

Category J: Violence Against Indian Women

COMPENDIUM OF RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1993-2020

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Category J: VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN WOMEN

2012-PJ-BX-K001:	NIJ Executive Research Visiting Fellowship: Violence Against Indian Women Research Program
Amount:	\$563,686
PI:	André B. Rosay
Status:	Completed

Under this visiting fellowship, Dr. Rosay will re-analyze the national and state data from the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), focusing on the prevalence of sexual violence victimization, stalking victimization, and violence by an intimate partner. Analyses will examine how certain analytic choices impact national and state estimates (e.g., only using complete interviews to calculate estimates, including refusal cases in the denominator). Second, Dr. Rosay will analyze the American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) NISVS oversample that was included in the 2010 data collection effort. Dr. Rosay's research provides the most comprehensive, reliable, and valid estimates on the victimization experiences of AI and AN women and men. Dr. Rosay's capstone research is expected to advance significantly the measurement and analysis of violence against women, particularly violence against Indian women.

In keeping with the mission of NIJ to disseminate quality research, Dr. Rosay will disseminate this research internally and externally, and train researchers on how to analyze NISVS data. Internal dissemination will include presentations and briefings with federal employees and stakeholders. External dissemination will include presentations at three conferences (the Sexual Violence Research Initiative 2015 Forum, the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, and the American Public Health Association conference). Dr. Rosay also will hold a data workshop on how to analyze NISVS data, in January 2016. Together, these activities will support the dissemination of reliable and valid data to researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in multiple sectors (including criminology and public health).

Dr. Rosay also will participate in a wide range of collegial work with the NIJ Director and NIJ staff to shape and inform the core knowledge-building work of NIJ, to support VAWA 2005, Title IX, Section 904 Tribal Task Force, and to guide NIJ's program of research on violence against Indian women in tribal communities.

Product: NCJ# 249736

Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings From the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2016) – Andre B. Rosay

This report examines the prevalence of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men, using data from a large nationally representative sample from the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), with a focus on sexual violence, physical violence by intimate partners, stalking, and psychological aggression by intimate partners. It also estimates interracial and interracial victimization and briefly examines the impact of violence. The report estimates that just over 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime; 56.1 percent have been victims of sexual violence; 55.5 percent have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner; 48.8 percent have experienced stalking; and 66.4 percent have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner. Just over 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native men (81.6 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime; 27.5 percent have been victims of sexual violence; 43.2 percent have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner; 18.6 percent have experienced stalking; and 73 percent have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner. Relative to non-Hispanic white-only women, American Indian and Alaska Native women are 1.2 times as likely to have experienced violence in their lifetime and are 1.7 times as likely to have experienced violence in the past year. Relative to non-Hispanic white-only men, American Indian and Alaska Native men are 1.3 times as likely to have experienced violence in their lifetime. Data on impacts of violence focus on victims' concern for their safety, physical injury, missing days at work, and use of various treatment services. PDF Link: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>

Additional NCJ Citations: 250087, 249821, 249815

2013-PJ-BX-K001:	Native American Crime, Victimization, and Justice Studies: Postdoctoral Fellowship
Amount:	\$95,689
PI:	Alison Brooks

Status: Completed

The issue of violence against American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) women is an important public health and criminal justice issue that has received attention in recent years because of specific provisions in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2005. The goal of this fellowship was to build and extend the work completed to date on NIJ's program of research examining violence against Indian women. As such, Dr. Alison Brooks consulted and provided continuing guidance on the implementation of the National Baseline Study (NBS). Additionally, Dr. Brooks conducted two research studies during her tenure at NIJ.

The first study, *Evaluability Assessment of the OVW-funded Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) Program*, aimed to document the implementation of the Department's SAUSA program and determine its readiness for an evaluation. The tribal SAUSA program's goal is to train eligible tribal prosecutors in federal law, procedure, and investigative techniques to pursue violence against women cases in both tribal and federal courts; and to increase the likelihood that viable criminal offenses are prosecuted in tribal courts and federal courts—or both. Data gathered during a review of the program's documentation, interviews with key staff, and site visits, showed the program is close to being ready for an evaluation, should the program address issues of funding, sustainability, and data availability and reliability. Anecdotal information indicated that positive and successful partnerships have been developed, fulfilling a key goal of the program. If the program is extended and/or expanded, a process evaluation that incorporates a qualitative component is possible in the future. A process evaluation could provide valuable information about the program's operation and context and could inform the results of a future outcome evaluation, if one is conducted. Information gained from a process evaluation could be fed back into the program to improve it in the current and/or future sites.

