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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2013

Transgender and LGB Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Now Have New Protections

October 1, 2013 is the start date for a ground-breaking new federal law protecting transgender and gender non-conforming people, and FORGE is delighted to announce that it has received funding to help with the implementation process.

Earlier this year Congress passed a non-discrimination addition to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) when it reauthorized it, explicitly prohibiting VAWA-funded agencies from discriminating against survivors based on gender identity and sexual orientation. This week the Office on Violence Against Women announced a \$350,000, 3-year continuation award to one of FORGE's existing Training and Technical Assistance grants to directly address the implications and implementation of the new legal requirements.

Specifically, FORGE will be conducting a nationwide, baseline assessment of the primary attitudes, values and beliefs held by those working in VAWA-funded agencies. Based on the study findings, FORGE will then develop additional training and advocacy tools specifically aimed at shifting attitudes and beliefs so that they better align with the new legal mandate for all VAWA-funded agencies to serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) survivors equally. FORGE will also work intensively with two or three pilot sites to implement comprehensive changes in their systems to better serve transgender, gender non-conforming and LGB survivors and pilot-test the newly developed tools. In year three, FORGE will create and disseminate a toolkit to assist all victim service providers in reducing attitudinal barriers to serving trans and LGB survivors.



FORGE is a national, 19-year-old transgender and SOFFA (Significant Others, Friends, Family and Allies) organization headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since 2009 we have been funded to provide training and technical assistance to victim service providers nationally on the needs of transgender victims of crime. Since 2011 we have been funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to specifically provide such training and technical assistance to those who serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, creating an extensive inventory of free online training webinars and publications available at www.forge-forward.org. We are also in our fourth year of providing direct advocacy, referral, and support services to transgender sexual assault survivors through an OVW culturally-specific sexual assault grant.

FORGE is a member of several coalitions that have been on the forefront of passing and now implementing the new non-discrimination law, including the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (www.NCAVP.org). LGBT people who attempt to access services from VAWA-funded agencies after October 1, 2013 who feel they are discriminated against are encouraged to file a complaint with the Department of Justice's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The OCR webpage offers a complaint form as well as more information: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/about/offices/ocr.htm>. You can access additional support and services by contacting one of the 49 NCAVP members (located in 26 states).

More information about FORGE and our programs and services is available at www.forge-forward.org. We also maintain a presence on Facebook ([facebook.com/FORGE.trans](https://www.facebook.com/FORGE.trans)) and Twitter ([@FORGEforward](https://twitter.com/FORGEforward)). Referrals and technical assistance can be requested by phone (414-559-2123) or email (AskFORGE@forge-forward.org).

Improving the lives of transgender individuals, SOFFAs, and providers since 1994: building strong connections, providing resources, and empowering personal and professional growth.

FORGE is a progressive organization whose mission is to support, educate and advocate for the rights and lives of transgender individuals and SOFFAs (Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies). FORGE is dedicated to helping move fragmented communities beyond identity politics and forge a movement that embraces and empowers our diverse complexities.

Stay Connected



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