

Boletín: Accessing Federal Resources to Enhance Services for Survivors from Culturally Specific Communities

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Introduction

Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault often face a myriad of challenges when trying to seek safety and justice. Moreover, it is well-known that there is no “one-size-fits all” approach to providing assistance to and for survivors. Survivors from historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities often face intersecting challenges, including additional economic barriers, challenges dealing with the criminal justice system, inadequate language access, barriers to accessing health care, challenges navigating multiple systems, vulnerabilities related to immigration status and discrimination, and risks of further isolation or unintended consequences when trying to seek assistance. These issues have a disproportionate impact on marginalized racial and ethnic communities and often result in additional layers of complexity in providing survivors with assistance and resources.

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, as a national resource center and technical assistance (TA) provider, periodically receives inquiries from culturally specific, community-based organizations seeking more information about funding opportunities and grant programs at the federal, state, and local level. They are interested in accessing resources for community-based organizations to better assist survivors in their communities who are experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

This funding can enable culturally specific, community-based organizations to further develop and expand innovative and comprehensive programs to ensure that more survivors seek and receive services that promote their safety and well-being. Furthermore, it is imperative to foster capacity building and access to resources in culturally specific communities to support the development of holistic strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches to better address and prevent intimate partner violence.

Casa de Esperanza has chosen to use “@” in place of the masculine “o” when referring to people or things that are either gender neutral or both masculine and feminine in make-up. This decision reflects our commitment to gender inclusion and recognizes the important contributions that both men and women make to our communities.

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Nonetheless, it can be difficult for culturally specific, community-based organizations to obtain information and learn how to navigate the different possible federal funding streams targeted to improving victim services. This can be especially challenging for programs that primarily serve individuals who live at the margins and who may not feel comfortable seeking help from mainstream service providers or government systems. Those culturally specific community-based organizations often provide a wider range of services and want to better integrate assistance for survivors within their existing programs. Securing more stable funding to help survivors in their communities is a priority for many of these programs.

This document focuses on three different key pieces of federal legislation that provide targeted resources for providing assistance to survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault:

- I. the Family Violence Protection and Services Act (FVPSA)
- II. the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- III. the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

These federal grant programs provide a significant amount of money to the states and territories via formula grants, which they in turn distribute to agencies and nonprofit organizations in their states that are providing direct services. The federal legislation and/or regulations for these programs also emphasize the importance of supporting culturally specific organizations and organizations that are primarily focused on assisting underserved populations. Additionally, there are some grant programs specifically focused on providing resources for such organizations that primarily are seeking to address the needs of underserved and culturally specific populations.

This document seeks to provide general information about these three pieces of federal legislation and how community-based organizations can further access resources and be involved in the state planning process in their states. All of the information in this document is public information that Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network has consolidated in this *boletín* (policy bulletin) in a concise, understandable format in order to help increase the knowledge and capacity of advocates and organizations to access these resources, engage in systems advocacy, and help enhance different pathways to safety for survivors from marginalized communities.

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Background on Federal Funding: How Federal funds from FVPSA, VAWA and VOCA are Allocated

The U.S. Congress is the branch of government that creates the programs and priorities that are established through federal legislation. Congress also helps determine the allocation of federal funding for those programs, which are then administered by the different federal agencies. It is important to keep in mind the following terms when discussing the funding of federal programs:

- **Authorization level:** This is the amount of money Congress says can be allocated to specific programs established through federal legislation. It is important to note that legislation often needs to be “reauthorized” after a certain amount of time to either maintain or change the authorization levels for federal spending. This is the case for both FVPSA and VAWA, since the legislation to reauthorize each one is usually for a 5-year period.
- **Appropriations:** This is the process whereby Congress actually allocates specific amounts of money to be spent on different programs each year. This is undertaken annually by Congress through the federal budget process. Often the appropriations levels are less than the maximum authorization levels for different programs in the federal statute. It is important to note that Congress can continue to appropriate funds for a federal program even after the authorizing period has expired, while Congress continues to work on passing “reauthorizing” legislation.
- You can access a chart [here](#), created by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, detailing the amount of federal funding that has been authorized and the amount that Congress has actually appropriated for FVPSA, VAWA, and VOCA programs.