Dr. Brooks' second study was entitled *State Response to Crimes Against Women in Indian Country*. This study investigated the state response, in part, by interviewing tribal law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim advocates as well as state law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim services staff in Public Law 280 states. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain information about their experiences responding to crimes against women: what was going well, what could be improved, and what promising practices had emerged in the field. Interview questions spanned the domains of context, case processing, agency roles and collaboration, interagency communication, staff training, community and victim outreach, and vicarious trauma. Forty-seven state and tribal prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim service providers were interviewed. Their answers and recommendations for improving the response to crimes against women in Indian Country were presented in a final technical report.

Product: Evaluation article released:
http://nij.gov/journals/275/pages/plan-for-program-evaluation.aspx?utm_source=eblast-JUSTINFO&utm_medium=eblast&utm_campaign=jnl275-progeval052015

Crossland, C., J. Palmer, & A. Brooks, NIJ's Program of Research on Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women, *Violence Against Women* 19 (2013): 771-790.

2013-VW-CX-0001: An Innovative Response to an Intractable Problem: Using Village Public Safety Officers to Enhance the Criminal Justice Response to Violence Committed Against Indian Women in Alaska's Tribal Communities
Amount: \$294,317
PIs: Brad A. Myrstol & Katherine TePas
Status: Completed

The purpose of the study is to contribute directly to NIJ's efforts to evaluate state and tribal responses to violence against Indian women in tribal communities. Through the use of detailed case file reviews and focus group discussions with Village Public Safety Officers (VPSO), as well as community and criminal justice stakeholders, this project will examine the contributions VPSOs make to the community and criminal justice responses to violence committed against Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. Specific attention will be paid to the impact VPSOs have on the investigation of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and homicide cases, as well as the extent to which VPSOs facilitate the prosecution of those who commit violence against Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. The overarching goal of the proposed project is to evaluate and document empirically the impact Alaska's VPSO initiative is having on the investigation and prosecution of those who commit acts of

sexual and domestic violence, as well as homicide, against Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. Finally, this research will assess the potential transferability of the VPSO model to other tribal communities in the lower 48. For the 2008-2011 study period, information pertaining to the case processing (investigation and prosecution) of an estimated 800 domestic violence, 750 sexual assault, 670 sexual abuse of a minor, and 25 homicide case files will be coded and analyzed. Case file coding will include the characteristics of suspects, victims, witnesses/third parties, as well as investigating officers. Focus groups will be conducted with groups of 10-20 individuals in four (4) research sites, as well as with small groups (8-10 individuals) of VPSOs, VPSO Coordinators, Alaska State Trooper (AST) Oversight Staff, and state prosecutors. Analysis of the case file and case processing data will proceed through three stages: (1) descriptive univariate analyses, (2) comparative bivariate analyses, and (3) multivariate inferential (explanatory) analyses. Regression techniques appropriate for the modeling of categorical dependent variables will be used, such as binary, ordered, and multinomial logit/probit models. The data from focus groups and interviews will be analyzed for salient themes related to the role and impact of VPSOs in Alaska's tribal communities. These thematic analyses will be used to contextualize and interpret the findings of the quantitative analyses.

Product: NCJ# 251890

An Innovative Response to an Intractable Problem – Using Village Public Safety Officers to Enhance the Criminal Justice Response to Violence Committed Against Alaska Native and American Indian Women in Alaska's Tribal Communities (2018) – B.A. Myr Stol

This report presents the findings and methodology of a study that evaluated the impact of Alaska's village public safety officer (VPSO) program on the investigation and prosecution of cases of sexual and domestic violence against Alaska Native and American Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. VSPOs are a "force multiplier" for state troopers by serving as first responders and assisting with investigations. VPSOs also serve crime victims and their communities by providing post-incident support and services in the aftermath of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and domestic violence incidents. This evaluation of the VPSO program reviewed case records of 693 cases of sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor, as well as 982 cases of domestic violence closed by the Alaska State Trooper C-Detachment between January 1, 2009, and December 31, 2011. Evaluation findings show that the men and women who serve in Alaska's VPSO program, along with other paraprofessional police, play a central role in the criminal justice response to crimes of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and domestic violence committed in the state's tribal communities. Their efforts increase the probability that such reported cases will be referred and accepted for prosecution and ultimately lead to a conviction. The evaluation also found, however, that although the services of VPSOs improved criminal justice responses in cases of sexual abuse of a minor, they were not as effective in responding to other types of sexual assault cases, considering all the factors involved. This finding was unanticipated. The evaluators have no data-based explanation for it. Regarding VPSO effects on domestic violence cases: as referral, acceptance, and conviction rates were so high for such offenses, no VPSO-specific effects were detectable.

