



Our elders planted seeds for the future generations long before our time, and it is up to us to nurture these seeds to ensure a healthier and more healed generation. Today, elders in our Tribal communities are at risk of domestic violence, sexual assault, and financial abuse, often at the hands of family members, caregivers, or family friends. Like our precious children, our elders are among the most vulnerable in our communities. It is vital to safeguard their minds, hearts, bodies, and souls from victimization. This newsletter provides stories, resources, and tips to help you serve this critical need.

We benefit immensely from the wisdom of our elders. They participate in community centers, intergenerational programs, family gatherings, and support groups, bringing with them a wealth of life experiences, unconditional love, and unique perspectives. Their guidance helps the younger generation develop healthy relationships, raise families, practice self-love, and carry on our cultural teachings. It is our responsibility to reciprocate their wisdom with supportive services, advocacy programs, protection, and patience.

Jana Pfeiffer (Diné)
Training and technical assistance (TTA) specialist, T-VSTTA

Protecting Our Protectors: Working Together to Reach and Support Our Elders



Elders can become silent victims often unseen and overlooked. As the wisdom keepers and pillars of Tribal communities, victim services can be a healing touch point for elders experiencing abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.

For those looking to incorporate more support for elders into their programs, Mindy Eicher, Director of Social Services and Adult Protective Services Coordinator with the Sac and Fox Nation, recommends making personal visits to find out what kinds of support elders want and need. "One-on-one contact is a big deal for many elders," she says.

For nearly five years, Mindy has been bringing needed assistance to Tribal elders in and around Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma through an Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant. As part of a multi-agency team, she works closely with Tribal departments including law enforcement, Tribal court, human services, and health care to identify and stop elder abuse.

Collaboration with other Tribal departments is key to meeting elder needs. Often programs can cover some, but not all, of victim and survivor needs so braiding services and funding sources expands the available support. Partnering with other programs in your Tribal community can increase connection to elders.

"We all want to help this individual get the best that they can have," Mindy says. Everyone collaborates along the way focusing on the elder's needs whether those are accessing state programs, doctors, behavioral health, and federally funded support programs. Mindy explains, "sometimes they can't do it [be a voice for themselves] ...make sure you're a voice for the person that you are standing up for."

Working together with other Tribal departments strengthens the support available to elders. For example, Mindy partners with victim services to provide elders with rides to appointments and offer help filling out paperwork. When a victim service provider is unable to cover services with their funding, community partners can fill in the gaps.

Contact support@t-vstta.org or call 833-887-8820 to learn how [Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside \(TVSSA\) funds](#) can support elder services.

Resources for Resilient Families and Communities

[Elder Justice Network Locator Map](#): Allows you to locate and collaborate with elder justice networks across the country.

[Elder Protection Team Toolkit](#): Offers guidance for developing Tribal elder protection teams and elder abuse codes along with culturally sensitivity resources.

[National Indian Council on Aging Webpage](#): Shares statistics, definitions, and real-life advice for how to recognize and respond to abuse.

Telling Your Story: Tips From a Grant Manager

Narratives tell the story of your program and what it aims to do. Now is a great time to reflect and consider small ways to shape your goals for the future. OVC grant manager Alexis Polen offers these tips.

- 1. List your goals first.** Often the goal itself is simple, but smaller steps towards accomplishing the goal can be more numerous and complex.
- 2. Think about the smaller steps to achieve your goals.** Those are your tasks. Planning, organizing, and coordinating count! Build in time to plan and coordinate with other.
- 3. Ask, who will complete each step? Can they do it alone?** If hiring and retaining staff is challenging in your community, you may need to allow more time to complete each step.
- 4. Consider the work beyond providing services to victims.** For example, you may consider hiring support staff to help with administrative work, such as collecting and maintaining the program data.
- 5. Dream big! And take one step at a time.** Victim advocates care deeply for those they serve. Sometimes it can become overwhelming to try and meet all survivor needs at once. No one person can achieve everything by themselves in a day. Be mindful of your capacity. It is okay to choose one or two goals before expanding towards more. Remember to take care of yourself and acknowledge your own hard work.

Your grant manager and T-VSTTA TTA specialist are here to support you at all stages of your program planning.

Contact support@t-vstta.org or call 833-887-8820 to request assistance.

AUGUST 11-15	SEPTEMBER 15-17	OCTOBER 23-24
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Crimes Against Children Conference
Dallas, Texas
[Learn More](#)

National Conference on Domestic Violence
Chicago, Illinois
[Learn More](#)

OVC Tribal Consultation
Virtual
[Learn More](#)

NOVEMBER 19-21	DECEMBER 10-13
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Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Consultation
Santa Fe, New Mexico
[Resource Guide](#)

18th National Indian Nations Conference
Palm Springs, California
[Learn More](#)

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- Mindy Eicher