STAAR

STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource Project

Handbook for STOP Administrators

Revised April 2019

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Handbook for STOP Administrators

Revised April 2019

Produced by

STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource Project,
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This handbook represents the collective and collaborative efforts of STOP administrators, OVW, and the STAAR Project of the Alliance of Local Service Organizations (ALSO).

The work that STOP administrators do every day has a direct impact upon the improvement of the criminal justice system's response to violence against women and the enhancement of victim services. As such, their efforts are vital to the ability of systems and programs to offer justice, support, respite, restoration, and hope to survivors.

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Table of Contents

PART I – BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE HANDBOOK 1001

Purpose of the Handbook for STOP Administrators *1003*
Development of the Handbook *1004*
Guide to the Handbook *1006*
Accessing Additional Resources *1007*
Updates to the Handbook *1008*

PART II – VAWA AND OVW 2001

The Violence Against Women Act *2005*
STOP Statutory Purpose Areas *2005*
STOP Funding Allocation Categories *2009*

PART III – STOP FORMULA GRANTS PROGRAM ROLES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 3001

CHAPTER ONE: ROLES OF OVW PROGRAM MANAGERS AND STOP ADMINISTRATORS 3005
CHAPTER TWO: SEEKING AND RECEIVING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 3013

PART IV – ADMINISTERING AND MANAGING STOP FUNDS WITHIN THE STATE OR TERRITORY 4001

CHAPTER ONE: CREATING STATE/TERRITORY STOP PROGRAMMING, SOLICITING APPLICATIONS, AND SELECTING STOP SUBGRANTEES 4005
Developing a Subgrantee Request for Proposals (RFP) Package *4006*
State and Territory STOP Administrative Pre-Award Processes *4007*
RFP Contents *4009*
Notice of Available Funds and Outreach to Potential Applicants *4012*
Bidders' Conferences *4013*
Application Review *4013*
Determining Fundable Applications *4014*
Funding Recommendation Decision-Making *4015*
Grant Agreements *4017*
Annual Progress Reports *4018*
CHAPTER TWO: MANAGING SUBGRANTEES 4019
Monitoring of Subgrantee Activities *4020*
Objectives of Grant Monitoring *4020*
Effective Oversight through Monitoring *4021*
Monitoring Processes and Practices – A Brief Overview *4021*
Types of Grant Monitoring *4023*
Grant Monitoring Methods *4024*
Monitoring Frequency and Responsible Personnel *4024*
Planning and Tools for Grant Monitoring *4025*
Desk Reviews *4028*
Site Visits *4031*
Site Visit Processes and Procedures *4034*
Post-Site Visit Activities *4037*
Working with Nonresponsive Subgrantees *4038*
Closing of Issues/Findings *4039*
Providing TA to Subgrantees *4039*

PART V: FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AT THE STATE/TERRITORY AND LOCAL LEVELS 5001

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS COLLABORATION? 5007

Collaboration vs. Cooperation and Coordination *5007*
Characteristics of Collaborations *5008*
CHAPTER TWO: PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS 5009
Obtaining "Buy-In" from Community Members *5009*
Engaging with Underserved and Marginalized Communities *5010*
Inclusion of Diverse Communities in Collaborative Work *5012*
Benefits of Collaboration *5012*
Spotting Opportunities for Collaboration *5014*
CHAPTER THREE: BUILDING AND STRUCTURING A COLLABORATION 5017
Collaboration Models *5017*
Structuring Collaborative Initiatives *5018*
Determining Collaboration Membership *5022*
Collaborative Work by STOP Administrators *5027*
Technology to Assist with Collaboration *5030*
Additional Resources *5031*

Part I – Background and Overview of the Handbook

Return to Table of Contents

Purpose of the Handbook for STOP Administrators

Administrators of the STOP Formula Grants Program bear a great responsibility. As administrators of the primary source of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding to the States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories,[1] they work to complete all tasks that are necessary to ensure that the dollars allocated to the State or Territory will be used to provide for the safety of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and the accountability of perpetrators for committing these acts of violence. They develop a plan for utilizing the funds, apply for the federal grant, and complete all pre- and post-award tasks that are required of U.S. Department of Justice grant recipients. They decide upon a process for allocating STOP dollars within the State or Territory, select grantees and enter into grant agreements, manage STOP subgrantees and their awards, and engage in monitoring activities.

As a fundamental tenet of the STOP Grants program, interdisciplinary collaboration is a concept that STOP administrators actively model in their planning processes, as well as in other aspects of their STOP Grant work. They ensure that subgrantees collaborate with and look to key agencies and organizations to join them in developing more effective responses. Administrators also engage with communities and groups in their jurisdiction who can contribute valuable information and insights to the development and refinement of plans, policies, procedures, services, and advocacy efforts.

STOP administrators continually develop their own knowledge of current and emerging challenges for survivors and those who work with them, effective interventions and advocacy, and promising practices. They do so by reading materials written by those with specialized expertise, engaging in conversation with individuals working in other disciplines, and participating in educational opportunities like webinars, conference calls, and training events.

There is a great deal that STOP administrators do in their day-to-day work. Many administrators have expressed the need for a handbook to assist them with fulfilling their responsibilities under the STOP Grant program.

1 The U.S. Territories that are eligible to receive STOP Grants are American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide to STOP administrators as they fulfill their grant management responsibilities for STOP Formula Grant funds at the State or Territory level. It offers:

- Information and contextual background about VAWA, OVW, and other important federal resources;
- Information about management of STOP Grants at the State and Territorial levels including dissemination of STOP funds within the State/Territory and monitoring of subgrantees; and
- Information about collaboration as a fundamental tenet of the STOP program.

Development of the Handbook

In response to the request of STOP administrators that OVW develop a handbook that provides them with uniform guidance on aspects of their work, the STAAR Project and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) entered into a dialogue with STOP Administrators for the purpose of gathering information about the essential elements of such a handbook. The STAAR Project – the OVW-designated comprehensive technical assistance (TA) provider for the STOP Formula Grants Program - convened a series of roundtable-style conference calls, in conjunction with OVW, during which STOP administrators provided input on the structure, topics, and guidance that they would like to see included in the handbook. They also offered comments on handbook development processes, format, and process for draft review.

During these planning phone calls, administrator input about the topics they would like guidance on fell into four main categories:

(1) Information and contextual background about the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)[2], OVW, and other important federal resources.

(2) Information about STOP Formula Grants, including "how to" guidance related to the STOP administrator's role as federal applicant for funds.

(3) Information about grants management of STOP funds at the State/Territory levels.

(4) Information about collaboration – as a fundamental tenet of the STOP Program that is essential for improving and enhancing responses to violence against women.

One conclusion of the discussions was that, in keeping with OVW's role in administering Federal STOP Grants to States and Territories, OVW would develop a handbook containing (1) and (2).

2 Violence Against Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, as amended.

The OVW handbook would provide information pertaining to federal processes that relate to the administrator's role as an OVW grantee and a "how to" guide for responsibilities as a federal OVW grantee. The ALSO STAAR Project TA handbook would, then, focus primarily on (3) and (4).

Using the administrators' preferences as guidance, the STAAR Project developed the handbook in close collaboration with OVW. The STAAR Project held a total of eight draft handbook section review webinars (two for each of handbook section[3]) for the purpose of soliciting comments, suggested changes, and general feedback on the content and structure of each handbook section. The STAAR Project also convened a workshop at the 2011 STOP Administrators Meeting for the purpose of hearing additional comments and suggestions, and to request that administrators share sample forms and other documents used in the administration of STOP Grants in their State or Territory. A number of administrators offered State and Territory documents during the workshop or forwarded them later.

All input was carefully considered and incorporated into the Handbook wherever possible. Occasionally, a comment or suggestion for material or changes was not added to the Handbook because it fell outside the scope of the document. For example, the Handbook does not include information on promising practices for law enforcement, prosecution, judges and court personnel, advocates, attorneys, and others, or descriptions of model programs. The STAAR Project can provide individualized guidance and technical assistance to administrators on these topics upon request.

The handbook does not contain information about the processes and procedures for applying for a federal STOP Grant, OVW or grant program policies, federal or OVW fiscal policies, federal civil rights requirements, or other STOP administrator responsibilities in their roles as applicants for and recipients of federal grant funds. Material covering these topics was originally envisioned for inclusion in the Handbook and appeared in the draft handbook sections that were reviewed by the STOP administrators who participated in the draft review webinars. However, subsequent discussions with OVW ultimately led to the conclusion that these topics fell within the bailiwick of OVW, and should be included in a handbook that OVW prepares and distributes. The OVW handbook will serve as the official STOP Formula Grant Program applicant and recipient handbook. The Handbook provides material on all other areas identified for inclusion in the Handbook by STOP administrators throughout the Handbook development processes.

See Guide to the Handbook, *below, for more details about the information that is contained in the Handbook.*

3 At the time the review webinars were held, the manual was divided into four main sections.

The STOP Implementation Plan Toolkit *provides guidance and tools for developing and writing a STOP Implementation Plan. It is available here.*

Guide to the Handbook

The Handbook is divided into five main Parts. Some of the Parts are further subdivided into Chapters. An Appendix containing supplemental materials follows the main text. Below are brief descriptions of the Parts, Chapters, and the Appendix.

Part One (Background and Overview of the Handbook) introduces the handbook, outlines its purpose and scope, and provides instructions on how to use it.

Part Two (VAWA and OVW) provides brief information about and links to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and STOP Formula Grant Program statutes.

Part Three (STOP Formula Grants Program Roles and Technical Assistance) is divided into two chapters.

> Chapter One (Roles of OVW, STOP Administrators, and the Comprehensive TA Provider) distinguishes among the roles and responsibilities of OVW program managers and STOP administrators.
>
> Chapter Two provides details on the kinds of technical assistance that are available to STOP administrators and their subgrantees, the role of the comprehensive TA provider for the STOP Program, and the processes for obtaining and utilizing it.

Part Four (Administering and Managing STOP Funds within the State/Territory) provides guidance on the processes that STOP administrators engage in within their State or Territory to administer and manage funds after receipt of the Federal STOP award.

- Chapter One (Soliciting Applications and Selecting STOP Subgrantees) includes information on developing a subgrantee application package, notifying potential applicants of the availability of funds, conducting application review, determining which applications are fundable, making final funding recommendations, and developing grant agreements.
- Chapter Two (Managing Subgrantees) covers why to monitor, objectives, types of monitoring activities, monitoring processes, and related topics.

Part Five (Facilitating Collaborative Efforts at the State/Territory and Local Levels) examines how administrators can participate in and encourage collaboration and coordinated responses including structuring collaborative initiatives, obtaining buy-in from community members,

determining membership, and examples of how STOP administrators can use it to further STOP priorities within the State or Territory.

Features to be aware of when using the handbook:

- The page numbers for each Part (I – V) begin with a new set of four digits in order to streamline the process for incorporating updates and additions to the Handbook:

  Part I – Background and Overview of the Handbook – begins on p. 1000

  Part II – VAWA and OVW – begins on p. 2000

  Part III – STOP Formula Grants Program Roles and Technical Assistance – begins on p. 3000

  Part IV – Administering and Managing STOP Funds within the State or Territory – begins on p. 4000

  Part V – Facilitating Collaborative Efforts at the State/Territory and Local Levels – begins on p. 5000

- Table of Contents entries are hyperlinked (Control + Click on a PC, and Command + Click on a Mac).
- Each Part begins with a Quick Reference Guide, which provides an overview outline of the information contained within the text of that section. You can go directly to the text covering a particular topic by clicking on it within the Quick Reference Guide.
- A button labeled "Return to Table of Contents" is visible in the upper right-hand area on the first text page of all Parts and Chapters. A mouse click on it will navigate the reader back to the table of contents.

Accessing Additional Resources

References to examples of supplemental resources including State and Territorial training materials, RFPs, handbooks, forms, and other documents are included throughout the Handbook. These appear in *teal, italicized text*, and are preceded by the symbol. The references include information about where additional resources are available within STAAR Project private portal for STOP Administrators. Documents in the private portal are organized by Handbook Part and subject matter. For assistance with the private portal, contact the STAAR Project.

Suggestions for additions to the State and Territory sample documents are welcomed; please send an email to the STAAR Project with information about materials that you recommend for inclusion.

Updates to the Handbook

Periodically, we will revise or add to the information contained in the Handbook. The STAAR Project will notify STOP administrators about updates and provide the new material.

Part II – VAWA and OVW

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO PART TWO

- The Violence Against Women Act
- STOP statutory purpose areas
- STOP funding allocation categories

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR WORK RELATED TO PART TWO

VAWA AND OVW

- VAWA 2013 Summary: Changes to OVW-Administered Grant Programs
- STOP Formula Grant Program statutes

  The U.S. Code sections that contain the STOP Grant-related provisions of VAWA 2013 are as follows:

  - 34 U.S.C. § 12291 (Definitions)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10446 (State grants)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10447 (Definitions and grant conditions)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10448 (General terms and conditions)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10449 (Rape exam payments)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10450 (Costs for criminal charges and protection orders)
  - 34 U.S.C. § 10451 (Polygraph prohibition)
- VAWA Regulations
  - The federal regulations governing the STOP Grants program were revised in 2016 and are published at 28 C.F.R. Part 90.
- OVW FY 2019 Solicitation Companion Guide – OVW Grant Programs and Pertinent Post-Award Information
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About STOP Formula Grants (Oct. 2017)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the VAWA Confidentiality Provision (34 U.S.C. § 12291(b)(2)) (Oct. 2017)
- Frequently Asked Questions - Nondiscrimination Grant Condition in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (April 9, 2014)

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

- STOP Formula Program Implementation Plan Checklist (Rev. April 2019)
- STOP Implementation Plan Toolkit

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- DOJ Grants Financial Guide
- Grants.gov
- Grants Management System (GMS)

PROGRESS REPORTING

- VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative – STOP Formula Grants Program

For additional resources on VAWA and OVW, go to the STAAR Project private portal for STOP Administrators. Contact the STAAR Project for assistance with accessing the portal.

The Violence Against Women Act

The passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by Congress in 1994 marked the beginning of a major shift in the ways that systems and services viewed and were able to address the needs of survivors and bring to justice the perpetrators of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The enactment of this landmark piece of legislation created grant programs that allowed for the influx of Federal funds to assist jurisdictions in improving their response to these crimes. The STOP Formula Grants Program was one such program. STOP was one of the initial VAWA grant programs for which funds were appropriated by Congress in 1995, and provided opportunities for State, Territorial, local, and Tribal governments, to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violence against women. As the original formula grant program created by VAWA, STOP Grants can serve as a foundation for instituting improvements to the criminal justice system within a State or Territory, enhancing community-based services available to survivors, and encouraging collaboration.

Developing a familiarity and understanding of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the mission and history of the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and STOP Grant Program governing statutes can provide a context for STOP implementation within a State or Territory.

STOP Statutory Purpose Areas

VAWA has designated allowable purposes for which STOP funds may be used. The general purpose of the STOP Formula Grants Program, as amended by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 is to "assist States, State and local courts (including juvenile courts), Indian Tribal governments, Tribal courts, and units of local government to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women for the protection and safety of victims, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women.[4]"

The purposes for which grants may be used are as follows[5]:

4 34 U.S.C. § 10441(a).
5 Id at (b).

(1) Training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including the appropriate use of nonimmigrant status under subparagraphs (T) and (U) of section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)).

(2) Developing, training, or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

(3) Developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as the appropriate treatment of victims.

(4) Developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying, classifying, and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

(5) Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services and legal assistance programs, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services to underserved populations, providing specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are granted, and increasing reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women, including crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

(6) Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing the needs and circumstances of Indian tribes in dealing with violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

(7) Supporting formal and informal Statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of State law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other State agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

(8) Training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault.

(9) Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled individuals.

(10) Providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in immigration matters.

(11) Maintaining core victim services and criminal justice initiatives, while supporting complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families.

(12) Supporting the placement of special victim assistants (to be known as "Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants") in local law enforcement agencies to serve as liaisons between victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and personnel in local law enforcement agencies in order to improve the enforcement of protection orders. Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants shall have expertise in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and may undertake the following activities –

- Developing, in collaboration with prosecutors, courts, and victim service providers, standardized response policies for local law enforcement agencies, including the use of evidence-based indicators to assess the risk of domestic and dating violence homicide and prioritize dangerous or potentially lethal cases;
- Notifying persons seeking enforcement of protection orders as to what responses will be provided by the relevant law enforcement agency;
- Referring persons seeking enforcement of protection orders to supplementary services (such as emergency shelter programs, hotlines, or legal assistance services);
- Taking other appropriate action to assist or secure the safety of the person seeking enforcement of a protection order.

(13) Providing funding to law enforcement agencies, victim services providers, and State, Tribal, Territorial, and local governments (which funding stream shall be known as the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program) to promote—

- The development and implementation of training for local victim domestic violence service providers, and to fund victim services personnel, to be known as "Crystal Judson Victim Advocates," to provide supportive services and advocacy for victims of domestic violence committed by law enforcement personnel;

- ❖ The implementation of protocols within law enforcement agencies to ensure consistent and effective responses to the commission of domestic violence by personnel within such agencies such as the model policy promulgated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police ("Domestic Violence by Police Officers: A Policy of the IACP, Police Response to Violence Against Women Project" July 2003); and
- ❖ The development of such protocols in collaboration with State, Tribal, Territorial and local victim services providers and domestic violence coalitions.

(14) Developing and promoting State, local, or Tribal legislation and policies that enhance best practices for responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

(15) Developing, implementing, or enhancing Sexual Assault Response Teams, or other similar coordinated community responses to sexual assault.

(16) Developing and strengthening policies, protocols, best practices, and training for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors relating to the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims.

(17) Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault against men, women, and youth in correctional and detention settings.

(18) Identifying and conducting inventories of backlogs of sexual assault evidence collection kits and developing protocols and policies for notifying and involving victims.