2014-MU-MU-K001:	Effective Methods to Assess Exposure to Violence and Victimization among American Indian and Alaska Native Youth
Amount:	\$1,325,843
PI:	Ada Pecos Melton
Status:	Ongoing

There has never been a national study of tribal youth regarding their victimization experiences that provides reliable, valid estimates of the scope of the problem. As a result, the incidence, prevalence, and nature of victimization experienced by American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) youth living in tribal communities is unknown. NIJ, in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Office for Victims of Crime, is funding this 30-month study intended to (a) improve the health and well-being of AI and AN youth by developing and testing a survey instrument and different administration modes that can effectively assess exposure to violence and victimization and (b) determine the feasibility of using these procedures in tribal communities and settings.

The project involves five stages: (1) assembling and acquiring input from stakeholders; (2) reviewing existing instruments; (3) developing the instrument, design, and implementation protocols; (4) conducting cognitive testing of the instrument to assure comprehension; and (5) and pilot testing of the instrument and modes of delivery. The goal for the instrument is to be comprehensive and include measures of exposure to abuse, neglect, sexual offenses, property crimes, hate crimes, bullying, peer and school assault, and exposure to domestic and community violence.

The sample includes tribal youth 12 to 20 years of age. Cognitive testing will be conducted in four tribal communities (one in Alaska and three in the lower 48 states) and involves a total of 50 respondents (between 12-15 youth at each site). This testing will include 3 to 4 youth each for ages 12-14, 15-17, and 18-20. The pilot test involves the use of at least two, but no more than three, different administration modes (e.g., face-to-face interviews, self-administered questionnaire in pencil-and-paper format, audio computer-assisted self-administered interviews, computer-assisted telephone interviews). The target sample is 375 completed interviews from three of the four tribal sites recruited for the cognitive testing phase—one in Alaska and two in the lower 48 states.

Among the key outcomes that will be examined are the response and refusal rates, missing data, interview length, willingness to disclose sensitive information, respondent comfort, cost, ability to provide assistance to respondents, and ease and adequacy of the human subjects’ protocol. Results will be disseminated in presentations, USDOJ publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, and through a website dedicated to the project.

DJO-NIJ-14-D-0071:	National Baseline Study Research Contractor (NBSRC)
Amount:	\$1,773,421
PI:	Ada Pecos Melton
Status:	Ongoing

The Violence Against Indian Women (VAIW) National Baseline Study (NBS) is part of a congressionally mandated program¹ of research at NIJ that seeks better information on domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking perpetrated against American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) women living on tribal lands and in Alaska Native communities. Despite compelling indications that rates of violence against AI and AN women merit serious attention, there is a dearth of solid scientific research regarding their victimization experiences. Accurate, comprehensive, and current information on the incidence, prevalence, and nature of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages is critically needed to improve our understanding of the programmatic, service, and policy needs of victims and to educate and inform policymakers and the public about this pervasive threat to the health and well-being of AI and AN women.

Under the direction of NIJ, the National Baseline Study Research Contractor² (NBSRC) and the National Baseline Study Data Center Contractor³ (NBSDCC) have implemented a study of health, wellness, and safety among AI and AN women living in tribal communities that is consistent with the general approach and methods developed for the pilot study. The pilot study was developed with input from tribal stakeholders to help ensure that NIJ’s NBS would be viable, culturally, and community appropriate, and respectful of those involved and that the information collected would be relevant and useful for the AI and AN communities.

The study will be conducted in geographically dispersed tribal communities across the U.S. (lower 48 states and Alaska), using a NIJ-developed sampling strategy for which the primary aim is to provide an accurate national victimization rate of violence against AI and AN women. The multistage sampling plan provides a practical and accurate approach that will involve enlisting the largest number of federally recognized tribes ever undertaken to date—providing for at least one tribe in each Indian Health Service (IHS) region and sampling proportional to size within region—and randomly selecting tribal households from each participating tribe in which all adult AI and AN women (i.e., 18 years and older) in the household will be approached to participate in the study.

At the end of this study, the NBS is expected to produce a deeper understanding of the issues faced by Native American women living in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages and to help formulate public policies and prevention strategies to decrease the incidence of violent crimes against AI and AN women.

GS-10F-0097L / DJO-NIJ-14-G-0081:	National Baseline Study Data Center Contractor (NBSDCC)
Amount:	\$1,602,073

¹ Title IX, Section 904(a) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-162 (codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3796gg-10 note), as amended by Section 907 of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, Pub. L. No. 113-4.