Federal funds that are subsequently made available to direct service providers are generally distributed in one of two ways: 1) via formula grants to the states/territories (hereafter referred to as states), which are managed by State Administering Agencies who then distribute those funds to organizations and agencies in their state; and 2) through discretionary grants administered directly by federal agencies.

Additional general information about these two distribution mechanisms is provided below:

Formula Grants

Formula grants are allocations of federal funding to states and territories that are determined by distribution formulas in the authorizing legislation and regulations. To receive the formula grant, the state must comply with different requirements and conditions set forth in the legislation and regulations.¹ The FVPSA, VAWA, and VOCA formula grants that go to the states are administered and managed by **State Administering Agencies**.

¹ [Helpful information for those seeking to learn more about federal grants is available at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101.html](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101.html). See also <https://ojp.gov/grants101/typesoffunding.htm>

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Each grant award amount to the state is calculated by a formula, and actual funding amounts vary. Award calculations may consider factors such as the population of the state, U.S. Census Bureau data, and the annual appropriation (funding) provided by Congress.²

Most State Administrating Agencies establish a competitive grant application process to distribute the formula grant funds received by the state from the federal government in order to provide funds to local government agencies and community-based organizations. Some states use a different process, known as “pass through.”³

Discretionary Grants

Discretionary grants at the federal level are awarded directly to eligible recipients (organizations and agencies), most often on a competitive basis. The FVPSA grants are administered by the Family Violence Prevention and Services program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); the VAWA grants are administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ); and the VOCA grants are administered by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at DOJ.

Applications for these grant funds are part of a national, competitive process in response to a request for proposals, which are issued by the federal agencies that administer those grants. Applications go through a preliminary review process and are scored by a panel of subject matter experts. Strengths and weaknesses are noted based on the selection criteria outlined in the grant solicitation and the agency then makes the grant award decisions.

Additional Resources

The federal government has a website, [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), that provides many helpful resources to learn more about applying for and managing federal grants, including the following:

- [Grants Learning Center](#)
- [Grants 101](#)
- [Grant Terms](#)

² [This chart from the Office of Victims of Crime shows the amount of VOCA crime victims assistance funding distributed to each state in fiscal year 2020: https://www.ovc.gov/grants/crime-victims-fund-assistance-allocations-2020.pdf](https://www.ovc.gov/grants/crime-victims-fund-assistance-allocations-2020.pdf)

³ Another process might include what is known as “pass-through.” Some states have “pass-through” funding clauses, which means that funds issued by a federal agency to a state agency or institution are then transferred to other state agencies, units of local government, or other eligible groups per the award eligibility terms. The state agency is referred to as the “prime recipient” and it issues the subawards as competitive or noncompetitive grants as dictated by the prime award terms and authorizing legislation. See <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-terminology.html#P>

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While it is helpful to understand the general funding mechanisms and terms described above, it is also important to develop a better understanding of the specific federal grant programs and funding streams established through FVPSA, VAWA, and VOCA legislation.

I. Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) was first passed in 1984 and was the first federal law to address domestic violence. FVPSA is administered by the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, which is located within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Family Youth Services Bureau. FVPSA provides the primary federal funding stream dedicated to the support of immediate shelter and supportive services for survivors of domestic violence or dating violence and their dependents.⁴ FVPSA supports life-saving services throughout the country through grants to states, territories, and tribal governments, as well as funding for other critical programs, such as national resource centers, state/territory domestic violence coalitions, prevention programs, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. FVPSA provides core funding annually that helps to support services provided by more than 1,600 organizations and programs across the country in their response to the urgent needs of domestic violence victims and their children.

The FVPSA legislation has been reauthorized by Congress on numerous occasions, most recently in 2010 when the funding allocations were reauthorized for another 5-year period. However, funds have continued to be appropriated by Congress each year while efforts are underway to reauthorize FVPSA once again and while Congress considers possible enhancements to improve access to services and support for survivors.