(19) Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs and projects to provide services and responses targeting male and female victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity, as defined in section 249(c) of title 18, United States Code.

(20) Developing, enhancing, or strengthening prevention and educational programming to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, with not more than 5 percent of the amount allocated to a State to be used for this purpose.

Go to the Office on Violence Against Women web site for STOP Formula Grant Program purpose area provisions and other program information.

STOP Funding Allocation Categories

The Violence Against Women Act provides a formula for allocation of subgrant funds at the State/Territory level.[6] This subsection breaks down the formula and offers the statutory definitions for important terms used in the formula.

- At least 25% for law enforcement;
- At least 25% for prosecutors;
- At least 30% for victim services; of this amount, at least 10% must be distributed to culturally specific community organizations; and
- At least 5% to State and local courts, including juvenile courts.
- The remaining 15% can be distributed to any discipline, as long as they are used for one or more of the enumerated program purpose areas.
- Beginning two years from the date of enactment of VAWA 2013 (March 7, 2013), at least 20% of the total award must be set aside for projects that meaningfully address sexual assault across at least two of the funding allocation categories (victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, courts).

Courts are defined as: "any civil or criminal, Tribal , and Alaska Native Village, Federal, State, local or territorial court having jurisdiction to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking, including immigration, family, juvenile, and dependency courts, and the judicial officers serving in those courts, including judges, magistrate judges, commissioners, justices of the peace, or any other person with decision-making authority.[7]

Culturally Specific means "primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups, as defined in section § 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300u-6(g)).[8]" The Public Health Service Act defines "racial and ethnic minority groups" as follows[9]:

(1) The term "racial and ethnic minority group" means American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian Americans; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics.

(2) The term "Hispanic" means individuals whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or any other Spanish-speaking country.

6 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(4).
7 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(2).
8 Id. at (a)(6).
9 42 U.S.C. § 300-u6(g).

Culturally Specific Services is defined as "community-based services that include culturally relevant and linguistically specific services and resources to culturally specific communities.[10]"

Law Enforcement is defined as: "a public agency charged with policing functions, including any of its component bureaus (such as governmental victim services programs or Village Public Safety Officers), including those referred to in section 2802 of Title 25."[11]

Prosecution is defined as: "any public agency charged with direct responsibility for prosecuting criminal offenders, including such agency's component bureaus (such as governmental victim assistance programs)."[12]

Victim Service Provider means "a nonprofit, nongovernmental or Tribal organization or rape crisis center, including a State or Tribal coalition, that assists or advocates for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, including domestic violence shelters, faith-based organizations, and other organizations, with a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.[13]

Victim Services or Services was defined in VAWA 2013 to mean "services provided to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including telephonic or web-based hotlines, legal advocacy, economic advocacy, emergency and transitional shelter, accompaniment and advocacy through medical, civil or criminal justice, immigration, and social support systems crisis intervention, short-term individual and group support services, information and referrals, culturally specific services, population specific services, and other related supportive services.[14]

34 U.S.C. § 12291 contains all VAWA definitions.

10 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(7).
11 Id. at (a)(18).
12 Id. at (a)(23).
13 Id. at (a)(43).
14 Id at (a)(44).

Part III – STOP Formula Grants Program Roles and Technical Assistance

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO PART THREE

- CHAPTER ONE: ROLES OF OVW PROGRAM MANAGERS AND STOP ADMINISTRATORS
  - Role of the OVW program manager
  - Role of the STOP administrators
- CHAPTER TWO: SEEKING AND RECEIVING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
  - Purpose of the STOP comprehensive TA project
  - Requesting technical assistance
  - TA delivery methods
  - Annual meeting for STOP administrators
  - Feedback on technical assistance

For additional resources, go to the STAAR Project website or contact the STAAR Project for assistance.

Chapter One: Roles of OVW Program Managers and STOP Administrators

Office on Violence Against Women Program Managers, STOP Administrators, and the STOP Technical Assistance Provider all contribute to fulfillment of the purposes and requirements of the STOP Formula Grant Program. While all work toward this common goal, each serves a unique role and has distinct responsibilities. This chapter contains descriptions of the roles of OVW program managers and STOP administrators. Chapter Two is devoted to the role of TA providers and TA available from the OVW comprehensive TA provider for the STOP Formula Grants Program.

Role of the OVW Program Manager

OVW Program Managers are staff of the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. Program Managers:

- Serve as a single point of contact for STOP administrative applicant and grantee agencies;
- Provide timely and relevant responses to general grantee inquiries via phone and email;
- Assist grantees with implementing the goals and objectives of the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program;
- Recommend relevant training and TA for grantees and/or subgrantees;
- Serve as a problem-solver when a grantee is faced with challenges or obstacles with effectively implementing the STOP program;
- Review and/or approve required documentation outlined in the award special conditions (e.g., implementation plan, certification desk reviews, progress reports, and RFP notices);
- Assist grantees with match waiver requests, which are reviewed and approved by the OVW Director;
- Review and approve all Grant Adjustment Notices (GANs) through the Grants Management System (GMS) (e.g., requests for extensions, sole source requests, close-out requests, etc.);

- ❖ Monitor grantee progress through quarterly financial reports (SF-269s) and programmatic progress reports;
- ❖ Conduct site visits to assess program implementation, identify promising practices, and provide assistance with addressing challenges and barriers to meeting the goals and objectives of the STOP program; and
- ❖ Work closely with the comprehensive TA provider on TA activities including planning the annual meeting for STOP administrators.

If necessary, Program Managers also assist grantees with audit reporting requirements and other administrative grant functions (e.g., conditions of Award and Acceptance, inability to draw down, etc.).

Role of the STOP Administrator

The roles that STOP administrators play generally fit within four main areas:

(1) Grantee of the Office on Violence Against Women;

(2) Lead developer and writer of the STOP Implementation Plan for the State or Territory;

(3) Administrator of State/Territorial subgrants; and

(4) Leader on issues related to domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the jurisdiction.

The following section outlines STOP administrators' work in these areas, recognizing that roles vary among jurisdictions, depending on State and Territorial governmental structure and laws; administrative agency structure, policies, and operating procedures; and the delegation of duties among personnel. Some STOP administrators may fulfill all roles, while in other States or Territories, responsibility for some tasks is completed by other personnel within the agency.

Some examples of the ways that the structure, function, and discretion of State and Territorial STOP administrative agencies and STOP administrator duties may differ could include the following:

- ❖ An agency that is responsible for administration of STOP funds has structure, functions, and duties that are prescribed by the State constitution, with policies or procedures created by statute.
- ❖ A State or Territorial agency in which the STOP administrator has the flexibility to create policies and procedures specific to the STOP program.

- ❖ An agency with a division that handles fiscal oversight of subgrantees, and has a separate monitoring section.
- ❖ An agency in which the STOP administrator may be charged with all duties related to administration of STOP funds – from preparing applications for Federal funding to subgrantee site visits.

OVW Grantee

- ❖ Serves as liaison between the Office on Violence Against Women and the State;
- ❖ Responds to Desk Reviews[15] and certification issues;
- ❖ Completes SF-425 (Federal Financial Report) (in most cases); and
- ❖ Oversees the administration of STOP Funding within the State/Territory.

STOP Implementation Plan Developer

- ❖ Leads the Statewide STOP planning process;
- ❖ Designs the planning process, along with the planning committee, to ensure that input about current and emerging needs, as well as successful approaches, is generated;
- ❖ Seeks input from all affected disciplines and communities, including all those with whom VAWA 2013 requires consultation[16] including:
  - o The State sexual assault coalition;
  - o The State domestic violence coalition;
  - o The law enforcement entities within the State;
  - o Prosecution offices;
  - o State and local courts;
  - o Tribal governments in those States with State or federally recognized Indian tribes;
  - o Representatives from underserved populations, including culturally specific populations;
  - o Victim service providers;
  - o Population specific organizations; and

15 A desk review is a complete review of all documentation required by the grantee State/Territory in order to maintain compliance with all Federal requirements.
16 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(2).

- Other entities that the State or the Department of Justice identifies as needed for the planning process.

❖ Coordinates the Implementation Plan with the State plans developed under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), the Rape Prevention Education (RPE) program, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA).[17]

❖ Gathers relevant qualitative and quantitative data to inform planning;

❖ Informs all those with authority over STOP Grant funds and processes at the State/Territorial level, including members of planning entities, of all statutory certification requirements and the current level of compliance;

❖ Writes the STOP implementation plan, based on input received during the planning process;

❖ Coordinates State matching funds;

❖ Submits the STOP implementation plan to OVW; and

❖ Responds to OVW requests for clarification of the plan.

Administration of STOP Subgrants

Pre-Subgrantee Awards

❖ Develops the STOP subgrantee solicitation(s) pursuant to the STOP implementation plan;

❖ Provides notice to potential subgrantees about the availability of funds;

❖ Offers grant-writing workshops, bidders' conferences, or other pre-application TA opportunities to potential subgrantees;

❖ Coordinates the subgrant application review process;

❖ Makes subgrant funding recommendations or funding decisions;

❖ Distributes funds in accordance with statutory funding allocation categories, including the 10% set-aside for culturally specific victim services; and

❖ Ensures that funded subgrantee programs meet one or more of the STOP statutory purpose areas.

17 Coordination of the STOP implementation plan with any existing State plans created under VOCA, RPE, and FVPSA is required for STOP grantees. 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(3).

Post-Subgrantee Awards

- Compiles and submits STOP Administrator Progress Reports as well as Subgrantee Progress Reports;
- Monitors and evaluates subgrant activity, including through site visits and reviews;
- Provides assistance to subgrantees on fiscal and programmatic issues throughout the funding year; and
- Offers opportunities for subgrantees and others to increase their knowledge and skills by connecting them with relevant resources including OVW TA providers, and informing them about available trainings and conferences.

Leadership on Violence Against Women Prevention and Intervention

- Informs OVW and comprehensive TA provider about relevant, emerging issues related to STOP Grants and violence against women;
- Employs promising practices for responding to violence against women in the State;
- Provides meaningful opportunities for culturally specific and underserved communities to access victim services and the criminal justice system;
- Serves as a facilitator and an agent of change regarding the response to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in the State/Territory;
- Seeks ways to share leadership with State/Territorial/Tribal sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions, and Tribes;
- Brings together and engages with stakeholders at the local, State, Tribal, and national levels;
- Encourages cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among disciplines;
- Works with additional grant programs to leverage funds;
- Delivers information on promising practices employed by other States/Territories; and
- Offers information to OVW and other States/Territories on exemplary STOP-funded subgrantee programs, as well as grant administration practices.

The Leadership items are not necessarily required in order to fulfill STOP Grant conditions, but they are consistent with the goals, purposes, and spirit of VAWA. They also provide broader

opportunities for STOP administrative staff to have a significant impact on the systems, processes, and practices addressing violence against women in the State or Territory.

Roles of STOP Administrators

Grantee of the Office on Violence Against Women

Developer of STOP implementation plan

- Leads Statewide STOP planning process
- Designs planning process and identifies members of planning committee
- Solicits input from disciplines and communities
- Gathers relevant criminal justice, victim services, and other data
- Informs about STOP certification requirements and seeks information about compliance
- Writes STOP implementation plan based on planning process and submits to OVW
- Responds to OVW clarification requests about plan

Administration of STOP Subgrants - Pre-Award Processes

- Develops subgrantee RFP based on STOP implementation plan
- Offers grant-writing workshops, bidders' conferences, and other opportunities to applicants
- Coordinates application review process
- Convenes funding recommendation committee and makes recommendations to final decision-maker
- Awards and administers funds in accordance with State/Territory and Federal requirements

Administration of STOP Subgrants - Post-Award Processes

- Compiles and submits STOP Administrator and Subgrantee Progress Reports
- Monitors and evaluates subgrant activity including desk reviews and site visits, as appropriate
- Provides assistance on fiscal and programmatic issues
- Offers knowledge- and skill-building opportunities
- Connects subgrantees with training and TA

Leadership on Violence Against Women Prevention and Intervention

- Informs OVW and comprehensive TA provider about relevant, emerging issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Employs promising practices for responding to violence against women
- Provides meaningful opportunities for culturally specific and underserved communities to access victim services, civil legal remedies, and the criminal justice system
- Serves as facilitator and agent of change regarding responses to survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Seeks ways to share leadership with State/Territorial and Tribal sexual assault, domestic violence, and dual coalitions
- Brings together and engages with stakeholders at local, State/Territorial, Tribal, and national levels
- Encourages cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among disciplines
- Works with additional grant programs to leverage funds and coordinate efforts - particularly with RPE, FVPSA, and VOCA, but also other Federal and State/Territory programs
- Delivers information on promising practices employed by other States/Territories
- Offers information to OVW and other States/Territories on exemplary STOP-funded subgrantee programs and grant administration practices

Return to Table of Contents

Chapter Two: Seeking and Receiving Technical Assistance

Since 1995, the OVW Technical Assistance Program (TA Program) has provided Office on Violence Against Women grantees with training, expertise, and problem-solving strategies to meet the challenges of addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking in States, Territories, Tribes, and communities.[18] The primary purpose of the OVW TA Program is to provide direct technical assistance to existing and potential grantees and sub grantees to enhance and support their efforts to successfully implement projects funded by OVW grants.[19] OVW is focused on building the capacity of criminal justice and victim services organizations to respond effectively and fostering partnerships among organizations that have not traditionally worked together to address violence against women.[20]

The TA Program was legislatively created as a set-aside from the funds appropriated for OVW grant programs. All TA activities must be closely connected to the purpose areas of the OVW grant programs for which they offer TA[21]. OVW TA must be responsive to the needs of victims, as expressed through its grantees, and adaptable to changes in the field.[22]

OVW-funded TA projects offer myriad opportunities to grantees through a diverse array of TA providers from local, Statewide, and national organizations. The TA providers assist OVW grantees by providing education, bolstering capacity-building, developing critical thinking skills, and implementing promising practices in their work to hold perpetrators accountable and keep victims and their children safe. These opportunities – including substantive educational and training programs, information-sharing with peers, on-site consultations, and individualized TA – help OVW grantees and subgrantees to learn from experts and one another about how to improve and enhance their work to address violence against women[23].

18 U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, OVW Fiscal Year 2013 Technical Assistance Program (solicitation), located at http://1.usa.gov/1lqtBzJ.
19 Id.
20 Id.
21 Id.
22 Id.
23 Id.

For additional information on the TA Program, including what past TA Program grantees have accomplished with their grant funds and to view performance measures, go to the Technical Assistance Program section of the VAWA Measuring Effectiveness Initiative website.

Purpose of the STOP Comprehensive TA Project

The comprehensive STOP Grants TA provider is the STAAR Project (STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource Project) of the Alliance of Local Service Organizations (ALSO). The STAAR Project offers needs-responsive TA to STOP administrators and State and Territorial subgrantees.

The STAAR Project assists STOP administrators with needs related to the STOP Formula Grant Program including:

- Fulfilling Federal requirements, as well as the goals, objectives, and purpose areas of the STOP Grants Program;
- Planning for and creating the STOP Implementation Plan;
- Setting and meeting goals and objectives of the Implementation Plan;
- Identifying and implementing promising practices in the administration of STOP funds in a State/Territory, the criminal justice and civil legal system responses to violence against women, and victim services;
- Maximizing STOP funds to achieve the greatest benefit for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence; and
- Developing and refining grant management including awarding funds, evaluating program efforts, and monitoring the use of STOP dollars.

The STAAR Project offers educational opportunities and resources to STOP administrators and subgrantees on substantive issues related to violence against women. More specifically, the STAAR Project offers the following in order to help STOP administrators and subgrantees successfully plan and implement STOP-funded projects:

- Information about violence against women, promising practices, and model programs through papers, research articles, a bimonthly e-journal, and other written materials;
- Needs-responsive consultation and assistance with assessment and planning processes on the Statewide and local levels, administration of STOP funds, and program development at the local and State/Territorial levels;

- ❖ Opportunities for subgrantees to attend OVW-sponsored national conferences through the LINK (Locally Implementing National Knowledge) Program.
- ❖ Learning about promising practices and models for addressing violence against women through the criminal justice system and victim services;
- ❖ Provides access to educational tools and other written materials that can be used to enhance learning at the State/Territorial and local levels;
- ❖ Serves as a vehicle for peer-to-peer networking – i.e., the sharing of information from others in the field who are undertaking similar work;
- ❖ Offers expertise on issues related to violence against women encountered by law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, victim services, and others; and
- ❖ Serves as a conduit of information to and from STOP administrators and subgrantees and OVW, OVW TA providers, experts in anti-violence work, and other national organizations working to address violence against women.

Requesting TA

STOP administrators and their subgrantees are welcome to contact the STAAR Project with any question with which they would like help. STOP administrators and subgrantees can request TA by sending an email to the STAAR Project (ALSOSTAARProjectTA@also-chicago.org) or by calling (773) 235-5705. When a question is complex or requires time-intensive TA, the STAAR Project may also ask that the individual requesting assistance complete a TA Request Form, which is available from STAAR Project staff.

STOP administrators can also contact other OVW TA providers that are funded to provide assistance to STOP Formula Grants recipient States and Territories. OVW has a cooperative agreement with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to maintain the TA2TA website, which contains a directory of OVW TA providers. If consulting with a TA provider, it can also be helpful to contact the STAAR Project for assistance with overall identification of issues, coordination of TA, and follow-up.

