

## Improving Tribal Access to Victim Services: Lessons from National, State, and Tribal Perspectives

### Webinar Q & A

**Moderator:** Steve Siegel (Special Program Unit, Denver District Attorney)

**Presenters:**

Dianne Barker Harrold (Indian Country Consultant)

Brian Hendrix (State of Oklahoma)

Nikki Finkbonner (Lummi Nation Victims of Crime Program)

**Steve Siegel:** *Let me start by reiterating something that came to me from our friends at the National Crime Victims Comp and the VOCA Administrators Group. You heard it somewhat throughout the presentation but starting with Crime Victim's Comp, it is important to reemphasize and make sure that folks understand that crime victim compensation from state programs is available to victims on the tribal lands. You need to contact whoever your system works with in your state to get that rolling. On the VOCA side, it also needs to be reemphasized that there are funds available to the tribal lands for VOCA funding in the Children's Justice Act Partnership for Indian communities, the OVC Comprehensive Tribal Victim Assistance programs, the Federal International Tribal Non Competitive grants, the Vision 21 Tribal Community Wellness Centers and through the state VOCA assistance sub grant program in your state.*

1. Can any of the speakers talk about the types of programs that they have seen funded on tribal lands that may be different than what was in your existing presentations?

**Brian Hendrix:** *As I mentioned, we are funding aid programs now. One is the Victim Witness Coordinator for Cherokee Nation. We recently had a tribe in Oklahoma, one of our new grantees and sub-recipients, have funded a domestic violence advocate in their tribal program. Choctaw Nation has their Elder advocate. The other thing that we have seen, and we funded this as a brand new sub recipient as well is, one of the Child Welfare programs joined Family Services program provides a field therapist to go out in the field with children that had been abused to provide counselling services within their service area. This is being funded with VOCA moneys. Lastly, there is an agency, Believing in Native Generations, that is associated with Riverside Indian School in Anadarko that is providing services. The agency works with young ladies that are at the Riverside Boarding School in Anadarko regarding issues such as dating violence and working with the youth that are on site.*

*There is a diverse range of programs we are funding with our VOCA funds on the tribal side. I think that may increase as the word gets out to tribal courts and to tribal law enforcement.*

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *There are a number of different ways to get funded. Like Brian said, sometimes you can get funding for your law enforcement and include an advocate in there if you cannot get through CTAS. The EDC does focus on tribal advocacy and programs and so does OEW.*

2) If any of the speakers could give us advice on grant writing that would be helpful, especially for jurisdictions that does not have grant writers.

**Nikki Finkbonner:** *We have 2 grant writers right now. You have to go to the Department of the Victims of Crime Program or the Police Department or the Prosecutor's office and see if they can put in little paragraphs to help the grant writers out. That's what we had to do.*

**Brian Hendrix:** *I was going to encourage, as it relates to VOCA grants, to find out early who your contact is on the state side and how those grants are administered. Then, like Nikki said, I know a number of tribes here that I mentioned where the department director are the ones that actually write the grants even if they have grant writers on staff. The department director knows more intimately the needs of the program and the needs in the field. It is important to identify those on a departmental level so they can assist with writing the grant to make it more competitive.*

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *If anyone is applying for the 2015 CTAS grants this year, they are doing something they have not done in the past; having webinars to help them give advice about writing each grant. If you go on to the CTAS website it will show you when the webinars that are occurring. The other thing is, and I'm a grant peer reviewer for the Department of Justice and other federal agencies, if you write a grant you might put in there – "We do not have a professional grant writer, we are putting this together from different tribal departments with the information we think we can include in this grant". That might bring some attention to it as they review it.*

**Steve Siegel:** *Seems like a pretty neat partnership developed with local community colleges and colleges from smaller jurisdictions. Sometimes, it is the Communications department, English department, or the Political Science department who actually have students and faculty that will step up and help with these kinds of things. If you have that, that's another option for you to look at.*

3) How do we insure tribal children, both as victims and witnesses, are receiving culturally appropriate services?

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *That is an important reason to have a collaborative relationship. You have cultural healers that are part of a collaborative team or multi-disciplinary team that you can be sure those services can be provided to once you train your collaborative team. Have them understand the need for understanding culturally appropriate services.*

- 4) Any thoughts, specifically, about best services and treatment modalities for helping tribal children that are exposed to violence and substance abuse?

**Nikki Finkbonner:** *The best thing to do is know your tribal community. Ask appropriate people if it is regarding culture, like an elder. Our victim specialist will call one of our staff to find out what is culturally appropriate when dealing with our children.*

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *I agree, if you have service providers a lot of times you have criminal jurisdiction issues where service providers are non-tribal providers. That is why it is important to bring them in as a collaborative partner, to train them and keep them and get them understanding about culturally appropriate services.*

- 5) Do we have any advice for a tribe looking to stand up a new domestic violence victim services program? What partners should we consider reaching out to? Both tribal and non-tribal.

**Steve Siegel:** *Before I ask the panel to answer, I would add to that it is not just tribal and non-tribal. It needs to be system based both in the tribe and community. As we look at domestic violence throughout this country, we often build programs that address the criminal justice and the trauma aspect but we also have to include those allied professionals and partners who look at things like women's self-sufficiency and health and the other parts of a family's life that are impacted by domestic violence. With that said, panellists, would you like to jump in on this question of building a domestic violence program?*

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *One thing you might think about doing is, a community needs assessment. Do a survey poll, get information from your tribal communities and your tribal citizens. Do the survey in a way where people who provide answers are not identified so no one worries about violating privacy. That will give you some input from your tribal communities and your tribal members about the needs that they have and what they are seeing. That can benefit you when brought to tribal leaders by saying "this is the numbers that we found, this is the impact that we have had". That would give you support. Even if you are writing a grant or asking the tribe to give you funding, that would be a way for tribal leaders to put that in the budget.*

**Nikki Finkbonner:** *You have to know what fits the need of your community. Bring everybody to the table- the courts, the police, the prosecutor, the public defender, your outside agencies and the sheriff's department. Have a domestic violence code in place. It has to fit the need of your people or it's not going to work.*

- 6) In your experience in working within training and with outreach in tribal communities have you seen a tribal judicial board provide a coordination of services with the trainings addressing ICWA violations? Especially DV.

**Diane Barker Harrold:** *I have seen a lot of tribal court systems that actually view the needs of safety, of tribal victims and children in a number of different ways. If they have a court session, they will set up a place where victims and defenders are not in the same place. Also, really look at the best interests of children. Tribal judges do that and they also look at it from a cultural perspective as well.*

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