The amount of funding appropriated by Congress in the FY 19 budget to be distributed according to the FVPSA formula was \$164.5 million. The current formula in the FVPSA legislation states that 25% of the amounts appropriated by Congress above \$130 million will be allocated to fund specialized services for abused parents and their children exposed to domestic violence. These funds are distributed through a discretionary grant program that is administered by the FVPSA office of HHS.⁵

⁴ Although Congress uses the term “family violence” in the legislation, the focus of FVPSA is on domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault as it occurs within the context of intimate partner relationships. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fvpsa_admin_guide_20121119_0.pdf

⁵ For more information about the FVPSA office discretionary grants, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/fvspa-discretionary-grants>

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The remaining amount of the FVPSA funding for services is distributed through a formula established in the FVPSA legislation in the following manner:

Formula Grants to States and Territories	70%
Grants to Tribes	10%
State and Territories Domestic Violence Coalitions	10%
Training & Technical Assistance Centers	6%
FVPSA Evaluation, Monitoring & Admin	2.5%
Discretionary	1.5%
Total formula	100%

- **Formula Grants to States and Territories:** 70% of available funds are distributed to States and Territories. States may use up to 5% of their grant funding for state administrative costs. The remainder of the funds are used to make subgrants to eligible entities for community-based projects that meet the goals of the grant program. Each state has a State Administrator that oversees the distribution of FVPSA funds. (See the resource section below for a link to information about State Administrators).
- **Grants to Tribes:** 10% of available funds are allocated for distribution to Native American Tribes for implementing, maintaining, and expanding programs and projects to respond to, prevent, and raise public awareness about domestic violence on Tribal lands.
- **State and Territories Domestic Violence Coalitions:** 10% of available funds are allocated to state and territorial domestic violence coalitions (collectively referred to in this document as state coalitions) to provide technical assistance to state agencies and organizations on policy and practices related to intervention and prevention, as well as training and support to local domestic violence programs.
- **Training and Technical Assistance Centers:** 6% of available funds are allocated to support resource centers that help inform and strengthen domestic violence intervention and prevention efforts. This includes funding for two national resource centers (one of which is focused on Native American survivors), four special issue resource centers, and three culturally-specific resource centers. These and several other FVSPA-funded resource centers, together comprise the [Domestic Violence Resource Network](#) (DVRN).

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- **Administrative Funds:** 2.5% of the funds are allocated to the FVPSA office of HHS for evaluation, monitoring, and other administrative costs associated with overseeing FVPSA.
- **Discretionary Funds:** The remaining 1.5% of FVPSA funds is allocated to discretionary spending, including additional discretionary grant projects.

The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), [Strong Hearts Help Line](#), [the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center](#), and [Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances \(DELTA\) Impact](#) program funds are also funded through FVPSA through separate allocations of funding in the appropriations process.

The Development of State Plans for the Distribution of FVPSA funding

State Administering Agencies are required to have a state plan in order to receive the FVPSA funds that go to the states via the formula grants. As stated in the HHS guide for FVPSA State Administrators, "The plan ultimately is a road map for how the funds will be used and distributed within the state with the goal of maximizing the funds to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence.... It is also a mechanism for key stakeholders to come together to assess needs, barriers, and emerging issues and to strategize on how to improve responses for victims and their children, especially from underserved communities."⁶ The FVPSA regulations also include guidance about the state planning process and the domestic violence needs assessments that promote greater coordination of the statutorily required activities to foster inclusion of underserved communities, including racial and ethnic minority communities, and to better identify the needs of all victims of domestic and dating violence.⁷ As a result, it is important for culturally specific community based organizations and organization working with underserved populations to ensure that they have a voice at the table as key stakeholders in the development of the FVPSA state plan in order to improve access to safety and services.

⁶ "Navigating the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program: A Guide for State and Territorial Administrators," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (2012) at p. 19. Available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fvpsa_admin_guide_20121119_0.pdf

⁷ 45 CFR part 1370 available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-11-02/pdf/2016-26063.pdf>. See also the definition of Underserved populations found at 45 CFR § 1370.2, which references the statutory definition of racial and ethnic minority groups as found in the Public Health Services Act.