TA Delivery Methods

The STAAR Project delivers TA in multiple ways. Some of the methods used are:

- ❖ Annual meetings for STOP administrators that address relevant administrative and substantive topics (see *Annual Meeting for STOP Administrators, below)*;
- ❖ Joint national meetings with STOP administrators and the directors of State/Territorial domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions to address topics relevant to STOP

administrators and coalitions that receive Grants to State and Territorial Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalitions;

- An e-newsletter sent directly to STOP administrators. This resource contains articles about criminal justice and victim service responses to crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; research summaries; resource compilations; important OVW announcements; updates from the STAAR Project; and other information related to the work of STOP administrators and their subgrantees.
- Trainings (including in-person meetings, webinars, and conference calls) addressing criminal justice system responses and enhancement of victim services.
- Individualized remote (phone or email) consultation on administrative and substantive issues facing STOP administrators, law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and victim services including coordinated/collaborative interdisciplinary work;
- On-site consultation for in-depth assistance with strategic planning, State plan development, interdisciplinary coordination and collaboration, and other substantive topics;
- Offering opportunities for STOP subgrantees to attend national OVW-sponsored and approved conferences and trainings through the LINK (Locally Implementing National Knowledge) program, which provides travel and conference cost assistance to qualifying subgrantees;
- Access to written resources (e.g., assessment instruments, educational tools, sample grant administration documents, updates on recent research, scholarly articles, and information on emerging issues);
- The STAAR Project web site containing informational materials for download (including archived newsletter issues and the Implementation Plan Toolkit), updates from OVW, and other important information; and
- Linking STOP administrators and subgrantees with appropriate experts in the field – including other OVW TA providers – for support or assistance with particular issues.

Annual Meeting for STOP Administrators

Each year, the OVW and the STAAR Project convene a meeting for STOP administrators of all States and Territories.[24] The meeting is mandatory for all grantee States and Territories pursuant

24 Due to the conference approval process and other Department of Justice conference requirements, the annual meeting was not held in 2014. While future meetings are not guaranteed, convening an annual meeting for STOP administrators remains a joint goal and plan of OVW and the ALSO STAAR TA Project.

to OVW grant special conditions. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum in which STOP administrators:

- Receive information that is essential for grantee compliance with grant requirements and applicable federal laws;
- Hear about best practices for effectively using STOP funds – both programmatically and fiscally;
- Meet with OVW program managers; and
- Network with administrators, TA providers, and experts in the field to support information dissemination and peer-to-peer learning.

The meeting content is tailored each year to address topics in which STOP administrators have indicated that they are interested, as well as those raised by TA providers and OVW. The planning team, consisting of OVW and STAAR Project staff, examine input received during conference calls for STOP administrators, evaluations from past meetings, TA requests, and annual report data. The team looks at emerging and ongoing challenges, as well as promising practices employed by STOP administrators and their subgrantees for the protection of victim safety, holding offenders accountable through the criminal justice system, STOP planning processes and outcomes, grant management, fiscal issues, and compliance with grant requirements. The annual meetings are structured to include a combination of plenary sessions, breakout workshops, and roundtable discussions.

On alternating years, OVW and the STAAR Project convene a joint meeting of STOP administrators and State sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions that are grantees of the Coalition Grants Program. The meeting is offered as an opportunity for administrators and coalitions to learn information that is necessary for grant compliance, but also to provide opportunities for both sets of grantees to attend substantive workshops that are of interest, and engage in cross-conversations about issues affecting STOP administrators, coalitions, and others within their State or Territory.

To view materials from past annual meetings, go to the STOP Meetings section of the STAAR Project website.

Feedback on TA Provided

In shaping its TA Program, OVW has actively solicited input from its grantees to ensure that efforts are responsive to the needs and concerns of States and local communities. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, OVW seeks feedback on a regular basis from its grant recipients so that TA can be enhanced and refined as necessary. STOP Administrators and

subgrantees may send feedback directly to the STOP Technical Assistance to Administrators Resource (STAAR) Project and/or to OVW.

Part IV – Administering and Managing STOP Funds within the State or Territory

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO PART FOUR

CHAPTER ONE: CREATING STATE/STERRITORY STOP PROGRAMMING, SOLICITING APPLICATIONS, AND SELECTING STOP SUBGRANTEES

- Developing a subgrantee request for proposals (RFP) package including
  - State and Territory STOP administrative pre-award processes (graphic)
  - Competitive application processes
  - Targeted and consolidated RFPs
- RFP contents
- Evidence-based practices and services (text box)
- Notice of available funds and outreach to potential applicants
- Bidders' conferences
- Application review
- Reviewer score sheets
- Determining fundable applications
- Funding recommendation decision-making
  - Geographic distribution
  - State formulas
- Grant agreements
- Annual progress reports

CHAPTER TWO: MANAGING SUBGRANTEES

- Monitoring of subgrantee activities
- Grant monitoring objectives
- Effective oversight through monitoring
- Monitoring processes and practices - overview
- Types of grant monitoring
- Grant monitoring methods
- Monitoring frequency and responsible personnel
- Planning and Tools for monitoring
- Desk reviews

- Site visits
- Site visit processes and procedures
- Site visits and nondisclosure of client records (text box)
- Maximizing site visits (text box)
- Post-site visit activities
- Working with nonresponsive subgrantees
- High-risk subgrantees (text box)
- Closing of issues and findings
- Providing technical assistance to subgrantees

For State and Territory sample documents for administering and managing STOP funds, visit the STAAR Project private portal for STOP Administrators. Contact the STAAR Project for assistance with accessing the portal.

Chapter One: Creating State/Territory STOP Programming, Soliciting Applications, and Selecting STOP Subgrantees

A State or Territory's STOP implementation planning process[25] should draw upon the knowledge and expertise of a diverse and representative group of planning committee[26] members from victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, Tribes, representatives of underserved populations and other disciplines and communities whose work impacts and is impacted by survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence. The input that is provided can help to ensure that the STOP implementation plan reflects the priorities articulated by the planners. STOP administrators can build on this valuable input to design and structure State/territory STOP Grant programs and craft application packages or requests for proposals. STOP administrators must then notify potential applicants of the availability of funds, solicit proposals, make funding decisions, and award funds to subgrantees.

This chapter is intended to provide guidance to STOP administrators on State or Territory processes that are a part of STOP administration once an award has been made to a State or Territory. The chapter addresses pre-subgrant award process including constructing an application package, notification of fund availability, application review, making funding decisions, and developing grant agreements.

25 Details about the STOP implementation planning process are not covered by the Handbook. In conjunction with the Office on Violence Against Women, the STAAR Project has developed the *Implementation Plan Toolkit* to assist with the development of a STOP Implementation Plan. To request assistance with implementation planning, please email the project at ALSOSTAARProjectTA@also-chicago.org or call (773) 235-5705.

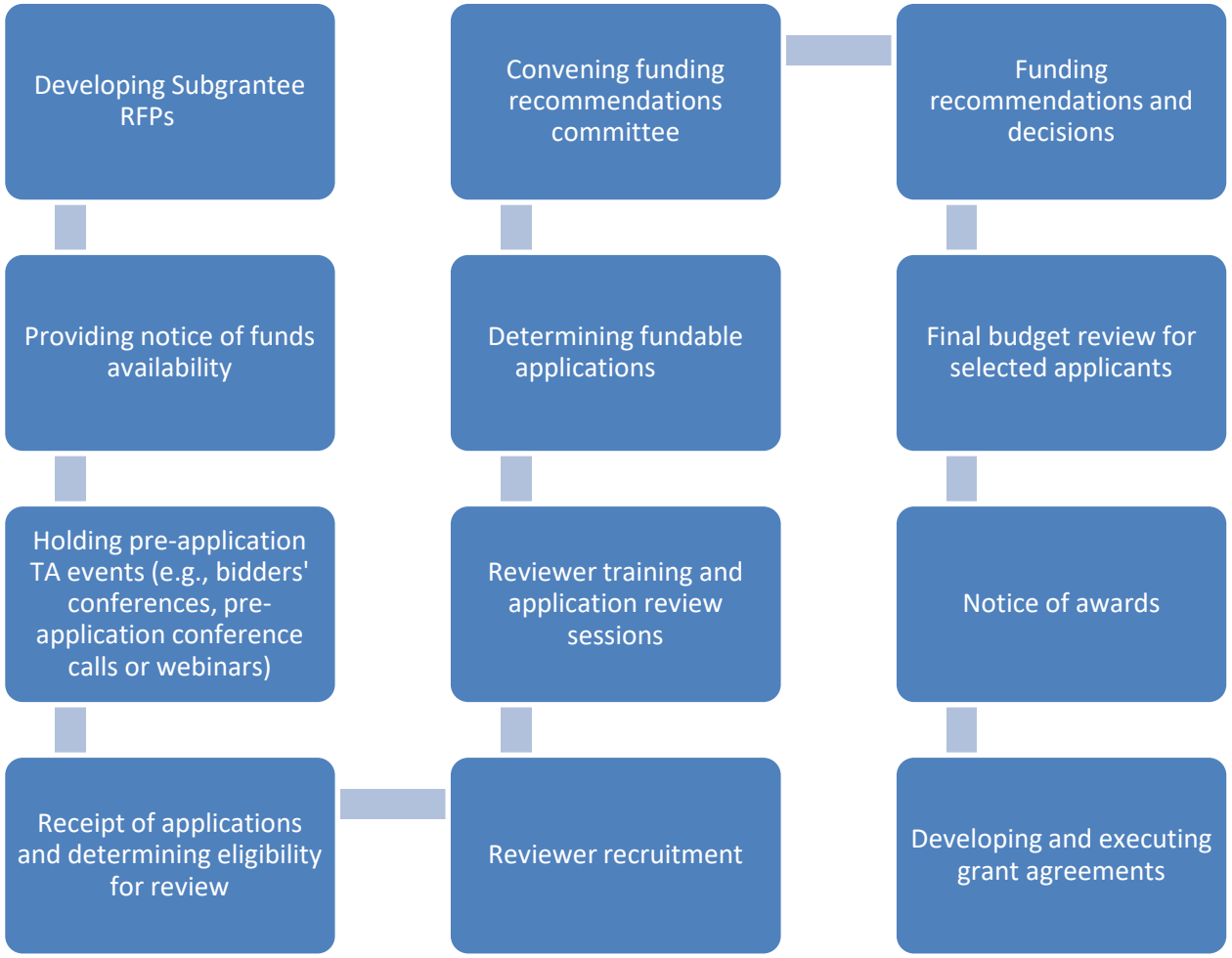
26 VAWA 2013 requires that the STOP Grant applicant State must consult and coordinate with the following when developing a STOP implementation plan: the State sexual assault coalition, the State domestic violence coalition, the law enforcement entities within the State, prosecution offices, State and local courts, Tribal governments in those States with State or federally recognized Indian tribes, representatives from underserved populations, including culturally specific populations; victim service providers; population specific organizations; and other entities that the State or Attorney General identifies as needed for the planning process. 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(2).

Developing a Subgrantee Request for Proposals (RFP) Package

The process of developing and distributing an RFP package for STOP subgrant funds is one of the most important steps that a STOP administrator can take to implement the STOP program within a State or Territory. The application package communicates the vision of the implementation planning committee to potential applicants and future subgrantees. Depending on State/Territorial statutes, regulations, and rules governing RFP processes, the RFP offers significant opportunities to tailor the STOP program to the unique characteristics and needs of the jurisdiction, to communicate clearly what is needed for a complete and successful application, and to ensure adequate numbers of fundable applications. Among other things, the RFP can be used to:

- Focus applicants on the priority areas identified by planners;
- Tailor the RFP toward a specific kind of project or to a particular discipline (e.g., law enforcement or prosecution);
- Offer program models, promising practices, and examples that applicants can adapt and implement with grant funds;
- Communicate the plan for funding and geographic equity for coverage of advocacy and services in the State or Territory;
- Build a way to assess whether an applicant will meet one or more needs articulated in the implementation plan;
- Determine the organizational capacity of applicants to implement the proposed project;
- Articulate expectations for measuring and communicating success; and
- Set forth a plan for grant management, reporting, and monitoring, including subgrantee responsibilities related to each.

State and Territory STOP Administrative Pre-Award Processes



Competitive Application Processes

A competitive application process ensures that the State will make awards to applicants submitting proposals that are most closely matched to the needs and priorities of the State as expressed by the planning committee. While not required, it is a good idea to use a competitive application process at least every two to three years for larger projects, and annually for small grants. For larger, Statewide, or other projects requiring considerable start-up or planning periods, it is possible to utilize a competitive process for the first year of a multi-year grant cycle, followed by one or two subsequent years of non-competitive re-applications. This allows for an initial start-up period where substantive work on the project can begin after personnel are hired, needs assessments are conducted, and other planning processes are finalized.

Targeted and Consolidated RFPs

Targeted RFPs

Some States have found it challenging to receive adequate numbers of fundable applications from certain disciplines or communities, or that address particular priority areas. One strategy that can be employed to increase the numbers of fundable applications is the development of a targeted RFP package. A targeted solicitation is a request for proposals that is aimed at a particular discipline, community, substantive topic, or project type. For example, if unobligated law enforcement funds remain at the end of the fiscal year, the STOP administrator could develop a law enforcement-specific RFP. Eligible applicants would be law enforcement agencies (or another agency, with a signed agreement of the law enforcement agency that the project is intended to benefit). Projects that could be funded would address law enforcement priorities, goals, and objectives that were created by the STOP planning committee. The package could be entitled, "Law Enforcement Grants," or given another name that encourages potential applicants to look closely at it.

A targeted solicitation can also be aimed at one or more communities that the STOP planning committee has determined are priorities. In that case, a solicitation package could be developed that emphasizes priority areas, goals, and objectives for underserved and culturally specific communities, as well as the types of projects that would be considered for funding.

For any targeted solicitation package, providing notice to potential applicants through email lists, mailings, and phone calls is key to receiving sufficient numbers of fundable applications. Convening bidders' conferences in two or more key locations around the State or Territory will provide opportunities to meet potential applicants, provide information about the grant program and the application process, and answer questions. Ideally, a STOP administrator would also have met with leadership or members of the targeted discipline or community(ies) before developing

the solicitation in order to seek information about what is needed from applicants to increase the number of high-scoring applications.

Consolidated RFPs

Some States have opted to join two or more Federal funding programs into a single subgrant RFP. A consolidated process is generally used to save funding agency time and other resources, and to simplify the process for applicants. A combined RFP must, however, maintain the integrity of the purpose and priority areas of the Federal programs, as well as State or Territorial priorities. If certain parts of the RFP are for one set of applicants or another, the instructions should make it clear which parts relate to which applicants. If eligibility for funding varies among programs, it should be relatively easy for an applicant to determine eligibility for each.

If your agency decides to consolidate the STOP subgrant RFP(s) with another Federal grant program, you may wish to request TA from the STAAR Project. You may also wish to seek assistance from your OVW program manager, as well as the program manager for the other grant program. Seeking review by others can help to ensure that you have included all necessary components and that the package will be clear and easy to use by applicants who are unfamiliar with one or both programs.

RFP Contents

In order to receive applications from applicants that are reflective of OVW requirements, as well as State/Territorial priority areas, goals, and program objectives, the STOP administrator should obtain input from the STOP planning committee on the funding priorities that will be contained in the solicitation package. To ensure that the needs of all communities in the State and Territory are considered during STOP planning and to fulfill VAWA 2013 requirements, the planning committee must, at a minimum, include the following[27]:

- the State sexual assault coalition;
- the State domestic violence coalition;
- the law enforcement entities within the State;
- prosecution offices;
- State and local courts;
- Tribal governments in those States with State or federally recognized Indian tribes;
- Representatives from underserved populations, including culturally specific populations;

27 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(2).

- Victim service providers;
- Population specific organizations; and
- Other entities that the State or the Attorney General identifies as needed for the planning process.

In addition to including the Statewide domestic violence coalition and sexual assault coalition, outreach can be made to any Tribal sexual assault or domestic violence coalitions[28] that are present in the State. It can be critical to include agencies that are part of specific communities but that do not exclusively focus on violence against women (e.g., organizations or groups that are part of the immigrant, Tribal, disability, or mental health consumer communities) because it can help with gathering information about current and emerging barriers to safety and justice for all survivors in a State or Territory.

Evidence-Based Practices and Services

While it can be challenging to find information about effective evidence-based practices for addressing domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, it is important to stay abreast of those current studies that are available. Research can provide important guidance about the kinds of practices that are promising and potentially fundable in a State or Territory. However, given the need for expansion of research in this area, it is critical to encourage the development and implementation of innovative practices that can be employed in this work. Informal research, anecdotal evidence, and the experiences of practitioners, advocates, and survivors can all serve as evidence of the effectiveness of a particular approach, even if it has not been formally evaluated.

STOP administrators can look for opportunities to partner with research institutions and universities who may be available to provide evaluation services with funding other than STOP dollars or as an in-kind donation. Such partnerships can help to provide feedback about services provided and interventions used that can be incorporated very quickly to adjust practices and make them more effective, and to demonstrate the impact of a program.

Once the goals and objectives have been determined by the planning committee, these should be incorporated into the draft RFP. The planning committee can provide input on draft RFPs to ensure that it is consistent with the results of the planning process and the priority areas expressed by OVW. A State/Territorial STOP subgrant RFP can include:

- Grant criteria and requirements, including background information about VAWA and the Federal STOP Formula Grants Program, the purpose of the State/Territorial STOP program

28 There are 18 OVW-funded tribal sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions as of April 2019.

and the Federal statutory purpose areas, information about relevant State/Territorial laws, a description of the types of agencies that are eligible for funding, and fiscal requirements;

- State/Territorial STOP priority areas and/or descriptions of the kinds of projects that will be considered for funding;
- An outline of the information an applicant must provide in the narrative description of the proposed project;
- Forms and attachments, such as assurances, budget detail worksheets, and an application checklist;
- Scoring criteria, including the information used to determine whether an application is complete and qualifies for consideration, as well as a breakdown of points used in the review process; and
- A description of the award process; and
- An estimate of the dates on which notice of awards will be sent and funded projects will begin.

