



## FAQs

### VAT *Online*, NVAA, and Other Training Offerings

*The following provides information about new training opportunities that are available for victim service providers in 2008 to help you choose the training that is right for you.*

#### 1. VAT *Online*

▪ ***What is VAT *Online*?***

Victim Assistance Training *Online* (VAT *Online*) is a Web-based training program funded by the Office for Victims of Crime. It was developed by Cicatelli Associates Inc., in partnership with the National Center for Victims of Crime and Safe Horizon, Inc. The training is a basic, fundamental program that combines core information and basic skills needed by victim service providers to assist victims of crime effectively and sensitively. VAT *Online* also includes information on meeting the needs of specific populations.

▪ ***What are the goals for VAT *Online* training?***

The goal of VAT *Online* is to teach new victim service providers in all types of victim service agencies the basic knowledge and skills they need to respond effectively to crime victims. A secondary goal is to provide the training at a time and place convenient to the learner, which is allowed for by the Web-based format.

▪ ***Who is the intended audience?***

The intended audience is new victim service providers with less than 3 years of experience working with victims of crime. The training will also serve as a refresher course for more experienced victim service providers.

▪ ***How long does it take to complete VAT *Online*? Will I have to complete it all in one sitting?***

The training is designed to take approximately 35–40 hours to complete and does not have to be completed all in one sitting. In fact, it is divided into various modules and sections so that the user can review it at his or her own pace and bookmark the last section reviewed. Each module or section takes 30–60 minutes to complete. Learners can take the entire training program, or can complete specific sections of the program.

▪ ***What are the costs associated with this training?***

This program is offered free of charge. Since the course is available online, there are no tuition, travel, or other costs associated with taking it.

▪ ***How can I access VAT *Online*?***

The training program is currently available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/vatonline>.

- ***Who developed VAT Online and how did they decide what topics to include in the training?***  
This training was developed by Cicatelli Associates Inc. in conjunction with the National Center for Victims of Crime and Safe Horizon, Inc. It was funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice.

The content of the training is based on a national needs assessment that was conducted in 2004, and has been developed with input from an advisory committee composed of national experts in the field of victim services. The needs assessment process included focus groups with victim service providers and managers, as well as with consumers. CAI also developed and distributed a national needs assessment survey. The content of *VAT Online* is a mixture of original material developed specifically for this training, and online links and resources.

- ***How often is this training going to be updated? Will I need to take this training every few years?***

*VAT Online* will be updated every 2 years so that its content remains current. Your supervisor may request that you review specific sections periodically as a refresher.

- ***What type of computer capability do I need to take VAT Online?***

You will need a computer that has Internet access, as *VAT Online* is an Internet-based, online training. It can be used with a Mac or PC. Specific hardware/software requirements include:

- ✓ Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME or higher
- ✓ Mac OS 9 or OS X or higher
- ✓ 64 MB RAM
- ✓ Modem minimum speed of 56K
- ✓ Microsoft Word
- ✓ Adobe Acrobat Reader - <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/>
- ✓ Macromedia Flash Player - <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/> (the Flash player allows you to view and participate in interactive activities created by Macromedia Flash, which is a graphics animation creation program).
- ✓ Screen Resolution: Best viewed at a screen resolution of 1024 x 768.

*VAT Online* is designed to be user-friendly and includes a module that explains how to navigate through the training.

- ***Do I need supervisor approval to take the VAT Online training?***

Anyone can access the *VAT Online* training. However, since *VAT Online* is a national program, your supervisor can help you apply the information and skills more specifically to your area and your agency, and can help you address your individual career plans.

- ***Can I take VAT Online training during my work hours or do I have to take the training at home?***

The program is available 24/7. You can take it from any location where there is a computer and Internet access. If you are using it as part of your on-the-job professional training, you should consult with your supervisor regarding when and where to take the training.

- ***As a supervisor, how can I use VAT Online as a training tool with my staff?***  
VAT Online will include a Supervisor Guide that provides suggestions on how supervisors can enhance staff's experience of VAT Online. Additionally, the Supervisor Guide will include a description of benefits of VAT Online as well as an overview and summary of each of the seven modules.
- ***Is there course accreditation for completing VAT Online?***  
When you complete VAT Online, you will receive a certificate of completion.
- ***Whom can I contact to learn more about VAT Online?***  
You can learn more about VAT Online and access it at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/vatonline>.

## **2. The National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA)**

- ***What is the National Victim Assistance Academy?***  
The NVAA is an education and training classroom experience for professionals and volunteers who assist victims and survivors of crime. The NVAA was restructured to include three instructional tracks offered during a week-long Academy.

**Track 1, Foundation-Level Training**, is a general training for those who have less than 3 years of experience. The goal of the foundation-level training is to provide entry-level professionals and volunteers with skills, knowledge, and resources to serve victims and survivors of crime more effectively. The length of the training is 4 days.

**Track 2, Specialized Training**, consists of several topic-specific training courses, such as elder abuse or ethics, for those who have been in the victim services field for at least 2 years. Courses offer information and learning experiences on the most current topics in the field that have direct impact on service providers' work with victims. The length of the training courses range from 1 to 3 days. There are Track 2 courses on each of the 5 days of the Academy.

