

# **Department of Veterans Affairs**



## **Congressionally Mandated Report**

### **The Deborah Sampson Act of 2020, Section 5305, Task Force on Veterans Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence or Sexual Assault**

**July 2025**

## Statutory Requirement

In accordance with the requirements of section 5305(a)(1) of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, P.L. 116-315, Title V, the Deborah Sampson Act of 2020 (the Act), codified at 38 U.S.C. § 1720D, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conducted a national baseline study to examine the scope of the problem of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Sexual Assault (SA) among Veterans and spouses, and intimate partners of Veterans. VA delivered the study to Congress in March 2023.

Section 5305(b)(1) of the Act directs VA, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to establish a national task force “to develop a comprehensive national program, including by integrating facilities, services, and benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs into existing networks of community-based intimate partner violence and sexual assault services, to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans.” Section 5305(e) requires the task force to submit a report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) and Congress on at least an annual basis on the activities of the task force. This report provides Congress an update on the task force’s activities since VA’s November 2024 report.

VA, in collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Defense (DoD), Defense Health Agency (DHA), and non-governmental organizations, formed an interagency task force to address IPV and SA among Veterans. These initiatives, led under section 5305 of the Act, aim to bridge critical gaps in services by integrating VA facilities and community-based resources and benefits.

## Executive Summary

SECVA, in collaboration with the Attorney General and HHS’ Secretary, is tasked with establishing a national task force to develop a comprehensive national program addressing IPV and SA among Veterans. VA’s Center for Women Veterans (CWV) is responsible for managing the task force. This report outlines a blueprint for creating a national program and leveraging existing mechanisms and structures to meet the statutory requirements.

To achieve this task, VA conducted a thorough review of existing program infrastructure and framework. The following steps were taken:

- **Stakeholder Identification:** VA identified external community-based organizations and representatives from partnering agencies (DOJ, HHS, DoD, and DHA) to consult and support the program’s development.
- **Program and Policy Review:** VA reviewed existing services, policies, programs, and stakeholder groups to identify gaps and opportunities.
- **Interagency Discussions:** VA engaged with several Federal agencies and offices, including but not limited to:

- **DOJ:** Office of Violence Against Women, Office for Victims of Crime, and Office of Legislative Affairs.
- **HHS:** The Division of Family Violence Prevention and Services within the Administration for Children and Families and the Office on Women's Health in the Office of Assistant Secretary for Health.
- **VA Offices:** CWV, Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Assault and Harassment Prevention Office, VHA Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program, and VHA Homeless Programs Office.

The Deborah Sampson Act of 2020, section 5305 Task Force (Task Force) launched on December 16, 2024, and will utilize data gathered from the community surveys and the workstream(s) analysis to develop a national plan addressing IPV and SA for the comprehensive national program, expected by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2025. The Task Forces expects to complete an updated Congressionally mandated report by October 2025.

### **Task Force Meetings and Workstreams**

The Task Force's initial kickoff meeting on December 16, 2024, had over 60 participants including representatives from DoD, DOJ, HHS, military and Veterans Service Organizations, as well as other external agencies and community-based organizations. The Task Force is committed to meeting monthly and more often if needed.

Members of the Task Force have met consistently from December 2024 to May 2025. Meetings have resulted in initial discussions regarding Task Force duties, deliverables, charter, communications plan, initiating a data call to establish baseline data regarding IPV and SA activities, as well as policies. Members of the Task Force have reviewed the baseline data received and will integrate the information in future workstream meetings and recommendations.

Recurring Task Force meetings follow an organized structure focusing on interagency and external community partner briefings, workstream updates, and other Task Force deliverables as they are brought up to further progress the development of the national plan. Each meeting fosters a collaborative forum for all members to provide expertise and recommendations related to current and future IPV and SA activities.

The Task Force will produce an annual report to Congress and SECVA to document its activities and updates. Task Force members identified potential areas of opportunities for collaboration and will develop recommendations using workstreams. Additionally, the Task Force will use existing IPV and SA infrastructures, frameworks, and resources in the construction of the national plan.

