

THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) YWCA IMPACT AND SUCCESS STORIES

OVERVIEW

- **YWCA USA reaches 2.3 million women, girls and their families** through more than 200 local associations in 45 states and the District of Columbia. They provide critical programs, including domestic and sexual violence services, through 12,500 staff members and 52,000 volunteers. **We are proud to be the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers in the nation.**
- **Every year YWCAs provide more than 535,000 women with safety services**, which include domestic violence and sexual assault programs and services such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, court assistance, and other community and safety programs. More than 45% of the women YWCA serves are women of color.
- Since 2013, a minimum of **56 YWCAs in 29 states have received at least \$48 million in VAWA funding** through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). YWCAs effectively use VAWA funding together with local, state, and private funding from local foundations, private donations, and state agencies to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, YWCA USA regularly collects survey data from its local associations. Based on survey feedback from 133 local YWCAs covering 40 states and the District of Columbia through mid-2020: **69% of the 76 YWCAs who operate domestic violence hotlines reported an increase in demand for services** and **64% of the 96 YWCAs who provide domestic violence housing services** (either emergency shelter or transitional housing) **reported an increase in demand for domestic violence housing.**

VAWA FUNDING STREAMS

The following VAWA programs provide significant support to YWCAs as they work in communities across the country to meet the needs of survivors. The YWCA programs and success stories highlighted are representative of the difference VAWA funding has made since it was last reauthorized in 2013.

Transitional Housing Assistance Grants

- **28 YWCAs in 20 states have received \$18,001,307.**
- New York: A young woman in **YWCA Mohawk Valley's** crisis domestic violence shelter was referred to their Safe Horizon's transitional housing program, a residential program for 16-to-21-year-old

runaways and homeless girls, due to violence perpetrated by her mother's boyfriend. In the program, this young lady had a determination to complete school and attend college. She is now almost done with college and is excelling in life.

- Oregon: **YWCA Greater Portland's Yolanda Project** is a unique, ongoing program that diverts pressure on the Portland region's emergency shelter system by working with survivors of domestic violence at risk of becoming homeless to obtain safe, stable housing for themselves and their families.

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program

- **At least 23 YWCAs in 16 states have received at least \$1,713,557.**
- Washington State: A client of **YWCA Kitsap County** was able to make use of the local association's comprehensive wraparound services funded through STOP. This included legal advocacy to get a domestic violence protection order, help with navigating the Dependency Court process to regain custody of her son after domestic violence and drug use, and use of their support groups. The housing assistance cut across the continuum. She stayed at a YWCA shelter while visiting her infant daughter in the hospital and then made use of YWCA's partnership with the local housing authority. As a result, the client received a Project Based Voucher. The result of YWCA wraparound services is that the client has permanent housing, both of her children are home with her, her CPS case is closed, she is away from her abuser, and she is going on two years of clean/sober living.

Sexual Assault Services Formula Grant Program

- **At least 10 YWCAs in at least 10 states have received \$710,420.ⁱ**
- Virginia: Headquartered in Lynchburg, **YWCA Central Virginia** provides free crisis intervention, support, advocacy, and information to approximately 750 survivors of sexual assault and abuse each year.
- Pennsylvania: A victim advocate from **YWCA York** responded to a hospital call for a possible case of child sexual abuse of a ten-year-old girl. A family friend had approached the girl at a relative's house and attempted to touch her and remove her clothing. The girl revealed that she had shouted, "No! Stop!" before immediately leaving the room to seek a trusted adult. When our advocate told the girl she was proud of what she had done and asked, "Where did you learn how to do this?", the young girl said, "From you. You came to my class and taught me that lesson." The girl's family was given information about free counseling through the Victim Assistance Center and free legal services.

Improving the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (also known as Grants to Encourage Arrest and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program)

- **6 YWCAs in 6 states have received \$5,287,089.**
- Utah: **YWCA Utah** provides an array of programs and services for survivors, including its [Family Justice Center](#), shelters, and support services. After ten years of escalating abuse, Candace found her way to the safety of YWCA Utah's Women in Jeopardy shelter. She had just suffered an especially violent incident of physical abuse, perpetrated in front of their children. She was able to bring only one of her two children with her as her husband was keeping the other from her. With the welfare of her children and her pregnancy foremost in her mind, she summoned the strength to actively take advantage of all the resources YWCA could offer. With the guidance and assistance of her YWCA case manager and advocates, she:
 - Pursued free legal advocacy, was reunited with the child her husband had been withholding, and began the process of obtaining a divorce and full custody of all the children.
 - Applied for DWS assistance to obtain critical medical care for her high-risk pregnancy.
 - Enrolled herself and her children in therapy to help them recover from the trauma and emotional harm of the abuse they had suffered.
 - Ensured that her oldest child received academic support and enriching experiences through the YWCA's after-school program.
 - Maintained her full-time employment with the support of a safe and stable living environment and the YWCA's free drop-in child care.
 - Applied and was approved for Section 8 housing and Rapid Re-Housing program assistance and moved her family to an affordable new apartment.

Rural Assistance Program

- **8 YWCAs in 7 states have received \$7,490,553.**
- Hawaii: At **YWCA Kauai County**, a young mother of two young girls (aged 5 and 11) called the crisis line crying after learning from her youngest daughter that she had been sexually molested by her father. Crisis counselors provided services and supported her as she made a police report and with the children being interviewed. All three family members received therapeutic services from experienced YWCA therapists.

Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program

- **6 YWCAs in 4 states have received \$4,107,431.**
- Washington State: The [Sexual Violence Law Center](#) at **YWCA Seattle|King County|Snohomish** has three staff attorneys and a director who provide holistic, trauma-informed legal assistance to victims of sexual violence in a wide variety of legal matters, including protection orders,

immigration, employment, public benefits, Title IX, housing, and crime victim rights, and provide technical assistance and trainings to advocates, attorneys, and judges working with victims of sexual violence.

Consolidated Grant Program to Address Youth and Children Experiencing Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Engage Men and Boys as Allies

- **4 YWCAs in 3 states have received \$3,837,470.**
- Tennessee: **YWCA Knoxville**'s [GameChangers](#) is the only gender-based violence prevention program for middle-school boys in East Tennessee. It uses a group mentoring structure to teach middle school boys about domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and about how they can help prevent violence against women and girls.
- Tennessee: **YWCA Nashville**'s [AMEND Together](#) seeks to end the epidemic of violence against women and girls by empowering young men and boys to become the catalyst for cultural change.

Justice for Families Program

- **5 YWCAs in 5 states have received \$2,740,242.**
- Pennsylvania: A client contacted **YWCA Greater Harrisburg**'s Legal Center after experiencing severe domestic violence during the entirety of her eight-year marriage. The Legal Center provided her with an advocate to help her obtain a protection from abuse order; at the final hearing, the judge gave the client a protection order that does not expire until 2099 and sentenced her abuser to 180 days. Leaving the courtroom, the client began crying with relief and stated that she finally felt free.

ⁱ YWCA North Central Indiana is listed as receiving funds from the Indiana Dept of Education and Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. The Criminal Justice Institute receives funding from both SASP and STOP. YWCA North Central Indiana is listed as having received \$408,028.