

## **Arkansas Crime Victims' Rights History**

The Sixth Judicial District's Victim Assistance Program was established in 1978 and is the oldest prosecutor-based victim assistance program in the state. VOCA grant funding in the early 1990's enabled the program to expand from a staff of two persons to its present staff of ten. VOCA funding allowed other prosecutor-based programs to be established during the 1980's and 1990's, promoting victims rights throughout the State of Arkansas. A major focus of the victims' rights movement in Arkansas is directly related to the passing of Act 1262 in 1997. Enclosed in your information is a copy of Arkansas Victims' Rights Law, Act 1262 of 1997.

## **Arkansas Sexual Assault and Establishing of Coalition History**

The Violence Against Women Act was first established in 1995, reauthorized in 2000, and again in 2005. In this act, Congress authorized the Attorney General of the United States to award grants to state sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions. This funding "is intended to provide federal financial assistance to state coalitions to support the coordination of state victim services activities and collaboration and coordination with federal, state, and local entities engaged in violence against women activities."

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault was awarded a grant through the U. S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women's Resource Sharing Project to investigate why some states did not have a coalition and to help those states establish these coalitions. The Illinois Coalition brought together a small group of service providers in Arkansas, which had never met before, to discuss the possibility of creating a statewide coalition. In December 1998, with the help of the Illinois Coalition, the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA) was incorporated as a 501©(3) private, non-profit organization.

Since that time, ACASA's membership has increased, but, most importantly, services for victims and families have improved as a result of training, certification, and standards of service set by ACASA and adopted by agencies.

## **Arkansas Domestic Violence and Establishing Coalition History**

The battered women's movement in the United States began as a natural development of the women's movement in the 1970's. Although the history of violence against women is an ancient one, it was not until the twentieth century that the legal status of women required that domestic violence be addressed as a social issue.

- \* 1973 - The first shelter in Minnesota started in an apartment office space and moved within a year to a five bedroom house.
- \* 1976 – Nebraska was the first state to abolish the marital rape exemption.
- \* 1976 – National Coalition Against Domestic Violence was formed out of the US Commission on Civil Rights Consultation on Battered Women: Issues of Public Policy.

- \* 1978 – The first shelters in Arkansas were established in Little Rock and Fayetteville.
- \* 1979 – There are over 250 shelters in the United States.
- \* 1981 – There are over 500 shelters in the United States.
- \* 1981 – Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence forms.
- \* 1983 – 91,000 women and 131,000 children in over 700 shelters.
- \* 1984 – FVPA; the first time federal funds are specifically designed for programs serving battered women and children.
- \* 1987 – First Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- \* 1989 – 1200 programs sheltering 300,000 women and children.
- \* 1990 – Project Clothesline established in Hyannis, MA.
- \* 1991 – Establishment of Silent Witness Project in St. Paul MN with 500,000 women marching on the state capitol carrying 27 silhouettes.
- \* 1993 – North Carolina becomes the 50<sup>th</sup> state where marital/date/cohabitant rape is a crime.
- \* 1994 – VAWA is passed as part of the federal Crime Bill.
- \* 1998 – The first victims' rights legislation in Arkansas.
- \* 2003 – First continuous source of state funding from marriage license fees for domestic violence programs in Arkansas. The Domestic Peace Act was passed and program and fiscal standards were created for the oversight of domestic violence shelters.
- \* 2005 – Dating violence became a domestic violence offense and those in a violent dating relationship are able to apply for an order of protection.