An RFP that is designed to solicit proposals that are likely to produce successful results can ask applicants to describe in narrative format:

- The need that will be addressed by the project;
- Evidence of the problem through qualitative or quantitative data, or anecdotal evidence;
- The priority areas (Federal and/or State) that will be addressed by the project;
- One or more project goals that are related to one or more priority areas and identified needs;
- Project objectives that are designed to help the applicant meet the project goal(s);
- Details about project activities that are designed to meet the objectives;
- All products developed during the project period and how they will be disseminated;
- A detailed project timeline;
- A plan for evaluating the success of the project;
- The applicant's experience working on domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault issues;
- The capacity of the applicant agency to carry out the proposed activities;

- Consultation during the application planning period and partnerships with the local domestic violence or sexual assault agency and/or or the Statewide domestic violence or sexual assault coalition (for law enforcement or prosecution funds, or those applying for victim services funds that are not community-based programs that specialize in and have a substantial history of working on violence against women issues);
- For those who are applying for law enforcement or prosecution funds but are not a law enforcement or prosecution agency applicant, a description of how the projects is designed to be implemented for the benefit of law enforcement or prosecution, using the criteria that are outlined in the STOP FAQs; and
- Evidence that it has substantial experience working with diverse groups or will partner with an agency with substantial experience if the project will address an underserved population or a culturally specific group.

Documentation of partnerships should be included in the form of unique and current letters of collaboration or memoranda of understanding (MOUs). Letters of collaboration and MOUs should provide details about the role of partners in the development of the project, the history of collaboration among the partners, what each will contribute to the project, and the financial or in-kind compensation that will be provided.

A detailed budget and budget narrative or justification should be provided. The required match (except for victim services programs) should be included in the budget and budget narrative/justification. All items in the budget should directly relate to project activities. Additionally, the solicitation package can ask each applicant to verify that it is compliant with all STOP certification requirements.

Notice of Available Funds and Outreach to Potential Applicants

Release of the RFP package should be advertised widely across the State or Territory. Methods for doing so include:

- Posting notice of available funds and the RFP on the agency web site;
- Publishing notice of the RFP on web sites, in newsletters, and in other notices distributed by the STOP administrative agency and other State and Territorial agencies;
- Sending notice directly to professional associations for law enforcement, prosecutors and civil legal attorneys, court personnel, health care providers, and others;
- Sending notice to the State domestic violence coalition, the sexual assault coalition, the Tribal coalition, and any other Statewide agencies addressing violence against women;

- Notifying Tribes that are located within the State (if possible, by sending information about the available funds directly to Tribal law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, victim services, and Tribal leaders or government);
- Providing notice to community-based culturally specific organizations and agencies that work with underserved communities;
- Notifying current and former grantees directly; and
- Announcing the availability of funds at local and Statewide meetings and conferences.

Bidders' Conferences

It can be helpful to offer several bidders' conferences or applicant workshops around the State/Territory after the release of the RFP. These can be particularly beneficial to agencies that are new to the State application process or who have not yet applied for a STOP subgrant. During these forums, applicants can learn about the STOP Formula Grants Program, State or Territorial priorities, State and Federal requirements, required components of the application as well as Federal and State requirements, expectations for subgrantees. The conferences also allow potential applicants to ask questions about processes and requirements.

Application Review

For competitive application processes, it is helpful to use reviewers who have experience with violence against women issues, but who are not STOP administrative agency staff that work directly with funded STOP subgrantees. Members of the planning committee are well-suited for this role and can do so provided there are no potential conflicts of interest with the review of one or more applications. For example, planning committee members should not review applications within the STOP allocation category (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, courts, or victim services) from which they are applying for funds, or any applications with which they have a conflict of interest. Other possible reviewers include staff of other divisions within the agency, or personnel who serve in other administrative agencies.

A conflict of interest form should be reviewed and signed by all reviewers verifying that the reviewer does not have any potential conflicts with the agencies submitting applications that they are assigned to review. The appearance of impropriety should be avoided, and it is best to err on the side of caution and disqualify a reviewer from reviewing and scoring a particular application if there is even the possibility of a conflict.

Reviewer Score Sheets

A reviewer score sheet can assign points to application components that include:

- The extent to which the applicant has identified needs in the jurisdiction, objectives designed to address the needs, and activities that will move subgrantees toward measurable objectives;
- The quality of the proposed project in terms of its ability to improve and enhance the criminal justice system's and/or victim services' response to violence against women in order to meet project objectives;
- The number of victims to be served or to be trained, etc.;
- Support for the application from the domestic violence or sexual assault community-based agency/ies, the Statewide domestic violence and/or sexual assault coalitions, and any culturally-specific community that the proposed project will address;
- Documentation showing support and agreement by law enforcement or prosecution agencies that will receive the benefit of any proposed activity by a victim service organization applying for law enforcement or prosecution funds;
- The feasibility of achieving the proposed results; and
- Evidence of adequate capacity to achieve the proposed objectives and develop and disseminate products.

Determining Fundable Applications

In order to select the scored applications that will be considered by the funding recommendations committee, it is helpful to decide upon a threshold score for consideration of an application as "fundable." For example, if the maximum possible score that can be achieved is 100, you might decide that only those applications that have scored 80 or higher will be considered for an award.

Funding Recommendation Decision-Making

After all applications have been reviewed and separated into fundable and non-fundable groups, you can convene a funding recommendations committee meeting. The role of the funding recommendations committee is to make decisions about the applicant agencies that should receive STOP subgrant awards. The committee can be comprised of the application reviewers, administrative agency staff, members of the planning committee, and/or others with experience and expertise on violence against women issues. Members of the funding recommendations committee should not be present during decisions about applications with which they have a possible conflict of interest. Those with possible conflicts may step out of the room during decisions affecting these applications, or you may elect to exclude them entirely from the funding recommendations process. Your administrative agency may have a policy in place that addresses this issue.

Factors to be considered by the committee during the funding recommendations process include:

- The available amounts in each of the STOP funding allocation categories (law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, discretionary), including the culturally specific set-aside within victim services;
- The scores achieved by applicants;
- Whether any practices described in the application could endanger the safety of victims;
- Whether the proposed projects employ promising practices or evidence-based approaches;
- Whether they are proposing any unallowable activities;
- Past or current performance as a STOP subgrantee or as a recipient of other grant programs;
- Geographic distribution of the potential subgrantees and underserved populations;
- Geographic areas to be served and the current availability of services;
- Whether an application proposes to provide culturally- or linguistically-specific services; and
- Whether the budget is reasonable and adequately compensates all partners.

Geographic Distribution

In terms of geographic distribution, you may find it helpful to divide up the State or Territory into funding regions. You can then create a spreadsheet that organizes the fundable applications by funding allocation category (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, etc.), and by geographic area within each funding category. This will help the committee to decide how to distribute funding around the State or Territory in a way that is equitable, responsive to State/Territorial needs, and fulfills the Federal STOP Grant Program requirements. You can provide guidance to the funding recommendations committee by recommending the number of applications to be funded in each geographic area based on population size, the need for services, reporting rates of the domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, existing funding, and any other factors that require consideration.

Sometimes it is very clear which agencies should receive awards based solely on the scoring and geographic distribution. At other times, though, other factors must be discussed and considered such as when scores are closely ranked or tied or there is a question about the capacity of an organization to meet its proposed goals and objectives. Obtaining the input of the funding recommendations committee in these cases can help to ensure that all perspectives and considerations are taken into account during the decision-making process.

At the conclusion of the funding recommendations committee meeting, you should have a clear set of applications that you will recommend for subgrant awards. In some States and Territories, a board of directors, agency director, or another level of management makes all final decisions. However the process works, you can present a packet of recommendations materials to the decision-maker(s) with a list of recommended subgrantees that includes agency names, proposed award amounts, and project descriptions. Additionally, you may wish to provide a copy of the Federal STOP solicitation, the STOP implementation plan, the State solicitation(s), any relevant reports, and STOP program statutory language.

State Formulas

In their STOP Implementation Plans, States and Territories are asked to describe how they will distribute STOP funds around the State, including how they will:

- Give priority to areas of varying geographic size with the greatest showing of need based on the availability of existing domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the population and geographic area to be served in relation to the availability of such programs in other such populations and geographic areas;
- Determine the amount of subgrants based on the population and geographic area to be served;

- ❖ Equitably distribute monies on a geographic basis including nonurban and rural areas of various geographic sizes; and
- ❖ Recognize and meaningfully respond to the needs of underserved populations and ensure that monies set aside to fund culturally specific services and activities for underserved populations are distributed equitably among those populations.

A handful of States have utilized a formula-based approach to subgrant distribution. There are ways to incorporate a formula into the allocation and award of STOP funds that emphasize priority areas and encourage local jurisdictions to address those areas that have been identified as the most critical by the State or Territorial planning committee. For example, some States have developed a formula for victim services funds that strives for funding parity among projects addressing sexual assault and domestic violence. Another possibility is to develop a formula to give priority to jurisdictions that show higher numbers of arrests and/or prosecutions of offenders.

In some cases, the formula allocates an equal amount of funds to a number of jurisdictions (counties, districts, or other division) around the State and gives those jurisdictions the discretion to determine priorities for the funds based on local needs. This type of formula does allow for local flexibility. However, whenever this type of formula is used, it should also incorporate a way to ensure that the jurisdictions, service areas, culturally specific groups, and underserved communities that State or Territorial planning committees have expressed as priorities. Additionally, when funding decisions are delegated to a local jurisdiction, there may be power differentials in the community that affect decisions, and members of some culturally specific and underserved communities may not be involved in the process at all. Finally, the VAWA requirement that States and Territories develop a STOP Implementation Plan sends a clear message that Congress intended that decisions about priorities, needs, and awards be made at the State/Territorial agency level using input from around the State/Territory. It becomes more difficult for a STOP administrator to ensure that all Federal statutory, regulatory, and grant agreement requirements are being met by all subgrantees. In jurisdictions employing this approach, additional resources should be devoted to monitoring grant recipients to ensure compliance and programmatic success.

Grant Agreements

Once final decisions have been made about STOP subgrant awards, you will have to develop and distribute subgrant agreements to the STOP subgrantee agencies. Subgrantees receiving STOP funds are subject to all Federal requirements contained in the STOP Grant agreement to which the STOP administrative agency is a party (except those provisions that relate solely to the role of the STOP administrative agency as a State/Territorial grantee and administrator of funds).

STOP subgrant agreements should incorporate provisions that articulate all of these requirements.

Subgrant agreements can also incorporate provisions in the form of including special conditions or assurances, that set forth State or Territory-specific requirements on the use of STOP subgrantee funds (as long as they do not contravene Federal requirements or violate State or Federal laws). For example, an agreement can include language about collaboration requirements; reporting and data collection; cooperation with evaluation efforts; attendance at certain trainings or meetings; and notifying the STOP administrator about receipt of new grant awards from OVW discretionary programs, other Federal agencies, State agencies, and private funders.

Annual Progress Reports

State/Territorial STOP grantees are required to collect and maintain data that measures the success of the current efforts undertaken with STOP funds. The STOP administrative agency is responsible for reporting annually to OVW on STOP subgrantees' program activities. STOP administrative agencies meet this requirement through submission of the Subgrantee Annual Progress Report.

Information in the progress reports is critical to the creation of annual reports to Congress, which provide information to members of the House and the Senate about who is being served with STOP funds, STOP-funded activities that are intended to improve the criminal justice system’s response to violence against women and offender accountability, and the kinds of services provided to survivors that are designed to increase their safety. These reports provide important information on which members of Congress base their decisions about future reauthorizations of the Violence Against Women Act and funding appropriations.

Chapter Two: Managing Subgrantees

The management of STOP subgrantees requires STOP administrators to engage in programmatic, financial, and administrative oversight from the time that subgrants are awarded through closeout. As stewards of Federal funds, STOP administrators must adhere to Federal requirements for subgrants including financial management and programmatic oversight.[29] While the Code of Federal Regulations[30] provides the foundation for subgrant monitoring, the details of how it is to be accomplished are left to the discretion of the State or Territory STOP Grant grantee agency.

Many factors influence the methods, frequency, and timing of grant monitoring for States and Territories including:

- State or Territorial statutes and regulations;
- Rules and procedures of the administrative agency;
- Availability of staff resources to conduct monitoring activities;
- The number of new versus continuing subgrantees; and
- The costs, allowability, and feasibility of travel within a State or Territory.

This chapter, which draws upon information from Federal grant monitoring practices and procedures,[31] is intended to provide STOP administrators with examples of monitoring processes that can be adopted in their entirety or tailored for use in their jurisdiction.

The STAAR Project encourages STOP administrators to share monitoring processes, procedures, forms, and tips that are used for monitoring STOP subgrantees. Sample State and Territory monitoring documents are available in the Dropbox folder.

29 Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 66, governs the administration of Federal grants and cooperative agreements. Section 66.40 (Monitoring and reporting program performance) states that "[g]rantees are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant and subgrant supported activities. Grantees must monitor grant and subgrant supported activities to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and that performance goals are being achieved. Grantee monitoring must cover each program, function or activity." 28 CFR § 66.40(a).
30 Id.
31 *OJP Grant Manager's Manual* (Aug. 2007).

This chapter:

- ❖ Offers guidance on monitoring including tools that can be used for monitoring activities, processes and procedures to employ in desk reviews and site visits, and pre- and post-visit tasks; and
- ❖ Includes information about technical assistance for STOP administrators and subgrantees.

Monitoring of Subgrantee Activities

Because each STOP administrative agency is responsible for the programmatic and fiscal integrity of STOP-funded activities within the State or Territory, STOP administrators must ensure that subgrantees comply with all Federal requirements. This can be accomplished through proactive monitoring and by assisting subgrantees in the implementation of allowable and effective programmatic, fiscal, and administrative efforts. Each State and Territory must determine what is reasonable in terms of subgrantee monitoring.

For purposes of this manual, the term "monitoring" is broader; it refers to a range of activities in which a STOP administrator can engage in order to ensure that subgrantee activities and expenditures are appropriate, allowable, and compliant with all State/Territorial and Federal requirements.

Objectives of Grant Monitoring

The objectives of monitoring are to:

- ❖ Ensure that subgrantees are complying with the programmatic, administrative, and fiscal requirements of relevant statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines;
- ❖ Promote the responsible stewardship of awarded funds;
- ❖ Verify that subgrantee programs are consistent with the STOP Grant statutory purpose areas as well as the goals and objectives Stated in the jurisdiction's STOP Implementation Plan;
- ❖ Provide guidance to subgrantees on compliance;
- ❖ Identify any problems and provide advice or assistance in resolution of problems that may impede the effective implementation of programs or that may violate the grant agreement, or governing authority;
- ❖ Observe and verify implementation of promising programs and practices for possible transfer of knowledge to other jurisdictions; and

- ❖ Identify areas in need of technical assistance that can be provided by the STOP administrative agency, the STAAR Project, or another TA provider.

Effective Oversight through Monitoring

The following are the building blocks of effective monitoring:

- ❖ A thorough understanding of the purpose, goals, objectives, timelines, time/task plan, conditions of award, and budget of the grant being monitored;
- ❖ Periodic desk review of files;
- ❖ Ongoing telephone and e-mail contact with subgrantees;
- ❖ Adequate preparation for site visits, including by completing pre-monitoring checklists, and reviewing the grant application, the grant agreement and any special conditions, and progress reports;
- ❖ Knowledge of who are the key programmatic, financial, and supervising personnel to meet with during a site visit;
- ❖ Knowledge of active OVW-funded projects and other relevant activities within the State or Territory;
- ❖ Access to all subgrantee materials needed for complete and effective monitoring; and
- ❖ Documentation of communications with the subgrantee regarding programmatic, fiscal, administrative, or monitoring matters.

Monitoring Processes and Practices – A Brief Overview

There are no specific, Federally-required processes or practices that a STOP administrator must use for the purpose of monitoring STOP subgrantees, other than those specified in the administrative and cost principles sections of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The OVW *Financial Grants Management Guide* incorporates the information contained in the CFR.

The information in this and the following subsections represents one approach to grant monitoring. You may wish to incorporate portions of it into your existing STOP monitoring processes.

There are a number of practices that can be employed to monitor subgrantees. These include:

- ❖ Desk reviews of subgrantee files to check for completeness and compliance with Federal and State/Territory program statutes and guidelines (including the STOP certifications),

State and Federal regulations, and other Federal and State/Territory requirements (e.g., civil rights statutes);

- Financial audits to ensure that expenditures are allowable and consistent with the approved project budget, and budget reviews to ensure that the timing of grant fund expenditure is reasonable and appropriate for the approved project activities and timeline;
- Quarterly or semiannual reports that provide data on activities during the reporting period, progress towards project goals and objectives, and agency self-evaluation materials;
- Scheduled site visits for the purpose of meeting with project staff and partnering agencies; discussing activities and the progress of the project; learning about successes and challenges; verifying that policies and practices are consistent with STOP purpose areas and guidelines; viewing facilities and equipment purchased; and observation of project activities;
- Unannounced visits to monitor funded activities that are conducted in public settings (e.g., staff can visit victim-witness offices, observe prosecutors and civil legal attorneys in court; view courtroom proceedings, and visit law enforcement departments);
- Reviewing documentation of subgrantee work to ensure that practices employed are beneficial to victims and do not endanger their safety (e.g., agency staff can ask to see a number of police reports from funded agencies and training materials developed and used for workshops and conferences supported with STOP funds); and
- Reviewing all products produced with STOP funds.

Agency staff may wish to write up detailed reports of findings from the above activities, highlighting areas in need of improvement as well as promising practices and positive outcomes. Creating templates for these reports can help to standardize and expedite the completion of reports. STOP administrative staff should document any areas in need of follow-up in writing and send notice to the subgrantee agency. A timeline for correction can be established with the subgrantee. The subgrantee agency should furnish documentation of improvements or corrections made or progress towards change pursuant to the agreed-upon timeline.