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Additional FVPSA Resources:

- More information about FVPSA can be found on the HHS website under the auspices of the Family & Youth Services Bureau [here](#).
- A comprehensive guide published by ACF entitled “Navigating the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program” can be found [here](#).
- A comprehensive overview of FVPSA by the Congressional Research Services can be found [here](#).
- This is a [list](#) of all of the agencies that serve as State Administrators of FVPSA funds and that are responsible for distributing the FVPSA resources allocated to each of the states and territories.
- A list of state domestic violence and sexual assault programs can be found [here](#).
- Information about organizations that provide training and technical assistance nationally through the Domestic Violence Resource Network can be found [here](#).
- A brief video about FVPSA and the important role it has played to address domestic violence was developed during the commemoration of its [30th anniversary](#). (2019 marked the 35th Anniversary of FVPSA).
- The FVPSA regulations are found at 45 CFR part 1370 and can be accessed [here](#).

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II. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

The Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) was first enacted in 1994 and has been reauthorized three times since then (2000, 2005, and 2013) with important improvements in each reauthorization. The majority of VAWA grant programs are administered through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) [Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\)](#). VAWA is one of the key pieces of federal legislation dedicated to improving the criminal justice system’s response through a coordinated community response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, as well as enhancing access to services and support for survivors.

VAWA grants include 4 grant programs that are distributed as Formula Grants, as well as 15 grants that are Discretionary Grant programs that are administered through OVW. In total, the Office on Violence Against Women distributed over \$462 million in grant awards in 2019 through these grant programs.⁸

VAWA Formula Grant Programs⁹

Formula Grant Programs to the States/Territories:

1. Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program: The STOP Formula Grant Program is awarded to states and territories (hereafter referred to as states) and are administered by STOP Administrators in each state. The state administering agency is responsible for distributing grant funds to enhance the capacity of local communities to strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies and to develop and strengthen victim services.

Each state must develop a state plan and allocate the funding in the following manner, pursuant to VAWA legislation:

- 30% for victim services (**of which at least 10% must be distributed to culturally specific community-based organizations**)
- 25% for law enforcement
- 25% for prosecutors
- 5% to state and local courts
- 15% for discretionary distribution

2. Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) Formula Grant Program: The SASP Formula Grant Program, which was first authorized in VAWA 2005, allocates funding for each state and territory

⁸ See FY 2019 OVW Grant Awards by Programs found at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/awards/fy-2019-ovw-grant-awards-program>

⁹ U.S. Department of Justice OVW Formula Grants Program fact sheet, found at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/1117621/download>

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to distribute through the state administrator in order to support rape crisis centers and other nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations or tribal programs that provide services, direct intervention, and related assistance to victims of sexual assault, without regard to age.

Formula Grant Programs for Coalitions:

3. State and Territorial Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalitions Grant Program:

These grants are provided to state domestic violence coalitions and sexual assault coalitions (as well as dual coalitions) for the purposes of coordinating victim services activities and collaborating with federal, state, and local entities in order to enhance prevention and intervention efforts.

4. Grants to Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Program: This program supports the development and operation of nonprofit, nongovernmental tribal coalitions.

VAWA Discretionary Grant Programs

OVW administers 15 Discretionary Grant Programs that were established through the VAWA legislation. Culturally specific community-based organizations can apply for any of these different grant programs as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for the specific grant program. However, the first three grant programs listed below were created in VAWA with a specific focus on enhancing access to resources for culturally specific community-based organizations. Additional information about those three grant programs is provided in the next section.

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Below is a list of the OVW Discretionary Grant Programs. (Additional information about each program can be found on the OVW website [here](#))

- Grants to Enhance Culturally Specific Services for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program
- Sexual Assault Services Culturally Specific Program
- Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations
- Consolidated Grant Program to Address Children and Youth Experiencing Domestic and Sexual Assault and Engage Men and Boys as Allies
- Enhanced Training and Services to End Abuse in Later Life Program
- Grants to Reduce Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking on Campus Program
- Grants to Support Families in the Justice System
- Grants to Tribal Governments to Exercise Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction Program
- Improving the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (also known as Grants to Encourage Arrest and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program)
- Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program
- Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Assistance Program
- Training and Services to End Violence Against Women with Disabilities Grant Program
- Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, or Sexual Assault Program
- Tribal Governments Program
- Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program

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VAWA Grant Programs focused on Enhancing Access to Services for Culturally Specific Communities

When VAWA was reauthorized in 2005, a new grant program was established to enhance access to resources for culturally specific community-based organizations. Subsequently, VAWA 2013 further clarified the definitions for the Culturally Specific grant program and allocated funding for a new grant program reach Underserved Populations.

