

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

September 2022

Vol. 2

FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE



A FVPSA-funded health and social justice non-profit geared to create healthy families and communities free of violence tomorrow. [Check out our dedicated 'Futures' page for more information.](#)



DID YOU KNOW?

FVPSA Specialized Services to Abused Parents and Their Children (SSAPC) demonstration projects are vital in expanding both capacity and prevention of family, domestic, and dating violence.

What's in this Edition?

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) program is excited to share with you its quarterly newsletter, "Community Connections." This edition includes:

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Grants Management

We partnered with the Office of Grants Management for a three-part Financial Grants Management training series. These webinars are designed to support FVPSA grantees in effectively managing their federal awards. Whether you're a newcomer or experienced with managing FVPSA funds these resources will keep you on track.

Module 1:

Understanding the Code of Federal Regulations and Cost Principles.

Module 2:

Roles and Responsibilities of Pass-Through Entities and Sub-recipients

Module 3:

Internal Controls

For additional Financial Grants Management resources to include frequently asked questions and presentations visit our [FVPSA ARP Grants Learning Portal..](#)

MOBILE UNITS AID IN CONNECTING SURVIVORS TO HEALING

Written by: Trevor Pedro, Senior Communications Specialist, FVPSA

Last year, the new Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Pierluisi, proclaimed a state of emergency and announced an executive order to prevent and protect against gender-based violence. Advocates at the Centro Salud Justicia or the Health Justice Center of Puerto Rico saw this as an opportunity to address a long-standing issue through an innovative sexual assault survivor support model.

"We provide trans-disciplinary services to victims of sexual violence (children, adolescents, and adults) under a multidisciplinary team model known as Comprehensive Forensic Services (CFS)," added Dr. Linda Laras, Director of the Health Justice Center. "Which means we can accomplish forensic exams, psychotherapy, legal assistance and other services all in one location."

Last year, this Family Violence and Prevention Services Act Program awarded more than \$1.8M in FVPSA American Rescue Plan grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault earmarked for the state to administer to survivor support programs like the Health Justice Center. These critical funds enabled Laras and her team to provide much-needed services to 158 survivors, with 80% of those cases involving children. Those heartbreaking numbers are just a blip in Laras' 30-year career; she has evaluated 2,500 cases since 1990. Each case stays with her, but it was that first one that made a lasting mark.

"I remember them all because of your connection with each survivor, but I often think back to my first case. The police called me out to perform an exam," added Laras. "I soon realized it was much more than an exam; it was an opportunity to bring someone from disclosure to closure."

Disclosure or, in this case, reporting gender-based violence is the key to leading survivors down a path to healing. Unfortunately, the current environment can make this crucial step difficult for survivors. For example, according to the [2021 Action Protocol to Combat Violence Against Women study](#), police in Puerto Rico received 7,876 reports of domestic violence and 867 complaints of sexual assault, including 119 rapes. Officials believe those numbers and the overall sexual assault rates are higher than reported due to natural disasters and public health emergencies and their effect on survivors.

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DIGGING INTO THE DATA

Decades of FVPSA Funding Show a Steady Commitment to Comprehensive Services for Millions Annually

For 38 years, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) program has served as an essential building block for the federal response to domestic and dating violence by ensuring the availability of annual funding for community-based shelters and services that support millions of families.

“Decades of steady congressional funding which include \$1B in American Rescue Plan (ARP) supplemental grants, allow FVPSA to collaborate with and support domestic violence and sexual assault services all across the country,” said Shawndell Dawson, FVPSA Program Director. “Services provided by states, territories, tribes, shelters, and hotlines serve as lifelines for millions of survivors and their children each year.”

FVPSA-funded formula grant recipients submit performance progress reports annually that include essential details about shelter nights, crisis calls, and supportive services provided to survivors and their children all across the nation. This data on domestic violence services shows that over one million survivors received support through state and tribal grantees in 2021, underscoring the reach and impact of FVPSA funding in local communities.