**Track 3, Leadership Institute**, consists of courses on management issues, for example, leadership and strategic planning. Track 3 is intended to help victim service administrators and leaders develop and refine the skills and abilities they need to manage and sustain their victim service programs. The Leadership Institute is 5 days in length.

All three tracks are offered to victim service providers during a week-long Academy.

- ***What is the difference between NVAA Track 1—the foundation-level training developed by OVC—and the NVAAs that have been offered by the Joint Center for Violence and Victim Studies, an affiliation between California State University-Fresno, the University of New Haven, and Washburn University?***  
OVC established the NVAA in 1995 to offer an academic-based curriculum that emphasized foundation-level education in victimology and victims' rights and services. The original NVAA was coordinated by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR) in cooperation with four universities and was offered at as many as five sites simultaneously. Following a 2003

formal evaluation, OVC decided to formulate a new NVAA model, to revise and update the text and structure, and to standardize the curriculum. Since 2003, the Joint Center for Violence and Victim Studies has adapted the original NVAA curricula and continued on their own to offer a foundation-level course for those new to the field of victim services. They are currently reviewing the form that their foundation-level training will take now that the new OVC NVAA is offered.

- ***Who is the intended audience for the three NVAA tracks?***

NVAA Track 1 is intended for victim service providers with less than 3 years of service in the victim services field; Track 2 is intended for those who have been in the field for at least 2 years; and Track 3 is intended for victim service administrators and aspiring leaders with the highest levels of experience and expertise.

- ***Is there course accreditation for completing the NVAA?***

OVC through its Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) is exploring how it can strategically partner with academic institutions so that participants could receive academic credit for their participation in the NVAA.

OVC TTAC also is exploring alternative strategies so that participants could apply for Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Participants may also qualify for credentialing by the National Advocate Credentialing Program (NACP).

- ***What are the costs associated with attending NVAA training?***

Tuition costs depend on the NVAA Track that you wish to attend. Tuition for Track 1, Foundation-Level Training, is \$400; for 1-day trainings in Track 2, tuition is \$100 and tuition is \$200 for 2-day Track 2 offerings; and tuition is \$500 for Track 3, Leadership Institute. These fees include meal costs and are for cost recovery only.

As with any training, there are travel and lodging costs associated with attending the NVAA. These costs will vary depending on where the NVAA is held and where the participant lives in relation to the training site.

- ***Is financial assistance available?***

OVC through its Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) provides scholarships to qualified victim service professionals through the Professional Development Scholarship Program. This program is designed for service providers from small, community-based or faith-based organizations or agencies that assist crime victims and operate with limited budgets or resources. Individuals can be reimbursed up to \$1,000 to cover transportation, lodging, and incidentals. Tuition costs are waived for scholarship recipients. A limited number of professional scholarships will be made available for eligible NVAA participants. More information about the Professional Development Scholarship Program and the application process are available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taResources/scholarship.cfm>.

- ***How can I apply for Spring 2008 NVAA?***

Application forms for all three tracks are available online at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/nvaa2008>.

- ***Who developed this training and how did they decide what topics to include?***

The NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training was developed by the NVAA Work Group of 12 experts in the victim services field. The group includes a balance of scholars/researchers from the academic community and those who have many years of experience in providing direct services to victims. The NVAA was developed based on the “Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers” created by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium. The NVAA Work Group used these standards, previous NVAA material, and their own expertise to recommend the topics to include in the NVAA, with input from almost 20 other victim service experts in the field, and approval by OVC.

Smaller teams from the NVAA Work Group membership guided the selection and development of Track 2, Specialized Training, and Track 3, Leadership Institute. Offerings for Tracks 2 and 3 were selected from existing offerings or developed based on the needs of the field.

- ***How often is this training going to be updated? Will I need to take the trainings every few years?***

OVC TTAC anticipates that the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training will be updated every 2 years. New trends and research will be reflected in the updates. The NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training includes resource materials that participants can use after the completion of the training.

- ***Where will the NVAA be held? How often will it be offered?***

Trainings are scheduled for presentation in different parts of the country to achieve geographic balance. Initially, the NVAA is anticipated to be offered twice a year. OVC is exploring offering the NVAA multiple times each year.

- ***How can I learn more about NVAA?***

You can go to <https://www.ovcttac.gov/nvaa2008> to learn more about NVAA.

### **3. Comparison of VAT Online, NVAA, SVAAs, and Other Offerings**

- ***Can you summarize the similarities and differences between VAT Online and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training?***

VAT *Online* and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training are both intended for victim service providers with less than 3 years of experience in the victim services field. Both courses cover topics and build basic skills to serve victims and survivors of crime more effectively. NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training participants are required to complete selected VAT *Online* modules.

Individuals are able to take VAT *Online* at times that fit their schedules and can work independently and at their own pace. Since the course is available online, there are no tuition, travel, or other costs associated with taking it. You need to have Internet access and a computer. VAT *Online* includes both knowledge-based and skills-building activities. Learners work independently on the course, or, at times, in conjunction with their supervisor or another staff person.

The NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training is delivered by subject matter experts who have outstanding presentation skills in face-to-face settings to groups of about 35 participants. The NVAA curriculum emphasizes skill building. The training experience provides participants with the opportunity to learn and practice important skills and to receive feedback from peers and faculty to enhance these skills. Training participants often develop a strong feeling of camaraderie with others who are attending the training with them.

- ***How do I decide which training to take first?***

Either could be taken first. VAT *Online* and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training complement each other—many of the same topics are covered in both, although the way they are covered may be different. Some participants might only be able to take VAT *Online* because of funding or other limitations. These participants will learn important information and skills. Participants who attend the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training will be required to complete selected VAT *Online* modules as part of their NVAA experience.

- ***What is the relationship between VAT Online, NVAA, SVAA, and the OVC Training Schedule?***

Although they differ in the manner in which the training is delivered, both VAT *Online* and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training cover the same topics and issues from a national perspective. State Victim Assistance Academies (SVAAs) are similar to the NVAA in that the SVAAs are training experiences for victim service providers with less than 5 years of experience, and the academies are delivered over several days. The SVAAs are developed from NVAA material that is then adapted to the individual characteristics and needs of a particular state. Currently, there are SVAAs in over half of the states. When there is an SVAA in every state, NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training will be discontinued; however, the NVAA Track 2, Specialized Training and Track 3, Leadership Institute will continue to be offered.

The OVC Training Schedule provides practical skill-building sessions on a variety of topics to victim service providers throughout the country. The offerings on the Training Schedule are directed to specific issues or a specific set of skills—for example, how to assist victims of identity theft or how to conduct a program evaluation. Some offerings are appropriate for anyone in the victim services field, while other offerings are intended for those who are program managers or those who have only a few years of experience.

- ***How are these offerings different from the National Advocate Credentialing Program (NACP)?***

Unlike NVAA and VAT *Online*, NACP does not provide any training itself. The NACP is a consortium of nine national victim organizations designed to recognize professional development for victim assistance professionals. This is a voluntary program open to any individual who provides services to those victimized by crime. There are four levels of credentialing, each with specific training and experience requirements. Several SVAAs and other training programs have their training programs approved by NACP. NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training (with supplemental material from VAT *Online*) has been approved by NACP. Information about the NVAA Track 1 requirements for credentials by NACP is available at

<http://www.trynova.org/nacp>.



- ***If I've already attended an SVAA, do I need to complete NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training, and/or VAT Online?***

If you've attended an SVAA, you do not need to complete the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training since the SVAA's are modeled after the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training. You may wish to attend NVAA Track 2, Specialized Trainings, or Track 3, Leadership Institute.

VAT *Online* also may not be necessary to take but can serve as an important resource and ongoing learning tool for those who have completed an SVAA. You or your supervisor can review VAT *Online* and see if there are any modules that would be helpful for you. In addition, because VAT *Online* contains current resources and Internet links to many sites containing important information about victim services, it can serve as an easily accessible source of information and other resources.

- ***Should I attend the SVAA in my state or the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training?***

If there is an SVAA in your state or if there is one planned for the next year, it is best to attend your SVAA. Preference to attend the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training will be given to applicants from states that do not have an SVAA or with non-operational SVAA's. The SVAA's are developed from NVAA material and then adapted to the individual characteristics and needs of a particular state. The NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training is intended for those individuals from states where there currently is no SVAA. A list of OVC-funded SVAA's is provided at <http://www.ovc.gov/assist/existingsvaa.html>.

- ***What's the benefit of taking either VAT Online or attending an NVAA if I've already taken trainings in my state?***

Both VAT *Online* and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training provide comprehensive information from a national perspective to enhance skills that are important to those who have been providing services to victims for less than 3 years. Both trainings were developed based on the "Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers" created by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium. Trainings other than VAT *Online* and NVAA may not have been developed from these standards or with this broad-based, national focus.

Both VAT *Online* and the NVAA offerings from all three tracks may offer new or different content from other training programs you have already taken. And either is an opportunity to refresh your skills and update your knowledge. Attending an NVAA also offers you the important opportunity to meet and network with others in the field and to learn from their experience.

- ***Are the VAT Online and NVAA Tracks 1, 2, and 3 considered professional development? Why take these trainings at all?***

VAT *Online* and NVAA Tracks 1, 2, and 3 are designed to provide professional development opportunities to those who are working in the victim services field. All focus on building skills and providing information that better enable participants to meet the needs of the victims they serve.

- ***Will the VAT Online and NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training still be offered after all states have SVAA's?***

When there is an SVAA in every state, the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training will be discontinued; however, NVAA Track 2, Specialized Training, and Track 3, Leadership Institute, will continue to be offered. VAT *Online* will remain available even after every state has an SVAA.

For more information on training offerings, please contact OVC TTAC at 1-866-OVC-TTAC (1-866-682-8822) or via e-mail at [ttac@ovcttac.org](mailto:ttac@ovcttac.org).