VAWA legislation provides the following definitions for these grant programs:¹⁰

- **Culturally specific:** The term “culturally specific” means primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups (as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300-u-6(g)).¹¹
- **Culturally specific services:** The term “culturally specific services” means community-based services that offer culturally relevant and linguistically specific services and resources to culturally specific communities.
- **Underserved Populations:** The term “underserved populations” means populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age), and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate.
- **Population Specific Organization:** a “population specific organization” means a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that primarily serves members of a specific underserved population and has demonstrated experience and expertise providing targeted services to members of that specific underserved population.

¹⁰ See 34 USC § 12291 at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/34/12291>

¹¹ The following is the definition from the Public Health Services Act (42 U.S.C. 300-u-6(g)) for “racial and ethnic minority group” that is referenced in the Culturally Specific definition in VAWA: (g) Definitions: For purposes of this section:

(1) The term “racial and ethnic minority group” means American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics. (2) The term “Hispanic” means individuals whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or any other Spanish-speaking country.] <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/300u-6>

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Grants to Enhance Culturally Specific Services for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program

The Culturally Specific Services Program (CSSP) was established in VAWA 2005 to promote the development of innovative culturally specific strategies and projects to enhance access to services and resources for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who face obstacles to using more traditional services and resources.¹²

As stated in the OVW fact sheet on the CSSP grant program, “Culturally specific community-based organizations are more likely to understand the complex, multi-layered challenges and obstacles that victims from their communities face when attempting to access services. Culturally specific community-based organizations are also better equipped to form essential relationships and engage their communities in the creation and implementation of services relevant to the diverse and unique needs of the victims.”¹³

Eligible entities for the CSSP grant are:

- (1) community-based programs whose primary purpose is providing culturally specific services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and
- (2) community-based programs whose primary purpose is providing culturally specific services who can partner with a program having demonstrated expertise in serving victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

In 2019, the Culturally Specific Services Program gave out 22 awards, totaling over \$6 million.¹⁴

Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations

The Underserved Grant program supports the development and implementation of strategies targeted at adult or youth victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking in underserved populations, and victim services to meet the needs of such populations.¹⁵ Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations that serve populations traditionally underserved due to geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, and populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers,

¹² See 34 USC § 20124 for the statutory provisions and purpose areas of the CSSP grant program, available at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/34/20124>

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice OVW fact sheet on Culturally Specific Services Program available at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/1117456/download>

¹⁴ See <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/awards/fy-2019-ovw-grant-awards-program>; A list of the organizations awarded CSSP grants in 2019 can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/awards/fy-2019-ovw-grant-awards-program#CSSP>.

¹⁵ This grant program is authorized 34 U.S.C. § 20123, available at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/34/20123>

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disabilities, alienage status, or age). For more information about the Underserved grant program, use the link provided [here](#). In 2018, the Underserved Program gave out 15 awards, totaling \$4.4 million. In 2019, the Underserved Program gave out 10 awards, totaling \$4.7 million.¹⁶

Sexual Assault Services (SAS) Culturally Specific Program

The SAS Culturally Specific Program provides grants to create, maintain, and expand sexual assault services and related assistance provided by organizations that are uniquely situated to respond to the needs of sexual assault victims from culturally specific populations. These grants support nonprofit organizations that focus primarily on culturally specific communities and that have expertise in the area of sexual assault or who partner with an organization having such expertise. More information about the program can be found [here](#). In 2019, the SAS Culturally Specific Program gave out 14 awards, totaling nearly \$4 million.¹⁷

State Planning Process to Address the Needs of Culturally Specific and Underserved Populations

In addition to the discretionary grant programs administered by OVW, it is important to keep in mind that a substantial amount of VAWA funding is distributed directly to the states for them to provide to direct services organizations and agencies in their state. These are the STOP and SASP dollars that are allocated via the formula grants to the states, as previously described above. Click [here](#) to see the amount of STOP dollars distributed to your state in 2019. Click [here](#) to see the amount of SASP dollars distributed to your state.

