

## **EXPANDING THE REACH OF VICTIM SERVICES**

A Report of the Subcommittee on Victim Services of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on  
Violence Against Women  
National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women

### **Executive Summary**

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) on Violence Against Women is a joint effort between the U.S. Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services. The Committee was chartered in 2006 to "provide policy advice to the Attorney General and Secretary of Health and Human Services concerning the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act, raising public awareness concerning violence against women, and facilitating cooperation among members of the criminal justice system and our communities." The NAC was charged with addressing four priority areas, including expanding services to historically underserved populations. A seven-member Subcommittee on Expanding the Reach of Victim Services was appointed to help the NAC fulfill its charge.

The Subcommittee examined different underserved populations such as Native American and Alaskan Native Women, Military, and Immigrant populations. After consideration of all three populations, the Subcommittee focuses the executive summary on the Native American and Alaskan Native Women and immigrant populations. The violence has reached critical proportions. It is a public health crisis, it is a criminal justice crisis, and it is, most of all, a humanitarian crisis. The number of senseless crimes against women in these communities continues to rise, resulting in physical and emotional scars and precious loss of human life. The ripple effect of violence against women impacts their children, their families, and their communities.

With the acknowledgement that there is much to be done to effectively respond to the violence against Native American/Alaskan Native Women and Immigrant Women in the vast number of immigrant communities across this country we will attempt to highlight two of most urgent recommendations we made in the body of this report.

- 1. Housing and Shelter: It is the opinion of the subcommittee that the highest priority for Native American and Alaskan Native Women is temporary shelter and permanent housing.** Given that most Tribal communities are deficit on infrastructure, it is a top priority that the necessary changes be made in rules that govern the funding sources, both at the DOJ/OVW and DHHS/ACFY. OVW should allow funding for shelters that includes space, maintenance and upkeep. The Family Violence Law needs to be amended to allow the funding from DHHS/ACFY Tribal Shelter and Related Assistance Grant to assist victims in obtaining permanent housing.

- 2. Tele-interpreter Services: It is the opinion of the subcommittee the highest priority for Immigrant Women is access to Language Lines.** There is a high cost for tele-interpreter services but it is the most requested service by immigrant and refugee organizations.

### **Expanding the Reach of Victim Services Subcommittee:**

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