

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds

The Violence Against Women Act-STOP funds are administered through the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) as a formula grant program. These funds are allocated to state agencies to be disseminated to local community agencies providing services to adult women who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking and their children. In Wyoming, the Office of the Attorney General, Division of Victim Services (DVS), is the state administering agency. The program is designed to provide funding to specific target areas within communities, and with the exception of 10% that can be retained by the state agency for administration, the funds must be allocated in the following manner: 30% to local victim advocacy groups, 25% to agencies whose services benefit law enforcement, 25% to agencies whose services benefit prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, 5% to agencies whose activities benefit the courts, and 15% is discretionary as long as the funded activities fall into the requirement of serving adult female victims of sexual assault, stalking and/or stalking.

There is \$225 million allocated to this program in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the stimulus bill), with \$175 million allocated for VAWA STOP, and \$50 million allocated for transitional housing. It is unknown at this time how much of the \$175 million is allocated for Wyoming for administration by DVS, and the \$50 million will be available to communities through direct application to OVW.

STOP formula grants and sub grants are intended for use by states; state, local, and tribal courts; Indian tribal governments; units of local government; and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services programs. To be eligible for these funds, applicants must ensure the following:

- That its laws, policies, and practices do not require the victim to bear any costs in connection with the prosecution of any misdemeanor or felony domestic violence offense, or the filing, issuance, registration, or service of a warrant, or service of a protection order, or a petition for a protection order or witness subpoena, whether issued inside or outside the state, tribal, or local jurisdiction.
- The state or territory, Indian tribal government, unit of local government, or another governmental entity incurs the full out-of-pocket cost of forensic medical exams for victims of sexual assault and that it will not require a victim of sexual assault to participate in the criminal justice system or cooperate with law enforcement in order to be provided with a forensic medical exam, or to be reimbursed for charges incurred on account of such an exam.
- That its judicial administrative policies and practices include notification to domestic violence offenders of the requirements to surrender weapons and ammunition.
- That laws, policies, or practices will ensure that no law enforcement officer, prosecuting officer or other government official shall ask or require an adult, youth, or child victim of an alleged sex offense to submit to a polygraph examination or other truth telling device as a condition for proceeding with the investigation of such an offense.
- Under 42 U.S.C. 3796gg-8(b), the refusal of a victim to submit to a polygraph or other truth telling examination shall not prevent the investigation, charging, or prosecution of an alleged sex offense.

Application for STOP funds is made annually by DVS and funds must be used within two years of award though DVS awards the full amount each year based on need. These funds are received by DVS annually and are allocated each state fiscal year. In SFY 2009, Wyoming received \$735,932.00 and the DVS awarded \$662,338.00 to community victim services providers.

Wyoming receives approximately \$5 million in federal funds each biennium from all federal funding sources; VAWA, VOCA and Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) which represents approximately 37% of total funding for victim services providers.