



## Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)

### FY 2025 Budget Request At A Glance

FY 2024 Continuing Resolution:	\$700.0 million (133 positions, 8 Attorneys)
Current Services Adjustments:	+\$0.0 million
Program Changes:	+\$100.0 million
FY 2025 Budget Request:	\$800.0 (142 positions, 8 Attorneys)
Change From FY 2024 CR:	+\$100.0 million (14.3%, +9 positions)

### Mission:

The mission of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is to provide Federal leadership to reduce violence against women, and to support the administration of justice for and strengthen services to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This is accomplished by developing and supporting the capacity of State, local, tribal, and non-profit entities involved in responding to violence against women.

### Organization:

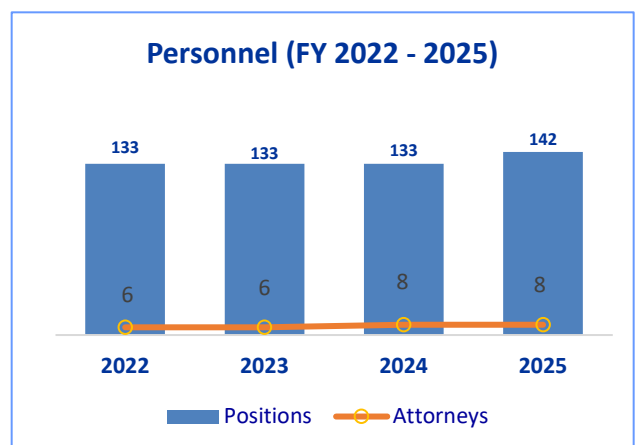
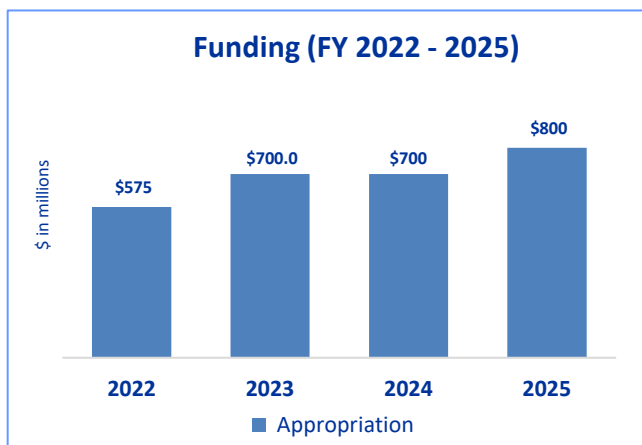
The OVW is headed by a Director, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Director oversees the Grant Development and Management, Policy Communication and Evaluation, Budget and Financial Management, and Administration Divisions. Additionally, the Director oversees staffs addressing Legal Counsel and Tribal Affairs.

### Resources:

The FY 2025 budget request for the OVW totals \$800.0 million, which is 14.3 percent above the FY 2024 Continuing Resolution.

### Personnel:

The OVW's direct positions for FY 2025 total 142 positions, which is nine positions above the FY 2024 Continuing Resolution.



## **FY 2025 Strategy:**

The OVW was created specifically to implement the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) and subsequent legislation. In 2002, the 21st Century Department of Justice Reauthorization Act established the OVW as a separate office within the Department of Justice.

In recognition of the severity of the crimes associated with domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, Congress passed VAWA as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. VAWA is a comprehensive legislative package designed to end violence against women and was reauthorized most recently in 2022. Its legislative history indicates that Congress seeks to remedy the legacy of laws and social norms that justified violence against women.

VAWA has led to significant improvements in how the issue of violence against women is addressed. VAWA improves criminal justice and coordinated community responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, and to increase the availability of services for victims of these crimes. It encourages jurisdictions to bring together players from diverse backgrounds to share information and to use their distinct roles to improve community responses to violence against women. By working together, a system can be created to keep victims safe and hold offenders accountable.

VAWA has led to significant improvements in the criminal and civil justice systems and has been successful by funding effective interventions such as legal assistance, protection order enforcement, and access to medical forensic examinations.

The OVW is committed to supporting projects that meaningfully address the needs of underserved and marginalized survivors, improve access to justice, enhance survivor safety, hold offenders accountable, and build a coordinated community response to violence against women.

The OVW's greatest challenges in FY 2025 will be to:

- Implement the many new provisions and requirements created by VAWA's 2022 reauthorization;
- Support communities in preventing and responding to crimes that present unique challenges, including the intersections of gender-based and community violence, non-intimate partner sexual assault, and stalking;
- Help survivors who may be poorly served by, or reticent to seek support from, the criminal justice system or mainstream victim service providers to access the supports, culturally specific services, or other options that meet their needs;

- Assist Tribes with implementing expanded tribal criminal jurisdiction;
- Reach potential grantees who have not previously applied for OVW funding or are hesitant to apply for OVW funding;
- Support core victim services and justice solutions as communities compete for resources and recover from the damage wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Build the internal infrastructure necessary to fulfill the OVW's statutorily envisioned role as the Federal government's leading voice on combatting violence against women, which includes implementing priorities under the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence.

