

ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER



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Omnibus Appropriations Act Gives Tribal Nations Direct Access to Crime Victims Fund

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) celebrates a long hard fought for victory for tribes who will finally have direct access to the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) through the 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Act, signed into law today.

"Alaska Native crime victims have largely been left out of meaningful access to the CVF despite there being record amounts within the fund," said Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director, AKNWRC. "With direct access, Tribes will have the ability to provide a meaningful and timely response to these funds for victims of crime at a time that they are the most vulnerable and have the greatest need for emotional and financial support." The Indian Law and Order Commission report sent to Congress November 2013 stated that Alaska Native women are over-represented in the domestic violence victim population by 250%, and while Alaska Natives represented 19% of the state population, they are 47% of reported rape victims.

The leadership from the Hill has been instrumental in uplifting the voices of victims, survivors, tribes and allies. "As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to meet the safety and justice needs of Indian Country. I am proud that we are taking a big step forward today by allowing tribal nations, whose communities suffer from the highest rates of victimization in the country, to directly access the Crime Victims Fund and build a better network of support and services for survivors," Representative Betty McCollum, Democratic co-chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus said.

"The 2017 distribution from VOCA to states and federal victim of crimes was \$2.5 billion," said Shirley Moses, AKNWRC Board Co-Chair and Executive Director, Healing Native Hearts Coalition. "Prior to this bill, tribes across the nation could only apply for a competitive grant that totaled \$1.5 million, less than .5 % of the total outlay for all 562 federally recognized tribes. With the passage of this bill we will finally have equal access to serve our communities." It is estimated that with the 3%, tribes will now have access to \$130+ million.

"This is great news; our women and men survivors need and deserve access to these funds on an equal footing to other citizens of Alaska and across the country," said Joann Horn, AKNWRC Board Co-Chair and Executive Director, Emmonak Women's Shelter. "Survivors are more likely

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to seek services from people and organizations that understand their circumstances, speak their language and understand their culture. Victims should not have to leave their homes, families, and villages to get the help they need and deserve that may only be available in hub areas and Anchorage, Fairbanks or Juneau.”

About the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Organized in 2015, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center is a tribal nonprofit organization dedicated to ending violence against women with Alaska's 229 tribes and allied organizations. AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have 141 years of combined experience in tribal governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence, and sexual assault advocacy (both individual crisis and systems and grassroots social change advocacy at the local, statewide, regional, national and international levels), and other social service experience. AKNWRC's philosophy is that violence against women is rooted in the colonization of indigenous nations.