

 To encourage and facilitate mutual support, awareness and cooperation among

 states and territories administering Violence Against Women Act formula grants.

**AVA Connect Conversation
October 22, 2020
3:00PM EST**

**OVERVIEW**AVA conducted our 4th AVA Connect conversation on October 22nd, 2020. The intent of our conversations is to create informal opportunities to stay socially connected with each other as peers in a meaningful way.  A key part of AVA Connect is giving you the opportunity to talk about whatever is most on your mind, ask questions and share ideas.  We want to create that round-table space, where we might sit down and have a cup of hotel coffee and muffins and check in with each other.
 **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**VAWA administrators from 10 states met for our fourth AVA Connect conversation. We agreed in advance to attempt to limit the call to one hour. AVA’s President, Julia Fuller-Wilson, started the meeting with a quick welcome and overview and then encouraged everyone else on the call to introduce themselves and share how long they have been in their current VAWA Administrator role.

After the introductions, participants then began to discuss any issue that they had concerns about or simply wanted to learn how other administrators are addressing an issue/challenge.

All of the conversation was particularly useful and timely. It was more of a sharing of ideas, experiences, and concerns. Some of the topics of discussion included:

* The impact of Covid on VAWA Administrator’s professional life
	+ Balancing the need to ensure that subgrantees are remaining VAWA compliant with a larger concern for their overall health and well-being
	+ Most administrators continue to work primarily from home and in some cases, their management was not initially in favor of this.
* Changes made to interacting with subgrantees during pandemic
	+ One state has developed a desk review process via WebEx that includes interviews with VAWA grant funded staff
	+ Other states are conducting all on-site monitoring via Zoom
	+ Most states are now accepting all required reporting and supporting documentation, being submitted to them electronically
	+ In addition to managing VAWA funds, some administrators also manage VOCA funds and have learned that it is much harder to process compensation payments while working from home.
* Administrators interested in Peer mentoring offered by AVA
* Challenges for service providers who want to mandate that all clients must wear a mask but do not want to turn anyone away who is in need of services
* Discussion about the President’s Executive Order on Combatting Race and Sex Stereotyping
* Concerns about the response by some law enforcement agencies across the country to service providers who show support for Black Lives Matter

We encourage you to participate in one of the upcoming AVA Connect conversations if you think you might find it useful. We still have room for a few more participants on the next AVA Connect conversation scheduled for **November 17 at 3:00pm EST**.

Take care and thank you for all that you do!