



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Office of Justice Programs

Minnesota
STOP Violence Against Women
Formula Grant Program

FFY22-25 VAWA Implementation Plan

Minnesota Dept. of Public Safety

Office of Justice Programs

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I. Introduction

A. The date on which the plan was approved by the State: June 9, 2022

B. The time period covered by the plan: Federal Fiscal Years 2022 – 2025

C. Overview of the implementation plan

The purpose of the Minnesota STOP Implementation Plan is to explain how VAWA STOP funding is allocated in Minnesota, and to delineate the goals and desired outcomes of the funding plan for the next four years. VAWA funding is required to be allocated across five categories of activities: Victim Services, Law Enforcement, Prosecution, Courts and Discretionary. Minnesota's plan builds on previous planning processes that began in 1995 with the onset of VAWA funding and is distributed in the following ways:

- The Victim Services allocation supports on-going direct services to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking and dating violence.
- The Law Enforcement and Prosecution allocations:
 - address the criminal justice system response to violent crimes against women through special project grants,
 - fund special project grants for Tribal Nations in Minnesota; and
 - fund development and ongoing support of Sexual Assault Multidisciplinary Teams.
- The Court allocation is granted directly to the Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) for the Point of Contact on Sexual and Domestic Violence staff position.
- The Discretionary allocation is added to the Law Enforcement and Prosecution funding for Tribal Nations for law enforcement and prosecution special projects to improve the criminal justice response to women impacted by sexual and domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.

D. Explanation of how the plan is organized

The implementation plan follows the template tool prepared by the STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource Project (STAAR), updated April 2019. The template headings are included throughout.

E. Description of the overall context for allocation of STOP funds

The Minnesota STOP Implementation Plan focuses on:

- direct services to traditionally underserved populations and rurally isolated communities;
- improving the Tribal government criminal justice response to Indigenous populations;
- creating systems change within the criminal justice system to improve the response to violent crimes against women (domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking), through a wide variety of special project activities;
- court-based training initiatives and response to court administration issues in the field; and
- an equal distribution of grant funds between sexual assault and domestic violence activities.

Minnesota has utilized STOP funding to support many successful criminal justice system special projects over the years, demonstrating strong collaboration between law enforcement, prosecution and victim service programs, working together for systems change. Applicants in the competitive funding define project goals and activities to address the greatest needs in their communities.

Examples of past special projects include:

- Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART)
- St. Paul Blueprint for Safety projects
- lethality risk assessment development and training for law enforcement and prosecution
- developing SANE programs in rural Minnesota
- developing expert witnesses for sexual assault cases
- mock trials for sexual assault prosecution to train prosecutors and advocates
- developing domestic violence courts
- Safety Audits to assess each step of the criminal justice response
- law enforcement and advocate team follow-up on gone-on-arrival cases
- city and county joint prosecution units
- specialized domestic violence law enforcement teams
- sexual assault case file audit to determine why cases aren't forwarded for prosecution
- using technology to improve sexual assault report writing and interview techniques
- forensic compliance model policies
- community engagement with traditionally underserved populations to develop policies and practices for a criminal justice response that reflects equity and is victim-centered
- judicial training on sexual and domestic violence for specialized teams of judges
- coordinated community response to address cases of high lethality risk
- technology tools that document protection order contact violations through cell phone data

Many gaps remain in direct services and in the criminal justice system response, requiring improved policies and procedures, and training and technical assistance across the state. The goal of the next four years is to:

- a. Provide stable direct service funding to VAWA-funded service providers serving traditionally underserved populations and rurally isolated communities;
- b. Fund special projects that show promising practices in improving the criminal justice system response in holding offenders accountable and reducing harm to victims;
- c. Expand training on a trauma-informed, equitable, victim-centered response to survivors by criminal justice personnel and advocacy service providers;
- d. Support Tribal governments in strengthening their criminal justice response to domestic and sexual violence; and
- e. Fund new policy initiatives to address systems change more broadly.

F. Mission

Mission Statement for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs:

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides leadership and resources to reduce crime, improve the functioning of the criminal justice system and assist crime victims. To accomplish this, OJP administers grants; provides training and technical assistance; provides research and data; works to protect crime victims' rights; and provides reparations benefits to victims of violent crime.

For the Crime Victim Grants Unit, within OJP:

- Purpose Statement: *The Minnesota Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Crime Victim Grants Unit (CVGU) promotes and supports quality services to victims of crime throughout Minnesota.*
- Operating Principles: *All our programs, activities, operations and decisions reflect the:*
 - ❖ *Needs, strengths and voices of Minnesota victims of crime.*
 - ❖ *Commitment to effective stewardship to provide access to quality services throughout Minnesota.*
 - ❖ *Promotion of positive, respectful, and professional relationships, partnerships and collaborations.*
 - ❖ *Advancement of work that promotes trust, shared commitment and collective action.*
 - ❖ *Commitment to quality, outcome-based work that instills pride and inspires hope for the future.*
- Vision: *The Office of Justice Programs, Crime Victim Grants Unit is a national model of an integrated approach to funding, effective partnership, best practices and demonstrated results.*
- Strategic Outcomes:
 1. *Support and promote leaders dedicated to quality, victim-centered services.*
 2. *Support and promote best practices in victim services through assessment of needs, delivery of technical assistance and support for quality improvement.*
 3. *Identify gaps in victim services and dedicate available resources to address those geographic, cultural and programmatic needs.*
 4. *Convene and support key partners committed to the delivery of an integrated system of quality victim services.*
 5. *Be viewed by its partners as a trusted resource that is active and committed to quality, victim-centered services across Minnesota.*

II. Needs and Context

A. Demographic information regarding the population of the State derived from the most recent available United States Census Bureau data including population data on race, ethnicity, age, disability, and limited English proficiency. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(1))

Diversity of population

Population numbers from the 2020 U.S. census indicate the state's population rose approximately eight percent since 2010, and is at 5,707,390. Populations from various Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and cultural communities make up approximately 19% of the population; the largest from Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Indigenous communities. The Somali population has increased to 79,000, with Ethiopian individuals adding another 31,000. The Hmong community continues to grow rapidly, currently numbering 81,000. The largest BIPOC and cultural communities living in Minnesota are (in descending order): Mexican, African American, Native American, Somali, Indian, Chinese, Ethiopian, Vietnamese, Korean and Filipino, with many additional cultural populations each numbering 20,000 persons or less.

Other Demographics

The following statewide statistics for Minnesota are from the 2020 census. (The statistics for items other than race cover the period of 2016-2020.)

- Persons under 5 years – 5.9%
- Persons under 18 years – 23.1%
- Persons 65 years and older – 16.7%
- Female persons – 49.9%
- Median household income - \$73,382
- Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2020 dollars) - \$38,881
- Persons in poverty – 8.3%
- People under age 65 living with a disability – 7.4%
- People under age 65 without health insurance – 5.8%
- People 5 years or older, where a language other than English is spoken at home – 11.9%
- Veterans – 291,453 persons
- Foreign-born persons – 8.4%
- People 25 years or older with a high school diploma or higher – 93.4%
- People 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher – 36.8%
- Owner-occupied housing unit rate – 71.9%
- Households with a computer – 92.7%
- Households with an broadband internet subscription – 87%

Race and Hispanic Origin (self-identified from census):

- White – 83.0%
- Black or African American – 7.4%
- American Indian and Alaska Native – 1.4%
- Asian – 5.4%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander – 0.1%

- Two or more races – 2.8%
- Hispanic or Latino – 5.8%
- White, not Hispanic or Latino – 78.1%

Hennepin and Ramsey counties have the highest population density in the state, specifically the metro cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- Minneapolis population – 443,715
- St. Paul – 314,997

Minnesota has 87 counties. The five most populous counties make up the five-county metropolitan area: Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Anoka and Washington, for a regional population of three million, or 52% of the statewide population. These five counties have experienced a growth rate of 10% - 14% since 2010, which helps explain the extremely tight housing market and high need for affordable housing. The population growth rate in the surrounding counties is even higher, with Carver County experiencing the highest growth rate in the state of 20% since 2010.

The largest urban areas in greater Minnesota are Rochester in Olmsted County, Duluth in St. Louis County, and St. Cloud in Sherburne County.

Demographic sources: *mncompass.org*; *worldpopulationreview.com*; and *census.gov*

Homelessness

The most recent Minnesota Homeless Study by Wilder Research was completed through face-to-face interviews with Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, and a one-day statewide count of homelessness on October 25, 2018. An estimated 50,600 people reported experiencing homelessness in 2018, and an estimated 19,600 experienced homelessness on any given night in 2018. Between 2015 and 2018, homelessness increased 10%, while the number of people staying outside or temporarily doubled up increased more dramatically. In the Twin Cities metro area that increase was 93%, and 36% for greater Minnesota. Tent encampments sprang up and have continued to grow throughout the metro area in the past four years. State and local health, social service agencies and victim service providers worked to address the needs of people in encampments during the pandemic. OJP awarded multiple COVID-19 related grants to agencies providing services, basic necessities, and transitioning women, children and high risk individuals into safe housing.

The Wilder Research study found nearly six in 10 homeless adults have experienced physical or sexual violence, with higher rates of violence reported by women and GLBTQ+ identifying individuals. African American and Indigenous adults are overrepresented in the homeless population. According to Wilder Research, this situation is impacted by a history of racist and discriminatory economic and housing policies, along with generational poverty. Additionally, 32% of those in the homeless one-day count were children 17 and younger. Due to reported increases in the number of and severity of domestic violence cases, along with increased violent crime during the pandemic we expect the number of homeless individuals has gone up significantly since 2018, as seen in the increasing number of encampments and anecdotal reports from domestic and sexual violence service providers.

The need for affordable housing is not limited to the Twin Cities metro area or only in counties experiencing population growth. Domestic and sexual violence programs statewide report the lack

of affordable housing impacts their work at a high level, keeping victims/survivors stuck in shelter or with the abuser.

B. Description of the methods used to identify underserved populations within the State and the results of those methods, including demographic data on the distribution of underserved populations within the State. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(E); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(e))

From the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, OJP has administered new programming and grown significantly through the following initiatives, with a focus on identifying underserved populations and addressing their unmet needs. From releasing RFPs with priority for traditionally underserved populations to increased outreach to a needs assessment, the following highlighted activities (in no particular order) are methods and activities OJP has and is using to identify and reach underserved populations in Minnesota.

1. Release New RFPs and Expand Funding Opportunities

OJP released multiple RFPs totaling over \$45 million to address the impact of COVID-19, with funding priority for programs serving BIPOC populations; economically disadvantaged communities; and traditionally underserved populations (BIPOC, cultural communities, GLBTQ+, Deaf/hard of hearing, people with disabilities, youth, elders, etc.):

- Short-term Coronavirus Relief grants (two rounds)
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Survivor Support & Prevention grants
- ARPA Violence Intervention grants
- Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (FVPSA) ARPA for New Grantees
- FVPSA ARPA for Current Domestic & Sexual Violence Grantees
- FVPSA ARPA for DV & SA statewide coalitions and Native coalitions

BIPOC agencies, programs serving traditionally underserved populations, and some mainstream programs received funding to address the impact of COVID-19 in their community. Numerous agencies were new to OJP funding and some to managing federal funding. Some agencies were funded multiple times for different projects to help their community. The scope of assistance provided by funded projects was broad, such as emergency housing for quarantining; technology needs to move to remote services; personal protective equipment; access to COVID-19 testing; emergency food; youth focused violence intervention activities; access to mental health services; housing assistance; legal advocacy; hazard pay for direct service staff; etc. This funding helped thousands of people, including BIPOC and other traditionally underserved populations, with access to new services for their community and help in addressing the impact of COVID-19.

2. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, funded by the Minnesota State Legislature and OJP, was created in 2019 to identify the root causes behind the historic violence against Indigenous women, girls and two spirit (GLBTQ+) people. The December 2020 report to the legislature calls for systemic legislative and social changes, and includes 20 mandates that aim to reduce and end violence against Indigenous women, girls and two spirit individuals. In 2021, the legislature appropriated funding to create the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office (MMIR), located within OJP. The new MMIR Director is in the process of hiring three staff to carry forward the mandates identified in the report.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women-Relatives Task Force - Three Year Strategic Plan

3. Consultation with Tribal Leaders and the Work of the Tribal Liaison

The Dept. of Public Safety Tribal Liaison works closely with the Commissioner on consultation meetings with Tribal leadership. Annual consultation was completed with 10 out of the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota this past winter. The Tribal Liaison meets quarterly with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), a government agency representing 10 of the 11 tribes within Minnesota, to share updates and hear concerns from the nations. The current focus of the state agency liaisons and MIAC Tribal leaders is to improve the state agency Tribal Consultation policies to better serve the Tribes and their members. The Tribal Liaison and new MMIR Director are currently travelling the state to meet Tribal leaders and hear how the office can best serve them.

4. Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force (MMAAW)

The Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force was created during the 2021 Legislative Session to examine and report on:

- Systemic causes of violence against African American women and girls;
- Appropriate methods of tracking and collecting data;
- Policies, practices, and institutions that impact violence against African American women and girls;
- Measures necessary to address and reduce violence against African American women and girls; and
- Measures necessary to help victims, their families and their communities.

The role of the MMAAW Task Force is to advise the Commissioner of Public Safety on the issue of MMAAW, to report to the legislature on recommendations to reduce and end violence against African American women and girls in Minnesota, and to serve as a liaison between the commissioner and agencies and organizations that provide legal, social, and other community services to victims, victims' families, and victims' communities. The MMAAW Task Force is a first-in-the-nation initiative and is partially supported with VAWA funding.

5. Community Engagement Director

OJP hired a Community Engagement Director in 2021 with experience and knowledge of diverse communities, especially in North Minneapolis. She meets with organizations seeking resources for the needs in their communities, mostly around violence intervention and crime victim services. She educates community representatives about OJP funding opportunities and the Reparations program, answers inquiries, and helps connect people to resources. Her understanding of unmet needs of traditionally underserved communities helped OJP target COVID-related funding to community agencies addressing those needs. The Community Engagement Director has also provided key support to the Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force through coordinating with partners and task force members, finding meeting space, managing information for members and the public on the OJP website, troubleshooting, etc. She ensures OJP communication efforts reach communities through different methods including more nontraditional ways, to increase community connections and information sharing.

6. Needs Assessment

OJP funded a Minnesota victim needs assessment and gap analysis report, published in 2021. The process was guided by a 31 member Community Advisory Group made up of BIPOC and cultural community individuals whose charge was to ensure the needs assessment process was transparent,

inclusive, respectful and non-traumatizing, and the research was useful, meaningful and equitable. The needs assessment process involved administering surveys to crime victim service programs, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations with likely involvement with crime victims; and conducting focus groups with people harmed by violence. All work was vetted through the Community Advisory Group. The contractor engaged in over 100 hours of focus group planning and recruitment, and conducted 16 focus groups from December 2020 to March 2021. Unfortunately, the focus group process was heavily impacted by the pandemic and far fewer victims/survivors were able to be interviewed. The Needs Assessment found the highest unmet crime victim needs were identified as emergency housing and emergency mental health care.

The primary barriers to accessing crime victim services were found to be:

- lack of agency financial resources to meet the demand for services;
- lack of awareness of available services;
- lack of transportation options for crime victims to utilize services;
- difficulty navigating the process to access and use services; and
- lack of services tailored to the needs of cultural communities.

Focus group participants suggested the following improvements:

- make accommodations and provide alternative methods of service delivery;
- offer more services and programs;
- increase awareness of available support services;
- provide more support; and
- provide more resources and information from law enforcement.

The report may be found at: [Minnesota Crime Victim Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis](#)

7. State Mapping of Economically Disadvantaged Communities

In early 2022, OJP hired a contractor to research and develop mapping to better identify economically disadvantaged communities. In 2021, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding appropriated to OJP in combination with legislative appropriations targeted funds to economically disadvantaged communities to address crime victimization and violence intervention projects. ARPA required project funds be spent on **at least one** of the following:

- A program or service provided at a physical location in a Qualified Census Tract (for multi-site projects, if a majority of sites are within Qualified Census Tracts);
- A program or service where the primary intended participants live within a Qualified Census Tract;
- A program or service for which the eligibility criteria are such that the primary intended participants earn less than 60 percent of the median income for the relevant jurisdiction (e.g., State, county, metropolitan area, or other jurisdiction); or
- A program or service for which the eligibility criteria are such that over 25 percent of intended participants are below the federal poverty line.

Applicants and OJP used a HUD interactive map to locate qualified census tracts, or census data profiles to determine eligibility. OJP needs better mapping guides to identify economically disadvantaged communities for future funding opportunities. This mapping resource is still in process.

Additional efforts to reach underserved populations in Minnesota

OJP is aware of underserved geographic areas and communities in both rural Minnesota and the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. As the primary agency funding crime victim services in Minnesota, OJP awards approximately \$54 million each year in combined state and federal funding to crime victim programs addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and general crime. The Victim Services allocation of STOP funding is included in this total. Service maps, [DV Services Map](#), [SA Services Map](#), [Reservation Services Map](#) show funded domestic violence and sexual assault programs throughout the state, including on 10 of the 11 federally recognized Tribal reservations. A few counties have no domestic or sexual violence specific services and victims must seek services in a neighboring county. However, those counties have OJP funded victim/witness coordinators in the county attorney's office who are able to provide assistance to victims.

VAWA funds contribute to funding support for a broad scope of services statewide. Of the 87 counties, OJP funds victim services at some level in every one. OJP has long recognized the importance of providing funding directly to BIPOC and cultural community programs to serve their own community with culturally specific services. OJP provides funding for direct services addressing domestic and sexual violence, stalking and dating violence to 38 programs for ongoing services to traditionally underserved communities including BIPOC and cultural community programs representing Indigenous, Somali/East African, Black/African American, immigrant/refugee, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Indian/Middle Eastern, Hmong, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, plus victims of elder abuse, victims of torture, youth, victims of sex trafficking, and GLBTQ+ including non-binary, gender non-conforming individuals. With regard to the needs of victims/survivors with limited English proficiency, OJP requires programs to identify their Limited English Proficiency plans and include expenses in their budget for Language Line or an alternative, to address the needs of victims with limited English proficiency.

Since the 2016 competitive process OJP has been able to increase funding support to direct service programs because the VOCA awards increased. OJP conducted a full competitive process with all the available state and federal crime victim funding for direct services (FVPSA, VAWA, VOCA, SASP, state) in state fiscal year 2016 and will do so again in 2023. Great effort is made to promote open competitive solicitations through multiple channels to reach those who have never applied for funding, and programs serving traditionally underserved communities who may not be aware of funding availability. The new Community Engagement Director will also assist in RFP promotional strategies for the 2023 competitive process. Additionally, numerous BIPOC and culturally specific agencies newly funded through the COVID-19 funding opportunities in 2021/2022 will be encouraged to apply and will be better prepared to compete due to their experience managing OJP grants.

In each application for OJP crime victim services funding, applicants must describe their community demographics, identify traditionally underserved populations, and describe unmet needs. This definition of traditionally underserved populations includes BIPOC and cultural communities, GLBTQ+, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, elders, youth, immigrants/refugees, people with disabilities and victims/survivors with limited English proficiency. Applicants must detail how they will create broad awareness of the availability of their services, how they conduct outreach specifically to traditionally underserved populations to increase awareness and utilization of services. This information, along with information from the statewide coalitions and other stakeholders are the helpful methods through which OJP identifies underserved populations. Additionally, programs seeking funding

routinely contact the DPS Commissioner's office, who is prioritizing outreach in many ways, and helps connect OJP with unfunded programs.

Many people, both rural and urban, are isolated by lack of transportation; language and cultural barriers; and lack of available services for those with physical, developmental or other disabilities. While there is a concentration of cultural communities in the Twin Cities metro area, there has been significant expansion to greater Minnesota urban and rural areas in the past ten years, creating greater population diversity across the state. These smaller BIPOC communities and cultural communities most often access services from mainstream victim service programs, who may or may not have a culturally specific advocate or tailored services for their needs. As an alternative, victims/survivors seek assistance from local, culturally specific social service agencies. Some culturally specific agencies in the Twin Cities try to provide remote services to those in greater Minnesota who have no access to culturally specific programming. This is challenging for both the victims/survivors and the advocates due to the distance.

Additionally, Minnesota has widely spread out communities of migrant workers, primarily representing Hispanic/Latino populations, across western and southern Minnesota. OJP funds 2 counties in this large service area through a culturally specific sexual and domestic violence program in western Minnesota. Other mainstream programs serve these communities in part, with Spanish speaking staff. Several OJP funded legal advocacy programs assist these communities with immigration legal needs. Legal advocacy staff have expressed there is an urgent need for training for judges on immigration issues impacting immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The Minnesota State Legislature has allocated funding to the Minnesota Dept. of Health to address sex trafficking through their Safe Harbor program. This funding supports nine Safe Harbor Navigators plus two Indigenous Safe Harbor Navigators for the two largest Tribal Nations. Through assigned regions, navigators cover the whole state but some have a huge service area with which to contend. There is a higher concentration of sex trafficking navigators and services in the Twin Cities metro area, especially for youth, however the metro is comprised of over half of the state's population and more navigators are needed.

Through work with navigators, agencies across the state are getting better at identifying trafficking and creating outreach and resources in their communities. This is especially true of programs near or on Tribal reservations, and those located near the Canadian border and in Duluth, with the Lake Superior shipping port. Advocates from Indigenous programs report it would be beneficial for each Tribal Nation to have their own navigator.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) provides materials for training of hotel staff titled "Sex Trafficking Prevention and Response Training for the Minnesota Lodging Industry." The training is specific to different staff positions with the hotel (i.e., front desk, security, housekeeping, etc.), and includes translated materials in Spanish, Hmong and Somali for the staff training portion. MDH staff report the plan ahead includes revisions, promotion of the training to hotels, and cross-agency evaluation.

III. Description of Planning Process

A. A brief description of the planning process.

Information informing how STOP funding is administered is shared in meetings with statewide criminal justice leadership, crime victim coalition directors, and state agency committees and task forces. OJP administers all state and federal crime victim service funding in Minnesota (except for Safe Harbor funding provided to the Dept. of Health), and conducts a coordinated funding process with all available funding. STOP funds represent four percent of OJP funding addressing crime victimization in Minnesota. Thus statewide planning involves coordination for each funding source, with attention to specific funding requirements, priorities and allocations. Information gleaned from the broader scope of work addressing statewide issues, emerging trends, and unmet needs regularly informs planning for STOP funding.

