



Community Donations for Sexual Violence Survivors

One of the best qualities about our rural communities is their ability to gather around us in times of great need. The support and resources they can provide our programs are powerful. Not only do our communities support our programs by providing their time and attention through volunteering and fundraising efforts, but community members so often reach out to ask, “Is there something else y’all need?” When our community reaches out to offer support, we don’t want to be scrambling for an answer!

Traditional donation lists for programs working with sexual assault and domestic violence survivors typically meet immediate crisis-based needs and often serve to generate items for a survivor to furnish a new home or while staying in shelter. This would include items such as clothing, food, toiletries, and gift cards. These items are wonderful to have on hand, but what about the long-term needs of sexual violence survivors?

For many sexual violence survivors healing goes well beyond reporting to law enforcement and finding physical safety. Emotion and memory live in the body as well as the brain and we want to generate a list of donations that will meet all of these needs. Resources to explore healing include comfort items, spiritual items, items to help reconnect to the body, and holistic approaches.

The list below is intended to be used as a donation list or wish list for advocacy organizations serving sexual violence survivors. The list is



meant to be inclusive of the many kinds of survivors present in our rural communities, which means we were inclusive of survivors of many faiths, genders, body sizes, races, and ages. We encourage you to get familiar with your specific community and use our list as inspiration to create the list that works best for your service area. Be sure to get feedback from survivors and community members about what will be most helpful.

Immediate Needs and Household Items: These items will be helpful for sexual violence survivors who have had clothing or bedding taken as evidence or who are navigating housing concerns. For survivors who have been assaulted inside their home, many of these items may make them feel physically safer or will help transform the space to somewhere new and different.

- Clothing and underwear for all genders, body types and sizes, and ages
- Headscarves
- Socks for all genders and ages
- Shoes for all genders and ages in a variety of sizes
- Toiletries for all genders: toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner for all hair types, body wash/soap, hair brushes/combs for all hair types, lip balm, hand sanitizer, mouthwash, hair oil, lotion, satin or silk hair caps and wraps
- New mattresses, pillows, bedding, and quilt sets
- Locks for windows and doors
- Gift cards to local grocery stores, hardware stores, furniture stores, and pharmacies
- Calendars and planners
- Non-perishable food items, local produce
- Reusable water bottles

Comfort Items: These items will be helpful for sexual violence survivors trying to find emotional safety and comfort while working through the effects of trauma. Some items will mainly be used at home but others will be mobile objects bringing comfort during therapy appointments, difficult conversations, and panic attacks.

- Fuzzy socks or slippers
- Comfy pajamas sets for all genders and ages, including plus sizes
- Tea/coffee, tea kettles/coffee makers

- Fidget spinners, fidget toys, smooth rocks, stress balls
- Fans and heaters
- Sound machines
- Stuffed animals for all genders and ages
- Throw pillows
- Nightlights, flashlights, and reading lights
- Weighted or heated blankets

Spiritual items: These items will be helpful for sexual violence survivors who are connecting or re-connecting with a spiritual or religious practice as a means of healing. Some items may have a specific religious purpose, while others may simply soothe the survivor or create a feeling of peace.

- Sounding bowls
- Incense and sage
- Candles and candlesticks
- Crystals
- Healing cards
- Rosary beads, crosses, devotionals
- Kiddush cup, menorah, dreidels, chocolate coins
- Muslim prayer beads (Misbaha)
- Prayer mat/carpet
- Chimes
- Meditation cushions
- Religious texts as indicated by the survivor



Items to Help Reconnect to the Body: These items will be helpful for sexual violence survivors who are struggling to connect to their body, who want to rediscover the value of their body, or who are using body movement to work through trauma.

- Nail polish and manicure kits
- Hair clippers, beard trimmers, razors for all genders
- Hot oil hair treatments
- Body scrubs and face masks
- Bubble bath, bath salts, or bath bombs
- Swimsuits and goggles for all genders, body types and sizes, and ages
- Yoga mats, blocks, and straps
- Running shoes and reflective gear
- Gym passes
- Gift certificates to salons, beauticians or barbers, massage therapists, etc
- Workout clothes, shoes, and sports bras for all genders and sizes

Holistic Approaches to Healing: These items will be helpful to give to sexual violence survivors who are accessing holistic approaches to healing in group settings and for survivors to take home and explore. Supplies like markers, puzzles, and yarn are great to always have on hand for support groups, one-on-one advocacy appointments. Some items, like plants and fish, can be given directly to survivors to take home and nurture.

- Journals
- Pens and pencils
- Art supplies
- Jigsaw puzzles, word searches, Sudoku puzzles
- Knitting needles and yarn
- Recipe books and cooking utensils
- Headphones
- Plants, fish, and terrariums
- Essential oil and diffusers

Donate Time or Talents: Not all donations are tangible. Community members are also able to donate time or talents to projects and tasks that make survivors feel safe, comforted, and supported by the community.

- Install window and door locks
- Help move furniture
- Solicit community members and organizations for donations
- Light household tasks such as painting a room
- Services such as massage therapy, yoga, and nutrition, from practitioners trained in trauma-informed approaches



This publication was prepared by Leah Green, RSP Rural TA Specialist, with input from many Rural Grantees. For more information, contact leah@iowacasa.org or visit www.resourcesharingproject.org/rural-training-and-technical-assistance.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2015-TA-AX-K018 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.