If a subgrantee does not comply within the time required, the agency must consider taking additional action. Some agencies may already have written policies related to non-performing or poorly-performing (i.e., “high risk”) subgrantees. If such a policy does not exist already, consider establishing one. However, it is also important to be cognizant of the need for extra assistance that the STOP administrative agency may have to provide to new subgrantees. If it is clear that a

subgrantee is out of compliance but is taking measurable steps to improve its performance, mentoring and additional support may be the sole pieces that are needed to help such an agency develop into a promising program. This support can take the form of TA on fiscal and other administrative regulations and guidelines, as well as programmatic issues. The administrative agency can refer subgrantees to the STAAR Project for individualized and tailored technical assistance and referrals to other OVW technical assistance providers.

Types of Grant Monitoring

There are three main types of grant monitoring that a STOP administrator can utilize: programmatic, financial, and administrative. These are defined and discussed below.

Programmatic monitoring addresses the content and substance of a subgrantee program. It includes:

- Review of qualitative and/or quantitative (i.e., performance measures) efforts to determine grant performance, innovation, and contributions to the field;
- Assessment of whether grant activities are consistent with the grant implementation plan and are responsive to grant goals and objectives;
- Analysis of technical assistance needs;
- Evaluation of activities;
- Reviewing contracts and interagency agreements; and
- Assessing the implementation of projects and making necessary modifications.

Financial monitoring includes the general review of financial reports as well as the comparison of actual grant expenditures to the approved budget. STOP administrators should ensure that subgrantees are in compliance with OVW financial guidelines and general accounting practices. They must also make sure that all STOP expenditures are allowable under Federal financial rules and determine whether the funded work falls under one or more of the STOP statutory purpose areas.

Administrative monitoring elements focus on:

- Adherence to grant terms and conditions;
- Complete, accurate, and timely reporting of progress toward grant goals and objectives;
- Documentation in State systems and program monitor files; and
- Compliance with statutes and regulations.

Grant Monitoring Methods

There are several different ways that STOP administrators can monitor STOP subgrantees. These include but are not limited to:

- *Individualized monitoring* via phone, email, mail, or other communication methods that address subgrantee questions about STOP-funded activities, fiscal matters, compliance, or performance.
- *Desk reviews*, which involve a comprehensive examination of subgrantee file materials for the purpose of learning whether a subgrantee has maintained administrative, financial, and programmatic compliance with all applicable rules and regulations related to receipt of a STOP subgrant, and making adequate progress towards grant goals and objectives.
- *On-site monitoring* (i.e., site visits), which takes place when the STOP administrator visits a grantee to verify STOP-funded activity.

The guidance in this manual focuses mainly on desk reviews and on-site monitoring.

Monitoring Frequency and Responsible Personnel

How frequently to monitor each subgrantee agency depends on the type of monitoring conducted as well as additional factors such as the specific needs of the subgrantee or the complexity of the project funded. STOP administrators should consider engaging in some form of monitoring of all subgrantees approximately every six months, and at least once each year. This does not mean that site visits must be conducted annually for all subgrantees. A combination of desk reviews, phone calls and emails, and site visits can be used to build and maintain close communication and ensure compliance and progress toward approved goals and objectives. For example, an administrator may choose to conduct site visits only for all new subgrantees and thereafter conduct annual desk reviews, quarterly budget reviews, and regular use of phone and email communication to ask and answer questions on an informal basis. Subsequent site visits could be reserved for cases in which red flags or issues have been identified. Another scenario could entail conducting site visits on a rotating basis so that each subgrantee agency is visited on a regular schedule (e.g., biannually). Desk reviews, budget reviews, and progress reports can be used to stay apprised of grant activities, ensure good grant fund stewardship and positive programmatic outcomes, and maintain communication with subgrantees about issues in the field and promising practices.

The STOP administrative agency personnel who conduct grant monitoring vary among the States and Territories. Some of the larger agencies maintain divisions or units that are dedicated solely to grant monitoring. In many smaller agencies, STOP administrators or their staff perform all of

these functions. This includes the creation of and updates to programmatic monitoring plans, review of grant monitoring reports, review of monitoring follow-up activity, and creation of common grant monitoring policies and procedures across the STOP administrative agency, including quality assurance.

Planning and Tools for Grant Monitoring

The first step in preparing to monitor subgrantees is to develop a plan for monitoring. This includes decision-making about the forms of monitoring that will be used, and under what circumstances and how often each of the methods will be employed. It may be useful to begin the process by developing a tool that lays out the monitoring plan and allows for record-keeping about monitoring conducted, which subgrantees have been monitored and when, the results of each monitoring phase, and next steps.

Additionally, you may want to consider developing a set of forms or tools that can be used for each type and phase of subgrantee monitoring. This subsection discusses both the plan and tools for monitoring.

Grant Monitoring Plan

A monitoring plan outlines a schedule of grant monitoring activity, the methods that will be used, and the staff responsible for each portion of the plan. Having a plan can help to ensure that you are meeting your monitoring goals, objectives, and timelines.

Any plan should be built upon a set of goals and objectives for a particular set of subgrantees or for a specific period of time. For example, the overall monitoring goal may be to engage in some form of monitoring for 100% of subgrantees using a combination of progress report reviews, financials review, desk reviews, attendance of events, product reviews, and site visits. The objectives can lay out how many subgrantees and under what circumstances each of the methods will be employed. For example, one objective may be to review 100% of progress reports and financial reports, and conduct desk reviews for 100% of subgrantees. You may wish to conduct site visits only for those subgrantees that are in their first year of funding, that have been deemed to be high risk, or that have had one or more specific areas in need of further inquiry post-desk review.

Once the plan has been created, it should be clear which staff members (if more than one will be implementing the plan) will be responsible for carrying out each part of the plan. Develop a system for regular communications with staff about the status of subgrantee monitoring to help keep the plan on track and coordinate the efforts of all those involved in the process.

Once you have created the monitoring plan, it can be helpful to notify all of your subgrantees of the monitoring requirements. This can be done via email, letter, or web site posting. If you have

created the plan prior to execution of grant agreements, you can include pertinent information about the plan in grant agreement provisions. It is advisable to use more than one method in order to ensure that all subgrantees receive notice. You may wish to require signature or initials next to any monitoring provisions in the grant agreement, or a response to a notification email indicating that the subgrantee understands what you will be requiring for monitoring purposes.

Deciding Who and When to Monitor

It may be helpful to use some type of grant assessment tool (GAT) to rate subgrantees and determine which types of monitoring should be used for which subgrantees. A GAT can use a standard set of criteria for prioritizing grants most in need of increased scrutiny or more intensive monitoring, such as site visits.

A GAT can assist with the development and implementation of the grant monitoring plan. It can contain standard assessment criteria, as well as additional specific criteria that will be used to assess subgrantee work. For example, there may be a set of criteria that applies to all STOP subgrantees, with specific assessment criteria that apply to subgrantees:

- That are implementing different STOP purpose areas;
- That fall under different funding allocation categories (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, culturally specific set-aside, prevention);
- That address the different crime areas (i.e., domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking); or
- Other subdivisions or categories of subgrantees, as determined by your State or Territory agency policies and guidelines and the STOP goals for the jurisdiction.

Responses to GAT criteria can be assigned weighted values, and the total assessment value for a grant can be used to determine a monitoring priority.

The monitoring priority level can then be used as a guideline for making a monitoring decision.

Creating and Using Grant Monitoring Tools

Creating and using a standard set of tools can provide you with guidance, forms, and templates to help you conduct grant monitoring and collect data in a uniform way. Examples of tools include:

- Pre-monitoring Checklist – The checklist outlines the activities to be completed prior to conducting a monitoring visit.
- Pre-Site Visit Contact Letter – Customize the letter for different subgrantees, as needed.

- ❖ Desk Review Checklist – Complete either as a stand-alone monitoring activity or as preparation for a site visit.
- ❖ Site Visit Checklist – Complete the checklist when conducting a monitoring site visit or when attending a funded training or other event (e.g., meeting, training, or conference where a deliverable will be presented or used).
- ❖ Site Visit Report – Complete the report after a monitoring visit. Send the report to the subgrantee, at your agency's discretion.
- ❖ Post-Site Visit Checklist – This checklist outlines the activities to complete after conducting a monitoring site visit (e.g., preparation of the site visit summary or report, grant management improvement recommendations, and follow-up correspondence).
- ❖ Post-Site Visit Letter, No Findings – Send this to a subgrantee when there are no findings as a result of a site visit. You may craft a template to meet your needs.
- ❖ Post-Site Visit Letter, Findings/Corrective Action Plan (CAP) – Send to a subgrantee when there are findings as a result of a site visit requesting that the subgrantee create a CAP.
- ❖ Follow-up Letter, Delinquent – You can send this letter to a subgrantee if a response to findings is required but not received.
- ❖ Follow-up Letter, Findings Closed – Send this to a subgrantee when the agency provides acceptable justifications that allow you to close the findings.

Guiding Principles for Effective and Efficient Monitoring

Keep the plan as a record for future use. It will help to facilitate financial monitoring of the same subgrantee. Consult your monitoring plan well in advance of going on-site to ensure that subgrantees are not unnecessarily visited during the course of the year. The monitoring plan should be an evolving document.

Complete all monitoring tasks in a timely fashion. This will assist you in meeting statutory and other STOP program requirements (e.g., proper submission of annual progress reports and financial status reports). It will also help to verify that quality grant monitoring documentation has occurred.

Monitoring Different Agency Types

Law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and courts can have very different organizational, management, and fiscal structures and processes from nonprofit, nongovernmental entities.

Differences among subgrantee agency types can include:

- Resources that the agency brings to the project (including match, in-kind contributions, and personnel);
- Decision-making authority about agency policies, personnel, resources, and programmatic practices (e.g., board of directors, elected official such as a district attorney or county sheriff, chief judge);
- Auditing policies;
- Confidentiality requirements (e.g., community-based advocates are, in some States/Territories statutorily-bound to confidentiality regarding communications with clients, or agency policy requires it and subgrantees are bound by the VAWA confidentiality provision);
- Data collection methods and systems; and
- Fiscal year start and end dates.

Many of the factors listed above will have little to no impact on grant monitoring so long as subgrantee project activities are clearly outlined in the approved grant application and the agency is able to share information that provides evidence of adequate progress toward goals and objectives, and responsible management of grant funds.

One difference may relate to the collection of data for inclusion in the annual subgrantee progress reporting form. Agencies that do not currently collect the set of data that the form requires may have to make adjustments to data systems. Making changes to forms or systems used to collect and store data may be more difficult for some agencies than others, depending on the processes, procedures, resources, and structures that are required to modify those in current use.

Desk Reviews

Desk reviews can operate as a form of subgrantee monitoring on their own, and can also help with the preparations for site visits. They can reveal areas to be followed up on using other forms of monitoring, including site visits. Consider conducting desk reviews once every six months and

a minimum of once per year. It is recommended that you complete a desk review prior to a site visit.

The following are recommended steps to take during the desk review.

Review the Subgrantee File

Ensure that the items listed below are present, complete, properly executed, accurate, and up-to-date. Review relevant materials in order to have a complete understanding of the project objectives, schedule, milestones, and status. Materials to review include:

- The original application and any modifications;
- Official correspondence;
- Signed award documents;
- Results of previous desk reviews;
- Prior site visit reports and previous monitoring reports;
- Completed or draft deliverables including brochures, policies and procedures, curricula, articles, and training materials;
- Evidence that the subgrantee is convening meetings and conferences, and providing trainings as indicated in the approved application, budget, and/or the grant agreement. Examples include meeting agendas, minutes, and participant lists; and
- Requests for programmatic or budget modifications, extensions, supporting documentation, and any approval documents.

Check the grant file to see if any of the above or other necessary materials are missing.

Review Progress Reports

Conduct a review of progress reports. You can use this to help in determining if:

- All reports have been submitted on time. If there are any outstanding progress reports, communicate this to the subgrantee and determine an appropriate date for submission. If a site visit will be scheduled after the desk review, you may want to request the delinquent reports be submitted far enough before the site visit so that you have a chance to review them before the scheduled visit. Once the reports are received, note this in the appropriate database or other tracking system and the desk review report.
- Review progress reports to determine if the reports are complete and contain sufficient information about project status, such as:

- Performance measures and related data;
- Progress towards goals and objectives, and completion of tasks pursuant to the approved timeline;

- Any implementation challenges and any assistance given or corrective action.
- Review the progress reports in conjunction with the financial reports to ensure that the rate of grant funds expenditure is consistent with the project activity level noted in the progress report and the approved timeline.

Review Award Special Conditions

If you have included special conditions,[32] prerequisites, or other time-sensitive provisions in STOP subgrantee grant agreements, review them to determine whether they have been met. If a special condition has not yet been met, you can request appropriate information from the subgrantee to fulfill its requirements.

Review Financial Reports

Conduct a general review of financial reports, as well as a review of grant expenditures compared to the approved budget. This process can include:

- Reviewing the State/Territory equivalent of the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) and determining if it is current and complete;
- Addressing any incomplete or delinquent financial reports with the subgrantee. If a site visit is scheduled following your desk review, financial reports regarding past periods of grant performance should be due before the start of a site visit. Note in the appropriate tracking system and in the desk review report that the corrective action is complete.
- Determining if significant financial irregularities are discovered. In cases where you suspect severe waste, fraud, or abuse, you should promptly inform your OVW Program Manager.

Potential problems to look for on financial reports are:

- Limited or no expenditures;
- Expenditures that are not consistent with the approved timeline;[33] and

32 OVW includes special conditions in STOP awards that prohibit unallowable activities, such as those that may compromise victim safety, and unallowable expenditures. States and Territories are encouraged to include similar prohibitions in their subgrant agreements.
33 Disproportionate expenditures do not always indicate a problem. However, you should follow up with the grantee to discuss expenditures.

- ❖ No reporting of program income, if applicable.

When reviewing financial records to see whether expenditures are reasonable and allowable, check for:

- ❖ Unreasonable expenditures. Reasonable expenditures are items purchased that are necessary to the project and that do not exceed the lowest available cost for the item needed. One way to ensure that purchases are reasonable is to require that subgrantees submit written estimates or quotes prior to purchase of equipment or supplies that are over a certain dollar amount (e.g., $250);

- ❖ Unallowable expenditures. Allowable expenditures are those costs that are allowed under Federal and State laws and regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Office of Management and Budget circulars, Federal Acquisition Regulation, State regulations, etc.), as well as under STOP guidelines; and

- ❖ Expenditures do not appear to be in alignment with the program objectives and approved budget. You can make inquiries during a site visit or contact the subgrantee. If you do not plan to make a site visit, you can ask for documentation (e.g., price quotes) and descriptions, the purpose of the purchase, etc.

Review Subgrantee Drawdown History

Another aspect of financial review includes a check of the subgrantee's drawdown history. If it appears that funds are being drawn down too quickly, this could be a sign of inappropriate expenditures. If funds are not being drawn at all or are being drawn down very slowly, this could indicate poor progress or could a management issue. You may need to direct the subgrantee to revise the financial report or remove the questionable cost(s). In some cases, a subgrantee may have to either return excess funds to your office or appropriately offset the next drawdown.

Using the results of the desk review, you can determine if a site visit or other intensive monitoring is necessary. If evidence indicates that a site visit is necessary for a particular subgrantee, you may want to plan one even if you had not originally planned for it.

Site Visits

Depending on your monitoring plan, you may have to schedule a number of site visits during each grant year. Planning and preparation prior to departing for a site visit can be extremely helpful in ensuring that you will receive the information that you need during the visit. There are times when a site visit is planned and implemented fairly quickly in the case of a desk review or other monitoring process that reveals the necessity of a visit. In those cases, you may have to schedule a site visit on a short timeline. For this reason – as well as to help create uniform site visit

processes and ensure that the same kinds of data are collected among all visited subgrantees – it is useful to create a set of forms and tools for use in preparing for and conducting a visit, as well as generating a report.

Below are some steps you may wish to take when preparing for a site visit.

Review Background Materials

In order to understand whether a subgrantee is making adequate progress towards its approved grant goals and objectives, it is important to review reference materials and reports created by the organization or agency, the subgrantee's organizational structure, and materials and reports created by other STOP administrative agency divisions or departments. You may also wish to consult with other State or Territorial agencies to learn about the results of any monitoring that they conducted.

It will be helpful to your planning to learn if another division within your agency has recently conducted a site visit or has one planned. If one has been conducted, review the prior site visit report. You may want to contact staff who are planning to monitor the same subgrantee to ensure they are aware of any findings or issues that should be addressed. This will help to avoid duplication of efforts, and can maximize monitoring efforts while minimizing the burden on the subgrantee.

Additionally, review the subgrantee's organizational chart or list of key personnel in the grant application. This will help you to understand the major players involved in the project as well as the directors and other personnel that should be included in the visit for protocol reasons.

Conduct a Desk Review

See **Desk Reviews,** above, for recommended desk review policies and procedures.

Schedule Site Visit or a Conference Monitoring Visit

After determining the need for a site visit or to monitor a conference or other STOP-funded event, contact the subgrantee to arrange a date and time for the site visit or conference monitoring visit. Request participation of the key personnel involved in programmatic and fiscal work on the STOP-funded project. Work with the subgrantee to develop an agenda that addresses your objectives for the visit, as well as any items that the subgrantee would like to discuss. Allow adequate time in the agenda for each of the site visit objectives, and include the names of individuals who will participate. Request that the subgrantee schedule entrance and exit interviews with the director of the organization, or a designated representative for the award(s).

Notify the Subgrantee

Provide as much notice as possible so that the visit can be scheduled for a time when all necessary representatives of the subgrantee organization or agency will be present and available. You may wish to telephone or send an informal email to the subgrantee to start the process of scheduling the visit, and follow up with a formal letter (sent via mail or email) that outlines the purpose, goals, and objectives of the site visit, and an agenda. Include a list of the documents that you will want to examine and a general agenda for the visit.

Gather Materials to Take to the Site Visit or Other Monitoring Visit

At a minimum, bring:

- The site visit agenda;
- Your government identification;
- Business cards;
- A list of publications or products that relate to the subgrantee project;
- The subgrantee's application for funding;
- The award documents and grant agreement, including any special conditions;
- The most recent progress and financial reports; and
- The subgrantee project budget.