“FVPSA funding also enables grant recipients in providing supportive services, such as legal advocacy, medical appointment accompaniment, transportation services, and crisis intervention,” said Dawson. “Our tribal grantees used FY 2021 funding, to deliver these services to 30.8 thousand survivors with Adult Crisis Intervention comprising more than nine-thousand clients.”

The history and impact of FVPSA’s public health response to domestic violence are widespread and ensure that survivors, their children, and communities can provide safe spaces and trauma-informed advocacy to help millions of people heal and thrive. States rely on FVPSA formula funding to support more than 1,500 local domestic violence agencies across the country, thus, ensuring that shelters can keep their doors open for the 1.3 million survivors receiving support from FVPSA-funded programs each year.

Age of Clients Served by State Grantees 2021

LEGEND

25 to 59

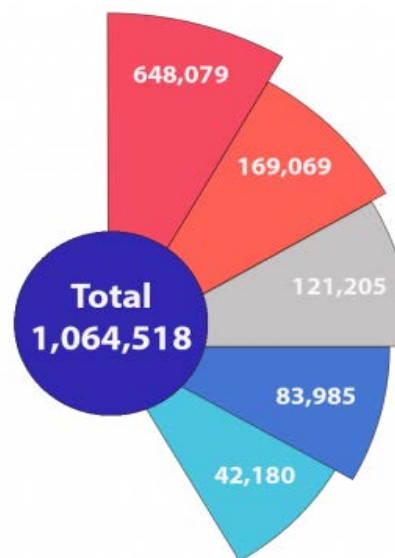
0 to 12

18 to 24

Unknown Adult Age

60 Plus

Unknown Child Age



SERVING CLIENTS IN SHELTER

Shelter Totals

300,000

Shelter Nights

100

250,000

80

200,000

60

150,000

40

100,000

20

50,000

0

2018

2019

2020

2021

Note: Click the above images to view the FVPSA Grants Data video presentation.

“We see FVPSA’s reach through the nearly 5 million supported survivors over the past four years,” said Dawson. “It is an incredible honor to be able to distribute grant funds and provide FVPSA funded states, territories, tribes, coalitions, hotlines, shelters, and programs with resources, tools, training and technical assistance that they need to support millions of survivors and their families every day.”

The FVPSA program used the most recent performance progress data reports to create several fact sheets and presentations highlighting the FVPSA mission and support of survivors, children, youth, and families. These data-related presentations, fact sheets highlighting state, territorial, and tribal domestic violence services, and videos are available on our newly launched [FVPSA Data Portal](#).

Over the last ten years, FVPSA funding has continued to expand services and supports for survivors which includes \$215.5M in FY 2022 appropriations.

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Reporting gender-based violence can be further complicated during times of natural disasters, climate related events, and public health emergencies. "Hurricanes come through Puerto Rico every year, and when they do, survivors often feel like they can't report gender-based violence against them because in their eyes there is nowhere else to go," said Carl Bittman-Diez, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Administrator for Puerto Rico. "The COVID-19 pandemic was another contributing factor."

The residents of Puerto Rico have seen a steady stream of natural disasters over the past five years, which includes eleven earthquakes and five hurricanes. Laras and her 27-member team of seasoned professionals in medicine, nursing, clinic, social psychology, social work, and epidemiology work through the constant state of emergency by providing comprehensive survivor support. The goal is to lower sexual assault rates across the island through this collaborative effort between the FVPSA State Administrator and the San Juan Bautista School of Medicine. This Puerto Rico Health Justice Center initiative allows Laras and the team to meet survivors whenever and wherever they need assistance.

"Puerto Rico provides some unique challenges geographically when considering how to reach survivors," said Laras. "Sometimes we have to travel over mountains to provide services. Thankfully, we can do that now with our five mobile units, which allow us to provide interviews and forensic psychological evaluations, forensic medical examinations, crisis intervention, case management, and medical monitoring."