The Criminal Justice Collaborative, hereafter “the Collaborative,” is a key group of stakeholders representing statewide organizations, convened monthly by Violence Free Minnesota (VFMN)*, the statewide domestic violence coalition. The group discusses statewide criminal justice system issues that impact the response to domestic and sexual violence across the state, and is the Minnesota version of a VAWA Planning Committee. This group includes broad representation in an effort to make a significant difference in how issues are addressed statewide through collaboration. The core group initially formed over 14 years ago as an advisory group for a VAWA Grants to Encourage Arrest project, and has continued to meet monthly since, growing in size each year. The Collaborative has served as an advisory group for numerous OVW funded discretionary grants and statewide projects focused on improving the criminal justice response to sexual and domestic violence and holding offenders accountable. The importance and impact of the issues identified and addressed in a collaborative manner cannot be overstated. Each organization benefits from the collaboration and relationship building that occurs in this group.

Current representatives from the crime victim coalitions, criminal justice agencies and state agencies attending the monthly Collaborative are:

- Guadalupe Lopez, Nikki Engel and Katie Kramer, Violence Free MN;
- Artika Roller and Sarah Florman, MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA);
- Nicole Matthews, MN Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC);
- Katy Eagle, Sacred Hoop Coalition;
- Bobbi Holtberg, MN Alliance on Crime (MAC)
- Judge Robert Small, MN County Attorney’s Association;
- Bill Hutton, MN Sheriff’s Association;
- Stephanie Revering, MN Chiefs of Police Association;
- Melia Garza, Point of Contact on Sexual and Domestic Violence, MN State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO);
- Taylor Humphrey and Brian Pottratz, Human Trafficking Investigators, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Police Dept.;

*Formally known as the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

- OJP staff (Cecilia Miller, Grants Director, the OJP Executive Director, and directors of the Crime Victim Justice Unit, Community Engagement, and Reparations, plus Housing Specialist and Grant Manager);
- Beatriz Menanteau, Mary Hopkins and Carolyn Palmer, MN Dept. of Health; (MDH), Health Prevention and Chronic Disease Division
- Bifftuu Adam, MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA)
- Liz Richards, MN Dept. of Corrections (DOC), Victim Services and Restorative Justice Division;
- Bobbie Shafer, Sherburne County Attorney's Office; and
- Joe Van Thomme, Eckberg Lammers, contract city attorney

The Collaborative is a robust working group of policy makers, addressing the intersection of domestic and sexual violence and the criminal justice response. Improving the response statewide at the policy level is of primary importance. Meeting monthly provides consistency and focus for addressing problematic issues that require significant time, have multiple layers, and potentially involve statutory language changes. The coalitions are knowledgeable about direct service needs across the state, as well as the issues programs and victims face in working with the criminal justice system. They are able to bring other voices to the table and represent a broad network of direct service programs. In addition, the Chiefs, Sheriffs and County Attorney Association directors are the primary conduit for information to their respective statewide memberships, and can advise on the best ways to communicate and gather information from their memberships. The Collaborative provides a forum to discuss global issues; for example, the inconsistencies across the state with how Domestic Abuse No Contact Orders (DANCOS) are issued, modified and dropped. Additionally, the group has been discussing challenges of evolving approaches to domestic and sexual violence and the impact of criminal justice reform on the work, as well as how each agency is addressing and furthering diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts in their work.

Information shared at Collaborative meetings has significantly helped OJP in planning for STOP Law Enforcement, Prosecution and Court funding allocations especially, as attendees discuss current criminal justice issues.

B. Documentation from each member of the planning committee as to their participation in the planning process. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(B); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(7)).

1. State sexual assault coalition
2. State domestic violence coalition
- ~~3. Dual domestic violence and sexual assault coalition~~ N/A
4. Law enforcement entity or State law enforcement organization
5. Prosecution entity or State prosecution organization
6. A court or the State Administrative Office of the Courts
7. Representatives from tribes, tribal organizations, or tribal coalitions
8. Population specific organizations representing the most significant underserved populations and culturally specific populations in the State other than tribes (which are addressed separately)

At a minimum, this documentation must include the following for each planning committee member (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(B); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(c)(2)(ii)):

1. Which category the participant represents of the entities listed in 34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(2), such as law enforcement, State coalition, population specific organization, etc.;
2. Whether they were informed about meeting(s);
3. Whether they attended meeting(s);
4. Whether they were given drafts of the implementation plan to review;
5. Whether they submitted comments on the draft;
6. Whether they received a copy of the final plan and the summary of major concerns; and
7. Any significant concerns with the final plan.

The Collaborative group represents the required participants for a VAWA Planning Committee, and more. Completed "Implementation Planning Participation Forms" are available upon request for the required entities representing: state sexual assault coalition; state domestic violence coalition; state law enforcement organization; state prosecution organization; state administrative office of the courts; tribal coalitions; and By-and-For organizations representing underserved populations and culturally specific populations other than tribes.

C. A description of consultation with other collaboration partners not included in the planning committee (do not include tribes in this section. See "III. D" below for information on consulting and coordinating with tribes).

1. Sexual assault victim service providers. (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(2)(H); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(1))
2. Domestic violence victim service providers (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(2)(H); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(1))
3. Population specific organizations, representatives from underserved populations, and culturally specific organizations. (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(2)(G); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(2))
 - a. How the State selected and meaningfully consulted with the included organizations, and
 - b. how the State considered both demographics and barriers/historical lack of access to services for each population.
4. Information on any others that were consulted but not part of the planning committee.

Coalitions and State Agency Partners

The VAWA State Administrator, Cecilia Miller, meets every other month with the executive directors of the six crime victim coalitions in Minnesota: Violence Free MN (VFMN), MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), MN Alliance on Crime (MAC), MN Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC), Sacred Hoop Coalition, and the MN Children's Alliance, plus state agency partners from the MN Dept. of Health, Health Prevention and Chronic Disease Division, and the Dept. of Corrections, Victim Services and Restorative Justice Division. The coalitions represent the

interests and perspective of the broad array of victim service providers addressing crime victimization statewide. Most of these individuals are part of the Collaborative group, however this every-other-month meeting is for different purposes. Besides updates from each participant about their current activities, the group discusses areas for collaboration and consultation. Cecilia regularly seeks assistance for grant administration strategies and information, challenges currently relevant for victim service providers, and ways OJP, MDH and DOC can work together on state agency initiatives.

An additional source of information comes from the OJP grant managers. Through their daily work providing technical assistance to grantees they learn about unmet needs and challenging issues from the 175 OJP funded crime victim grantee agencies statewide, and share this information with Cecilia and each other in weekly unit meetings.

Victim Services

Cecilia worked with the domestic and sexual violence statewide coalitions to speak with domestic and sexual violence programs statewide about their needs and challenges, both pandemic related and ongoing. Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding became available to OJP in 2021, to specifically address the COVID-19 impact on programs. Cecilia Miller, with the help of Lauren Ryan, OJP Housing Specialist, joined 5 virtual regional meetings of Violence Free MN member programs in December 2021. Meetings with sexual assault programs followed with assistance from MNCASA. The goal was to hear from programs across the entire state about current issues, unmet needs and pandemic-related challenges. Additional virtual meetings were held with the DV/SA coalition directors to discuss funding needs for training and ways to use the FVPSA ARPA funding specifically to support DV/SA programs coping with the impact of COVID-19 on their staff and services, on victims/survivors and on their communities. The impact of the pandemic is and has been far reaching and dramatic, to the degree that it is difficult to parse out which issues are pandemic-related and which are not. The information provided from programs and coalitions is informing the FVPSA ARPA funding and VAWA planning, as OJP focuses funding to address needs as much as possible.

Attendees for these meetings numbered approximately 83, representing 64 programs, of which 12 are domestic and sexual violence BIPOC and cultural community programs, and programs serving traditionally underserved populations. Attendees included domestic violence shelters, community-based advocacy programs providing domestic and/or sexual assault services, and stand-alone sexual assault agencies. Numerous attendees attended more than one meeting.

Innovation Lab Project

Violence Free MN received a VAWA special project grant in 2021 from OJP to create an “Innovation Lab Project.” The project incorporates consultation with BIPOC leaders and advocates from domestic and sexual violence programs. It is highlighted here to demonstrate consultation occurring through VAWA funding, and in anticipation of significant learning to be utilized in VAWA planning and for future projects.

Project Objective: to center the needs of marginalized DV victim/survivors by creating a space where advocates from culturally-specific programs and BIPOC leaders in Minnesota’s DV movement can determine the kinds of criminal justice system changes needed to better serve their communities.

Method: Bring together criminal justice system stakeholders and BIPOC advocates to identify issues in criminal justice system response and explore innovative solutions

Test: Pilot some small change and evaluate for application across MN

VFMN's Innovation Lab Project will create and test the effectiveness of a model led by culturally-specific programs and BIPOC leaders in Minnesota's domestic violence field – and focused on historically underserved populations – to impact systemic change within the criminal legal system. This model represents a fundamental shift in how the coalition approaches our work in the criminal legal system (CLS), bringing race equity front and center in crafting meaningful and effective domestic violence interventions in Minnesota.

Over the past four decades the domestic violence movement has increasingly invested in the criminal justice system as the primary and best response to relationship abuse in the United States. Minnesota has been a leader in advancing coordinated community response (CCR) models, (i.e., The Duluth Model and the Blueprint for Safety), models and responses that address the unique needs and concerns of BIPOC communities only secondarily. These models have received national and international accolades and yet, we know that we have failed to create programs and systems that provide the resources and responses wanted by many victim/survivors, with BIPOC communities suffering the greatest consequences as a result. This is supported by data collected on DV homicide rates, and the documented need for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force and the Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force.

We have ample evidence that current criminal legal system responses to domestic and sexual violence are not providing victim/survivors with the safety and assistance they need. In 2015, the National Domestic Violence Hotline conducted a study on survivors' experiences with law enforcement, ("Who Will Help me? Domestic Violence Survivors Speak Out About Law Enforcement Responses," National Domestic Violence Hotline 2015). Approximately 50% of survey participants had, and 50% had not, interacted with law enforcement about the relationship abuse. However, both groups shared a strong reluctance to calling law enforcement for help. For those who had interacted with law enforcement, only 50% felt police involvement increased their safety. Across all participants, 25% said they would not call police in the future – and the majority of survey participants in this case were white women. Other studies with a larger proportion of BIPOC participants show greater levels of reluctance to connect with law enforcement and increased reports of negative outcomes.

The Innovation Lab Project has asked leaders from different criminal legal system fields – individuals who understand the historic and systemic nature of racism within the legal system – to partner with the coalition to discuss and develop new models of domestic violence intervention. The innovation labs will create a space for VFMN's culturally-specific member programs to foreground the experiences of their communities in the process of identifying issues, analyzing strategies, and recommending changes to policies and practices; the desired outcome being interventions that are responsive to a more diverse cross-section of our communities.

The innovation leaders will identify specific issues to address at monthly lab meetings. Innovation labs will be for learning, discussion, and exploration of promising criminal legal system and community-based practices. Topics have included the miss-arrest and

criminalization of victims of color, restorative justice approaches, and non-law enforcement response to DV. Lab participants will collectively identify practices to pilot. A detailed plan for local implementation will be developed that includes identifying local jurisdictions for testing, local champions for implementation, and mechanisms for tracking evaluative data. An evaluation consultant will be brought in to help craft strong data collection and evaluation measures.

Creating alternative approaches for responding to domestic and sexual violence with a specific focus on race equity will lead to more abundant options and improved practices for ALL victims of intimate partner violence.

