



A Message from OVW Director Susan B. Carbon

Dear Friends,

This October, we at the Office on Violence Against Women are excited to observe the 23rd Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Started in 1987 as a way to bring advocacy groups together around the common cause of ending violence against women, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a time to recognize our achievements while drawing attention to the continuing needs for the movement to end violence against women. As President Obama stated in a proclamation announcing Domestic Violence Awareness Month:

Ending domestic violence requires a collaborative effort involving every part of our society. Our law enforcement and justice system must work to hold offenders accountable and to protect victims and their children. Business, faith, and community leaders, as well as educators, health care providers, and human service professionals, also have a role to play in communicating that domestic violence is always unacceptable. As a Nation, we must endeavor to protect survivors, bring offenders to justice, and change attitudes that support such violence.

Sixteen years after the Violence Against Women Act became law in 1994, we have made great strides in ending domestic violence. We have awarded millions of dollars in grants and cooperative agreements to organizations that help stop violence against women in all 50 states and every territory. We have raised awareness nationwide of the unsettling reality of the prevalence of domestic violence, and the breadth of its impact on all communities. Our battle to change social norms -- to make domestic violence simply unacceptable -- has saved lives in every corner of the country. For this, we can be grateful, but the fight is long from over.

One in four women will be the victim of domestic violence in her life. About 10% of students nationwide report being physically hurt by an intimate partner in the past year. For African American women, and women in Indian Country, the statistics are even worse. Domestic violence is a reality they ought not have to face. No one should. And when we look at domestic violence in its most lethal form, almost one-third of female homicide victims that are reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner. Domestic violence is a chronically underreported crime. It is a travesty, and it must end.

In honor of this important month, the Office on Violence Against Women will be hosting a national consultation with tribes about the way the federal government can help end the epidemic of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. Additionally, we will be meeting with grantees from across the country on various topics essential to ending violence against women: engaging men and youth, protecting children exposed to violence, addressing the needs of culturally specific communities, bridging the gap between domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organizations, and engaging law enforcement and members of the court system to create a more safe and just system for victims, and one which will hold offenders accountable for their actions.

This month is a time for discussion, advocacy, new plans, and rejuvenated action. We hope you will join us in honoring this month by wearing purple on October 28th. We also hope this month will inspire you to talk to your friends and neighbors about the importance of raising awareness about the realities of domestic violence. Each year, an estimated 4.8 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner. These women are our family members, our colleagues, our neighbors and our friends. They are in every community, urban and rural; they cover every age and ethnic group, and every economic sphere, rich or poor. None of us is immune, but all of us must work to end this national tragedy. As President Obama concluded his proclamation of this important month:

This month -- and throughout the year -- let each of us resolve to be vigilant in recognizing and combating domestic violence in our own communities, and let us build a culture of safety and support for all those affected... I call on all Americans to speak out against domestic violence and support local efforts to assist victims of these crimes in finding the help and healing they need.

I hope this month will be the time you answer this call to action.

Finally, let me also take a moment to congratulate all of our recent grantee recipients. This year, the Office on Violence Against Women awarded over \$365 million dollars to more than 750 organizations in communities across the country. I am humbled by the amazing work performed by each of these organizations. We at OVW are excited and privileged to help enable our grantees to tackle obstacles and achieve our shared goals of creating a nation free of fear, free of domestic violence.

With deep respect and gratitude,
Susan B. Carbon
OVW Director
U.S. Department of Justice

We remind all those in need of assistance, or other concerned friends and individuals, to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.