Seven workstreams have been developed to align with each of the seven duties tasked to the Task Force as set forth in section 5303(d) of the Act. Workstream membership is finalized and leads, co-leads, and collaboration from current Task Force members will

facilitate the workstream. Workstream leads will be expected to report on their progress and recommendations to the recurring Task Force meetings monthly.

**Seven Task Force Duties to Develop a Comprehensive National Program:**

(1) To review existing services and policies of the Department and *develop a comprehensive national program to be carried out by VA, in collaboration with relevant Federal agencies to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault prevention, response, and treatment.*

(2) To review the *feasibility and advisability of establishing an expedited process to secure emergency, temporary benefits, including housing or other benefits, for Veterans who are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.*

(3) To review and make recommendations regarding *the feasibility and advisability of establishing dedicated, temporary housing assistance for Veterans experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.*

(4) To identify any *requirements regarding intimate partner violence assistance or sexual assault response and services that are not being met by the Department* and make recommendations on how the Department can meet such requirements.

(5) To review and make recommendations regarding the *feasibility and advisability of providing direct services or contracting for community-based services for Veterans* in response to a sexual assault, including using sexual assault nurse examiners, particularly in underserved or remote areas, including services for Native American Veterans.

(6) To review *the availability of counseling services provided by the Department and through peer network support, and to provide recommendations for the enhancement of such services, to address—(A) the perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual assault; and (B) the recovery of Veterans, particularly women Veterans, from intimate partner violence and sexual assault.*

(7) To review and *make recommendations to expand services available for Veterans at risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence.*

**Task Force Next Steps**

The Task Force will provide reports as required by section 5305(e), which mandates that "not less frequently than annually...by October 1 of each year, the Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress a report on the activities of the Task Force, including any recommendations for legislative or administrative action." It will continue meeting monthly to provide oversight of the seven workstreams, which will help derive recommendations for Veterans experiencing IPV and SA. By the end of

FY 2025, the Task Force expects to deliver a national plan framing the development of the comprehensive national program, which will include recommendations addressing IPV and SA policies and services, as directed by section 5305(b)(1).

### **Conclusion**

VA achieved significant progress in identifying existing programs in place to help deliver on the initiatives outlined in section 5305(b)(1). With the implementation of the Task Force and workstreams, a comprehensive national program to address IPV and SA among Veterans is underway.

VA held the initial Task Force meeting on December 16, 2024, and has continued to meet collaboratively with interagency partners and other external stakeholders. Additionally, the Task Force completed a data call and developed workstreams, and as a result, it will strengthen VA integration into existing networks of community-based services to address IPV and SA among Veterans. Furthermore, the Task Force will continue to increase its collaboration with subject matter experts and community partners to promote continued awareness, access, and resources. VA will leverage stakeholders' expertise to identify opportunities for growth and development in hopes of developing key recommendations for the development of the national plan. VA looks forward to reporting the outcome of these continued efforts to Congress.

**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**July 2025**

**Appendix A**  
**Task Force Partners (Federal and Non-Federal)**

<p><b>VA</b>  Assault, Harassment, and Prevention Office  Care Management and Social Work  Center of Minority Veterans  VA Center for Faith  CWW  Health Services Research &amp; Development  Homelessness Program Office  Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program  National Cemetery Administration  OEI  OEI VA/DoD Interagency  Office of Nursing Services  Office of Mental Health  Patient Care Services  Readjustment Counseling Service  Veterans Benefits Administration  Veterans Experience Office  Veteran Service Organization Liaison</p>	<p><b>Federal</b>  Defense Health Agency  Department of Defense  Department of Justice  Department of Health and Human Services</p> <p><b>Non-Federal</b>  Disabled American Veterans  Futures Without Violence  Pink Beret Organization  Service Women Action Network  National Coalition for Homeless Veterans  National Domestic Violence Hotline  National Indigenous Women's Resource Center  National Military Family Association  Ujima, National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community  Veterans of Foreign Wars  Women Veterans Interactive  Wounded Warrior Project</p>
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