Participants in the project include:

Criminal legal system partners

- 2 Chiefs of Police
- 2 Supervising Agents, one who works exclusively with DV offenders
- 1 County Attorney
- 1 City Attorney
- 2 Public Defenders
- 2 Victim-Witness Advocates

Advocacy partners

- Advocate from a culturally-specific Hmong DV/SA program
- Advocate from a culturally-specific Native American DV/SA program
- Advocate from a culturally-specific Latina DV/SA program
- Advocate from a culturally-specific African immigrant DV/SA program
- ED of color from a large mainstream DV/SA agency
- Advocate of color who focuses on underserved populations in a statewide legal services agency for DV/SA
- Shelter Director of color in a mainstream DV/SA agency
- Client Services Director of color in a large mainstream agency that works with harm-doers

RFP Applicants

Consultation for VAWA funding, because VAWA planning happens in conjunction with other available funds, takes various forms and comes from a variety of directions. OJP has learned much about challenges and barriers programs are facing via the multiple RFP application processes OJP released from fall 2020, to the present, (totaling \$45 million in available funding). Each RFP process included Information Sessions for potential applicants. In these, applicants described their primary issues in providing services, the challenges facing their communities, and tested out creative programming ideas for potential funding. These RFPs have consistently prioritized funding for BIPOC and cultural community programs, programs serving traditionally underserved populations, and economically disadvantaged communities. Through increased community engagement about these RFPs, OJP has connected with and provided funding to numerous agencies for the first time, and significantly expanded programming to traditionally underserved communities, and BIPOC and cultural community agencies.

D. Consultation and coordination with tribes (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(3) and (c)(2)(iii))

1. A description of efforts to reach tribes.
2. Which tribes were consulted and which tribal official(s) for each tribe was contacted.
3. The means by which tribes were given the opportunity to offer their opinion.

Input from Tribal Reservations and Indigenous Serving Victim Service Programs

The DPS Tribal Liaison and Cecilia Miller met multiple times to plan communication for the Tribal Listening Session for VAWA implementation planning. A virtual meeting was held in early March 2022, with the head of each Tribal Nation invited from the 11 federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, or their designee, if desired. Also invited were the MN Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition and Sacred Hoop Coalition directors, the Tribal reservation-based domestic and sexual violence program, Tribal law enforcement, Tribal personnel working on their VAWA special project, and OJP personnel including Julie Rudie, Director of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office, Kate Weeks, OJP Executive Director, and Aida Tosca and Megan Reetz, OJP grant managers that work with the 10 funded Tribal Nations. The meeting specifically highlighted the STOP Law Enforcement / Prosecution / Discretionary allocations for the Tribal special projects. Attendees heard about special project accomplishments from the past and current projects. Tribal government leaders asked questions about future funding and the funding process. Tribal reservation-based domestic and sexual violence advocates shared challenges they are experiencing due to the pandemic, and ways their programs are trying to address the heavy toll on staff and the need for healing.

This draft VAWA Implementation Plan has being sent to all these individuals including Tribal Nation leaders for the 11 Tribes, providing an opportunity for feedback on the IP.

E. A summary of major concerns that were raised during the planning process and how they were addressed or why they were not addressed, which should be sent to the planning committee along with any draft implementation plan and the final plan. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(c)(2)(i))

Consultation feedback and issues raised from reviewing the Implementation Plan draft are included in full in this section, available to everyone including the planning committee (the Collaborative) and other stakeholders or interested persons.

Tribal Consultation Meeting

The conversation focused primarily on VAWA funded Tribal reservation-based special projects – what types of activities have been funded and what has been accomplished, as well as ongoing challenges in addressing domestic and sexual violence. The following was shared during the Tribal consultation meeting:

- It's a big challenge to recruit and hire for both DV/SA victim advocates and law enforcement positions. Grant funding can be a barrier when recruiting at times.

- Patrol Officers (Front Line Responders) need direct training pertaining to the response and interacting with survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Responding officers have expressed uncertainty about how to respond, investigate and assist survivors.
- The ability to conduct hands-on, in-person training with this funding has suffered during the pandemic. The discussion and collaboration is different when you're in the same room versus conducting training virtually.
- Slow and steady meaningful changes have been accomplished over the years as a result of this funding, including code changes to improve the gaps in domestic violence and sexual assault cases, as well as training and collaboration with Indian Child Welfare.
- Meetings about missing and murdered Indigenous women are occurring, to educate communities, get feedback and plan activities.

OJP staff recognized these challenges and thanked those involved with the Tribal special projects for their continued work. OJP staff explained the process for applying for special project funding, ways funding could be utilized to address the concerns that were shared, the Tribal entities that could apply immediately, and the assistance available from OJP grant managers.

Meetings with Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs

These meetings to gain feedback primarily concerned asking about challenges direct service programs are facing in providing services during the pandemic. Some challenges are specifically pandemic-related, but others have been issues for years that have heightened in severity and urgency due to COVID-19. The VAWA Victim Services allocation is part of the full picture of direct service funding, along with FVPSA, SASP, VOCA and state funding. The needs described below are being addressed by all of these, plus FVPSA ARPA funds which are currently being awarded.

- More flexible funds for survivors for housing support and basic needs (direct client assistance)
- Mental health needs have increased but access is extremely limited, with long wait times
- Survivors' needs have increased and are intensified by isolation and lack of transportation
- Increased requests for protective orders and harassment restraining orders
- Other sources of funding for agencies has gone down (foundations, local sources), impacting staff retention and program stability
- Technology for virtual services
- Hazard pay, wellness activities for staff, PTO for sick staff, and hiring bonuses
- Isolation spaces, non-congregate housing space, PPE and testing
- Help with service continuity when short-staffed and current staff are burned out
- Housing specialist staff
- Access to affordable legal services

Implementation Plan Feedback from Violence Free Minnesota

Katie Kramer, Policy Director, provided the following feedback for inclusion in the plan.

- Violence Free MN recognizes this feedback is beyond OJP's control, and is the responsibility of legislators on the federal level, however VFMN wants to continue to advocate that the percentages of where VAWA funding must be allocated (victims services, law enforcement, courts, etc.), be shifted so that victim service providers have the highest percentage of funding overall from VAWA. This would require a change in the law, VFMN continues to express our support for this shift to our Minnesota federal delegation.

- With the creative, exciting, thoughtful and unique projects that take place with VAWA STOP grants, VFMN asks that there be a place where these projects are posted and where information, evaluations/reports are shared. This can help inspire additional collaborations in other areas of the state/nation to duplicate effective responses to domestic and sexual violence, so this work can continue on, be replicated, etc. (Note: OJP will create a dedicated space on our website for this information, and will include the website link in the next VAWA Special Project RFP, in August 2022).

Implementation Plan Feedback from the Dept. of Corrections

Liz Richards, Director of the Victim Services and Restorative Justice Division, provided the following feedback for inclusion in the plan. The feedback ties to other sections of the implementation plan but has significant impact when taken as a whole, thus it is provided here in one place.

- The Collaborative also serves as the advisory committee on the most recent VAWA discretionary grant (Improving the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking), received by the DOC. Through extensive interviews with justice involved women, the grant project created recommendations to address victimization issues specific to Native American women incarcerated in DOC prison facilities. The recommendation document is attached (see Addendum B).
- The expansion of restorative justice work incorporates language of “harm reduction.” When discussing increased accountability, one needs to address both accountability and harm reduction. (Note: As a result of this feedback, a goal addressing restorative justice was added to this plan’s listed goals and objectives.)
- DOC is expanding and changing their language about victimization. Using victim/offender language creates a false dichotomy because many incarcerated people have histories of victimization, some from childhood and many victimizations that continue into adulthood. When looking at the criminal legal system, new approaches to improving responses to domestic and sexual violence need to address that reality. The DOC is working to take a person-centered approach, to assess each person that comes under the control of the DOC to determine the range of issues that need to be addressed in order for this person to be successful and to thrive. Part of that assessment is to examine the issues of domestic and sexual violence victimization and start to address those while the person is under DOC custody.
- With all of this, the intersectionality of issues needs to be named and addressed. That funding sources and programming have traditionally addressed issues in isolation is a problem. Housing is not separate from successful criminal legal interventions, etc. Plus the trauma of racism is overlaid on everything. Addressing racism within the criminal legal system is critical – it is a system built on racism rife with extreme racial disparities.
- DOC is working to establish partnerships between the DOC system and community-based advocacy programming. This is an area of expansion and requires training and intentional work to build up the skills of advocacy programs and of DOC staff.
- DOC’s PREA efforts involve much more intentional work with the SART teams within DOC facilities, and expansion of the PREA work with community-based partners.

F. A description of how the State coordinated this plan with the State plan for the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and the programs under the Victims of Crime Act and section 393A of the Public Health Service Act (Rape Prevention Education), including the impact of that coordination on the contents of the plan. (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(3); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(6) and (g)(6)).

OJP is the primary state agency division providing grant funding for crime victim services in Minnesota, administering the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), VAWA STOP funds and Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) funds, and state funding to address all crime victimization types. OJP also administers, through its Community and Justice Grants Unit, JAG funding, RSAT, Title II, Coverdell, juvenile justice and community crime prevention programming.

OJP is the primary recipient of federal and state funds to address crime victim services (exception: Safe Harbor and RPE funding). Hence, OJP can create an overall funding plan utilizing different federal funding sources to comprehensively address Minnesota's crime victim programming. Planning is coordinated to leverage efforts across funding streams and provide greater diversity of programming.

OJP funds a broad network of organizations across the state to provide domestic and sexual violence services. This includes 53 domestic violence community advocacy programs; 25 domestic violence emergency shelters; and two legal advocacy programs. For sexual assault, OJP funding supports 53 community programs and rape crisis centers providing direct services, 11 of which are stand-alone sexual assault programs. Grants consist of one federal source (STOP Victim Services, SASP or VOCA) and state funding. OJP administers funding following federal requirements, (e.g., the sexual assault set-aside requirement for STOP Victim Services). With this funding distribution plan direct service programs do not have to manage multiple grants that cover the same direct services, and OJP can avoid duplication of effort issues that could happen in multiple grants to the same agency.

Rape Prevention and Education (RPE)

The Minnesota Dept. of Health (MDH), Health Prevention and Chronic Disease Division, administers the RPE funding, the Safe Harbor state funding, and hosts the MN Human Trafficking Task Force. On an ongoing basis MDH and OJP share updates and collaborate. MDH and MNCASA conduct quarterly training on sexual assault prevention and services, through the Sexual Violence Prevention Network activities. Many of the agencies working in sexual assault prevention are the same agencies receiving funding from OJP for direct services. In addition, OJP annually awards a \$300,000 grant in state funds to MNCASA to address sexual assault prevention, for which MNCASA coordinates with MDH.

In the VAWA implementation planning process Cecilia met with Beatriz Menanteau, Mary Hopkins and Carolyn Palmer about the funding initiatives within MDH, the organizations receiving RPE and Safe Harbor funding, and the work ahead addressing sexual violence prevention. In Minnesota, RPE funding is granted in part to MNCASA to provide leadership and coordinate diverse prevention activities in connection with Minnesota's strategic plan to advance the primary prevention of sexual violence. The 5% of OJP's STOP funds that could be used for prevention is small compared to MDH's funding, however various ideas were posed for how STOP funding could be effectively utilized

toward prevention during the meeting, including small grants to build prevention capacity. Further planning conversations will occur in the near future, especially around funding to Tribal Nations and how MDH and OJP could coordinate on the funding to create higher awards.

