

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 typically are national, tribal, statewide, or other nonprofit organizations or institutions of higher education with the capacity to provide training and technical assistance on a national level. 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.

248 Projects

Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019, the TA Program funded 248 projects.

70,451 TA Activities

Grantees provided a total of 38,370 consultations, and responded to 25,986 requests for information.

242,020 People Trained

Grantees trained a total of 242,020 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.



There is a perpetual need for both basic and advanced training and technical assistance for advocates and staff in the victim services field, which is chronically under-resourced and subject to high staff turnover. Many agencies serving victims of domestic/sexual violence operate with limited budgets, and staff are likely to juggle high caseloads. In 2019, the annual Domestic Violence Counts survey found that in a single 24-hour period, victims made 11,336 requests for services that could not be met, because programs did not have the resources to provide these services (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2019).



MD • Grantee Perspective

There was a clear need for training and technical assistance, as well as the development of written “how-to” resources for the field that focus on operational tools that advocates and supervision officers can use to collaborate more efficiently with a common goal of reducing victimization. The e-curriculum developed under this effort will help probation staff to increase their awareness, understanding, and practical application of victim-centered approaches to the specialized supervision of sex offenders. Topics covered include defining victim-centeredness as a fundamental tenet of sex offender management, key principles and practices of specialized sex offender supervision, various points at which probation officers’ decisions and practices have implications for victims and their families, the role of victim advocates in promoting victim-centered supervision practices with sex offenders, and promising examples of victim-centeredness in practice.

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC POLICY, MARYLAND



VAWA funding supports state and tribal coalitions and topically specific technical assistance providers who work to strengthen domestic/sexual violence prevention and response efforts. OVV also helps coordinate all of these efforts by supporting initiatives like the Resource Sharing Project, which compiles and disseminates resources and works with coalitions on issues such as organizational growth, professional development, and policy/protocol development. For more information visit: resourcesharingproject.org.

General Grant Information

Information for this report was submitted by **248** individual projects, located in **103** provider agencies for the July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019 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 **249** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff during each 6-month period.
- **167** (67%) 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.**

- **200** (81%) TA projects used funds for training.
- Most often these trainings reached domestic violence program staff (**11%**), dual sexual assault and domestic violence program staff (**11%**), law enforcement officers (**9%**), and multidisciplinary staff at the same training (**8%**).

In the two years covered by this report, TA Program grantees trained:

242,020
PEOPLE

at

3,735
TRAINING EVENTS

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.

- **208** (84%) individual TA projects used funds for technical assistance.
- TA providers delivered a total of **70,451** technical assistance activities.

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

- A total of **38,370** consultations;
- A total of **25,986** information request responses;

- A total of **5,197** referrals; and
- A total of **898** 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.

- **221** (89%) individual TA projects used funds for products.
- TA providers developed or revised a total of **5,253** 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:

- Victims with disabilities, including Deaf or hard of hearing populations;
- LGBTQ populations;
- Victims in remote rural areas;
- American Indians or Alaska Natives;
- Immigrant victims, including undocumented immigrants;
- Racial minorities;
- Youth victims; and
- Victims with limited English proficiency.

The need to provide **linguistically appropriate and culturally informed services** was particularly pronounced for **immigrant victims, victims with limited English proficiency, American Indian or Alaska Native victims, and racial minorities**. According to TA providers, these **needs included**:

- Training for law enforcement on cultural sensitivity and implicit bias;
- Training for service providers, judges, court personnel, and attorneys on immigration proceedings;
- Training for all providers on trauma-informed responses to victims;
- Improved translation and interpretation services;
- More bilingual advocates and service providers; and
- Culturally specific outreach methods to increase safety and accessibility of services.

