



# SECTION BY SECTION

House Committee on Education and Labor  
Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

## ***Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act of 2021 (H.R. 2119)***

### **Section 1. Short Title**

This section states that the title of the bill is the *Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act* and includes a severability clause.

### **Section 2. Purpose**

This section amends the purpose of FVPSA, reflecting FVPSA's focus on both domestic violence intervention and prevention, and mirroring language in the FVPSA Final Rule promulgated in 2015 that emphasizes the importance of accessible, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant residential and non-residential services.

### **Section 3. Definitions**

This section makes changes to the definitions of the terms "Indian; Indian tribe; tribal organization," "personally-identifying information," "shelter," "State domestic violence coalition," "supportive services," "tribally designated official," and "underserved populations and underserved individuals," and it adds definitions for the terms "dating partner," "digital services," "domestic violence, dating violence, family violence," "economic abuse," "institution of higher education," "population specific services," "racial and ethnic minority group," "technical abuse," "tribal domestic violence coalition," "youth," and "child."

### **Section 4. Authorization of Appropriations**

This section reauthorizes FVPSA for fiscal years 2022-2026, updates the funding formula, and authorizes funding at \$270 million annually.

### **Section 5. Authority of Secretary**

This section adds institutions of higher education as entities to whom the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) is authorized to make grants under FVPSA and directs the Secretary of HHS to make grants to or enter into contracts with eligible entities to conduct research and/or evaluation. Additionally, this section provides authority to the Secretary of HHS to grant flexibilities and waivers to grantees and subgrantees as necessary to continue operation of programs in the event of a major disaster or emergency.

### **Section 6. Allotment of Funds**

This section amends the allotment of funds to states and territories by applying a minimum grant level of \$600,000 annually for all states and territories, including American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands, with the remaining funds to be allocated by population to all states.

## **Section 7. Formula Grants to States**

This section clarifies that protections against discrimination on the basis of sex include sexual orientation and gender identity. Additionally, this section clarifies that sex-segregated or sex-specific programming may be provided if it is necessary to the essential operation of a program, and, in such instances, requires grantees to provide comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with sex-segregated or sex-specific programming. This section further strikes the requirement for states or Indian tribes to contribute \$1 in matching funds for every \$5 in federal funds received under FVPSA. This section also adds a requirement for grantees to include information regarding their development and implementation of barrier removal plans to ensure compliance with the ADA and Section 504 in their annual performance reports to the Secretary of HHS.

## **Section 8. State Application**

This section updates the state application by requiring states to certify compliance with FVPSA requirements; adds a requirement for states to certify that they will work with State Domestic Violence Coalitions to establish service standards and best practices for grantees; adds a requirement for states to describe how their activities and services are designed to promote trauma-informed care, autonomy, and privacy for those experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, and family violence; and aligns references to the state plan with similar provisions in *the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*. This section also adds a requirement that state and tribal applications include a certification and description of how the state or tribe will disseminate information about the national resource centers. Additionally, this section adds a requirement that state and tribal applications include a certification that subgrantees demonstrate their ability to provide services for Deaf people and people with disabilities in compliance with the ADA and Section 504.

## **Section 9. Subgrants and Uses of Funds**

This section adds to the allowable use of funds the provision of shelter and services to underserved populations, language assistance for individuals experiencing domestic violence with limited English proficiency or with a disability, and partnerships that enhance the design and delivery of domestic violence services. Additionally, this section adds an allowable use of funds for making material improvements to the accessibility of physical structures, transportation, communications, or digital services. This section adds a Sense of Congress regarding the use of funds for making material improvements in the accessibility of physical structures, transportation, communication, or digital services.

## **Section 10. Grants for Indian Tribes**

This section makes technical changes regarding the requirements around formula grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations and aligns the section with the aforementioned updated definitions.

## **Section 11. National Resource Centers and Training and Technical Assistance Centers**

This section updates the authorizing language for the criminal and civil justice, health care, mental health, substance use disorder, and trauma national resource centers. Additionally, this section authorizes two new national special issue resource centers that may be funded by the Secretary of HHS for domestic violence response programs and related systems to address victims who are underserved due to sexual orientation and gender identity. This authorization also strengthens the organizational capacity of state, territorial, and tribal domestic violence coalitions and state, territorial, and tribal administrators who administer FVPSA. This section also authorizes an Alaska Native Tribal Resource Center and a resource center on disability and domestic violence that the Secretary of HHS must fund.

## **Section 12. Grants to State Domestic Violence Coalitions**

This section creates flexibility for state domestic violence coalitions by shifting certain activities to optional uses of funds.

### **Section 13. Grants to Tribal Domestic Violence Coalitions**

This section authorizes tribal coalitions to receive FVPSA funding. Grant funds may be used for administration and operation to further the purposes of domestic violence, dating violence, and family violence intervention and prevention activities.

### **Section 14. Specialized Services for Abused Parents and Their Children Who Have Been Exposed to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Family Violence**

This section continues grant programs to expand the capacity of programs to address the needs of children exposed to family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence and ensures better access to currently underserved populations. This section also clarifies that grants for specialized services for children and their parents who have been exposed to domestic violence can support caregivers (not just parents) who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, or family violence, or who are caring for children whose parents have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, or family violence

### **Section 15. National Domestic Violence Hotline Grant**

This section reflects the increasing digital nature of the services being provided by the National Domestic Violence Hotline and amends the language to broaden the Hotline's services from just telephonic services to include digital services.

### **Section 16. National Indian Domestic Violence Hotline Grant**

This section authorizes a National Indian Domestic Violence Hotline as a stand-alone program. Under current law, the Strong Hearts Native Helpline is funded as a subsidiary of the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

### **Section 17. Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership**

This section continues support for the current Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership (DELTA) program operated by CDC. These projects design, test, and/or scale up innovative domestic violence and dating violence prevention models and systematically evaluate their effectiveness. This section also provides new core grants to each state, territorial, and tribal coalition to build organizational capacity and state leadership for primary and secondary prevention of domestic violence, including collaboration with other systems central to prevention efforts (to be administered by CDC). Additionally, this section provides new grants to local community-based programs to enhance the capacity of communities and systems to engage in effective prevention efforts (to be administered by the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program of the Administration for Children and Families at HHS).

### **Section 18. Additional Grant Programs**

This section provides capacity building and implementation grants to increase access for survivors from underserved populations who may face additional barriers to access services in traditional spaces such as older adults, individuals with disabilities, youth, individuals of different sexual orientations, faith-based communities, and individuals in rural areas by creating a new grant program. This section also provides evaluation grants to provide greater assistance executing programmatic designs, collecting and analyzing data, and disseminating findings. Additionally, this section establishes a grant program to support culturally specific services for survivors from racial and ethnic minority populations.

### **Section 19. Analysis of Federal Support for Financial Stability Among Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Family Violence**

This section authorizes a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on federal support for the financial stability of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, and family violence.