² Awarded to American Indian Development Associates, LLC; Contract No. DJO-NIJ-14-D-0071.

³ Awarded to Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International; Contract No. GS-10F-0097L / DJO-NIJ-14-G-0081.

PI: Lisa Carley-Baxter
Status: Ongoing

The Violence Against Indian Women (VAIW) National Baseline Study (NBS) is part of a congressionally mandated program⁴ of research at NIJ that seeks better information on domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking perpetrated against American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) women living on tribal lands and in Alaska Native communities. Despite compelling indications that rates of violence against AI and AN women merit serious attention, there is a dearth of solid scientific research regarding their victimization experiences. Accurate, comprehensive, and current information on the incidence, prevalence, and nature of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking in Indian Country and Alaska Native villages is critically needed to improve our understanding of the programmatic, service, and policy needs of victims and to educate and inform policymakers and the public about this pervasive threat to the health and well-being of AI and AN women.

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The study will be conducted in geographically dispersed tribal communities across the U.S. (lower 48 states and Alaska), using a NIJ-developed sampling strategy for which the primary aim is to provide an accurate national victimization rate of violence against AI and AN women. The multistage sampling plan provides a practical and accurate approach that will involve enlisting the largest number of federally recognized tribes ever undertaken to date—providing for at least one tribe in each Indian Health Service (IHS) region and sampling proportional to size within region—and randomly selecting tribal households from each participating tribe in which all adult AI and AN women (i.e., 18 years and older) in the household will be approached to participate in the study.

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2018-VT-BX-0001: Pathfinder: Evaluating Services to Native American Victims of Sex Trafficking
Amount: \$103,662
PI: Jaclyn Smith and Robin Davis
Status: Ongoing

There is a shortage of sex trafficking recovery programs in the United States. Only one—Pathfinder Center—provides culturally responsive services specific to Native American women who have been victims of sex trafficking. This proposal seeks to demonstrate a Native-specific sex-trafficking delivery model, and to create a blueprint to replicate the program throughout other parts of Indian country. ICF will partner with the Pathfinder Center to conduct an 18-month formative and preliminary outcome evaluation of Pathfinder’s services for Native American victims of sex trafficking, using a community-based, participatory research approach that is culturally responsive and trauma-informed. The study will integrate survivors’ voices and key stakeholders throughout all project activities. These activities include a systematic literature review, key informant interviews, and staff and client surveys. The proposed research concludes with a final report, in the form of a proposed outcome evaluation of the Pathfinder, and a special report detailing the Pathfinder-ICF partnership.

⁴ Title IX, Section 904(a) of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005, Pub. Law No. 109-162 (codified at 42 U.S.C. § 3796gg-10 note), as amended by Section 907 of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, Pub. L. No. 113-4.

⁵ Awarded to American Indian Development Associates, LLC; Contract No. DJO-NIJ-14-D-0071.

⁶ Awarded to Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International; Contract No. GS-10F-0097L DJO-NIJ-14-G-0081.

2019-75-CX-0014:	A Descriptive Analysis of Missing and Murdered Native Women and Children in Nebraska, Barriers to Reporting and Investigation, and Recommendations for Improving Access to Justice
Amount:	\$169,264
PI:	Tara Richards
Status:	Open

This project proposes a new partnership between the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, which represents the four tribes of Nebraska: Omaha Tribe, Ponca Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe, and Winnebago Tribe, as well as other Native persons living on and off tribal lands in Nebraska, and the researchers at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. The research team will conduct a pilot study involving the collection of preliminary data and secondary data analysis on the topics of murdered and/or missing Native women and children. Specifically, the proposed collaboration will include secondary analysis of quantitative data (e.g., law enforcement data [LE], data from the Nebraska's Missing Persons Database, the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Children's Bureau) as well as collection and analysis of qualitative data from key informants (e.g., tribal leaders and community members; state, local, and tribal LE; tribal and non-tribal victim service providers) to: (1) identify the scope and context of missing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women and children in Nebraska, (2) identify the scope and context of murdered AI/AN women and children in Nebraska, (3) identify both challenges and promising practices regarding reporting and investigating missing and/or murdered Native American women and children in Nebraska, and (4) generate data-driven recommendations for developing and strengthening partnerships to increase opportunities for justice and support for Nebraska's Native women, children, and families. In addition to delivering important, actionable information to Nebraska's tribal communities, tribal and non-tribal LE, victim service providers, court systems, and legislators, the proposed collaboration will also provide a replicable model for other states to complete their own comparable research to improve responses for what is perceived as a significant public health problem.

For an index of all grants, go to ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/223572-grants-index.pdf.