



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

## Sexual Assault Services Program

Funding authorized: \$40 million

FY 2020: \$38 million

FY 2021: \$41 million

FY 2022 Request: \$100 million

**“Survivors...have more complex trauma that includes stress about paying bills due to loss of income from COVID, children being out of school, death...”** — Florida advocate

**“I don’t think I would be alive if it weren’t for this program.”** — Missouri survivor

### 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.

**“My confidential advocate is what helped me stay in school.”** — campus sexual assault survivor, Colorado 2020

**Rape crisis centers struggle.** The nation’s 1,500 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims’ most basic needs. National attention to the problem of sexual assault has meant more victims have come forward seeking recovery services. According to a 2020 survey by NAESV:

- **62% of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services** — a 12% increase from last year with some waiting lists several months long.
- 35% of programs lack a therapist on staff.
- 62% of programs saw an increased demand for services in 2020.

**“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.”** — Kansas Advocate

### The Need is Great.

According to 2015 data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey:

**1 in 5 women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape.**

**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.** As an example, in FY 21, the states of Kansas and New Hampshire each received about \$400,000 for the entire state.

*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.

**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.

**“As of today, I can proudly say that I am a SURVIVOR and not a victim of sexual assault. I can encourage others and help them get to their place of healing.”** — Arkansas survivor

Congress can be an essential part of the solution by increasing appropriations for the Sexual Assault Services Program to \$100 million.

### **HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director at [terri@endsexualviolence.org](mailto:terri@endsexualviolence.org)