You may also wish to take electronic or paper copies of the GFMD Financial Guide, applicable regulations, STOP program statutes, program guidance, and the STOP solicitation through which the project was funded, and the current State/Territory STOP Implementation Plan. You may want to arrange for computer and Internet access at the subgrantee site to facilitate information access during the visit.

Site Visit Checklist

A site visit checklist is an essential tool for use when conducting a site visit. The checklist should serve as a reminder of all of the topics that need to be examined during the visit. This includes services provided, STOP-funded personnel, organizational structure, the office or building, programmatic work completed in comparison to approved goals and objectives, and fiscal management of grant funds.

In addition to the standard topics and questions to be covered during the site visit, you may also wish to prepare and note in the checklist questions and reminders that are tailored for individual subgrantees. If there are questions that remain unanswered or items that were not obtained

during the site visit, note it in the checklist and ask to receive the materials for information requested by a specific date.

Site Visit Processes and Procedures

During the site visit, you will conduct a number of tasks related to administrative, programmatic, and financial aspects of the STOP subgrantee project. Plan to discuss specific issues related to progress, observe project activity, and assess planned versus actual progress.

In addition to completing a site visit checklist for on-site visits, you should complete the checklist for monitoring conducted at the event site where a project deliverable is being presented. These include conferences, meetings, trainings, and other STOP-funded meetings.

Consider how you will capture information that you learn during the visit. For example, you may want to take handwritten notes, record discussions using a handheld digital recorder, or take notes on a laptop directly into the checklist or other form.

Conduct Entrance Interview

An entrance interview is used to set the tone and establish expectations for the site visit. Plan to meet with the main subgrant contact, the agency director, financial and accounting staff responsible for reviewing invoices, and any project personnel responsible for managing and implementing STOP-funded activities. During the interview, you may wish to explain that the purpose of the site visit is to ensure compliance with STOP regulations, assist in resolving problems, define TA needs, review evaluation efforts, and discuss any other concerns or questions that you or the subgrantee may need to raise.

Review financial records. One of the most important aspects of the on-site visit is the examination of fiscal-related materials. Follow up on any financial items identified as requiring further review during the desk review (e.g., financial status reports, unallowable expenditures, drawdowns, cost sharing/match, and rate of expenditures). Then, compare the approved budget to actual costs.

Conduct Administrative Review of the Grant

If you will be visiting the location where the grant award file is kept, check that the file contains the following:

- The approved grant application;
- A signed grant agreement;
- All grant-related correspondence;
- Assurances, certifications, and other standard forms;

- LEP plan; and
- Evidence that the subgrantee is in compliance with all Federal requirements, including Civil Rights provisions.

Check the subgrantee grant file to ensure that they are in compliance with statutory requirements and relevant policy guidelines.

Site Visits and Non-Disclosure of Client Records

A STOP administrator may want to review the records of a funded program to fulfill State/Territory agency grant monitoring policies and procedures. In order to comply with VAWA confidentiality requirements, no identifying information about victims may be viewed during this process. Steps intended to protect victim confidentiality must be taken prior to the site visit. STOP administrators may wish to set out required practices at the beginning of the funding period that establish expectations for victim confidentiality, including how it must be maintained during site visits and other monitoring processes. For example, funded programs can be asked to maintain a log of services provided that tallies services but does not identify victims. An alternative to this could involve a STOP administrator indicating in advance of a site visit that review of sample records will be part of the agenda during the site visit, or that the program should prepare a report with aggregate data. The disclosure of identifying data can put victims at risk, violate STOP funding requirements, and run counter to State/Territorial, professional/licensing, and agency/organization confidentiality requirements.

Conduct Programmatic Review of the Grant

Programmatic review involves an examination of the substantive work on the project. Look at the following:

- Do progress reports reflect goals outlined in the grant application and what has been planned?
- Is adequate progress being made towards the goals and objectives outlined in the application?
- Is there evidence that reported activities have occurred, and were reported accurately?
- Are project deliverables being produced in a quality and timely manner?
- Are project milestones being achieved according to the agreed-upon schedule?
- Are there barriers to meeting the goals and objectives? Can you offer technical assistance through your office or another provider in the State or Territory or through the STAAR Project?

Maximizing Site Visits

Site visits are an essential monitoring method, but can also be time-consuming and costly for administrative agencies. To make the most of time spent on-site with subgrantees, consider devoting a portion of the site visit to gathering additional information that can be helpful to the State's or Territory's STOP work. Examples include:

Input that can be incorporated into State/Territorial STOP implementation planning work.

- Details about possible promising practices.
- Information about possible non-compliance with STOP certification requirements that the subgrantee has observed in the jurisdiction.
- Information about emerging and ongoing issues for survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the service area or jurisdiction.
- Administrative and programmatic challenges faced by local programs.

Additionally, site visits can also serve as opportunities to build upon your relationship with subgrantees. Spending time talking with subgrantee staff can serve to open the lines of communication so that agency personnel may be more likely to contact you with challenges or issues in the future, ask questions, or apprise you of successes. Some STOP administrators have found that it is easier to rectify problems that arise if they have already established a solid working relationship with a subgrantee because there is a history of communication and the subgrantee may feel comfortable talking with you.

- Could the program benefit from exposure to national trainings? You may wish to keep a particular subgrantee in mind for LINK (Locally Implementing National Knowledge program of the STAAR Project) events.
- Are grant activities consistent with the purposes and goals of VAWA and the STOP Formula Grants Program? Do activities seek to hold offenders accountable and/or protect victim safety?
- Do any activities compromise victim safety?
- Is programmatic progress reasonable in comparison to the rate of expenditures?

Conduct an Exit Interview

The exit interview is used to summarize the process and results of the site visit. Use this time with project staff to review:

- Any outstanding issues and areas requiring follow-up;
- Next steps for both you and the subgrantee;
- Timelines for any action either of you will need to take; and

- Technical assistance that will be available to the subgrantee.

Post-Site Visit Activities

There are a number of tasks that you can complete after a site visit to help both you and the subgrantee to stay on track. These include preparing a letter and a site visit report, and completing the grant monitoring tool. Keep all of these on file for at least the length of time that your State/Territory agency requires.

Prepare the Site Visit Report

Complete a site visit report as soon as possible after returning from a site visit. The purpose of the report is to document the results of the site visit including challenges, areas requiring technical assistance, and innovative or promising practices.

Include in the report:

- Subgrantee agency/organization name and grant number;
- Date of the site visit;
- Names, titles, and brief description of funded project roles of individuals who participated in the site visit;
- Purpose(s) of the visit and key issues and questions to be addressed;
- Details about the findings of the administrative, financial, and programmatic reviews, including answers to questions that were addressed during the visit;
- Descriptions of any new issues or challenges identified;
- Next steps for both STOP administrative agency staff and the subgrantee, including a timeline for completion;
- Technical assistance requested and offered; and
- A complete summary of the site visit including an opinion about progress, issues identified previously and at the visit, and any conclusions based on site visit findings.

Send a Follow-up Letter to the Subgrantee

It is recommended that you prepare and send a post-visit letter to the subgrantee within 45 calendar days after the site visit. In the letter, you can thank the subgrantee for participating in the visit, reiterate any outstanding issues, list next steps along with dates for completion, details about TA, and any other information that you would like to include, and reiterate the timeline for follow-up work. It can also include information about technical assistance that you, an agency

in your State or Territory, the STAAR Project, or another OVW technical assistance provider will provide to the subgrantee.

If a serious problem has been identified, you may wish to request a corrective action plan (CAP) from the subgrantee. The CAP can address legal, financial, programmatic, or other issues. The CAP should describe the issue to be addressed, steps that must be taken by the subgrantee, the personnel responsible for carrying out each step, and the deadlines for each step.

Any correspondence submitted by subgrantees in response to the site visit, site visit report, and CAP should be placed in the subgrantee file.

Follow up with the Subgrantee Regarding the Site Visit or CAP

If necessary, follow up, pursuant to the agreed-upon timeline, to check in about information that you expect to receive from the subgrantee, information that you will forward to the subgrantee, and technical assistance. This includes communicating about:

- Incomplete or inaccurate subgrantee award files;
- Delinquent or incomplete progress and/or financial reports;
- Drawdown issues that require additional drawdowns to be made or the return of funds;
- Collection of performance or progress data;
- Accurate records of equipment purchased with grant funds; and
- Technical assistance to be provided by your office or another entity.

Document the steps taken by subgrantees to resolve issues so that they can be reported to OVW and any State or Territory agencies, as appropriate and necessary.

Working with Nonresponsive Subgrantees

You may want to set general guidelines for when a subgrantee could be considered nonresponsive. After identifying an issue, you can set a timeframe (e.g., 30, 45, or 60 days) within which a subgrantee begins to take steps to resolve it. This does not mean that an issue must necessarily be completely resolved, but rather that the agency has taken meaningful action by the deadline that you provide. If the subgrantee does not respond or begin to take steps, you may wish to then contact the subgrantee via e-mail or letter and request a response within a short timeframe – e.g., 10 business or 15 calendar days). If you still do not receive a response, you may then take additional action, including discussing possible consequences with supervisors within your agency and notifying OVW about the situation, if it could possibly affect your ability to fulfill OVW or other Federal requirements.

High-Risk Subgrantees

Most States and Territories have guidelines that they follow when a particular subgrantee does not meet performance expectations. When subgrantee activity becomes particularly problematic, they may be considered "high risk" by the State/Territory. Designation as a high-risk subgrantee may be based on:

- A history of unsatisfactory performance;
- Financial instability;
- Accounting systems that do not meet State/Territorial standards;
- Non-compliance with the terms of and conditions of previous awards;
- Having an open audit or not meeting the recommendations of an audit within the required time period;
- Having significant non-compliance issues identified through normal grant monitoring processes;
- Being subject to a State or Federal investigation in which non-compliance issues were noted that require corrective action; or
- A lack of responsibility demonstrated in any other way.

Closing of Issues/Findings

If a subgrantee provides a justification for desk review or site visit findings, and this justification is accepted by you, notify the subgrantee that findings have been closed. If you previously notified your OVW program manager about the issue, you should provide notice of the resolution.

Providing TA to Subgrantees

Some STOP administrators have significant substantive knowledge about issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking and frequently offer TA related to challenges that a subgrantee may be experiencing. Others may feel more comfortable seeking TA from an agency with expertise on violence against women issues. STOP administrators are encouraged to seek assistance from the State domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, the Tribal sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions, and other organizations and individuals who have experience and expertise in these areas.

The STAAR Project can provide TA on both programmatic violence against women-related topics and administrative issues. The project can also facilitate the provision of TA by other OVW TA providers, when appropriate.

One of the key components of subgrantee management is to make technical assistance available to those projects that need or want additional information or guidance. STOP administrators can offer technical assistance to a subgrantee that is:

- New, in order to discuss grant requirements including any special conditions in the grant agreement;
- Experiencing challenges in meeting the goals and objectives of its STOP-funded efforts;
- Looking for guidance in project implementation including information about promising practices, sample forms, model policies, curricula, or training materials; or
- Engaging in activities that may compromise victim safety.

TA can:

- Provide direction to subgrantees who are experiencing unanticipated challenges and help them meet their goals and objectives;
- Educate practitioners about the standards adopted and employed elsewhere for addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking;
- Assist with critical thinking about relevant issues for current and future problem-solving;
- Help subgrantees adopt or adapt promising practices that have been developed and implemented in another jurisdiction;
- Engage subgrantees in discussions about emerging issues and creative solutions and interventions; and
- Catalyze the creation, implementation, or adaptation of promising practices.

Part V: Facilitating Collaborative Efforts at the State/Territory and Local Levels

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO PART FIVE

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

- Collaboration vs. cooperation and coordination
- Characteristics of collaborations

CHAPTER TWO: PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Obtaining "buy-in" from community members
- Engaging with underserved and marginalized communities
- Inclusion of diverse communities in collaborative work
- Benefits of collaboration
- Spotting opportunities for collaboration
- OVW Discretionary Grants in Your State/Territory (text box)

CHAPTER THREE: BUILDING AND STRUCTURING A COLLABORATION

- Collaboration models
- Creating a collaboration agreement (text box)
- Structuring collaborative initiatives
- Confidentiality in the context of collaboration (text box)
- Determining collaboration membership
- Collaborative work by STOP administrators
- Utilizing administrative tools to promote and achieve collaboration (text box)
- Avoiding conflicts of interest in collaborative work (text box)
- Technology to assist with collaboration
- Additional resources

"Trying to leave an abusive relationship is extremely challenging and extremely scary. However, thanks to the funding provided by VAWA I was not alone. The police officers that worked with me were well trained and domestic violence was treated as a serious matter. They provided me with support and protection while I needed it most. There wasn't ever a concern that went unattended or a question that went unanswered. When my son was three and became fascinated with the sound of police sirens, I told him that every time he sees a police officer to smile and say hi because when he was a little baby they saved his and mommy's life.

I stand before you and I can proudly say that thanks to the dedication, persistence, and support that I received from the services made available to victims, thanks to VAWA, I am confident, I am strong, and I am in control of my life."

- Elvia Sanchez, Survivor (from remarks made at the 2010 STOP Administrator and Coalition Director Meeting, San Francisco, California)

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Collaboration is key for successful application for and implementation of the STOP Program. VAWA specifies that States and Territories receiving STOP Grant funds, as well as subgrantees, must "develop a plan for implementation and shall consult and coordinate with" a number of entities.[34] These are:

- The State sexual assault coalition;
- The State domestic violence coalition;
- The law enforcement entities within the State;
- Prosecution offices;
- State and local courts;
- Tribal governments in those States with State or federally recognized Indian tribes;
- Representatives from underserved populations, including culturally specific populations;
- Victim service providers;
- Population specific organizations; and
- Other entities that the State or the Attorney General identifies as needed for the planning process.

34 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(2).

Beyond the Federal requirements, it is also regarded by experts and experienced practitioners as critical to the success of any community effort to improve the criminal justice system's response to violence against women.

This Part:

- Defines collaboration, distinguishes it from other types of cooperative work, and provides characteristics that are typical of collaborative work;
- Offers possible strategies to obtain "buy-in" from community members;
- Discusses engagement with underserved and marginalized communities;
- Explores the benefits of collaboration;
- Describes opportunities for collaboration;
- Identifies collaboration models and provide considerations for model selection;
- Considers which stakeholders to include;
- Offers examples of collaborative work in which STOP administrators can engage; and
- Provides tools and resources to help facilitate and guide collaborative work.

Chapter One: What is Collaboration?

The term "collaboration" is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as working jointly with others, especially in an intellectual endeavor.[35] An additional definition that is relevant in this context is to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected.[36]

The *Collaboration Handbook*[37] defines collaboration in this way:

> *Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.*[38]

Collaboration vs. Cooperation and Coordination

While the terms collaboration, coordination, and cooperation are often used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings in the context of community work to address violence against women.

The *Collaboration Handbook* distinguishes among the terms cooperation, coordination, and collaboration as follows[39]:

Cooperation is characterized by shorter-term informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. Cooperative partners share information only about the subject at hand. Each organization retains authority and keeps resources separate so virtually no risk exists.

Coordination is characterized by more formal relationships and an understanding of missions. Those involved focus their longer-term interaction on a specific effort or program. Coordination requires some planning and division of roles and opens communication channels among

35 Merriam-Webster.com.
36 Id.
37 Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Fieldstone Alliance, 1994).
38 Id. at p. 24.
39 Id. at p. 22.

organizations. Authority still rests with everyone's organization, but everyone's risk increases and power can be an issue. Resources are made available and resources are shared.

***Collaboration* is** a more durable and pervasive relationship. Collaboration brings previously separate organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on all levels. Authority is determined by the collaborative structure. Risk is much greater because each member of the collaboration contributes its own resources and reputation. Power can be an issue and can be unequal. Partners pool or jointly secure resources, and share results and rewards.[40]

Characteristics of Collaborations

In his essay *Collaboration and Community – A Report Prepared for the Pew Partnership for Civic Change*,[41] Scott London offers a number of characteristics that collaborative endeavors typically share:

- The problems are ill-defined or there is disagreement about how they should be defined;
- Several stakeholders have a vested interest in the problems and are interdependent;
- The stakeholders are not necessarily identified *a priori* or organized in any systematic way;
- There may be a disparity of power and/or resources for dealing with the problems among the stakeholders;
- Stakeholders may have different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problems;
- The problems are often characterized by technical complexity and scientific uncertainty;
- Differing perspectives on the problems often lead to adversarial relationships among the stakeholders;
- Incremental or unilateral efforts to deal with the problems typically produce less than satisfactory solutions; and
- Existing processes for addressing the problems have proved insufficient.[42]

40 This information is also available within the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. Available at http://www.wilderresearch.org.
41 1995
42 Collaboration and Community at pp. 2-3.

Return to Table of Contents

Chapter Two: Partnering with Community Members

Obtaining "Buy-In" from Community Members

According to the definition of collaboration, it involves a commitment on the part of all members to developing a common vision and to working together to develop goals, objectives, and strategies designed to achieve that vision. However, anyone who has participated in a collaborative effort that includes members with diverse interests and perspectives knows that some members may be more reluctant than others to be involved. Others may be fine with joining an initiative for a brief period but less motivated to solve longer-term problems. These individuals may not see the possible positive outcomes for the entire community, those they serve, their agency, or themselves if they change the way that they or their agency operates. If they do see the potential benefits, they may not believe that they will be able to effectively create change. They may fear that the barriers are too great to be overcome, even if the effort is shared with others. These beliefs may be held both by those who hold power in the community and play a significant role in forming and employing the policies, procedures, and practices that are currently used, as well as by those who are members of communities that have been largely underserved or marginalized.

