



Domestic Violence in the United States

Background information and victim resources

Federal and state law in the United States criminalizes domestic violence and recognizes all victims regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, national origin, or immigration or citizenship status.

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Among other initiatives, VAWA funds sexual assault and domestic violence programs across the country. In 1996, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a non-profit organization, launched its 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, toll-free service that provides crisis assistance and local shelter referrals for callers across the country. The telephone number is (800) 799-SAFE. The TTY number for the hearing impaired is (800) 787-3224. Information is also available online: [Domestic Violence Hotline \(thehotline.org\)](https://thehotline.org). Trained advocates provide translation services and can connect victims to free state and local resources.

Victims of domestic violence in the United States can access state and local resources that may be administered publicly or privately. More than 10,000 organizations and agencies in the United States provide support and services to victims of crime, including domestic violence, regardless of their immigration status. Services may include counseling, interpretation, safety planning, emergency housing in confidential shelters, emergency financial assistance, and legal assistance.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, provides grants to all 50 states to be used for combatting violence against women, including domestic violence. They maintain a website that provides links to state-specific domestic violence resources: [Local Resources | OVW \(Justice.gov\)](https://www.justice.gov/ovw).



Victims may seek court intervention to obtain protection orders, child custody and divorce orders, and child support orders. Prosecutors may also pursue criminal charges against abusers. Within the criminal and civil justice system, local courts can order a range of remedies to promote the safety and welfare of the victim and children, including: parenting classes, alcohol abuse classes, and drug rehabilitation. To find an attorney in the United States, please follow this link: [Find an Attorney in the United States \(Travel.State.gov\)](https://travel.state.gov).

For more information, contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Children's Issues at 888-407-4747 (from the United States and Canada) or + 1 202-501-4444 (from outside the United States).