members, and the general public statewide. Due to the unique geographic location and rural communities of Hawaii, accessing resources is a challenge for so many programs. State Coalitions Funding allows HSCADV to fly to neighboring islands to provide quality, in-person training opportunities for those communities. The funding has also provided an opportunity to engage multidisciplinary systems, such as law enforcement, Child Welfare, and the Judiciary, to improve the response to victims of domestic violence. Last reporting period, HSCADV collaborated with the Judiciary, law enforcement, parole, and legislators to provide an open forum for victims of domestic violence and their experiences within systems across the state. As a result of the statewide forum, shifts have occurred, such as providing a safe place for victims in courthouses away from perpetrators, improvements in judges' responses to domestic violence victims within hearings, and mandated domestic violence training for judges statewide. Furthermore, the funding permits a collaboration between domestic violence agencies, HSCADV, and law enforcement for the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), and the police response to victims of domestic violence.

**HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



NM • Grantee Perspective

Significant areas of remaining need for improving services for sexual assault survivors, increasing their safety, and enhancing community responses include: continuing to develop new services for survivors from underserved populations, delivered by culturally specific organizations run by and for members of these populations; continuing to enhance services for survivors from underserved populations delivered by current Sexual Assault Service Providers (SASPs); increasing the number of SASPs such that survivors in un/underserved areas have improved access to sexual assault services; and the continued development of full-spectrum services to address the needs of all survivors, particularly those with complex trauma resulting from prolonged experiences of sexual violence.

NEW MEXICO COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS, INC.



CO • Grantee Perspective

Services for culturally specific and other underserved populations continues to be a huge need in Colorado. Often, mainstream service providers don't even know who is in their community, as evidenced by a lack of data provided on grant reports in relation to questions about underserved populations in their service area. There is a great need for information and training on providing culturally appropriate services as well as building organizational capacity to do this kind of work.

COLORADO COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Remaining Areas of Need

Grantees noted a need to **enhance collaboration and coordination between service providers** in response to domestic violence and sexual assault. This included collaboration between:

- Health and human services providers and DV/SA organizations;
- DV/SA organizations and religious organizations;
- Criminal justice professionals and victim service providers; and
- Tribal, state, and local law enforcement and courts.

Grantees pointed to the need to **devote more resources to serving victims of sexual assault**, including:

- Developing sexual assault response teams (SARTs) within their states;
- Improving availability of SANE exams;
- More equitable distribution of resources for assisting sexual assault survivors; and
- Improving law enforcement and criminal justice responses to sexual assault.

Grantees emphasized the need for increased **community education and outreach** in order to:

- Educate legislatures and policy-makers on the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence as it relates to the law and policies they implement;
- Expand awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault in underserved communities;
- Promote available services; and
- Encourage victims to come forward.

Grantees frequently reported the need to **provide culturally informed and linguistically appropriate domestic violence and sexual assault services and outreach to underserved populations** within their respective states, including:

- Victims in remote rural areas;
- Victims with limited English proficiency;
- Immigrant victims;
- LGBTQ populations; and
- Victims with disabilities, including Deaf or hard of hearing populations.

A majority of grantees reported **difficulty in maintaining current services given budget cuts and financial constraints**, as well as **difficulty meeting new state and federal mandates without concurrent increases in funding**. These challenges had **significant impacts on agencies' ability to recruit and retain qualified staff**.

Grantees also felt that **more training was needed on trauma-informed response and evidence-based practices among:**

- Law enforcement and first responders;
- Judges and court personnel;
- Victim service providers; and
- Prosecutors.

Finally, many grantees underscored difficulties in **providing victim services,** such as:

- Housing and shelter;
- Mental health and substance abuse services;
- Legal assistance;
- Financial support; and
- Transportation.

MN • Grantee Perspective



Overall, one of the greatest areas of need is still a lack of knowledge, training, and experience amongst systems professionals in providing trauma-informed care to victims/survivors. Across the state, this issue is the backbone of multiple problems our organizations face. For example, this lack of training increases issues in coordination of care and collaboration with local advocacy organizations. A lack of awareness of sexual violence issues creates trickle down effects, often resulting in community-wide disadvantages, as well as large-scale policy issues. A specific example of this is Minnesota's current issues around billing of SANE exams. A lack of clear policy and collaboration created a system that revictimizes those seeking exams.

MINNESOTA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