Present the Benefits

It can be difficult for an individual or agency to justify joining a collaborative effort that may not appear to offer much in return. One way to help potential partners overcome some of the barriers to fully participating in an initiative is to help them see the benefits to their agency and their work. For example, if the goal of a particular State-level collaborative is to update the protection order registry in order to ensure that protection orders are available for verification more quickly throughout the State and the United States, a police department may wish to be involved because it knows that a new system will likely make its officers' work easier and will reduce the possibility of civil liability due to non-enforcement of an order. Highlighting the ways that the work of the collaborative initiative can lead to increased resources, lightened workload, improved services for survivors, or decreased frustration with current processes can help reluctant potential partners see why membership could ultimately be worth the effort. Focusing on the benefits of joining the collaborative work can be an especially important strategy if there

is a history of contention between the potential member and your agency or another that is part of the group.

Offer Examples of Success

You can help potential collaborative members to see that the goals and objectives of an initiative are achievable. To illustrate this, you may want to use the examples of similar work accomplished by other communities or States. You will need to do your homework ahead of time so that you can present information about details of the work and the benefits to the State or community. If possible, speak directly with those who were involved in the example efforts to learn about the processes used, challenges faced, and how they worked to solve problems. Seeing what another collaborative initiative has accomplished can serve as effective motivation for those who are on the fence about participating.

Others may not be certain whether participation in a collaborative initiative focusing on domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking is consistent with their ethical requirements. They can also be concerned that, even if participation does not violate any particular rules, their work with a collaborative group could have the appearance of impropriety. This question has been raised by judges in many communities from the time that the first violence against women collaborative initiatives were launched. What judges in many jurisdictions have concluded is that participation is consistent with, and does not violate, ethical canons. Moreover, involvement in a community group that addresses ways to respond to crimes of violence does not signify bias for or against any party in any future criminal or civil case over which a judge may preside. In Illinois, for example, Family Violence Coordinating Councils, which operate in each judicial district, are chaired by a judge who not only participates actively in decision-making but also plays a leadership role.

For more ways to engage potential partners, see *Benefits of Collaboration*.

Engaging with Underserved and Marginalized Communities

For those communities that have been traditionally underserved or marginalized, it may be challenging for them to agree to membership in a collaborative initiative. Even if the benefits to a particular community of their involvement in and achievement of the initiative's goals appear to be obvious to you or others, the factors to consider may be vastly more complex for a particular underserved community. Their cultural and language needs may have remained largely unaddressed by victim services and the legal system until recently. They may justifiably lack trust in the criminal justice system, which they may perceive as more eager to arrest, prosecute, and imprison community members than it is to seek justice for victims who are members of their community. Local criminal justice professionals or others in the community may play a role in identifying individuals who are in violation of immigration laws and reporting them to Federal

immigration officials. There may be distrust that has developed over many generations between members of a State jurisdiction and a neighboring Tribal nation.

Building trust with underserved and marginalized communities will be an essential first step before expecting community members to jump into a collaborative project and pledge their support. The trust-building process is one that can take time and that requires patience by all parties. Many of the steps will have to be tailored to the specifics of a particular situation including the goals and objectives of the collaborative initiative, partners, defining features of the relationship of the dominant community and the underserved or marginalized community, and the needs of all potential and current initiative member communities. However, there are some affirmative, objective steps that you can consider taking when working towards building and maintaining trust with underserved and marginalized communities. For example, the members of the collaborative initiative can agree to:

- Understand and learn as much as you can about the history of programs serving marginalized communities - such as programs serving communities of color - and more mainstream programs.

- Incorporate cultural competence[43] as a universal goal among all members (individuals and agencies) and work towards increasing access to services, the criminal justice system, and the civil legal system by survivors from underserved and marginalized communities.

- Work towards goals and objectives and engage in activities that do not create unintended negative consequences for underserved and marginalized communities. For example, many States follow Department of Health and Human Services standards for advocates, such as training requirements for advocates. Many of these were developed with a mainstream approach in mind. If a training is not relevant to communities of color, many advocates from those programs will not attend, or if they do, they are often left confused as to how to apply the approaches to their communities. This can be particularly true for sexual assault advocates. The requirements of these standards make it difficult for community-based programs to qualify for funding. An important first step toward undoing unintended consequences can be to review current standards and engage in a dialogue with community-based programs in marginalized communities as to how the standards affect their work. Additional steps towards can include (1) working with community-based programs and coalitions to either revise the standards or, in this example, the trainings, in cases where changes cannot be made, and (2) providing funding for training by community-based organizations for other community-based organizations so that they may meet the standards and become eligible for funding.

43 Cultural competence, as we are using it here, involves becoming culturally aware and developing a deeper understanding of culture. It is widely accepted that this is not a static process but one that is evolving and requires continuous learning.

- Ensure that procedures followed by the initiative allow for equal voice at the table during discussion, deliberation, and decision-making processes.
- Ask communities what is important to them, what is in place already, what is working for them, and what challenges they are experiencing.
- Learn from survivors from marginalized communities. There are a great number of ways to gather and learn this information – including focus groups, listening sessions, face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys, town meetings, and small group meetings. Community-based victim service organizations serving marginalized communities in your area will likely have engaged in one or more of these and may be able to assist with your processes should you seek additional information from community members and survivors.

Inclusion of Diverse Communities in Collaborative Work

It is critical to involve communities of color, culturally specific communities, and traditionally marginalized communities (some or all of which may overlap, depending upon the State, Territory, or community) in the creation and implementation of collaborative initiatives. Community-based organizations, faith-based groups, Tribal leaders and representatives, and community leaders are among those to consider inviting to the table. A diverse membership can ensure that:

- The perspectives of survivors from all affected communities and populations are considered;
- Issues specific to particular communities can be addressed by the group;
- Appropriate outreach to and engagement with all communities is conducted by member agencies;
- Data collected by a particular community but not captured elsewhere is considered;
- Advocacy and service accessibility by all survivors is a key consideration; and
- Culturally competent services and interventions are designed and implemented.

Benefits of Collaboration

The STOP Formula Grants Program requires and encourages collaboration in STOP-funded activities. Beyond the Federal requirements, there are a number of practical reasons why collaboration is a worthwhile endeavor.

Collaborative projects can:

Build upon work that has already been started. Informal partnerships or other joint work begun by front-line agency personnel (e.g., to strengthen the law enforcement or prosecution response to individual victims by conducting more effective post-incident investigations) can frequently be moved forward by engaging in a more formalized collaboration that involves individuals who have agency decision-making authority. Inter-agency partnerships that involve directors, managers, or those who have the authority to make decisions on an agency's behalf can often accomplish work that front-line staff cannot. For example, they can formalize and promote departmental or agency policies, enter into interagency agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOU), and require that staff participate in training sessions.

Increase access to and sharing of information and resources. Pooling resources such as grant dollars, staff time, equipment, and supplies can help agencies to accomplish what they may not have been able to do by relying solely upon the resources of their own agency. For example, a community collaborative that receives a STOP subgrant to develop and implement a coordinated community response may decide to apply some of the funds received to support a Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistant within the local law enforcement agency[44], who works with other agencies in the community to improve the enforcement of protection orders, as well as within the law enforcement agency. In-kind or other resources contributed by a collaborating partner can be used to leverage grant funds and multiply the positive outcomes of grant-funded work. Additionally, sharing information about processes, procedures, and policies, as well as specific cases (ensuring that confidential information about individual survivors is not shared absent an appropriate, signed release) can aid in issue identification, problem-solving, and the development of improved responses.

Enhance knowledge and skills, and increase capacity. Collaborative work can support the ability of partners to accomplish their objectives and day-to-day work through formal or informal cross-training, discussion and adaptation of techniques and approaches, agreements that support joint response or allow for alternatives to traditional response, and shared financial resources awarded by funders who encourage collaboration.

Ensure that strategies and activities are tailored to the community. Strategies, policies, procedures, and new ideas can be developed by the group, thus ensuring that they are driven by and address the unique characteristics and needs of the community. Processes, procedures, and policies that are developed by individual agencies can also receive approval by the community through membership by presenting them for discussion and comments, and incorporating suggestions. Providing such opportunities increases community trust in government agencies, and supports and promotes transparency.

44 Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants serve as liaisons between victims and law enforcement for the purpose of improving protection order enforcement. See 34 U.S.C. § 10441(b)(12).

Allow consideration of diverse perspectives and ideas. Membership that includes all those affected by the work of the collaboration – such as representatives of Tribal, deaf/hard of hearing, disability rights, mental health consumer, communities of color, and culturally specific communities – ensures that all viewpoints are considered when making decisions. It also sends a message that input from all relevant communities is important and will be incorporated.

Improve relationships and grow networks. Engaging in dialogue and side-by-side work with those with whom members previously only had cursory contact (e.g., within the context of criminal cases) can lead to greater understanding of each other's work including challenges that members face, the strengths and limitations of community agencies, and the laws, regulations, and policies that govern their activities. Additional benefits include connecting with others working on violence against women issues and getting to know agency points of contact.

Support the empowerment, growth, and leadership of community members. Members whose perspectives were not fully considered by others before formation of the collaboration can feel empowered and emboldened to move forward in the work, take on new challenges, and learn new leadership skills.

Lead to innovation. The "two heads are better than one" adage is often proven true in the context of collaborative work. A group-driven process that allows for frequent discussion and refining of ideas can lead to new and unique approaches and practices that individual agencies may not have developed on their own.

Increase the chances that efforts will be institutionalized and sustained long-term. When efforts are created, supported, and promoted by multiple disciplines, there is a greater likelihood that others will accept and institutionalize approaches, policies, and practices promoted by the group. Additionally, funders are increasingly aware that project success is often dependent on interdisciplinary work. Projects with the ability to demonstrate that they are engaged in meaningful collaboration and have achieved a measure of success through it are more likely to receive support from funders who value this way of working.

Increase STOP Grant match by applying member volunteer hours. Unpaid time contributed by collaboration membership can be applied as an in-kind contribution toward the required match for STOP Formula Grant funding.

Spotting Opportunities for Collaboration

Collaboration can be initiated whenever it is determined that a need exists to assess challenges, develop strategies, improve responses, design systems, create documents, or engage in other work that considers and incorporates the perspectives and interests of more than one discipline or community. Each collaborative project is unique and should be tailored to the needs of the

particular community/ies, State, Territory, and/or Tribe(s) involved, and its challenges, needs, and resources.

Collaborative work can be initiated:

- At any level – local, county, State/Territory, multi-State/region, or national. Its membership can represent a wide variety of disciplines and sectors of the community or it can represent a handful of agencies. It can include local-level representatives, administrative agency personnel, national partners, or any combination of these.
- By any discipline or group – including advocates, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, culturally-specific communities, faith-based groups, and State/Territorial administrative agencies.
- For short-term projects with specific end dates, to meet an objective, or to engage in long-term work.
- For a variety of reasons including:
  - To reform, improve, or coordinate the response to survivors and criminal justice system policies and practices.
  - To develop and promote interagency protocols that guide the responses of multiple agencies.
  - To create criminal justice agency policies that prescribe how law enforcement, prosecutors, probation, court personnel, and others respond to sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking.
  - For the creation, promotion, training on, and implementation of agency or Statewide/Territorial policies, regulations, forms, and legislation.
  - To collect data or conduct a needs assessment.
  - To consolidate or leverage funding.
  - To build broad-based support for new or ongoing projects.
  - To work together on demonstration and pilot projects.
  - To engage in short- and long-term strategic planning.

OVW Discretionary Grants in Your State/Territory

In some cases, an agency or organization receiving a STOP subgrant in your State or Territory may also be a recipient of an OVW discretionary grant. It may be useful to learn about the work that STOP subgrantees, as well as others in the State/Territory, are implementing with OVW discretionary funds and how this work dovetails with or enhances the goals and objectives of the State/Territorial STOP Implementation Plan. Check the OVW web site for information about OVW discretionary program awards made in your State or Territory. If the information is not available on the web site, you may need to submit a FOIA request to learn about other OVW grantees in your State or Territory. Another way of staying current with discretionary awards is to ask all subgrantees to provide you with notice of the application for and receipt of OVW discretionary grants. This can be included as a provision of the grant agreement.

Chapter Three: Building and Structuring a Collaboration

Collaboration Models

There are a number of different approaches to collaborative work, each with its own unique structure, processes, and strengths. The model employed can be tied to the particular issues to be addressed and the agency(ies) that drive(s) the work, as well as the way that the members wants to interact with one another. Care should be taken to choose the model that will work best for the particular needs and strengths of the community as well as the goals and objectives that the collaborative work is designed to fulfill. More than one model can be used within a community for different purposes.

Below are several examples of models[45]:

Community Partnering. In this model, the community-based victim service agency usually develops a strategic plan for community action, and directs and oversees the work of the collaboration. The victim service agency partners with other organizations and individuals including criminal justice system agencies, schools, legal services, and others to meet specific objectives. Membership is driven by the needs identified by advocates, survivors, and the community. Work groups or committees that draw upon the expertise of the community are established, and work plans are developed collaboratively.

Community Organizing. This model typically involves victim service program advocates or community activists engaging the community in an initiative aimed at finding solutions for a specific issue or to raise awareness about a problem.

Coordinating Councils, Task Forces and Committees. These coordinating bodies are organized by advocates, governmental agencies, or representatives of the criminal justice or civil legal systems to improve communication, improve the response to survivors, address a particular issue, engage in planning, and/or develop policy.

45 From Malefyt, M., Littel, K., and Walker, A. *Promising Practices – Improving the Criminal Justice System's Response to Violence Against Women*. Washington, D.C.: STOP Violence Against Women Grants Technical Assistance Project. (1998), pp. 231-232.

Response Teams. This model is characterized by an interdisciplinary team formed for the purpose of responding to incidents of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Members of the team – including law enforcement, advocates, and sometimes others – coordinate their initial response and follow-up with survivors.

Community Intervention. This model involves the establishment of intervention projects that oversee and monitor the criminal justice system and community response to domestic violence or sexual assault. Projects undertaken by collaborations utilizing this model include evaluation of each discipline's response, brokering of relationships among disciplines, and promoting and facilitating policies and protocols.

Consolidated Service Centers. This model offers a place for victims to report crimes, seek advocacy, and consult with attorneys in one location that is staffed by law enforcement, prosecution, community-based domestic violence or sexual assault advocates, and/or civil legal attorneys.

Training and Technical Assistance Projects. Providing individualized technical assistance and/or curricula and training are the goals of this model.

Creating a Collaboration Agreement

Once the membership has been identified, it may be tempting to jump directly into the substantive issues that will be the focus of the initiative. Before doing so, though, it is wise to put in place a strong foundation that will govern the processes by which the work will proceed. The membership should consider all of the topics and questions listed above in the Choosing a Collaboration Model section and come to an agreement on all of the major areas. You can then draw up a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that memorializes what has been agreed upon (e.g., purpose of the initiative, roles, responsibilities, tasks, contributions, and goals) and have all members sign it. If representatives of certain agencies cannot make policy decisions that impact their agency, have someone with that level of authority sign the MOU, as well.

Structuring Collaborative Initiatives

The structure, functions, membership, and processes of a collaborative initiative can be as important as the goals and objectives that it wishes to meet. Before selecting a collaboration model, it is important to think through how it will best function, who will be invited to participate, how decisions will be made, how conflicts will be resolved, and a number of other factors. Below

are some areas for consideration,[46] along with questions that may help guide the decision-making process.[47]

When selecting a collaboration model and choosing members, think about the following topics and questions:

Purposes of the Collaborative Project

- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What are the goals and objectives of the initiative?
- Are the goals and objectives short-term, discrete, or specific, or are they long-term, overarching, or more general?
- Is there a firm timeline to be met or is the project open-ended?

How to Avoid Duplication of Existing Services and Initiatives

- What initiatives are already present in the community, State, or Territory?
- Are the existing projects working towards the same or similar goals or objectives as the new one?
- Can efforts be combined or should a separate collaboration be started?
- How is the new collaboration distinct from existing ones?

Who Should Be Involved

- What are the goals and objectives?
- Who in the State/community are working towards similar or parallel goals and objectives?
- In which agencies is change needed?
- Who has access to critical information?
- Who has the power to institutionalize change?
- Who are the policy-makers?
- Who are the community leaders (consider faith communities, neighborhood organizations, culturally-specific communities)?

46 Id. at 232 (sub-headings in bold/italicized text). The questions under each sub-heading are original to the *Handbook*.
47 See also *Collaboration Handbook*, supra.

- Are there organizations or individuals that are not traditionally included in such initiatives but who have perspectives to share, such as those that are culturally specific or population specific?
- How will the voices of survivors be heard – including those from underserved, unserved, and inadequately served communities? In addition to the State/Territory domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, are there are other individuals or groups that can be involved – including Women of Color caucuses, Tribal coalitions, or grassroots groups and organizations that are still in the formative stages?

How Formal or Informal the Initiative Should Be

- Should the members enter into an agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU)?
- Should specific roles be assigned?
- Should committees be formed or will the collaboration create structure on an ad hoc basis?

Resources Needed to Begin and Sustain the Collaboration

- What resources are needed to start work?
- Can the initiative sustain itself with volunteer membership?
- What can members contribute now?
- What steps must the collaboration take to secure additional resources?
- What are the possible sources of additional support?

Current Issues and Power Dynamics Among the Disciplines and Within the Community

- Are there any outstanding issues that could affect the work of the initiative?
- Have recent incidents catalyzed the formation of a collaboration?
- How are the relationships among the members defined?
- Are there power disparities among the members?
- How will a balance of power be attained and maintained to facilitate the work of the initiative?
- What steps will be taken to ensure that all members are able to express the needs of and challenges faced by their agency or community?

- How might current community issues challenge the work of the collaboration and what steps will be taken to overcome such hurdles?