## **FY 2025 Program Changes:**

The FY 2025 budget proposal includes \$102.5 million in program increases and \$2.5 million in program decreases.

### **Program Increases:**

#### **Access to Sexual Assault Nurse Exams (SANEs):** \$20.0 million.

These funds will support the issuance of grants for regional Sexual Assault Forensics Examiners (SAFEs), and technical assistance and resources to increase access to SANEs and SAFEs, as authorized by section 1318 of VAWA 2022. This program will help address nationwide gaps in the availability and quality of post-sexual assault medical forensic care. Emergency medical care is critical for treating a victim's healthcare needs and collecting forensic evidence after a sexual assault, and such care is best provided by specially trained SANEs and SAFEs. There are no current services for this program.

#### **Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction (STCJ):** \$14.0 million.

Additional funding to support efforts by tribes in planning, implementing, and exercising special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction to hold accountable non-Indians who commit crimes of domestic violence, dating violence or violate certain protection orders in Indian country and to reimburse participating tribes for expenses incurred in exercising STCJ.

The program encourages collaborations among tribal leadership, courts, prosecutors, attorneys, defense counsel, law enforcement, probation, victim service providers, and other partners to ensure that victims find safety and justice and that non-Indians who commit covered crimes in Indian country or Alaska Native villages are held accountable and have their rights safeguarded. Current services for this initiative are \$11.0 million for a total of \$25.0 million.

**Sexual Assault Services Program:** \$11.5 million. This program supports rape crisis centers and other nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations or tribal programs that provide services, crisis intervention, and related assistance to victims of sexual assault. With additional funding, the OVW will be able to significantly increase the size of awards to states and territories, which are based on population, enabling rape crisis centers to serve tens of thousands more victims each year. Current services for this initiative are \$78.5 million for a total of \$90.0 million.

**Special Initiative to Address the Intersection of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) and Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Human Trafficking:** \$10.0 million.

This program will enable the 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 Healing and Response Teams (HRT) that will be available to Tribal community-based organizations, Indian Tribes, and urban Indian organizations, as described in the Not Invisible Act Commission recommendations. There are no current services for this request.

**Local Law Enforcement Grants for Enforcement of Cybercrimes Against Individuals:** \$10.0 million. This funding would advance the Administration's priority of addressing the serious issue of online harassment, stalking, and abuse. The White House's Gender Policy Council, Domestic Policy Council, and the National Security Council convened an Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on Online Harassment, Stalking and Abuse that has focused on sexual exploitation and abuse of children online, "revenge porn," the use of online platforms and social media sites for trafficking individuals, cyberstalking, and the use of the internet for domestic terrorism or extremism. In the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality, the Administration committed to convene a U.S. government task force to further these efforts. There are no current services for this request.

**Improving Criminal Justice Response/Arrest:** \$7.5 million.

This program supports coordinated community responses to domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, with an emphasis on the criminal justice system's role in holding offenders accountable for their crimes. Further, with set-asides of up to \$4.0 million for a homicide reduction initiative and \$4.0 million to address domestic violence lethality issues relating to

firearms, the OVW will be able to invest in research, practice, and training and technical assistance designed to spot risk factors for domestic violence-related homicide and disarm abusers before they kill. Current services for this initiative are \$60.5 million for a total of \$68.0 million.

**Transitional Housing Program:** \$5.0 million. Demand from victims far outpaces available resources. In addition to funding housing units, the Transitional Housing Program supports victims with security deposits, rental assistance, and utility payments. Grantees also provide supportive services, such as counseling, support groups, safety planning, and advocacy services, as well as childcare, employment services, and transportation assistance. Current services for this initiative are \$50.0 million for a total of \$55.0 million.

**Legal Assistance for Victims Program:** \$5.0 million. Civil legal assistance provided by attorneys funded through the OVW's Legal Assistance for Victims Program increases the quality, quantity, and efficacy of legal services for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Research has shown that appropriately-trained attorneys have a significant impact on safe outcomes for survivors. Victims who get help from attorneys and community-based advocates may be more likely than victims without that assistance to perceive themselves as having a voice in the justice process. Current services for this initiative are \$55.0 million for a total of \$60.0 million.

**Culturally-Specific Services:** \$4.0 million.

These funds will support culturally-specific services for victims. Advocates report that survivors are more inclined to seek services from organizations that are familiar with their culture, language, and background. Culturally-specific community-based organizations are more likely to understand the complex challenges that victims from their communities face when attempting to access services. Current services for this initiative are \$11.0 million for a total of \$15.0 million.