IV. Documentation from Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Court, and Victim Services Programs

This documentation may be in the form of letters from current grantees or State- or Territory-wide organizations representing prosecution, law enforcement, courts and victim services able to comment on the current and proposed use of grant funds. The documentation must describe:

1. the need for the grant funds;
2. the intended use of the grant funds;
3. the expected result of the grant funds; and
4. the demographic characteristics of the population to be served including age, disability, race, ethnicity, and language background.

(34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(C))

The required letters are available to view upon request.

V. Plan for the Four-Year Implementation Period

This section should describe how the State will address the needs of sexual assault victims, domestic violence victims, dating violence victims, and stalking victims, as well as how the State will hold offenders who commit each of these crimes accountable. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(3))

A. Goals and Objectives

1. Concise description of the State's goal and objectives for the implementation period. 28 C.F.R. 90.12(a)).

- a. Administer VAWA STOP funding following all federal and state rules for grant administration.
 - Every 2 years release competitive RFPs for VAWA special project funding, utilizing Law Enforcement and Prosecution funding to address VAWA priority program purpose areas.
 - Award Victim Services funding as part of the 2023 competitive process for all crime victim services funding statewide.
 - Continue to promote and administer the VAWA special project funding allocated to Tribal Nations in Minnesota through ongoing communication from grant managers and the DPS Tribal Liaison, partnering to identify special project needs that could be addressed with VAWA Law Enforcement, Prosecution and Discretionary funding.
- b. Utilize VAWA STOP funding to address persistent criminal justice issues related in the response to violent crimes against women.
 - Through the Collaborative meetings and input from service providers, identify persistent statewide problems and barriers impacting positive outcomes for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.
 - Design special project funding initiatives to address identified problems and barriers for inclusion in the special project RFPs.
 - Communicate funded special project activities and outcomes through the OJP website and to stakeholders for broader insight, lessons learned, and to instigate follow-up project ideas.
- c. Further the goals and activities of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) Office.
 - Collaborate with the MMIR Director for ideas to utilize VAWA funding in addressing mandates identified in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force report.
 - Connect VAWA funded grantees serving indigenous populations to MMIR Office staff.
 - Through consultation, identify on-going unmet needs of Tribal Nation programs providing sexual and domestic violence services and seek ways to address the needs with increased funding.
- d. Support and strengthen services for traditionally underserved populations with VAWA funding, exceeding the minimum allocation requirements.
 - As much as possible, provide consistent, stable VAWA funding to support on-going domestic and sexual violence programming.

- Provide targeted technical assistance where needed to help subrecipients build capacity to manage VAWA funding.
 - Seek assistance from the two Tribal coalitions for working together on technical assistance needs.
- e. Educate other state agencies and stakeholders on the purpose and accomplishments of VAWA funding in Minnesota.
- Find opportunities in the monthly Collaborative meetings to share about VAWA awards, grant accomplishments and innovative special project activities that address the criminal justice response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.
 - Collaborate with the MN Dept. of Health in addressing sex trafficking initiatives and opportunities to further sexual assault prevention work.
- f. Apply for VAWA discretionary awards to advance VAWA initiatives in Minnesota.
- Partner with the domestic and sexual violence coalitions and/or other state agency partners to identify appropriate discretionary VAWA funding opportunities that could benefit Minnesota's response to violence against women.
 - Obtain feedback from direct service agencies statewide on their needs that could be addressed with discretionary funding projects.

2. Description of how STOP funding will be used to meet the State's goal and objectives during the implementation period. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(1); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(a)).

Current Project Goals and Objectives

Accomplishing the following goals and objectives for the STOP grant program will create effective utilization² of STOP funds. Each goal is important and not listed in a prioritized order.

- a. Administer RFPs for special project initiatives to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women:
- Determine RFP priorities and timelines (Jul. 2022)
 - Release RFP for law enforcement/prosecution competitive special projects (Aug. 2022)
 - Monitor and provide technical assistance in the accomplishment of grantees' goals and objectives, and use of funds (on-going)
 - Ensure evaluation and appropriate measurement tools are used to evaluate special projects (on-going)
 - Ensure those implementing training concepts/ideas receive training, technical assistance and evaluation assistance (on-going)
- b. Generate ideas for addressing issues within the criminal justice systems' response to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence:
- Discuss with the Collaborative current criminal justice issues (on-going)

- Meet with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office staff to determine ways STOP special project funding could address the report mandates (Jul. 2022 and on-going)
 - Work closely with the Point of Contact on Domestic and Sexual Violence at the State Court Administrator's Office regarding judicial training goals and outcomes, and assistance to funded domestic and sexual violence programs (on-going)
 - Gather information from various agencies throughout the state through meetings, reports and needs assessments (on-going)
 - Gather feedback from coalitions and funded grantees on persistent unmet needs and difficulties with criminal justice system policies and practices (Aug. 2023)
- c. Expand access to services for underserved populations and communities:
- Through technical assistance, training and coordination with the coalitions, assist crime victim grantees in expanding their outreach and connection to underserved communities and populations in their service area, including BIPOC and cultural communities, GLBTQ+, elders, youth, rurally isolated, people with disabilities, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, victims of sex/labor trafficking, and immigrants/refugees (on-going)
 - Connect grantees to resources that educate about the different needs of underserved populations and communities (on-going)
 - Address language access needs across the state through training and resources (on-going)
- d. Work with coalition partners and the Collaborative to increase effectiveness of planning and funding, to extend the reach of STOP funds:
- Meet every other month with the six crime victim coalitions (on-going)
 - Meet monthly with the Collaborative on statewide policy issues (on-going)
 - Develop collaborative projects (i.e., joint training) to increase the capacity of grantees (on-going)
 - Coordinate annual training calendars (on-going)
 - Develop statewide project ideas for potential federal discretionary funding (Oct. 2022)
- e. Improve coordination with the 10 Tribal Nation special project grantees addressing the law enforcement and prosecution response to violence crimes against women:
- Open the application process as Tribal Nations are individually ready to apply (on-going)
 - Discuss technical assistance needs for the RFP process with Tribal Nations without a current special project grant (on-going)
 - Provide information to the DPS Tribal Liaison about VAWA special projects, current and past, to communicate and promote the funding opportunity when meeting with Tribal leaders (on-going)
 - Provide technical assistance on projects (on-going)
- f. Collaborate with the DOC, Victim Services and Restorative Justice Division (VSRJ):
- Develop strategic plan for coordination and partnership between VSRJ and OJP to expand the knowledge of restorative justice work in Minnesota (Jan. 2023)

- Incorporate educational training opportunities for crime victim service grantees on restorative justice work that is relevant and appropriate for domestic and sexual violence programs (May 2023)
- Research and develop funding opportunities for domestic and sexual violence agencies ready to engage in restorative justice activities. (June 2023)

3. A description of how the funds will be distributed across the law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, and discretionary allocation categories. (See 34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(4)).

The funding allocations are as follows:

- a. Law enforcement – 25%
- b. Prosecution – 25%
- c. Courts – 5%
- d. Victim Services – 30%
- e. Discretionary – 15%

In awarding funds within each allocation, Minnesota is careful to meet the 50/50 split between domestic violence and sexual assault.

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Allocation

The bulk of the Law Enforcement and Prosecution allocations will be administered through an open competitive process for 2-year special projects. Applicants have an opportunity to create a project that fits with VAWA Priority Purpose Areas and is based on the needs in their community. Applicants clearly identify the systems change that is the goal of the project, justify the need, and detail their plan and budget. Applicants have the ability to apply for large, more involved projects than can be accomplished with one-year grants.

OJP requires that special projects be a collaborative effort between the criminal justice system agency and the local domestic violence and/or sexual assault advocacy program. To create lasting systems change, a collaborative effort to inform and guide the process is critically important. Each application must include details about the collaboration including roles, responsibilities, and financial obligations of all partners in the project.

A portion of the Law Enforcement and Prosecution funding is targeted to specific agencies for established Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART), plus MNCASA's Sexual Violence Justice Institute (SVJI), the resource agency supporting the SMART projects. Each SMART must include the sexual assault advocacy program, law enforcement, prosecution, hospital personnel performing evidentiary exams, and probation, at a minimum. Minnesota has been building the SMART network for nearly 20 years. Newly funded teams receive \$50,000 for two years, followed by an additional \$50,000 for two more if their work is showing success. After the four-year protocol development process is completed, the team moves to a \$26,000, two-year grant to continue their protocol work, addressing deeper levels and protocols for their sexual assault response to diverse populations. Eleven SMART teams are currently receiving support. This funding is committed as on-going, with evidenced success and continuing accomplishments.

In addition, a portion supports the Statewide SANE Coordinator at MNCASA who is coordinating the Statewide Medical Forensic Policy Initiative project. It is anticipated VFMN will receive a portion to support the annual creation of the “Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota,” documenting domestic violence homicides in Minnesota. www.vfmn.org/reports

A portion of the Law Enforcement and Prosecution allocations is set-aside for Tribal Nations, for two-year special projects of \$115,000 each, to address the criminal justice response to violence crimes against women specifically domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. The grants include a small addition of state funding for flexibility to provide food – a traditional component of Tribal meetings and gatherings.

Court Allocation

The Court allocation will continue to support a direct grant to the State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO) for a Point of Contact on Sexual and Domestic Violence staff position, which was started in June 2011. Having a Point of Contact has been extremely helpful for coordination with the Minnesota Judicial Branch, for addressing questions from court personnel across the state on judicial or court administration issues, and to coordinate training for judges. The Point of Contact uses VAWA Court funding to connect national TA providers and trainers with judges, and has created two teams of judges highly trained in domestic violence and sexual assault, to lead training for other judges. This use of STOP Court funding is valued by OJP, the SCAO and the field.

Victim Services Allocation

The Victim Services allocation (approximately \$700,000 annually), is granted to two ongoing direct service providers who have been receiving VAWA funding for years: a Tribal reservation-based domestic violence shelter and services program (Red Lake Nation); and a large sexual assault program in rural Minnesota (Support Within Reach). The required set-aside for cultural community or community of color programming is met with the grant to the Red Lake Nation.

Discretionary Allocation

Discretionary funding (approximately \$350,000 annually) is combined with the Law Enforcement and Prosecution set-aside for Tribal reservation-based special projects to improve the law enforcement and prosecution response to violent crimes against women. This need has historically not been well supported with federal funding. By combining the Discretionary portion with the current set-aside, the grant amount can support a staff position and potentially create a more effective response, (i.e., a dedicated law enforcement officer to address sexual and domestic violence cases, etc.). Consultation on this use of Discretionary funds occurred during the previous implementation planning process in a meeting with Tribal Nation entities hosted by Fond du Lac Reservation in Sept. 2017. The proposal was wholeheartedly supported by meeting participants.

B. Statutory Priority Areas

1. Information on how the State plans to meet the sexual assault set-aside, including how the State will ensure the funds are allocated for programs or projects in two or more allocations (law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, and courts). (34 U.S.C. 10446(c)(5)).

OJP exceeds the sexual assault set-aside requirement. Special project funding achieves an even split between domestic violence and sexual assault in each allocation. For the Law Enforcement and Prosecution special projects, the competitive RFP routinely garners a higher number of applications addressing domestic violence issues than those focused on sexual assault. The dedicated SMART project funding from those allocations helps OJP ensure a 50/50 split of funding between sexual assault and domestic violence focused initiatives. These coordinated community teams are well established and are developing effective sexual assault protocols in their communities, and improving the response to victims. Funding SMART projects has proven to be an excellent, effective use of sexual assault funds. The Victim Services, Discretion and Court allocations are also distributed to ensure an equal effort toward domestic violence and sexual assault.

