



MEMORANDUM

TO: Laurie Robinson, Elizabeth Pyke
FROM: The Domestic Violence Resource Network
DATE: December 11, 2008
RE: Recommendations for the Transition Team Regarding the Office on Violence Against Women, the Office of Justice Programs, and the Office for Victims of Crime

The Domestic Violence Resource Network¹ wishes to thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the structuring and policy priorities of the Office on Violence Against Women, the Office of Justice Programs, and the Office for Victims of Crime. The general recommendations of the DVRN include:

- Study and assess the impact of the current economic crisis on victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking; find ways to support services facing funding shortfalls as government revenues and philanthropic giving decrease
- Retain the statutory structure of both the Office on Violence Against Women and the Office for Victims of Crime and distribute the funding within these Offices as Congress intended; these funding streams should not be block-granted, nor should they be used for anything other than the purpose areas articulated by Congress
- Encourage collaboration and coordination between OVW, OJP and other offices within DOJ that address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking (e.g., the EOUSA, the Office of the Solicitor General, OPD); encourage these same Offices to collaborate and coordinate with Offices addressing violence against women in other federal agencies, such as HHS, HUD, Labor, State, DoD, VA, DoEd
- Revive the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and give it the authority to provide meaningful policy guidance to federal agencies
- Address the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking and work with the Office of the Solicitor General to ensure government briefs address these issues fully and appropriately
- Ensure that DOJ entities implement and provide guidance or regulations around non-grant provisions of VAWA

¹ The Domestic Violence Resource Network (DVRN) is a coalition of technical assistance providers funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Family Violence Prevention and Services Office. The DVRN members also receive funding from the Office on Violence Against Women and various OJP entities to provide technical assistance to grantees of the U.S. Department of Justice. The member organizations of the DVRN are: the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence; the National Center on Domestic Violence, Mental Health & Trauma; the Resource Center on Child Protection & Custody; the Battered Women's Justice Project; the Resource Center on Health and Domestic Violence; the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community; the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence; the National Domestic Violence Hotline; La Casa; the International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis; the National Network to End Domestic Violence; the Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence; Sacred Circle.



- Lift the cap on VOCA and dedicate this funding stream to victim services
- Ensure greater accessibility to justice in the criminal and civil court and law enforcement systems by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, with trained legal interpreters in civil and criminal courts; ensure that immigrant victims may seek help without immigration consequences
- Increase resources for legal representation and assistance for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking; work with the Legal Services Corporation to ensure access to lawyers trained about the four crimes
- Support the development of alternative, community-based models of intervention to serve communities of color
- Ensure that Indian women have access to justice, particularly where the perpetrator is a non-Indian; support tribes in developing systems that respect tribal sovereignty and traditional folkways; ensure that federal prosecution and law enforcement efforts prioritize safety and justice for Indian women who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking
- Tie justice system efforts to related HHS efforts to support safe and stable families, such as TANF and responsible fatherhood initiatives; tie DOJ re-entry programs to OVW efforts to decrease violence within families
- Do a better job of addressing issues of access in rural/remote/isolated communities; provide in-home resources, transportation, and communications services
- Fund adjunct services in family courts; improve family courts' capacity to assess needs of litigants and educate these courts about the menu of options—including community-based programs—that will give litigants options for resolving cases involving abuse
- Ensure that the justice system and related violence against women services broaden accessibility for persons with disabilities (including psychiatric and cognitive disabilities and the effects of trauma) and ensure that all services for survivors are more accessible and fully responsive, particularly to survivors/children who are currently underserved
- Work with HHS to develop and strengthen non-criminal justice responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking
- Support expanded research to understand patterns of victimization, effectiveness of justice and social service system responses, and needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking
- Develop model confidentiality protocols through HHS and DOJ for systems and programs serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking
- Ensure that DOJ programs addressing domestic violence and sexual assault holistically address the impact of these two crimes on the children who experience the victimization of a parent or other family member