



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

*The following provides information about training opportunities that are available for victim service providers 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 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 also serves 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 takes approximately 35–40 hours to complete and does not have to be completed all in one sitting. It is divided into modules so that the user can review it at his or her pace and bookmark the last section reviewed. Each module 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 free. There are no tuition, travel, or other costs associated with taking it, other than Internet access and a computer.

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

The training program is 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 Cicitelli Associates, Inc., (CAI) 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 was 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.

- ***What type of computer capability do I need to take VAT Online?***  
You will need a computer that has Internet access. *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 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.
- ***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 includes four instructional tracks offered during a week-long Academy that begins on Monday morning and ends with graduation on Friday.

**Track 1, Foundation-Level Training**, is a general training for those who have less than 3 years of experience serving crime victims. 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.

**Track 2, Professional Skill-Building Institute**, is designed to build skills and address timely topics that confront victim service providers on a daily basis and that have direct impact on service providers' work with victims. The training is targeted for those who have been in the victim services field for at least 2 years.

**Track 3, Leadership Institute**, focuses on core knowledge and skills to develop leaders who can generate direction, alignment, and commitment needed for individuals to work together productively toward common goals. Track 3 is intended for new and emerging leaders as well as those who have been in leadership positions for several years.

**Track 4, Advanced Trainer Institute**, is for individuals who already have some experience as trainers/facilitators/speakers, and who want to conduct trainings for OVC. The goal of this training is to improve the quality of instructor-led training by enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of trainers in the field, and to prepare the next generation of trainers to provide OVC trainings. OVC is seeking trainers who represent the diverse victim field and a diversity of subject matter expertise.

To take part in this enriching learning experience, participants are invited to apply or are recommended to OVC TTAC. Interested applicants will be asked to provide information on their past training experience when they apply. If an applicant meets all the criteria, he or she may be invited to attend. However, the maximum number of participants is 18 so there is no guarantee of acceptance. Early application is recommended.

For more information, e-mail OVC TTAC at [training@ovcttac.org](mailto:training@ovcttac.org).

- ***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 formulated a new NVAA model, updated the text and structure, and standardized 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.

▪ ***Will Continuing Education Units (CEUs) be offered for completing a NVAA Track?***

Yes, CEUs are offered for the completion of each NVAA Track. The OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) is an Authorized Provider that meets IACET's internationally recognized continuing education and training standards and awards IACET CEUs. IACET is a well-known organization that is recognized as upholding standards of excellence in continuing education and therefore, many colleges, universities and professional associations accept IACET CEUs. Please note that acceptance of IACET CEUs is not guaranteed. A decision to accept CEUs remains at the discretion of the organization. To confirm whether a particular organization or association accepts IACET CEUs, please contact that organization directly.

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

The tuition fee for each track is \$200. The registration fee is applied only toward audio-visual equipment and facility rental costs. It is not applied to the cost of speakers or any training materials. The tuition fee is intended for cost recovery purposes only.

Participants are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses. These costs 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 (PDS) 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. A limited number of professional development scholarships will be available for eligible NVAA participants. If an individual receives a PDS to attend the NVAA, the tuition cost of \$200 will be waived, leaving \$1000 to cover transportation, lodging, and incidentals at the prevailing government per diem rate. More information about the Professional Development Scholarship Program and the application process are available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/HowWeCanHelp/dspPDSscholarship.cfm>

▪ ***How can I apply to attend NVAA?***

Application forms for all three tracks are available online at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/nvaa>. If you would like an application to attend the ATI, please send an e-mail to [training@ovcttac.org](mailto:training@ovcttac.org).

▪ ***Who developed the NVAA trainings 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 topics to include in the NVAA, with input from almost 20 other victim service experts in the field, and approval by OVC.

Subject matter experts developed Tracks 2, 3, and 4 trainings. These trainings were selected from existing OVC offerings or developed based on the needs of the field.

- ***How often are the NVAA trainings updated? Will I need to take the trainings every few years?***  
Each NVAA training is reviewed following delivery and revisions are made so that the training material remains current and is continuously improved to meet the needs of the field.

After taking Track 1, Foundation-Level Training, consider taking Track 2, Professional Skill-Building Institute, or Track 3, Leadership Institute. The topics included in Track 2, Professional Skill-Building Institute, change from year to year so you can take Track 2 more than once. OVC also offers other excellent trainings to enhance capacity to better serve crime victims. Visit <https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspTrainingCatalog.cfm> to learn more. VAT *Online* provides another training option to develop knowledge and skills in the victim services field.

- ***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. The NVAA is offered once a year.
- ***How can I learn more about NVAA?***  
Visit <https://www.ovcttac.gov/nvaa> to learn more about NVAA.

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

- ***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 that 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 as part of their pre-assignments.

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 other than 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 not more than 40 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 instructors to enhance these skills. Training participants often develop a strong feeling of camaraderie with others who attend 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 are 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, and SVAA?***

Although they differ in the manner in which the training is delivered, 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 adapted to the individual characteristics and needs of a particular state. Currently, there are SVAAs in more than two-thirds of the states.

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, a consortium of nine national victim organizations, recognizes professional development for victim assistance professionals. The NACP 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?***

Anyone who has attended an SVAA does not need to complete the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training since the SVAAs are modeled after the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level

Training. The NVAA Track 2, Professional Skill-Building Institute, and Track 3, Leadership Institute, are good choices instead.

It is not necessary for those who have completed an SVAA to take *VAT Online*; however, it is an important resource and ongoing learning tool. Review *VAT Online* to see which modules will be most relevant. *VAT Online* contains current resources and Internet links to many sites containing important information about victim services, so it is an easily accessible resource.

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

The NVAA, Track 1, Foundation-Level training is intended for individuals with less than 3 years in the field and preference to attend the NVAA Track 1, Foundation-Level Training is given to applicants from states that do not have an SVAA. 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. The SVAA's are developed from NVAA material adapted to the individual characteristics and needs of a particular state. A list of OVC-funded SVAA's is provided at <http://www.ovc.gov/training/svaa.html>.

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

*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.

*VAT Online* and the NVAA offerings from all four tracks may offer new or different content than other training programs. Taking either *VAT Online* or NVAA is an excellent 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 VAT Online and NVAA Tracks 1, 2, 3, and 4 considered professional development? Why take these trainings at all?***

*VAT Online* and NVAA Tracks 1, 2, 3, and 4 provide professional development opportunities to those who work 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. Additionally, CEUs are awarded for the full participation and completion of all requirements for each NVAA Track.

#### **4. Training by Request**

▪ ***What is Training by Request?***

The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) provides comprehensive, quality training and technical assistance resources to victim service providers and allied professionals. These instructor-led (face-to-face) trainings are offered on a formal schedule each year, but can also be presented "on request." Training by Request (TBR)

enables program leaders to request training from the OVC TTAC Training Catalog to be presented in their region. The Trainings Catalog can be found at:

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspTrainingCatalog.cfm>

- ***How do I request training?***

You must complete an application, found at:

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspTrainingByRequest.cfm>

- ***How far in advance do I need to complete the application for Training by Request?***

You must submit a complete application at least 90 days before your preferred training date. Good trainings take time to plan.

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