2. Goals and objectives for reducing domestic violence-related homicides within the State, including available statistics on the rates of domestic violence homicide within the State and challenges specific to the State and how the plan can overcome them. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(G); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(f)).

For 30 years Violence Free Minnesota has annually collected information to determine the number of intimate partner homicides and creates the “Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota.” In 2018, they released a 30-year retrospective report, looking back over 30 years of the data. The report included changes in how the data is gathered, and what is included in the report. www.vfmn.org/reports

In the 2020 report, VFMN states:

2020 was a reckoning. Globally, we experienced a pandemic of epic proportions; uprisings for racial justice in response to the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis law enforcement; and an onslaught of gender-based violence, including the intimate partner homicides of 30 people in Minnesota.

In 2020, at least 20 women died from intimate partner violence; at least one man died from intimate partner violence; at least three children died due to relationship abuse; and at least six bystanders/interveners died.

The Homicide Report over the years has included recommendations that could significantly impact and reduce domestic violence homicide, such as: changes in the ways data is collected and reported; better training for criminal justice system professionals; training for the media and improved reporting policies; adoption of officer involved domestic violence policies; invest in quality Domestic Abuse Transformative Justice Programming (formally referred to as Batterer’s Intervention Programming); expand analysis of risk assessments to include the full range of criminal behavior; and better address economic stability for victims.

Defining goals and objectives that address the recommendations in the Homicide Report, with the help of the Collaborative, is an excellent pathway to reducing domestic violence-related homicides in Minnesota. OJP will work to prioritize these goals and seek resources to support project initiatives, in collaboration with our partners.

Fatality review teams can also help decrease domestic violence homicides over time. Minnesota has had fatality review teams in the past but currently there are none funded with VAWA funding, and OJP is unaware of any active teams.

Significant work to address domestic violence homicide in Minnesota is happening through the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office (MMIR) in OJP, and the Missing and Murdered African American Women and Girls Task Force (MMAAW). The MMIR Office was funded the year following their task force report. It is hoped the MMAAW will follow the same pathway in securing funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to establish an office and continue the work defined in their upcoming task force report. Both task forces focused on the disparities in criminal justice treatment of missing and murdered cases, and the societal structures and norms that reinforce inequities and create harm.

C. Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims

Description of how the State will recognize and meaningfully respond to the needs of underserved populations as identified above in II.B. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(D) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(4)).

1. Description of how the State plans to meet the needs of the identified underserved populations, including, but not limited to, culturally specific populations, victims who are underserved because of sexual orientation or gender identity, and victims with limited English proficiency. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(E); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(e))

Minnesota's STOP Victim Services funds are awarded in combination with all federal and state crime victim services funding in OJP (VOCA, FVPSA, SASP, state funds) through an open competitive process approximately every four years, for two-year grants. Awarded applicants then apply for a subsequent two-year grant, until the next competitive process. One of OJP's main strategic directions is to provide stable funding for on-going advocacy services, as much as possible. Programs are able to build stronger relationships with their communities and with criminal justice system personnel when stakeholders know that the services will exist over time.

OJP encourages agencies serving BIPOC and cultural community programs, and traditionally underserved communities to apply for funding, and has for over 10 years. The language has changed in RFPs now, reflecting priority for funding for these agencies in the past three years. Additionally, mainstream crime victim service programs have been required to detail in their funding renewal applications how they are identifying and conducting outreach to underserved communities in their service area, promoting their services, and developing collaborative relationships with community agencies serving traditionally underserved communities and individuals.

For the COVID-19 related RFPs released from OJP in 2021-2022, funding priority is reflected in the awards to BIPOC and cultural community programs, and traditionally underserved communities, including a number of agencies who are managing grant funding for the first time. Increased community engagement has made a big difference in the number of applications received. OJP staff is providing targeted technical assistance to assist funded agencies in developing effective financial tracking, and tools to meet federal requirements. OJP is knowledgeable about the significant impact of violence on underserved communities and is taking great strides to get financial resources to these agencies directly helping victims impacted by violence. These agencies represent a mix of Twin Cities metro locations and greater Minnesota.

Using federal and state funding sources, OJP provides funding for direct services addressing domestic and sexual violence, stalking and dating violence to 38 programs for ongoing services to traditionally underserved communities including BIPOC and cultural community programs representing Indigenous, Somali/East African, Black/African American, immigrant/refugee, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Indian/Middle Eastern, Hmong, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, plus victims of elder abuse, victims of torture, youth, victims of sex trafficking, and LGBTQ+ including non-binary, gender non-conforming individuals. All OJP funded crime victim programs need to provide information on how they address the needs of victims/survivors with limited English proficiency.

In practice, OJP is including language specific to the needs of traditionally underserved populations in RFPs. The most recent VAWA RFP for two-year special projects released in early 2021, included the following language:

Funding priority will be given to:

- 1. Applications impacting historically underserved populations (Black, Indigenous, communities of color, LGBTQ, youth, elderly, disabled, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, etc.);*
- 2. Applications that address the criminal justice response to missing and murdered Indigenous women (as identified in the "[Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force – A Report to the Minnesota Legislature](#)"); and*
- 3. Applications addressing domestic violence homicide reduction.*

The Definitions section included the following:

Accessible and appropriate services: services which are welcoming, culturally inclusive, physically accessible, and appropriate to all victims seeking assistance. Those working with victims are aware of the cultural, individual and role differences including those related to race/ethnicity, language, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical and/or cognitive ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, and residency, without regard to immigration status.

Traditionally underserved populations: populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services including underserved racial and ethnic populations; populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity; and populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status or age).

Unique Needs: applicants should demonstrate their understanding that women have unique needs that may be based on ethnic and cultural background, age, disability, sexual orientation, income, geographic isolation, immigration status and so on. Your application should reflect an understanding of the diversity of your community. It should also include plans for addressing the unique needs of groups in your community.

The STOP Statutory Purpose Areas section included the following:

In addition to the STOP Statutory Purpose Areas listed above, OVW encourages projects that:

- *Improve services for and/or the response to victims of sex trafficking and other severe forms of trafficking in persons who have also experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking.*
- *Increase support for survivors of sexual assault, including services, law enforcement response and prosecution.*
- *Meaningfully increase access to OVW programming for specific marginalized and/or underserved populations (based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, etc.).*
- *Increase the use of promising, evidence-based, and evidence-building practices, where available.*

2. A description of how the State will ensure that monies set aside to fund culturally specific services and activities for underserved populations are distributed equitably among those populations. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(D) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(4))

Determining how to distribute funds equitably among programs serving traditionally underserved populations is a work in progress as OJP increases funding awards to these agencies as funding opportunities arise. OJP is aware the bulk of traditionally underserved populations reside in the Twin Cities metro area, however expansion to other areas of the state is growing each year. OJP grant managers working with the 10 Tribal Nations that have OJP funded domestic and sexual violence programming have been encouraging expansion of services, but for some communities this is complicated by space constraints, staff retention, hiring policies and recruitment challenges.

Through increased community engagement and new funding opportunities due to COVID-19 related funds, numerous agencies serving traditionally underserved populations have received OJP funds for the first time. This is an OJP priority – to get funding to communities impacted by inequity, lacking a strong support network, and disproportionately impacted by crime and violence.

3. Specifics on how the State plans to meet the set-aside for culturally specific community-based organizations, including a description of how the State will reach out to community-based organizations that provide linguistically and culturally specific services. This could include specific information as to which subgrantees met the required 10% set aside within the victim services allocation for culturally specific organizations during the prior funding cycle. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(E); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(2))

OJP exceeds the VAWA required set-aside for culturally specific community-based organizations by awarding 50% of the Victim Services allocation to the Red Lake Nation for their domestic violence shelter program and community-based domestic and sexual violence services.

With other funding (VOCA, FVPSA, SASP, state), OJP provides funding for direct services addressing domestic and sexual violence, stalking and dating violence to 38 programs for ongoing services to traditionally underserved communities including BIPOC and cultural community programs representing Indigenous, Somali/East African, Black/African American, immigrant/refugee, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Indian/Middle Eastern, Hmong, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, plus victims of elder abuse, victims of torture, youth, victims of sex trafficking, and GLBTQ+ including non-binary, gender non-conforming individuals. All OJP funded crime victim programs need to provide information on how they address the needs of victims/survivors with limited English proficiency.

Community engagement efforts in the past three years (and continuing) have increased OJP funding support for culturally specific community-based organizations that provide linguistically and culturally specific services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

D. Grant-making Strategy

1. Timeline for the STOP grant cycle. (See 28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(8)).

All applicants use the OJP on-line grants management system, E-grants, to seek availability of and apply for allocated and competitive grant funds. Grantees use E-grants to submit financial status reports, narrative reports and quarterly statistical reports (if applicable). An electronic grant management system has made applying and reporting easier and more time efficient for grantees, plus simplified staff efforts to track the use of STOP funds across priority areas and create summary reports.

The following timeline applies to VAWA funding processes for special project competitive funding and allocated funding for SMART projects:

- Release *Notice of Availability of Funds* to broad list by email blast – August
- Conduct virtual Information Sessions, open to all potential applicants, to review the RFP requirements and answer questions – August
- Respond to potential applicants' questions and post on FAQ through the open application process – August/September
- Recruit and train grant reviewers – October

- Mail out review packets two weeks prior to scheduled reviews – October
- Conduct several grant review sessions over several days – October
- Process selected applications – November/December
- Release funds for project start date – January 1st
- Monitor sub-grants over life of grant (two years) including one or more site visits, one or more desk reviews, quarterly billing review, and annual VAWA report
- Close out grants 30-60 days after close of grant period

2. Description of how the State will ensure that eligible entities are aware of funding opportunities, including projects serving underserved populations. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(5) and (g)(4))

OJP engages in broad efforts to announce the availability of competitive funding through email blasts to over 3,000 nonprofit, government and criminal justice entities, as well as posting the funding notice in the State Register and on the OJP website under “What’s New.” The coalitions list funding opportunities on their listserv and are helpful in outreach to currently unfunded agencies. The coalitions also provide technical assistance to potential applicants and serve as a conduit for information. For criminal justice related special projects, funding announcements are sent to a broader set of criminal justice agencies beyond those entities eligible to apply, so that others know of the funding opportunity and can pass along the information or offer encouragement.

Information sessions are conducted shortly after the release of the RFP. These have been well attended and successful in helping potential applicants understand the RFP requirements. Questions asked and answered are posted on the FAQ on the website, so all applicants have access to the same information.

OJP is pursuing additional ways to reach traditionally underserved communities, through the work of the OJP Community Engagement Director, and through media sources specific to cultural populations (radio, newspaper, listserv or online newsletter).

3. Description of how the State will ensure that any subgrantees will consult with victim service providers during the course of developing their grant applications in order to ensure that the proposed activities are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(D))

OJP requires that special projects be a collaborative effort between the criminal justice system agency and the local domestic violence and/or sexual assault advocacy program. Each application requires information about the collaboration and the application partners, including roles and responsibilities, and financial obligations of all partners in the project. All partners are to be included in the process, from initial project design through project evaluation. The victim service advocacy partner’s role is advocating for victim safety and confidentiality.

