



Office on Violence Against Women – Funding for Tribal Communities

The FY 2025 President’s Budget for the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) totals \$800 million, which is \$100.0 million more than the FY 2023 Enacted Budget. Included in this amount is \$108.8 million in funding that supports programs and initiatives in Indian country and Alaska Native Villages. That is a \$27.8 million increase from the FY 2023 Enacted Budget.

Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program (Tribal Governments Program) – \$51,450,000 funded by set-asides: The Tribal Governments Program is designed to enhance the ability of tribes to respond to violent crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking; enhance victim safety; and develop education and prevention strategies. The Tribal Governments Program awards funds to tribal governments and their designees to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted response. OVW issues two separate Tribal Governments Program solicitations: 1) the standard OVW Tribal Governments Program solicitation; and 2) the Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program: Strengthening Tribal Advocacy Responses Track (START).

START is targeted toward Tribal governments, or their designees, that have never, or not recently, received funding through this program. Tribal Governments START grantees will focus on capacity building by participating in a comprehensive assessment process that identifies community strengths and gaps, early in the project, with additional training, technical assistance, and support provided. Funds may be used for a broad spectrum of activities: developing and enhancing tribal governments’ response to violence against AI/AN women; strengthening tribal criminal justice systems; improving services for AI/AN survivors; creating community education and prevention campaigns; addressing the needs of children who witness domestic violence; providing supervised visitation and safe exchange programs; providing transitional housing assistance; providing legal advice and representation to survivors of violence; developing and promoting legislation, policies and best practices; and addressing teen dating violence. Funds can also be used to develop, strengthen, and implement policies, protocols, and training for law enforcement regarding cases of missing or murdered Indians and to compile and annually report data to the Attorney General related to missing or murdered Indians.

The Tribal Governments Program is funded by set-asides from eight other OVW grant programs: STOP Formula, Improving Criminal Justice Responses, Rural, Legal Assistance for Victims, Engaging Men and Youth, Justice for Families, Children and Youth, and Transitional Housing Programs.

Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction Grant Program (Tribal Jurisdiction Program) – \$25,000,000: The Tribal Jurisdiction Program, as reauthorized by Congress in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization Act of 2022, provides grants to tribal governments to support tribal efforts to exercise “special tribal criminal jurisdiction” (STCJ) over non-Indian offenders who commit “covered



crimes” (i.e., domestic violence, dating violence, violations of certain protection orders, child violence, sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, obstruction of justice, and assault of Tribal justice personnel). Tribes can use funding to exercise their sovereign power to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence both Indians and non-Indians who commit these crimes. Funded as part of the Tribal Jurisdiction Program, the Tribal Reimbursement Program, reimburses tribes for expenses incurred in their exercise of STCJ over non-Indians who commit covered crimes (listed above) within the Tribe’s jurisdictional boundaries.

Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Grant Program (Tribal Coalitions Program) – \$8,853,571 funded by set-asides: The Tribal Coalitions Program, first authorized by VAWA 2000 and amended by subsequent legislation, builds the capacity of survivors, advocates, Indian women’s organizations, and victim service providers to form nonprofit, nongovernmental tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions to end violence against American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women. Tribal Coalitions Program grants are used to: increase awareness of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking against American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people; enhance the response to violence against women at the tribal, federal, and state levels; and identify and provide technical assistance to coalition membership and tribal communities to enhance access to essential services. The program is funded by statutory set-asides from the STOP Formula, Improving Criminal Justice Responses, and Sexual Assault Services Programs. VAWA 2013 changed the program from a discretionary grant to a combination of discretionary and formula funding.

Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program (TSASP) – \$9,000,000 funded by set-aside: TSASP provides funding to tribes, tribal organizations, and nonprofit tribal organizations to create, maintain, and expand sustainable sexual assault services programs and activities within Indian country and Alaska Native villages.

