

ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER



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House of Representatives has passed H.R. 2119 Family Violence Prevention & Services Improvement Act (FVPSA) Reauthorization

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) is excited to announce that the House of Representatives has passed H.R. 2119 Family Violence Prevention & Services Improvement Act Reauthorization (FVPSA) with a vote of 228 yes and 200 no. The State of Alaska's House of Representative Don Young voted in favor of the bill. The Bill has important enhancements for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and Native Hawaiians.

H.R. 2119 as passed will continue to provide FVPSA formula grants to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and tribal organizations through 12.5% of the total yearly appropriation. This formula approach and funding level recognizes the federal government's trust responsibility and government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes. The purpose of these grants are 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 family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents. Historically FVPSA is the only grant program that comprehensively recognizes the interrelated aspects of domestic violence with homelessness, economic hardship, workplace readiness, physical and behavioral health concerns, and culturally specific needs, and works across the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to address these issues, including meeting the needs of children exposed to family violence. During the 2021 Fiscal Year there were more than 25 Alaska Tribes and/or Tribal Consortiums awarded FVPSA Grants.

New provisions include:

- Stable Funding for an Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence (funding is currently at the discretion of Congressional appropriators and the Secretary of Health and Human Services).
- Authorize stable funding of the StrongHearts Native Helpline to serve as the National Indian Domestic Violence Helpline (funding is currently discretionary).

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ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER



- Strengthening the capacity of Indian Tribes to exercise their sovereign authority to more fully respond to domestic violence by increasing the current 10% tribal allocation to 12.5% off the top of appropriations.
- Authorizing recognition and meaningful funding for tribal coalitions to provide Indian Tribes and tribal organizations with technical assistance and training on developing responses to domestic violence.
- Stable funding for a Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence for Native Hawaiians to develop culturally relevant training and technical assistance to address domestic violence.

“The Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center continues to make headway at educating and providing assistance to support building capacity among the 40% of tribes in the nation that are in Alaska (229 of 574) after decades of being ignored and underserved. It is important to have an Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence codified to continue to assist tribes in providing lifesaving services and support to victims of family and gender-based violence,” said Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director, AKNWRC. “We have the greatest need among domestic violence victims in the nation, but we are less likely to receive or have access to the needed services, particularly to prevent missing and murdered Indigenous women. H.R. 2119 is a positive step that we can build upon. We thank Representative Young and all of the men and women of the House who recognized the important life saving resources provided by FVPSA.” Jerue said.

“The steady permanent funding for tribal coalitions recognizes the services and important role tribal coalitions take in educating and providing support to tribes, especially small tribes that often do not have the necessary infrastructure to fully build programs. We are encouraged that the House recognizes the need to fund tribal coalitions,” said Lenora “Lynn” Hootch, Tribal Council Emmonak Tribe, Executive Director of the Yup’ik Women’s Coalition and Board member of AKNWRC.

The Indian Law and Order Commission report sent to Congress November 2013 stated that Alaska Native women are over-represented in the domestic violence victim population by 250%, and while Alaska Natives represented 19% of the state population, they are 47% of reported rape victims.

About the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center

Organized in 2015, the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center is a tribal nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against women with Alaska’s 229 tribes and allied organizations. AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have 153 years of combined experience in tribal governments, nonprofit

ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER



management, domestic violence, and sexual assault advocacy (both individual crisis and systems and grassroots social change advocacy at the local, statewide, regional, national and international levels), and other social service experience. AKNWRC's philosophy is that violence against women is rooted in the colonization of indigenous nations.

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

Strengthen local, tribal government responses of 40% of the federally recognized tribes located 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.

The StrongHearts Native Helpline:

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. To date, StrongHearts (1-844-7NATIVE) has received more than 1,400 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 targeting 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.

Purpose of the Tribal Coalitions:

Tribal Coalitions exist throughout Indian Country providing training, technical assistance and support to Tribal governments and tribal victim services providers. Currently, 19 tribal coalitions exist with more forming to address gaps in services and as need is demonstrated. The tribal coalitions seek a funding stream through FVPSA, such as the funding received by their state coalition counterparts to provide tribal specific training and technical assistance for Indian Tribes. 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 domestic and sexual violence committed in Indian Country.