



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Sexual Assault Services Program

Funding authorized: \$40 million
FY 2019: \$37.5 million
FY 2020: \$38 million
FY 2021 Request: \$50 million

“We saw a significant increase in calls starting in October 2017 when #MeToo exploded and that level has not yet decreased.” – a 2019 Rape Crisis Center Survey Respondent

Sexual Assault Victims Deserve Recovery Services.

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in the U.S. Department of Justice, was authorized in 2005 through the Violence Against Women Act as the first federal funding stream dedicated to the provision of direct services to victims of sexual violence. According to OVW’s most recent report on the SASP program:

- **Over 55,000 individuals received services annually through SASP;**
- Over 300 advocates and counselors were funded at local programs; and
- Almost 30,000 survivors received medical or legal advocacy.

“I don't think I would be alive if it weren't for this program.” -- a Missouri survivor

Across the country, SASP funds support the critical services victims need most.

SASP funds support services in every state. Formula grants are awarded to states, territories and tribes to support efforts to provide services to adult and minor sexual assault victims and their families. Grants can be used for critically important intervention and advocacy services, especially accompaniment through medical and criminal justice systems.

SASP funds support underserved communities. Grants to culturally specific organizations help support intervention and related assistance for underserved victims and communities of color like United Somali Women of Maine and the Hmong American Women’s Association in Milwaukee.

SASP funds ensure quality services. Through support of coalitions which provide training and technical assistance, SASP helps ensure that victims receive high quality

services and improved responses from the justice system. *Research shows these services increase prosecution and help victims recover.*

Advocates help the criminal justice system respond better. Research shows that when victims receive advocate-assisted services following assaults, they receive more helpful information, referrals and services and experience less secondary trauma or re-victimization by medical and legal systems.

Rape survivors supported by advocates were 59% more likely to have police reports taken than survivors without advocates, whose reports were only taken 41% of the time.

Advocates help victims heal. When advocates are present in the legal and medical proceedings following rape, victims fare better in both the short- and long-term recovery, experiencing less psychological distress, physical health struggles, sexual risk-taking behaviors, self-blame, guilt, and depression.

“SASP allowed us to finally open a comprehensive service rape crisis center in Dallas.” Jana Barker, Executive Director, Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center

The Need is great.

According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 21% of women and 3% of men reported completed or attempted rape ever in their lifetime (CDC data brief based on 2015 national data).

Victims of sexual assault suffer. They are more likely to struggle professionally, academically and from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and to contemplate suicide.

Current funding levels are inadequate. In FY 19, the states of Kansas and New Hampshire each received about \$400,000 for the entire state.

Rape crisis centers struggle. The nation’s 1,500 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims’ most basic needs. Attention to campus and military sexual assault as well as high profile cases has meant more victims have come forward needing recovery services. According to a 2017 survey by NAESV:

- **Half of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services.**
- At some programs, survivors are waiting as much as 6 months to receive counseling.
- 44% of programs lack a therapist on staff
- 84% of programs saw an increase demand in services in 2019.

According to a Kansas advocate responding to our 2019 survey:

“Turnover is on the rise. As Advocate stress levels increase due to the demands of the job, they start looking for less stressful jobs with higher pay and better benefits. We tend to get folks who are new to the profession, they get some experience, then leave for better pay and less stress.”

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director at terri@endsexualviolence.org.