VAWA competitive RFPs include the following language:

Activities That May Compromise Victim Safety

Ensuring victim safety is the guiding principle underlying the VAWA funding program. The following activities have been found to jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions and cannot be supported with VAWA funding:

- 1. Procedures or policies that exclude victims from receiving safe shelter, advocacy services, counseling, and other assistance based on their actual or perceived sex, age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, work in the sex industry, or the age and/or gender of their children;*
- 2. Procedures or policies that compromise the confidentiality of information and/or privacy of persons receiving OVW-funded services;*
- 3. Procedures or policies that require victims to take certain actions (e.g., seek an order of protection, receive counseling, participate in couples counseling or mediation, report to law enforcement, seek civil or criminal remedies, etc.) in order to receive services;*
- 4. Procedures or policies that fail to include conducting safety planning with victims;*
- 5. Project design and budget that fail to account for the access needs of participants with disabilities and participants who have limited English proficiency or who are Deaf or hard of hearing;*
- 6. The use of pre-trial diversion programs without prior OVW review and approval of the program or the automatic placement of offenders in such programs;*
- 7. Couples counseling, family counseling, or any other manner or joint victim-offender counseling as a routine or required response to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, or in situations in which child sexual abuse is alleged;*
- 8. Offering or ordering anger management programs for offenders as a substitute for batterer's intervention programs;*
- 9. Policies or procedures that require victims to report the crime to law enforcement, participate in the criminal justice system, or seek a protection or restraining order against the offender, and penalize them for failing to do so.*
- 10. Procedures or policies that deny victims and non-abusing parents or caretakers and their children access to services based on their involvement with the perpetrator;*
- 11. Requiring survivors to meet restrictive conditions in order to receive services (e.g. background checks of victims; clinical evaluations to determine eligibility for services; etc.,) or other screening processes that elicit information that is not necessary for services, such as questions about immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental health, and work or criminal history that the service provider does not need to know about to provide services safely;*
- 12. Relying on batterer intervention programs that do not use court monitoring to hold batterers accountable for their behavior;*
- 13. Policies and procedures that fail to account for the physical safety of victims;*
- 14. Enforcing or promoting nuisance abatement ordinances, crime-free housing ordinances, or crime-free lease addenda (often associated with crime-free housing programs) that require or encourage the eviction of tenants or residents who may be victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking. See also the U.S.*

Department of Housing and Urban Development for guidance on how such ordinances and addenda may violate the Fair Housing Act; and

15. *Policies or procedures that require testing of sexual assault forensic evidence in cases where the victim obtained a medical forensic exam but has not chosen to participate in the criminal justice system.*

Letters of support are an option for relationship-building projects with criminal justice partners or Tribal governments. The RFP includes language that must be in the support letters: “ensuring the proposed activities are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims.” A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is frequently requested in the RFP, to provide detail on the partners, their roles and their level of involvement in the project.

4. Description of how the State will identify and select applicants for subgrant funding, including whether a competitive process will be used. If different selection methods will be used for each allocation category, describe the method. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(8))

STOP grants are awarded as two-year grants.

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Allocation:

- VAWA special projects are issued through an open competitive process
- VAWA special project set-aside funds for Tribal government special projects are issued on an open application basis, whenever the Tribal Nation applies. These grants are not on a consistent scheduled basis due to grant extensions that change the grant period. OJP works with Tribal entities to ensure no break between grant awards.
- Targeted funds for SMART Projects, the MNCASA Technical Assistance Grant and the Statewide SANE Coordinator are renewal applications.
- Funds for any new SMART Projects are issued through an open competitive process

Court Allocation:

- Issued on a rolling basis to the State Court Administrator’s Office for the Point of Contact on Domestic and Sexual Violence position and for judicial training.

Victim Services Allocation:

- Issued through the full crime victim services competitive process that occurs approximately every four years, with a two-year renewal grant in between. OJP makes the decisions regarding who receives VAWA and SASP, versus who receives VOCA or FVPSA.

Discretionary Allocation:

- The Discretionary funding is added to the Tribal Nation set-aside funding that comes from the Law Enforcement and Prosecution allocation, and distributed as described above.

5. Whether STOP subgrant projects will be funded on a multiple or single-year basis. (See 28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(8))

STOP subgrant projects are funded using two-year grants. With special projects especially, the longer grant period is helpful in getting projects off the ground and completing project activities.

6. Description of how the State will determine the amount of subgrants based on the population and geographic area to be served. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(B) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(2))

The grant award amounts for Victim Services sub-grants are based on the four-year competitive process and how all crime victim funding is allocated across the state. Awards are based on the quality of the application in its response to the RFP, the geographic area and amount of programming for which the agency applied to serve and the population and land mass of the service area in relation to the rest of the state. The goal is equitable geographic distribution of all crime victim service funds across the state.

The grant amounts for Law Enforcement and Prosecution special projects are based on the funding amount requested by the applicant, their ranking in the competitive process, the grant reviewers' assessment of the application budget, and the scope and impact of the proposed project. Through a second-level staff review, effort is made to equitably distribute funding, and fund new applicants that may not have a grant writer but have a clear, purposeful project with strong support from their collaborative partners on the MOU. Awards are, at times, minimally reduced (5-10%), to stretch the available funds for projects. Consideration is also given to fair distribution between the Twin Cities metro area and greater Minnesota.

7. Description of how the State will give priority to areas of varying geographic size with the greatest showing of need based on the availability of existing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking programs. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(A) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(1))

OJP plans funding for crime victim services statewide in a unified process utilizing VAWA STOP, SASP, VOCA, FVPSA and state funds. The goal is to fund areas with the greatest needs, prioritizing services to traditionally underserved populations, and to spread the domestic and sexual violence services broadly throughout the state to increase access to services for all. OJP has mostly succeeded in supporting services in nearly every county. Gaps do remain, however. Service maps: [DV Services Map](#), [SA Services Map](#), [Reservation Services Map](#)

8. Description of how the State will equitably distribute monies on a geographic basis including nonurban and rural areas of various geographic sizes. (34 U.S.C. 10446 (e)(2)(C) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(3))

Equitable distribution of all direct service funding for crime victims is a high priority for OJP. VAWA funds are part of this overall funding picture. In past competitive processes for all crime victim service funding, OJP utilized a statewide formula as a general guide to ensure geographic distribution of funding. Other factors impacting funding decisions were grant reviewer scores, the priority to support services to traditionally underserved communities, and past grantee performance.

In the most recent open competitive process, applicants were provided an opportunity to apply for expansion funding available by competitive bid. The goal was to increase services to underserved or unserved populations and improve the sustainability of programs across the state. Expansion funding was available due to the increased VOCA awards from OVC.

Geographic distribution is considered when awarding competitive STOP Law Enforcement and Prosecution special project funding, as well as a focus on expanding special project awards to applicants who have not received this funding recently.

9. Information on projects that the State plans to fund, if known. (28 C.F.R. § 90.12(g)(5))

The following projects are currently funded:

Victim Services Allocation:

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians (Tribal Nation)

Red Lake, MN

Funding allocation category: Victim Services

Project description: Provide domestic violence & sexual assault services on Red Lake Reservation

Length of grant period: two years – through Sept. 30, 2023

Support Within Reach (non-profit)

Bemidji, MN

Funding allocation category: Victim Services

Project description: Provide sexual assault services in Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard counties

Length of grant period: two years – through Sept. 30, 2023

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Allocation:
two-year collaborative special projects:

Hennepin County Attorney's Office (prosecutor office)

Minneapolis, MN

Project intent: To add a veteran sex crimes prosecutor to the Sexual Assault Initiative office, to embed in suburban law enforcement agencies, with a focus on core partners who have the highest volume of sexual assault cases and serve the highest proportion of victims of color. The intent is to improve the response to, and investigation of sexual assault reports through training and advising law enforcement, collaborating with advocacy agencies, and coordinating system response between law enforcement, advocacy, prosecution, forensic laboratories and SANE.

Hope Center (non-profit)

Faribault, MN

Project intent: Reassess the work of the Blueprint Project team through convening stakeholders and system partners, identifying issues, collecting data from focus groups, designing a more cohesive system response to enhance the current collaborative work of the team, creating an information hub to share training and best practices, and implementing system-wide changes including additional training and modification of protocols.

Mending the Sacred Hoop (non-profit)

Duluth, MN

Project intent: Conduct a Safety Audit to analyze domestic violence cases in Duluth where Indigenous women are the victims/survivors, examining the deeper levels of systemic interaction and decision-making on domestic violence cases. The audit team includes law enforcement, prosecutors, probation, survivors, court staff, victim/witness coordinators and advocacy agencies. The audit will map the relevant system, observe the work, conduct text analysis, policy review, agency linkages and other relevant factors in the handling of domestic violence cases.

Minnesota County Attorney's Association (non-profit)

St. Paul, MN

Project intent: To deliver, in collaboration with Zero Abuse Project, comprehensive, statewide, trauma-informed training to criminal justice entities to more effectively investigate, prosecute and respond to sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking and dating violence impacting youth, and vulnerable adults. Special emphasis will focus on addressing the needs of LBGTQIA+, individuals with disabilities, and those from geographically isolated communities.

Ramsey County Attorney's Office (prosecutor office)

St. Paul, MN

Project intent: To convene the Ramsey County Sexual Assault Systems Change Task Force, to develop long-term sustainable infrastructure to provide and institutionalize victim-centered, trauma-informed best practices for sexual assault response in Ramsey County. The project will enhance training standards, develop collaborative investigative practices, directly engage survivors, share successful systems change efforts and expand data collection and analysis.

This projects carries forward the recommendations to improve the justice system response identified from the 2-year study of 646 reported sexual assaults.

Southern Valley Alliance (non-profit)

Belle Plaine, MN

Project intent: To address domestic violence homicide reduction in Scott and Carver Counties, the project will create and implement new danger assessment procedures to rank lethality of domestic violence situations. The project uses Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell's danger assessment training, and will solidify procedures during and after a law enforcement call, to identify victims/survivors with higher risks of lethality. In addition to strengthening the advocacy for high risk survivors, the project will train law enforcement in the sheriff's office and the eight police departments, and staff in the county attorney offices.

Violence Free Minnesota (non-profit)

St. Paul, MN

Project intent: To develop the Innovation Lab Project, to make fundamental changes in the approach to criminal legal system work by creating meaningful and effective models for domestic violence intervention that make principles of racial equity central, through amplifying voices from culturally specific programs and BIPOC leaders in the field. The project includes identifying issues, analyzing strategies and recommending changes to policies and practices, to develop interventions that are responsive to a more diverse cross-section of Minnesota's communities.