TA providers also emphasized the need to **support grantees in their efforts to enhance collaboration with other service providers** in response to domestic violence and sexual assault. This included collaboration between:

PA • Grantee Perspective

The Women of Color Network, Inc. Economic Policy and Leadership Project leads with the vision that, despite violence and inequity, our communities and survivors are resourceful and are entitled to economic security, a voice at the table, and safety and health for all of our communities. The innovations we make in our culturally specific programs have the power to transform lives, communities, institutions, the field, and our society. By gathering women of color advocates; facilitating expert and peer sharing of concrete strategies, resources, and skills for addressing economic insecurities; as well as fostering organizational capacity and leadership development, we enhance our culturally specific advocacy and community connection while challenging the systemic inequities faced by survivors of color.

WOMEN OF COLOR NETWORK, PENNSYLVANIA

D.C. • Grantee Perspective

Training remains a significant need for law enforcement agencies in the response to sexual assault and domestic violence. Specifically, investigators need training on trauma-informed practices and proper report writing for sexual assault and domestic violence cases. This especially appears to be a need in smaller agencies, who may encounter funding and logistical barriers that prevent or delay the receipt of this needed training. If police agencies do not receive the proper training, victim/survivor safety may be compromised and offenders may not always be held accountable for their offenses. From our interaction with project sites and agencies applying to receive technical assistance, it appears that officers may be receiving basic training on sexual assault in the academy, but are not receiving regular in-service training on this topic. Regular training is critical in order to ensure that officers and investigators are up to date on victim-centered practices and appropriate interview techniques.

POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM, WASHINGTON, D.C.

CA • Grantee Perspective

We see a need with regard to increasing victim/survivor safety around the infrastructure of organizations and staff support. Programs need organizational structures, strategies, practices, and policies to support staff and address and minimize secondary trauma within direct services programs, including supervision for and by staff who may be survivors, and how to navigate staff's past trauma experiences.

FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE, CALIFORNIA



MN • Grantee Perspective

Casa de Esperanza and partners have noted that many OWW grantees representing the CSSP, Rural, Tribal, and Underserved programs had a similar issue with managing their grants along with strengthening their organizational infrastructure. Grantees explained that their programs were able to serve their diverse and varying communities, but that keeping up with the compliance needs was an issue for them. A significant area of remaining need for increasing victim/survivor safety and offender accountability was the availability of resources and materials for their organizations to better manage and maintain their overall compliance systems to meet and/or sustain the federal requirements. Meeting these needs would allow organizations to better focus on serving their participants. Through this project, Casa de Esperanza aims to work with grantees to strengthen their organizational capacities to enable better services for their communities.

CASA DE ESPERANZA, MINNESOTA



CO • Grantee Perspective

As the Center continues to develop rapport with grantees of the Consolidated Youth (CY) Program, it is clear that there is a strong interest, as well as a need, for creating more comprehensive coordinated community responses to children, youth, and young adults exposed to dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. We speculate that CY grantees would benefit from having a very defined community and population to work with. CY grantees may also benefit from OWW more clearly requiring a coordinated community response approach to their work. A stronger CCR requirement may serve to enhance their capacity for developing coordinated and comprehensive connections between youth service providers, rape crisis centers, shelters, law enforcement, schools, and other stakeholders. Responses to youth who are reporting abuse vary dramatically person-to-person and community-to-community. Children, teens, and young adults need more consistent support from adults, and pathways for reporting.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Law enforcement agencies and DV/SA service providers;
- Criminal justice professionals and victim service providers; and
- Tribal, state, and local law enforcement and courts.

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

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:

- Trauma-informed practices;
- Cultural responsiveness and anti-bias policing practices;
- Protection order enforcement;
- Working with victims with limited English proficiency;
- Best practices in sexual assault response and investigation;
- Identification of the primary aggressor; and
- Training to identify victims of trafficking.

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:

- 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;
- Training on youth culture and teen dating violence;
- Training on protection orders and protection order-related issues; and
- Basic training in trauma-informed practices.

Finally, TA providers identified the need to provide **training to victim service providers on issues of confidentiality** in order to maintain victim safety and encourage reporting.