



Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA)

FACT SHEET

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grants to Native American Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages) and Tribal organizations are formula grants funded through a 10% statutory set-aside. The purpose of these grants is to assist Tribes in efforts to increase public awareness about, and primary and secondary prevention of, family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence, and to provide immediate shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic, family, or dating violence, and their dependents. Funding is available to all Tribes and Tribal organizations that meet the definition of “Indian Tribe” or “Tribal organization” at 25 U.S.C. 450b and are able to demonstrate their capacity to carry out domestic violence prevention and services programs.

Other programs funded by FVPSA include the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center (NIWRC - www.niwrc.org) serving as the National Indian Resource Center defined in the statute, the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center (AKNWRWC) and StrongHearts Native Helpline. The last two programs are funded on a discretionary basis through appropriations and need permanent funding.

The following amendments would strengthen American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian capacity to respond to domestic violence:

1. Increase the Tribal government set aside from 10% to 12.5%
2. Authorize permanent funding for the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center to serve as the Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence
3. Authorize permanent funding of the StrongHearts Native Helpline to serve as the National Indian Domestic Violence Helpline
4. Authorize formula funding for the Tribal Domestic Violence Coalitions to provide training and technical assistance (TTA) similarly to what the State Domestic Violence Coalitions provide through a separate set aside
5. Authorize permanent funding for the Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NHRCDV)

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Recommendations and Organizations:

The overarching theme of our recommendations is based on one simple fact. Tribal governments, Tribal coalitions, and Tribal and Native Hawaiian people are best equipped and situated to help Indigenous survivors of domestic violence and abuse. The current breakdown of FVPSA funding allows AI/AN survivors to fall through the cracks and only by making Tribal programs (such as AKNWRC and StrongHearts) and the NHRCDV permanent and reallocating funding percentages to meet current needs can more AI/AN and Native Hawaiian survivors be helped.

Tribal Government Funding from 10% to 12.5%:

Prior to 1994 Alaska Tribes were not eligible for funding through FVPSA. In a Solicitor's Opinion issued 1/11/1993, entitled "governmental Jurisdictional Alaska Native Villages Over Land and Nonmembers," the Solicitor rejected the view that Alaska Native Villages were not Tribes. As a result of this decision, roughly 220+ Tribes were added to the FVPSA eligibility—nearly doubling the eligible Tribes, but not increasing the amount available to Tribes. Less than half of federally recognized Tribes currently receive funding with awards for most Tribes averaging \$14,000 prior to 2018 with increased appropriations for Tribal governments. Less than 60 Tribal domestic violence shelters and less than 300 Tribal domestic violence programs operate throughout the nation. Shelters and advocacy services are too often the only lifeline women and their families have, especially when justice systems fail to protect women and hold abusers accountable.

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (www.AKNWRC.org) is committed to:

Strengthen local, Tribal government responses of 40% of federally recognized Tribes in Alaska through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes, especially against domestic and sexual abuse and violence. We do this through providing:

1. Technical Assistance & Training, including Needs Assessment;
2. Public awareness/resource development;
3. Policy development & systems advocacy/engagement; and
4. Advocacy on an Alaska Native program of research and knowledge development.

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The StrongHearts Native Helpline (www.strongheartshelpline.org):

Trained with a strong understanding of Tribal cultures, sovereignty and law, StrongHearts advocates offer one-on-one, peer-to-peer support and referrals to local resources in a safe and healing environment. All calls are anonymous and confidential. As of August 2022, StrongHearts (1-844-7NATIVE) has received more than 25,000 calls from survivors, concerned family members and friends, service providers and more, helping to close the gap in culturally-appropriate resources for American Indians and Alaska Natives facing domestic violence. As the first culturally-appropriate domestic violence helpline specifically serving Native Americans, StrongHearts is also expanding its staff of advocates to respond to callers, many of whom are seeking support as they navigate difficult barriers to justice and safety.

Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence (www.atcev.org) on behalf of the Tribal Coalitions:

Tribal Coalitions exist throughout Indian Country providing training, technical assistance and support to Tribal government and Tribal victim services providers. Currently, 19 Tribal coalitions exist with more forming to address gaps in services and as need is demonstrated. The Alliance in collaboration with the Tribal coalitions seek a funding stream through FVPSA for the Tribal coalitions, such as the funding received by their non-Tribal coalition counterparts, to provide training, technical assistance and support to the Tribal governments funded under FVPSA, specific to FVPSA guidelines, requirements, and directives. The overarching goal of Tribal Coalitions is to raise awareness, educate, and to provide culturally specific technical assistance, training, and supportive services to advance and enhance the responses to crimes of domestic and sexual violence committed in Indian Country.

The Pouhana O Nā Wāhine (Pillars of Women - PONW www.pouhanaonw.org) is committed to:

Helping Native Hawaiians address domestic violence through restoring the Native Hawaiian way of life rooted in our beliefs, practices and ceremonies and securing resources to opening a NHRCDV. PONW's mission is to provide technical assistance and training, partner at the community, statewide and national levels, and develop policies and cultural resources to prevent and eliminate domestic violence and help increase victim safety. While domestic violence programs function in Hawaii, none are led and managed by Native Hawaiians or rooted in developing Native Hawaiian solutions.

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