The state administrators of these grants are required to engage in a state planning process to guide the distribution of these grants to subgrantees. The VAWA statute and regulations require that the state administrator develop a plan for implementation and that they must develop those plans through deliberative consultation and coordination with the full list of entities required for implementation plan consultation. The list includes domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, law enforcement, prosecution, state and local courts, state and federally recognized tribes, and victim service providers. Additionally, the list includes the requirement to consult with “representatives from underserved populations, including culturally specific populations,” as well as “population specific organizations.” States and territories must demonstrate through their implementation plan that they have consulted and coordinated in a meaningful way with this full list of entities. Additionally, they are required to coordinate the state plan for the distribution of VAWA dollars with the state plans developed for the distribution of FVPSA and VOCA dollars.

¹⁶ See <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/awards/fy-2019-ovw-grant-awards-program#Underserved>

¹⁷ See <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/awards/fy-2019-ovw-grant-awards-program#SASP%20Cultural>

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The VAWA statute also requires that the state implementation plan include, “demographic data on the distribution of underserved populations within the State and a description of how the State will meet the needs of underserved populations, including the minimum allocation for population specific services required under subsection (c)(4)(C).” The minimum allocation that is referenced here is the requirement that of the STOP funds that go to the states, “not less than 30 percent shall be allocated for victim services of which at least 10 percent shall be distributed to culturally specific community-based organizations.”

As a result, it is very important for community-based organizations focused on providing culturally specific services primarily to racial and ethnic minority communities be involved in the process for the development of the state implementation plan. Having their participation can help to ensure that the voices and needs of their communities are represented and that resources are allocated at the state level to enhance access to services for culturally specific and underserved populations.

Training and Technical Assistance

OVW also administers a [Technical Assistance Program](#) to provide OVW grantees and potential grantees with the training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies they need to meet the challenges of addressing and preventing sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. OVW’s technical assistance projects offer in-person and online educational opportunities, peer-to-peer consultations, site visits and tailored assistance.

Additional Resources about VAWA

- OVW Grant Awards by State – [interactive map](#)
- Information on the [19 grant programs currently administered by OVW](#).
- A summary of OVW programs as authorized by VAWA can be found [here](#).
- Information about Open Solicitations can be found [here](#).
- A list to the contact information for the VAWA State STOP Administrators can be found [here](#).
- A chart indicating the amount of STOP funding awarded to each state can be found [here](#).
- A chart indicating the amount of SASP funding awarded to each state can be found [here](#).
- Learn more about how you can register to become a peer reviewer for OVW grant applications [here](#).
- Here is a [link](#) to the calendar of webinars and trainings hosted by OVW TA providers.

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III. Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

Each year, states and territories receive Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to support community-based organizations that serve crime victims. VOCA funds are distributed by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) at the U.S. Department of Justice and come out of the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), which was established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. The CVF is financed by criminal fines, forfeitures, and penalties paid by federal offenders, not from taxpayer dollars. As of 2018, the Crime Victims Fund balance was over \$12 billion. Since VOCA is not based on taxpayer dollars, the VOCA legislation does not need to be reauthorized regularly, the way that both FVPSA and VAWA have to be reauthorized periodically.

Congress determines how much of the Crime Victim Fund will be distributed each year. There has been a very significant increase in VOCA funding allocation, starting in 2015 when the size of VOCA funding for victim services more than tripled. In FY18 Congress allocated \$4.4 billion from the Crime Victims Fund for distribution, and for FY19 it was set at \$3.3 billion. This presents a significant opportunity for culturally specific community-based organizations to try to access resources to expand pathways to safety for survivors.