This state-of-the-art full-service unit includes a forensic examination and interview room with the necessary equipment to offer services. There is even a ramp, electric stretcher, bathroom with shower, refrigerator for samples, electric generator, and solar panels to ensure a steady stream of power. The team also uses four additional units for professional transportation and dedicated spaces for forensic examinations and interviews. While the added capabilities are helping advocates address the rising rates of sexual violence, Laras knows success is rooted in a collaborative team effort.

"The staff consistently recognizes the needs of the other disciplines, as well as the need to work harmoniously with each other to provide the best services possible," explained Laras. "FVPSA grants and the team's expertise gives us an opportunity to provide a ray of sunshine through our survivor's tears."

If you or someone you know needs assistance, reach out to the Health Justice Center of Puerto Rico at 787-337-3737 or visit their website at <https://centrosaludjusticia.org/>.

ON THE HORIZON

The FVPSA Program is on the horizon of expanding training and technical assistance with for FVPSA grant recipients with the release of these three Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) that will support seven new cooperative agreements that will provide sexual assault technical assistance; expanded capacity building technical assistance for formula grantees; and technical assistance for Native Hawaiians experiencing domestic violence. These new technical assistance grants will begin on October 1, 2022, and will be funded through September 30, 2025. Please click the links below to learn more about the new FVPSA NOFOs.

***Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence**

***Culturally Specific Sexual Assault Capacity Building Centers**

***FVPSA Formula Grantees Capacity Building Consortium**

FVPSA Launches New ARP Website

FVPSA has launched a one-stop-shop website for grantees and advocates looking for American Rescue Plan grants information resources called the FVPSA ARP Grants Portal.

This user-friendly website includes FAQs, Federal Project Officer contact info, funding tables, and much more. Click below to dive into this new resource.

[FVPSA ARP Grants Portal](#)

Success-Ful Pod

According to a 2022 Statista survey, 57% of U.S. consumers listened to an audio podcast last year. So if you are looking for a new listen that focuses on engaging content and success stories from our advocates and grantees, tune into FVPSA Success Stories.

Our latest episode dives into an innovative FVPSA ARP-funded initiative that leads survivors of sexual assault down a path to healing.

- Ep. 1 - COVID Surveillance Testing
- Ep. 2 - Parallel Pandemics
- Ep. 3 - Hotline Answers Call
- Ep. 4 - Safe Space
- Ep. 5 - StrongHearts
- Ep. 6 - Project Safe
- Ep. 7 - Health Justice Center

Click the button below to visit our FVPSA Success Stories archive and start listening to these engaging conversations today!

[FVPSA Success Stories](#)

FVPSA Grantee Leads Survivors to Self-Sufficiency

Southern Indian Health Council (SIHC), an FVPSA grantee, is American Rescue Plan Grants to Support Sexual Assault Survivors. This multidimensional support effort aims to provide, promote, and coordinate services for survivors experiencing domestic violence (DV), intimate partner violence (IPV), dating violence (DV), sexual assault (SA), stalking, and human trafficking.

According to a 2021 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, Native Americans are twice as likely to experience sexual violence than any other race, which is most likely an undercount due to the prevalence of missing and murdered indigenous women. Caleb Martinez, the Project Safe Coordinator, sees these numbers and his life-long tie to the Alpine and Kumeyaay communities as driving forces for change.

"I witnessed violence at a young age, grew up on the reservation, and was directly impacted by domestic violence," said Martinez. "I received services here as a child at Southern Indian Health Council. So, domestic violence has always been an issue that is near and dear to my heart as being someone who's been directly impacted by that and this community as well."

These Southern California-based advocates are tapping into FVPSA ARP grants to lead survivors of sexual assault away from the dependency on abusive relationships, and safety net systems to a path focused on goal setting and, ultimately, independence.

"We want to lean in on setting goals because we recognize the importance of survivors having their own agency, making decisions for themselves, especially coming from a setting where they felt so powerless," said Kassandra Mason, Director of Behavioral Health for SIHC. "Whether they need clothes, necessities like food or therapy to break that will of power and control that a lot of abusers hold over survivors. we try to get them to a point of self-sufficiency, where they can be empowered and regain that control."