Law Enforcement / Prosecution / Discretionary Allocation:

two-year special projects to Tribal governments to improve the criminal justice response to sexual and domestic violence

Project goals have included updating code, lethality assessment training, human trafficking training, DV/SA investigator, multi-disciplinary training and protocol development

Bois Forte Reservation

Nett Lake, MN

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Cloquet, MN

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Cass Lake, MN

Lower Sioux Indian Community

Morton, MN

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Onamia, MN

Prairie Island Indian Community

Welch, MN

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians

Red Lake, MN

Upper Sioux Indian Community

Granite Falls, MN

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

White Earth, MN

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Allocation:

Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART)

two-year grants through Dec. 31, 2022:

DFO Community Corrections (community corrections office)

Rochester, MN – *Project County:* Olmsted

Hope Center (non-profit)

Faribault, MN – *Project County:* Rice

HOPE Coalition (non-profit)

Red Wing, MN – *Project County:* Goodhue

Isanti County Attorney's Office (prosecutor office)

Cambridge, MN – *Project County:* Isanti

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (non-profit)

St. Paul, MN

Project description: Provide technical assistance to the Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Teams (SMART) in Minnesota

New Horizons Crisis Center (non-profit)

Marshall, MN – *Project County:* Lyon

Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (non-profit)

Duluth, MN – *Project County:* St. Louis

Sexual Violence Center (non-profit)

Minneapolis, MN – *Project County:* Hennepin

Sexual Violence Center (non-profit)

Minneapolis, MN – *Project County:* Carver

St. Paul Ramsey County Dept. of Public Health – Sexual Offense Services (government-based)

St. Paul, MN – *Project County:* Ramsey County

Support Within Reach (non-profit)
Bemidji, MN – *Project County:* Beltrami & Itasca

Winona County Attorney’s Office (prosecutor office)
Winona, MN – *Project County:* Winona

Court Allocation:

Minnesota Judicial Branch (State Court Administrator’s Office)

St. Paul, MN

Funding allocation category: Courts

Project description: Point of Contact on Domestic and Sexual Violence to coordinate domestic violence & sexual assault related policy and training efforts

Length of grant period: two years

a. Crystal Judson. (34 U.S.C. § 10441(b)(13))

- i. If the If the State plans to address the “Crystal Judson” purpose area, include narrative on providing the required training.
- ii. If the State does not plan to use the “Crystal Judson” purpose area, include a note to this effect.

Minnesota does not plan to use the “Crystal Judson” purpose area.

VI. Conclusion

As OJP moves into the next four years of partnerships with OVW and stakeholders across the state, we are confident that we have been, and are, utilizing STOP funds effectively to address the specific needs of Minnesota. STOP funding continues to make a significant, positive impact at the local level and statewide.

Minnesota has a history of funding community-based advocacy programs to work in collaboration with criminal justice agencies to develop better policies and procedures to improve the criminal justice response to violence against women. With VAWA funds, this work will continue to include traditionally underserved geographic areas and populations. Many funded grantees have created true systems change in their communities.

OJP is supporting a coordinated community response to sexual assault through the Sexual Assault Multidisciplinary Action Response Teams (SMART). SMART projects are effectively implementing their protocols and evaluating results. Additional communities in Minnesota request resources to start their own SMART, based on the improvements they see in neighboring counties with a SMART project. The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), through its Sexual Violence Justice Institute, is leading the way, both as a resource center and by providing a wealth of on-going technical assistance for current and start-up SMART projects.

We must work toward comprehensively addressing issues impacting victim safety and domestic violence homicide, building greater collaboration between community-based direct service programs and the criminal justice system, expanding direct services that effectively reach BIPOC and cultural communities and other traditionally underserved populations, and finding ways to impact the connection between opioid use and sex trafficking, expanding statewide policies for evidentiary kit storage and testing, and continuing targeted training for law enforcement, prosecution and court personnel.

The work of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office, the Missing and Murdered African American Women and Girls Task Force, the Innovation Lab project, and the VAWA special project grants, brings a sense of hope for improvements in the response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking in Minnesota. We look forward to sharing lessons learned and positive outcomes.

While VAWA funds have given Minnesota opportunities to assess needs, implement programming, and create system change efforts to respond to women experiencing domestic and sexual violence, stalking and dating violence, the needs remain, especially for services and responses that reflect equity and survivors' self-identified needs. Through VAWA funding we see encouraging results. We will continue to evaluate proposed projects and ways to best achieve our overall statewide goals, and will continue to plan system change initiatives that address the reality of the varied needs in Minnesota.

ADDENDUM

ADDENDUM

Improving Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking – Recommendation to the Minnesota Department of Corrections

The following recommendations are based on data gathered from Native American women currently and formerly incarcerated at MCF-Shakopee. The recommendations are tailored specific to this population and have applicability to all Native American women who are engaged in the corrections system.

Due to the high rates of domestic and sexual violence experienced by Native American women, there is a need for comprehensive culturally specific support and services that involve community-based advocates and providers with expertise in domestic violence/sexual assault (DV/SA) victimization.

Programming & Supports while In Facility

Build pathways and capacity for community based DV/SA advocates to develop and lead DV/SA programming and support in facility that will address trauma and victimization histories while people are incarcerated.

- Provide community-based programs access to training and information on DOC processes.
- DOC conduct outreach to community-based programs that would fill identified gaps in programming.
- Tailor DOC processes for screening outside programming to prioritize culturally specific programming and programming addressing victimization.

Promote access to community organizations who provide corrections system involved women with culturally specific programming and healing practices including, but not limited to, cultural reclamation work, language-access, and spiritual practices.

Many of the in-facility programs and supports depend upon community volunteers. As a result, much of the programming and support available is Christian based. This is an equity issue. What is common and accepted for one religious group/practice is not allowed or available for Native women's spiritual practices.

- Create a DOC funded Native American Culture Coordinator position to implement and support traditional Native spiritual practices.
- Alternatively or additionally, contract with Native spiritual advisors or Elders to provide support via phone or video.
- Make spiritual practice items readily available – e.g., drums, rattles, traditional medicines, medicine bags, pipes. These should be as readily available to Native women as bibles are for Christian women.

More dedicated support is needed to address issues of grief and loss. Grief and loss are common themes for the Native women and there are inadequate resources that address this.

- Hire or contract with Native women to facilitate or co-lead groups with the white professionals currently providing these services.

- Expand access to grief and loss support services and provide sufficient time for the provision of these services.
- Find ways to bridge between in-facility services and community-based services as the length of incarceration is short for many women and the length of support needed exceeds the length of incarceration.

Promote connections between women and their children while they are incarcerated. Women need assistance visiting with their children while at Shakopee. As a result of having only one facility for women in a large state, the distance needed to travel for in-person visitation is too great a burden for many families, meaning many women do not have in-person visitation with their young children for the entirety of their sentence.

- Explore and expand virtual visitation options.
- Promote mother-child interactions that are culturally responsive. Evaluate current programs offered for their appropriateness for Native American families.
- Working with community organizations, identify and promote supports for transporting families/children to Shakopee for contact.
- As Healthy Start programming is developed and implemented, prioritize culturally responsive programs that place women in proximity to their community/family supports.

Develop short-term programs/treatment to address substance use disorders. This is a primary cause of return to facility and, once in facility, there is no support available to address it.

- Promote and prioritize culturally specific treatment and programming.
- Evaluate current treatment/programming as to responsiveness to needs of Native women.
- Programming should be evaluated in how it is addressing intersecting issues of DV/SA victimization, historical trauma, trauma of racism, **and** substance abuse.
- Create opportunities for evening and weekend programming and explore contracting with Native American treatment providers.
- Explore possible ways to provide peer based support between current and former incarcerated women along with culturally specific support services.

Expand ways in which trauma and victimization is assessed. Intake is not the ideal place to ask questions related to victimization and trauma and should not be the only time incarcerated individuals are asked questions about victimization. Some of the women we spoke with had never shared these stories of victimization with anyone before. Victims need time to build trust and relationships before being asked to reveal personal experiences of violence and abuse.

Increase accessibility to programs and services for Native women. Shame and stigma attached to illiteracy, learning disabilities, and cognitive difficulties brought on by traumatic brain injuries mean that many Native women don't disclose these issues easily. Without disclosure and proper supports in place, their ability to engage with and reap the benefits of programming is compromised.

- Work to ensure there is existing and adequate ability to read and comprehend written materials. Ensure there are supportive literacy and learning services provided to those who need them.

Policies

Staff training

- Staff in facilities should be trained in a trauma-informed approach.
- Cultural competency training to understand historical trauma, levels of victimization and the significance of traditional practices, e.g., beading, smudging, etc.
- Create models that engage staff in a learning process versus one-time training approaches.

Re-examine all facility policies through a race/ethnicity equity lens. For example, the prohibition on sharing food and other items runs contrary to cultural values.

- Create an Impacted Persons Council as a mechanism for community engagement with the policy review process.

Examine all facility policies for their responsiveness to gender. DOC policies that are universal across all facilities may have a different or more significant impact on women. For example, funeral attendance policies exclude women at MCF-Shakopee from this privilege because of MCF-Shakopee's classification as a medium custody facility.

Examine policies and practices to assess how they cause additional trauma or harm.

The information these participants shared supports locally what studies have shown nationally, that certain populations of women and girls – Native American women and African American women, transgender women – experience disproportionately high rates of trauma and victimization. Assessing policies for their potential to cause additional trauma and harm should be a top priority.

Establish mechanisms for regular interaction between current and formerly incarcerated women and DOC staff.

- Consider use of the Justice Involved Women & Girls Task Force as a place to create meaningful connections between DOC staff and women and to work on the implementation of recommendations.
- Consider implementing an Impacted Person Council at Shakopee facility.

Re-entry & Alternative Sentencing

Support innovative housing resource development through community-based organization for people returning to the community. Safe and supportive housing was named by impacted people as the leading barrier to success.

- Secure pilot funding for the Healing House model in development through this grant.
- Contract with a Native housing organization to provide services at MCF-Shakopee.
- Actively promote the housing needs of incarcerated Native American women to help prioritize these needs across government agencies, i.e., MN Housing Finance, MN Interagency Council on Housing, Dept. of Human Services, and with the Governor's Office.

Create support for re-entering mothers. Only five of 62 participants expressed a desire to start over/move away from the city or county of commitment; children and family were a significant factor in women's desire to return.

- Provide targeted supports for women who have had children removed from their care by state or local agencies, supports to assist women in navigating the child protection systems and support with visitation and reunification.

- Provide culturally responsive support for mothers and their children.
- Expand transitional housing options that allow for reunification with children.
- Contract with justice involved Native women to assist with re-entry work.

Create supports that address safety needs. Women victims /survivors who are re-entering their communities post-incarceration may have additional needs around safety and may be made more vulnerable to violence by conditions of supervision. Women with inadequate or nonexistent support upon release are incredibly vulnerable to violence and harm. Several women shared stories of violence they experienced upon release as a result of not having sufficient resources and support.

- Promote connections between DOC supervising agents and local, community-based advocacy.
- Develop resource and referral materials that will provide women contacts and resources to local DV/SA programming and assure that DOC staff understand how to assess for safety in how and when they provide those resources.
- All case managers should know what culturally specific supports and services are available across the state and provide this information to Native women preparing for release. This should include a warm handoff initiated by the case manager if a re-entering individual requests.
- Re-entry systems should be tailored to meet the self-report assessment needs of each individual and culturally specific needs should be part of initial design of programs.

Justice-Involved Native American Girls

Almost 2/3 of the women we spoke with became justice-involved while they were still juveniles – many as a result of childhood trauma and abuse. There is a need for similar kinds of supports to those recommended here to be made available to Native girls in Minnesota’s juvenile detention facilities. Trauma-informed, gender responsive, culturally specific policies and services must start there; it is possible that if it does, we can reduce the disproportionate numbers of Native women incarcerated as adults.

Legislation

DOC should continue to push forward the Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA) and make sure it’s applicable and accessible to women in Shakopee with shorter sentences. Women at Shakopee also deserve an Individualized Rehabilitation Plan (IRP). Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act

DOC should support efforts to reduce or eliminate the revocation of individuals based on a technical violation.

DOC should advance funding legislation that will support the programming needed within facilities and in community as identified in these recommendations.