Program of Research on Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women – \$1,000,000: VAWA 2005, as amended by VAWA 2013, calls for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to conduct research on violence against AI/AN women living in Indian country and in Alaska Native villages. In conducting its analyses and research, the statute directs NIJ to focus on dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, stalking, and murder, and to evaluate the effectiveness of responses to those violations.

National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault – \$500,000: The National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault (NTCSA) funding may be used to establish, sustain, and/or expand a repository that provides resources, training opportunities, educational materials, and training and technical assistance on issues relating to sexual assault of AI/AN people. NTCSA is also designed to improve victim services for AI/AN sexual assault victims, as well as increase offender accountability for such crimes.

Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney Program – \$3,000,000: VAWA 2022 established the Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney (Tribal SAUSA) Program as a new, permanent program. OVW’s Violence Against Women Tribal SAUSA initiative was originally developed in response to a



2009 listening session with tribal nations and has proven to be a popular strategy for improving public safety in Indian country. Beginning in FY 2012, and in alternating fiscal years since then, OVW has made anywhere from two to five awards to federally recognized tribes to work with their local United States Attorneys' Offices (USAOs) to hire or retain a mutually agreed upon tribal prosecutor to be cross-designated as a SAUSA. These cross-designated prosecutors maintain active VAWA crimes caseloads in tribal court, federal court, or both, while also helping to promote higher quality investigations and better inter-governmental communication. Reported benefits have included successful prosecution of cold cases, stronger relationships between tribes and USAOs, and victims coming forward with confidence that their cases will be taken seriously. One SAUSA reported: "There is a longstanding and unspoken epidemic of domestic violence on [the reservation]. Women are coming forward and informing [us] that previously they stayed quiet, figuring no one would care, prosecute, or advocate for them... The Assistant DV Prosecutor and SAUSA position established the institutional integrity needed for victims to come forward, abusers to be held accountable, and survivors to get coordinated justice, care, and a chance at surviving the menacing rate of abuse that faces Native women [on this reservation]."

Special Initiative to Address the Intersection of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) and Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking (New) – \$10,000,000: The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) authorizes OVW to issue grant funds to provide resources to tribal communities that are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. The Not Invisible Act Commission (Commission) was created by Congress to address violent crimes on Indian lands and against Indians by developing recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior and the Attorney General on actions the federal government can take to combat violent crimes, including the VAWA crimes identified above. One recommendation of the Commission was to establish Healing and Response Teams (HRTs), as well as to improve support for work on the intersection of MMIP and the crimes addressed by VAWA.¹

The requested \$10 million will enable OVW to support tribal victim services providers with resources to increase MMIP awareness; work with tribal, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to develop MMIP response protocols and reporting; inform the public and offer tribal community education on the connections of MMIP with other crimes (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking); and promote healing for families and survivors. This funding will also provide resources to support the creation, training, and sustainability of HRTs that will be available to tribal community-based organizations, Indian Tribes, and urban Indian organizations, as described in the Not Invisible Act Commission recommendations. HRTs are designed to provide victim centered support, advocacy, resource liaisons, healing pathways, and systems navigation assistance using a tribal-based model of care in MMIP and human trafficking cases.

¹ Not Invisible Act Commission. (2023, November 1). *Not one more: findings and recommendations of the Not Invisible Act Commission*. Available at: https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-11/34%20NIAC%20Final%20Report_version%2011.1.23_FINAL.pdf.



Tribal Communities Funding <i>(\$ in thousands)</i>		
Office on Violence Against Women Grant Program	FY 2023 Enacted Budget	FY 2025 President's Budget
Tribal Governments Program	49,300	51,450
Tribal Coalitions Program	8,364	8,853
Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program	7,850	9,000
Program of Research on Violence Against AI/AN Women	1,000	1,000
National Tribal Clearinghouse on Sexual Assault	500	500
Tribal Jurisdiction Program	11,000	25,000
Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney Program	3,000	3,000
Special Initiative to Address the Intersection of MMIP & Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking	0	10,000
TOTAL	\$ 81,014	\$ 108,803