A significant percentage of VOCA funding is distributed through formula grants to the states each year to support two important types of programs: 1) the **crime victim compensation programs**, which pay many of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by victims as a result of crime, and 2) the **victim assistance program**, which provides victims with services and support in the aftermath of crime. More information about these programs appears below. It is important to keep in mind that states have the rest of the fiscal year in which they receive the VOCA grant, plus three additional years to actually spend the funds.

Formula Grants to the States/Territories¹⁸

1. Crime Victim Compensation Formula Grant Program: This program provides funding to supplement state compensation programs that provide financial assistance and reimbursement to victims for crime-related out-of-pocket expenses, including medical and dental care, counseling, funeral and burial expenses, and lost wages and income. Compensation programs may also reimburse victims for other types of expenses related to their victimization, such as travel, temporary lodging, crime scene cleanup, and dependent care.

2. Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program: This grant program supports thousands of victim assistance programs throughout the nation each year. VOCA formula grants for crime victim

¹⁸ <https://www.ovc.gov/grants/types.html#formulagrants>

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assistance are awarded to every state, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The states provide subgrants to local community-based organizations and public agencies that provide services directly to victims. VOCA grants are made to domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, child abuse programs, and victim service units in law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, hospitals, and social service agencies, among other entities. States and territories are required to give priority to programs serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. Additional funds must be set aside for other victims, such as surviving family members of homicide victims and victims of drunk drivers.

Each state has a VOCA State Adminstrating Agency that oversees the distribution of the victim assistance funds as subgrants to state agencies, community-based organizations, and other local service victim service providers to support direct services. In some states, the same agency administers the VOCA and VAWA funds. Each state gets a base amount of funding and then an additional amount is allocated based on the state population as determined by current census data.

Discretionary Grant Programs

OVC [discretionary grants](#) are used to fund national-scope demonstration projects and training and technical assistance delivery to support victim service providers. These grants can be awarded to states, local units of government, tribal communities, individuals, educational institutions, and private nonprofit organizations.

Additional VOCA Resources

- Click on the link to learn more about [VOCA](#).
- Here are link to two videos on [What is OVC](#) and [What is the Crime Victims Fund?](#)
- Here is a list of the [National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators](#) where you can find your state administrators or administrative agency and more information about grants in your state.
- The [OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) provides comprehensive training, technical assistance, and other support to assist the field in building its collective capacity to serve crime victims.
- Review the [VOCA nationwide performance reports](#) for the number of victims served, by victim types and service categories, for each fiscal year.
- The state programs that receive VOCA formula funds are required to submit quarterly performance measures. The performance measures are indicators of the effect of VOCA funds on

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services to crime victims in the state. Access the [U.S. Resource Map](#) to view these performance measure reports.

- [Victims of Crime Act and the Need for Advocacy: A Toolkit for Advocates and Victim Service Providers to Ensure VOCA Funds Reach Underserved Crimes Victims](#)
- [Applying for VOCA Funding: A Toolkit for Organizations Working with Crime Survivors in Communities of Color and Other Underserved Communities](#)
- [Expanding the Reach of Victim Services: Maximizing the Potential of VOCA Funding for Underserved Survivors](#)

Additional Resources on the Allocation of Funding

This [chart](#) compiled by the National Network to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NNEDV) outlines all of the appropriated funds for domestic violence, stalking and other gender based violence grant programs through FVPSA, VAWA, and VOCA. The chart is a useful resource to see how funds are allocated to particular grant programs. Changes to the funding levels over time is also evident in the chart.

For more information about applying for federal grants, visit www.Grants.gov. If you already have a Grants.gov account, you may search for grant opportunities. If you do not have a Grants.gov account, go to the Get Registered link on the right side of the home page, select to register as an Organization or an Individual, and follow the steps outlined to register in Grants.gov. You can also learn more about the federal grant process at the [Grants Learning Center](#).

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network is one of the national culturally specific technical assistance providers, funded through FVPSA and OVW. We can assist in providing additional information about tools, resources, and trainings and can help provide technical assistance on capacity building and financial sustainability to assist culturally specific community-based organizations and to help service providers enhance access to safety and well-being for survivors. For assistance, please contact ta@casadeesperanza.org.