**National Resource Center on Cybercrimes Against Individuals:** \$4.0 million.

Like the Local Law Enforcement Grants for Enforcement of Cybercrimes Against Individuals, this funding advances the Administration's priority of addressing the serious issue of addressing online harassment, stalking, and abuse. The request also reflects recent Congressional interest in providing resources to address cyberstalking, online harm, and other cybercrimes against individuals as outlined in the 2022 reauthorization of VAWA, which authorized this national resource center. The proposed funding would provide much needed technical assistance and training resources on cybercrimes against individuals for Federal, State and local government agencies, community-based organizations, and other professionals and interested parties, resources

including the collection, preparation, analysis, and dissemination of information and statistics on these crimes and research on the causes and effects of these crimes as well as model solutions to prevent and deter such crimes and enforce relevant criminal laws. The OVW will collaborate with the Office for Victims of Crime to implement this initiative. There are no current services for this request.

**Consolidated Youth Oriented Program:** \$3.0 million. This program provides services to children and youth exposed to domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Grantees also use these funds to provide services to non-abusing parents and caregivers. Current services for this initiative are \$17.0 million for a total of \$20.0 million.

**LGBT Specific Services Program:** \$3.0 million. These funds will be used to support greater outreach to, and services for, transgender victims of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Transgender individuals suffer high levels of violent victimization and are at a much greater risk of dying by suicide than are cisgender individuals. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals, and in particular, lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons of color and transgender persons of all races may be reluctant to report victimization and seek services for fear of discrimination, and because biases and lack of knowledge compromise the quality and utility of the system's response. Service providers may be unprepared to offer sensitive and appropriate services to LGBT victims of violence; in fact, only an estimated one in five LGBT victims of intimate partner violence or sexual assault seek help from a victim services organization. The funding requested for services for transgender survivors will broaden the OVW's reach to this population that is disproportionately affected by violence and faces greater barriers to safety and justice. Current services for this initiative are \$1.0 million for a total of \$4.0 million.

**National Service Line for Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Abuse:** \$3.0 million.

These funds will enable the OVW to fund a new five-year project to launch and maintain a national service line for incarcerated survivors of sexual abuse, to provide support services to survivors in local, State, tribal, and Federal confinement facilities, support coordination efforts with victim service providers, and offer technical assistance to victim service providers working with incarcerated victims. Sexual abuse is already one of the most underreported violent crimes in the United States, and confinement settings create additional barriers for victims to report or seek help. Many confinement agencies and facilities across the country, especially those in remote and rural areas (where services are limited), have struggled to maintain compliance with Prison Rape Elimination Act Standard 53. Additionally, sexual assault services

are underfunded despite the high rate of sexual assault and the tremendous need for specialized services, including services for incarcerated survivors. As a result, many incarcerated survivors receive little to no sexual assault support services. There are no current services for this request.

**Rural Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Enforcement Assistance:** \$2.5 million.

An estimated one in five people in the United States lives in a rural area. Rural victims of violence may have worse psychosocial and physical health outcomes than their urban counterparts, due to challenges related to geographic isolation, lack of material resources, and social and cultural pressures that make it difficult to seek and obtain help. Therefore, the Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (Rural Program) supports projects uniquely designed to address and prevent domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child sexual abuse in rural areas. Strategies Rural Program grantees employ—including victim advocacy, medical forensic exams performed by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), transitional housing, and victim-centered prosecution—have been found through research to be effective. Furthermore, the Rural Program encourages collaboration among justice system professionals, victim services providers, and the healthcare sector, resulting every six months in over 13,000 victims receiving services, more than 1,000 incidents investigated, about 600 cases prosecuted, nearly 11,000 professionals trained, over 200 medical forensic exams performed, and over 200 offenders monitored by parole and probation officers. Current services for this initiative are \$50.0 million, for a total of \$52.5 million.

**Management and Administration (M&A) Division:** \$861,000 and 9 positions.

This increase is needed to provide sufficient staffing to manage the grants to be made under this budget request, to stand up multiple new grant programs, and to continue responding to the many requirements created by VAWA 2022. Current services are 133 positions and \$37.2 million for a total of 142 positions and \$38.0 million.

**Program Decreases:**

**Pilot Program to Improve Victims Services on College Campuses:** -\$1.5 million. This discontinues a pilot program to improve victim services on college campuses. As outlined in the Explanatory Statement for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2023, the OVW plans to award the FY 2023 funds for a demonstration program to expand access to holistic assault services on college campuses with the intent to establish a best practice guide for other institutions to implement. The OVW anticipates that the

FY 2023 appropriation will be sufficient to accomplish this purpose and no further funding will be necessary. Current services are \$1.5 million.

**Rape Survivor Child Custody Act (RSCCA):** -\$1.0 million. This request reduces funding due to lack of qualified applicants. Since Congress first appropriated funds to implement the RSCCA in FY 2016, a total of 17 States have received RSCCA funding four times and therefore may no longer receive increases. In that same time period, 30 States have never chosen to seek the funding. The OVW foresees no impact on its ability to encourage States to put in place qualifying laws that provide for termination of the parental rights of rapists upon clear and convincing evidence of rape. Current services are \$2.5 million for a total of \$1.5 million.