Impact of COVID-19 on American Indian Alaska Native Survivors of Domestic Violence

COVID Funding Requests:

- Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Grants:
  - $100 million FVPSA set aside for tribal governments
  - $1 million divided evenly between the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center and Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center

- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Grants:
  - $22,500,000 grants to tribal governments
  - $10 million to Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program
  - $3 million to tribal coalitions

- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grants:
  - $16,765,000 additional set aside for Tribal governments

Domestic Violence in Tribal Communities:

- Native women experience disproportionately high rates of violence. The various intersections that Native survivors of violence must confront as a result of their victimization are further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The National Institute of Justice released an alarming study in May 2016, confirming what many of us working to protect Indian women and children already knew. American Indian and Alaska Native women experience severe rates of violence in their lifetimes, including:
56.1% have experienced sexual violence;
55.5% have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner;
48.8% have experienced stalking; and
66.4% have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.

Of these victims, 38% were unable to receive necessary services, including medical care and legal services.

Impacts of COVID on Survivors in Tribal Communities:

- We expect the COVID-19 pandemic to increase the prevalence of violence experienced by Native women by exacerbating already existing issues including:
  - Lack of safe housing for victims;
  - Lack of space in shelters for victims to maintain safe, social distancing;
  - Lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for staff of tribal shelters and victim services programs;
  - Inadequate justice response to victims;
  - Limited transportation for victims; and
  - Lack of access to adequate health care.

- The current funding available in Indian Country is inadequate to address the needs of victims - from the provision of basic, emergency services and responses to more comprehensive, long term services – in “normal” times, and even less so during a pandemic such as COVID-19.

For more detailed information on the impacts of COVID-19 on tribal survivors of domestic violence, please see letters sent to Congress (House and Senate) from a group of Tribal organizations who advocate on behalf of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and homicide.