As a commitment to trauma-informed survivor centered services, SIHC also offers SA survivors opportunity to become economically self-sufficient and more marketable. The team is using these historic funds to cover General Education Diploma (GED), trade school, certificate program fees, and other career development services to improve employability.

"We recently had someone come into Project Safe who needed the basics, food, shelter, and communication. We provided those items along with legal support," said Martinez. "Two weeks later, they're back in school, getting employment, and they shifted from surviving to thriving."

One of the biggest hurdles in moving from escaping a dangerous situation to surviving and onto thriving is the idea that survivors are dependent on their abusers financially and emotionally.

"This is why FVPSA American Rescue Plan funds are so instrumental for SIHC and Project Safe," said Mason. "Survivors might feel like they won't make it on their own. These grants allow us to provide shelter, food, clothing, and communication, which in turn provides a feeling of support and empowerment when they need it most."

For details about Project Safe, visit www.sihc.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have a page dedicated to helping Tribal advocates and grantees navigate. This online resource includes program instructions, allowable costs, and much more. Head over to our [FVPSA ARP Grants Tribal Resources page](#) today!



Tribal Resource Centers



StrongHearts Native Helpline

1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483) is a 24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic, dating, and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, with culturally-appropriate support and advocacy through call, text, and chat functions.

Visit <https://strongheartshelpline.org/>.



Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWR) is devoted to strengthening local, tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes.

Visit <https://www.aknwrc.org/>.

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center provides national leadership to end violence against American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian women by lifting up the collective voices of grassroots advocates and offering culturally grounded resources, technical assistance and training, and policy development.

Visit <https://www.niwrc.org/>.



Tribal Safe Housing Capacity Building Center

This initiative focuses on working towards a vision of "Safe Housing for All Our Relatives through providing training and technical assistance in meeting the housing needs of Indian (including Alaska Natives) and Native Hawaiian survivors living in tribal communities.

Visit <https://www.niwrc.org/resources/webinars/introducing-tribal-safe-housing-center>





RESOURCES AND MORE

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

The Child Protection and Custody Resource Center is a project of Caminar Latino. Since 1993, the Resource Center has provided training and technical assistance to advocates, professionals, and communities seeking to improve outcomes in child protection and custody cases that involve domestic violence, while also leading policy reform in those areas.

The Resource Center operates an 800-line for survivors and professionals seeking information, referrals, research, and support. In addition, the Resource Center supports and coordinates policy- and practice-focused meetings, training, and publications which lead the field in developing evidence-building and evidence-based practice, as well as interventions that are safe and supportive of families.



SHARE YOUR SUCCESSES

If your organization has a success story you would like to share, contact your assigned Federal Project Officer.

[View our Federal Project Officer contact sheet to find your point of contact.](#)

FVPSA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Click on the links below to access the various digital resources.

[FVPSA Food Costs Allow-ability FAQ](#)

[FVPSA State Pass-Through Entity Administrative Costs FAQ](#)

[FVPSA Allocation of Employee Costs FAQ](#)

[Use of FVPSA Funds for match to HUD DV Bonus Grant Programs FAQ](#)

[COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and the Allowable Uses of FVPSA Grant Funds for Domestic Violence Shelter and Supportive Services FAQ](#)

[FVPSA ARP Grants to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault Supplemental Funding FAQ \(PDF\)](#)

[FVPSA ARP Domestic Violence Services Supplemental Funding FAQ for States and Territories](#)

[FVPSA ARP Domestic Violence Services Supplemental Funding FAQ for Tribes and Tribal Organizations](#)

[FVPSA ARP Domestic Violence Services Supplemental Funding FAQ for Specialized Services for Abused Parents and their Children \(SSAPC\) Grant Recipients](#)

[FVPSA ARP Grants to Support Survivors of DV and SA from Culturally Specific Populations FAQ \(PDF\)](#)

[FVPSA ARP Grants for COVID-19 Testing, Vaccines, and Mobile Health Units FAQ \(PDF\)](#)

More information and resources are available via our easy to use FVPSA Frequently Asked Questions page.