How the Work will be Facilitated and Accomplished

- What structure will facilitate the work?
- Will quarterly, monthly, or weekly meetings be held, and if so, where? Will the meeting venue be rotated among member agencies?
- Will work be assigned by collaboration leadership or will subcommittees define themselves and their work?
- What technologies will be employed (e.g., email groups and lists, online discussion groups, whiteboard software, drop boxes and multi-user editing features, scheduling tools, etc.)?

How Decisions will be Made

- Will all members have an equal voice or will a particular agency or an executive committee have ultimate decision-making authority?
- Will a voting process be used or will informal agreements be reached?
- Will the majority rule or will consensus be required?
- What level of decision-making will be delegated to committees?
- How will conflicts about decisions be resolved?
- How will conflicts of interest be anticipated and avoided?

Confidentiality in the Context of Collaboration

Local agencies that work together as part of a multidisciplinary initiative to enhance services or advocacy for survivors of domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking often cite improved communication as one of the goals of the collaboration. They seek to share information with one another for the purpose of developing the best responses possible to survivors, and to enhance the safety of survivors and their children.

Victim service agencies must comply with an array of privacy and confidentiality laws and other requirements designed to protect the safety of survivors. Statutes in many States and Territories provide for advocate-client privilege and/or confidentiality, which usually means that non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence and/or sexual assault programs cannot disclose information about help sought and services provided without specific client permission. You should consult with an attorney familiar with laws in this area to learn what is required and what is allowable in your jurisdiction.

Agencies that receive VAWA funds – either as a grantee or a subgrantee – are required to strictly conform to requirements governing confidentiality and privacy of information about survivors served with VAWA funds. Specifically, programs cannot disclose personally-identifying survivor information without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person.* Non-personally identifying aggregate data may be provided to comply with reporting, evaluation, or data collection requirements. The only allowable exemptions are where release is required by a statutory or court mandate.

Additionally, as part of an application for STOP funding, the State/Territorial applicant must provide a 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." 42 U.S.C. § 3796gg-1(i)(D).

**42 U.S.C. § 13925(b)(2). For more information about confidentiality in collaborative settings or under VAWA, in general, contact the STAAR Project.*

* Maintaining Confidentiality: Obligations and Best Practices, PowerPoint created by the Safety Net Project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence and Julie K. Field, Esq., the Confidentiality Institute (presented 2/8/2011 at the annual STOP Administrators Meeting in Miami, Florida).

Determining Collaboration Membership

The decisions about who to invite into the process are closely tied to the collaboration model selected, goals and objectives, scope of work, and its reach (local, metropolitan area, Statewide/Territory-wide, or multi-State/regional).

When deciding who to include in a collaborative initiative, consider the following:

- Who is directly involved in the issues that are outstanding?

- ❖ Who has an interest or stake in the outcomes?
- ❖ Who will be directly or indirectly affected by any decisions that are made?
- ❖ Who has access to information needed in order to accomplish goals and objectives?
- ❖ Who has decision-making authority or direct access to those who do?
- ❖ Who are the community organizations or groups to whom survivors turn for assistance?
- ❖ Who are the organizations, groups, and/or individuals who are traditionally involved in such endeavors?
- ❖ Who are the organizations, groups, and/or individuals who are not traditionally involved but who support the work and are trusted within the community?
- ❖ Who are the organizations, groups, and/or individuals to whom culturally specific and population specific members of the community turn to for assistance and support?
- ❖ Are there organizations, groups, and/or individuals who have been invited to participate in anti-violence against women initiatives in the past but who have not yet participated? What are the barriers to participation and how can they be overcome?

For the latter category (i.e., those who have been invited in the past but who have not yet actively participated), think about the ways in which outreach or communication can be done differently. For example, if only phone calls were placed, emails sent, and/or invitations mailed, consider requesting a meeting at their agency or another location that is convenient for them. Not only does this provide an opportunity to see their facilities and the community or neighborhood in which they are located, learn more about their work, and discuss face-to-face the possibility of working together, it demonstrates your genuine interest in their contributions to the work of the collaborative initiative, the larger community, and the State/Territory.

Stakeholders to consider inviting include the following[48]:

<u>Victim Services and Survivors</u>

- ❖ Survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- ❖ State Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions
- ❖ Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions
- ❖ Community-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs

48 This is list is non-exhaustive list that is not intended to substitute for list of entities that must be involved in the STOP planning process. For more information, see the STOP Implementation Planning Toolkit on the STAAR Project website, and the STOP Formula Implementation Plan Checklist on the OVW web site.

- ❖ Tribal domestic violence and sexual assault programs
- ❖ General crime victim service organizations (i.e., those who provide services for victims and survivors of crimes beyond domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking)

Other community-based organizations and groups

- ❖ Housing advocates
- ❖ Organizations serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) communities
- ❖ Organizations serving culturally specific or immigrant communities
- ❖ Disability rights advocates
- ❖ Mental health consumer advocates and peer support providers
- ❖ Gun control advocates
- ❖ Faith-based groups
- ❖ School-based agencies
- ❖ Child advocacy organizations

Law enforcement

- ❖ Local/municipal police and village safety officers
- ❖ Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants
- ❖ Tribal police
- ❖ Bureau of Indian Affairs officers
- ❖ County sheriffs
- ❖ State police
- ❖ Representatives of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (BATF) local field office
- ❖ State and local law enforcement associations
- ❖ Campus police
- ❖ School resource officers

Prosecution

- Local district or State's attorneys
- Victim-Witness specialists
- Tribal prosecutors
- County attorneys
- State Attorney General's office
- U.S. Attorney's office
- Prosecutors' associations

Civil legal system

- Legal services
- Private attorneys
- Community-based legal advocates

Courts/Judiciary

- Judges, hearing commissioners, and other judicial officers
- Tribal judges, hearing commissioners, and other Tribal court judicial officers
- Court administrators
- Clerks of court
- State administrative office of the courts
- Judges' associations
- Probation and parole departments

Corrections

- State, county, and local adult prisons and jails
- Youth detention facilities

Databases and registries

- State, Territorial, or Tribal protection order registry administrator/operator
- State, Territorial, or Tribal criminal history database administrator/operator

- Court records database administrator/operator
- National Instant Criminal Background Check System point of contact
- State/Territorial firearm background check administrator/operator

State administrative agencies

- STOP Grant administrator
- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants administrator
- Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) administrator
- Rape Prevention Education (RPE) administrator
- Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (FVPSA) administrator
- Administrators of other relevant State and Federal grants (e.g., Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne/JAG))

Health and mental health care providers

- Private medical practices and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)
- Hospitals and clinics
- Indian health centers or other Tribal health care providers
- State or Territorial department of public health
- Local and county departments of public health
- University health care
- Public and private mental health care providers

Others

- Private foundations that provide significant support to violence against women projects
- Schools
- Any organization or other entity serving culturally or linguistically specific communities
- Any organization or other entity serving or supporting Tribal members (e.g., urban Indian community centers)
- Representatives of the Tribal council or other Tribal governmental structure

- ❖ Researchers from universities or other settings
- ❖ Local business community members

Collaborative Work by STOP Administrators

Collaboration is often thought of as an activity in which local service providers and others engage in order to increase the effectiveness of their efforts. However, a number of opportunities for collaboration are uniquely available to STOP administrators. Engaging in interdisciplinary work at the State/Territory level can reap similar benefits to collaboration at the local level, but also have the potential for increased impact because of the reach of administrators' work, and that of their collaborating partners.

Collaborations that STOP administrators can engage in include:

- ❖ Working with the State/Territory Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) administrator, the Rape Prevention Education (RPE) administrator, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) administrator,[49] public health department, and the human services agency to leverage funding, coordinate needs assessments, planning, and funding approaches, and to ensure that funded projects are not duplicative or overlapping.
- ❖ Creating an interdisciplinary STOP Implementation Planning Committee composed of representatives of law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services including the State or Territorial domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, Tribes located within the State, culturally specific communities, communities of color, and others (see also *Determining Collaboration Membership* within this section). Examples of ways that the committee can work with the STOP administrator include:
  - ♦ Providing input on the community's needs, challenges, and strengths; and
  - ♦ Assisting with conducting a needs assessment, data analysis, and interpretation of results.
  - ♦ Determining Statewide/Territory-wide priorities and the types of subgrant programs to be funded;
  - ♦ Reviewing draft solicitations/requests for proposals (RFPs);
  - ♦ Reviewing applications and make funding recommendations;

49 Coordination of the STOP implementation plan with any existing State plans created under VOCA, RPE, and FVPSA is required for STOP grantees. 34 U.S.C. § 10446(c)(3).

- Monitoring subgrantees, including by participating in site visits;[50]
- Participating in regular meetings for the purpose of reviewing data; discussion of strengths, challenges, and emerging issues; and decision-making about new approaches;
- Engaging in subcommittee work on specific topics or to respond to new/urgent issues; and
- Sharing information about educational resources, training opportunities, and promising practices.

❖ Engaging with Statewide and Territory-wide domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions to:

- Identify and address emerging and ongoing challenges for survivors;
- Keep lines of communication open about criminal justice system responses to survivors;
- Seek input on the design of RFPs and funding programs;
- Learn about the strengths and needs of victim service providers;
- Hear about other (i.e., non-STOP-funded) work that the coalition is engaged in, as well as work that other States are engaged in; and
- Stay informed about compliance with STOP certification requirements around the State/Territory.

❖ Working with local agencies (including subgrantees) within the State or territory to:

- Provide cross-training and foster peer-to-peer problem-solving and support;
- Develop and distribute a Statewide needs assessment and the STOP Implementation Plan;
- Share information about substantive strengths and challenges;
- Develop responses to challenges including issues related to STOP certification requirements; and
- Develop and convene conferences and trainings.

50 Where allowable by administrative agency policy, State/Territory regulations, and/or legislation.

Utilizing Administrative Tools to Promote and Achieve Collaboration

STOP administrators have a variety of tools available that they can use to encourage subgrantees to collaborate with partners at the local, county, or Statewide/Territory-wide levels. The approach you take is dependent upon a number of factors including the State's/Territory's strengths, needs, recent events, statutes and regulations, and the political context. If collaboration has been emphasized by the STOP administrative agency for a period of time already, you may want to mandate a degree of collaboration for all subgrantees. If there has been little prior emphasis on collaboration in the State or Territory but the agency is making a renewed effort toward it, you may want to start more slowly by introducing the concept and supporting opportunities for growth before making it a requirement. Below are some examples of the ways that administrative processes and resources can play a role in helping subgrantees intensify their efforts towards working together to achieve safety and justice for survivors.

Provide a model for collaboration at the State/Territory level by ensuring that there are meaningful opportunities for input by and among all disciplines and communities during the STOP planning process, and by regularly working with your STOP planning committee, State/Territory administrative agencies, and other key multidisciplinary committees or task forces addressing domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Work with agencies administering related State/Territorial funding programs, and seek information about other Federal funding received at the State, Territory, Tribal, or local levels that may be related to, or overlap with, the STOP statutory purpose areas.

Include language in the STOP subgrantee solicitation/RFP that encourages or requires applicants to consult with non-profit, non-government, community-based victim service providers when planning or designing a proposed project. You may determine that requiring subgrantees to convene a certain number of meetings will work best or that all applicants must include memoranda of understanding (MOUs) as part of their application. You may elect to assign extra points to applications that demonstrate a level of collaboration. Another option is to require that an application be submitted by lead agency on behalf a collaborative group and that the application must demonstrate participation in the development of the application and outline activities in which the partners will be involved during the project period. To further highlight the importance of these application components, reiterate and emphasize them during grant-writing workshops and bidders' conferences.

Include provisions in subgrantee grant agreements that require collaboration to continue throughout the project period. Give examples of how this should be accomplished. Provide accompanying materials stating that subgrantees will be required to provide updates on collaborative work in progress reports.

Utilize grant monitoring site visits as opportunities to assess the level of collaboration that subgrantees are engaged in, and to emphasize expectations that real collaboration is required – (i.e., it allows for equal input and participation by all parties and is not collaboration in name only or for purposes of meeting minimum grant requirements).

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest in Collaborative Work

A conflict of interest (COI) can occur when a member's interests negatively influence judgment related to the work of the group. A COI can be problematic because of the actual impact that it can have on outcomes, but even the appearance of a COI should be avoided. If there is a perceived COI, it can decrease the credibility of an initiative, its goals, and the products that it develops. It is imperative that potential COIs be identified before they create problems, and that solutions are developed and put into place immediately after receiving notice that a COI may exist.

One way to avoid a COI is to circulate to each member a disclosure form for signature that requires members to agree to reveal any potential conflicts to the group. Provide examples so members will know what is expected of them with regard to disclosure.

Check with your agency's legal department to see what else might be required with regard to avoidance and disclosure of a COI and circulate information to your subgrantees.

Technology to Assist with Collaboration

The face-to-face (FTF) meeting has long been considered an essential ingredient in any collaborative initiative. Larger workloads, longer hours, smaller travel budgets, telecommuting or remotely-working staff, fewer staff to cover work, and agency rules that prohibit or restrict travel, however, have made FTF meetings increasingly rare. The FTF meeting has not become obsolete, but it must be used strategically. Many initiatives collaborate remotely on a regular basis and save FTF meetings for those times that are best served by having all members in the same room. For day-to-day work, there are a number of technological tools that collaborative members can use to promote clear communication while conserving personnel time and grant dollars. Below are a few ideas for how partnering organizations can collaborate remotely using technology.

Email: Email is widely used for communicating, and it is often employed in lieu of telephone calls. It is most optimally used for quick messages and logistical planning – e.g., developing processes, sending documents for review and later discussion, and setting up conference calls or other meetings.

Meeting Planning Tools: These are online services that allow for expeditious meeting set-up (e.g., Meeting Wizard) and allow meeting conveners to hear back quickly about the availability of participants.

Conference Calls: This mode of communication is often used for groups to discuss plans and for soliciting feedback in a way that allows all participants to be privy to the others' comments. When

discussing an existing document, this method is best when employed in conjunction with webinar technology or online document collaboration tools such as Google Docs. There are a number of conference call services that are free to the convener (but a toll call for participants), or dial-in services that are low-cost for the convener.

Video Conferencing: Some State or Territorial governmental agencies have access to video-conferencing technology that allows video conferencing between two or more sites. If this is not available or use is cost-prohibitive, there are other options available. For example, Skype is a free video conferencing service that is compatible with most computers that are equipped with a web camera.

Document Sharing Drop boxes and Other Online Collaboration Tools: These are online collaboration tools (e.g., Dropbox, Google Docs, Basecamp), which allow viewing and changing of a document, spreadsheet, video, or image by multiple users in real-time. Some also allow for on-the-spot creation of a new document.

Additional Resources

Community Assessment and Strategic Planning

- Asset-Based Community Development Institute, School of Education and Social Policy, DePaul University. https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx

The ABCD Institute offers a number of asset mapping tools and other asset-based community development resources.

- "Criminal Justice System Assessment Tools: Checklists for Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and the Courts to Use in Developing Effective Responses." (in Littel, K., Malefyt, M., Walker, A., Buel, S., and Tucker, D. Assessing the Justice System Response to Violence Against Women: A Tool for Law Enforcement, Prosecution and the Courts to Use in Developing Effective Responses. J. Kuriansky, Ed. Washington, DC: STOP Grants Technical Assistance Project (Feb. 1998)). NCJ No. 221760.

- Community and Economic Development, Department of Human and Community Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. https://web.extension.illinois.edu/cce/ced/.

This web site contains numerous tools including a community self-assessment survey, online strategic planning, a community survey development tool, a conflict management tool, and an online project scheduling tool.

- Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, *Strategic Planning Toolkit*. https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/resources/dspStrategicPlan.cfm

The Toolkit offers guidance and tools for assessment of an organization's ability to serve victims of crime.

Conducting Meetings

- Developing Facilitation Skills. *The Community Toolbox*. Available at: http://bit.ly/N3rYsg.
- How to Conduct an Effective Meeting. (Tool from the VOCA Administrators' Toolkit (National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, Feb. 2007)). *Available upon request from the STAAR Project.*

Coordinated Community Response

- Jackson, M. and Garvin, D. *Coordinated Community Action Model* (2003). https://csswashtenaw.org/ada/professionals/coordinated-community-action-model/
- Coordinated Community Response. (in Malefyt, M., Little, K., and Walker, A. *Promising Practices – Improving the Criminal Justice System's Response to Violence Against Women*. Washington, DC: STOP Grants Technical Assistance Project (1998)). http://1.usa.gov/1jxkTey
- Sadusky, J. *Working Effectively with Police – A Guide for Battered Women's Advocates* (Rev. 2001). https://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/working_effectively_with_police.pdf
- STOP Violence Against Women, a Project of The Advocates for Human Rights, *Coordinated Community Response.* http://bit.ly/1e1gJqd

This piece focuses upon the benefits and components of a coordinated community response.

Establishing and Maintaining a Collaboration

- How to Conduct Effective Meetings (from *VOCA Administrators Toolkit: Tools*, National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators February 2007).
- Winer, M. and Ray, K. Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey. St. Paul: Fieldstone Alliance (1991).

The Community Toolbox. http://bit.ly/1fb76Ki

The Community Tool Box is a global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities. It offers more than 7,000 pages of practical guidance in creating change and improvement.

- Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Creating a Collaboration Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. https://www.kcsdv.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CollabAgreeorMOU.pdf

This tool, developed with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, provides guidance on developing an agreement or MOU for collaboration on anti-violence against women activities.

- Office on Violence Against Women, Sample Memorandum of Understanding. https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ovw/legacy/2008/10/21/sample-mou.pdf

- Piercy, D. Skills for Successful Collaborations – A Skills Building Curriculum in Negotiation, Collaborative Mindset, Strategic Thinking, Meeting Facilitation. Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (2000). https://vawnet.org/material/skills-successful-collaborations

- Wilder Research Center, *Collaboration Factors Inventory*. http://bit.ly/N3sxlJ

The Inventory looks at twenty research-based collaboration success factors and makes recommendations for areas of improvement.

- Creating and Maintaining Coalitions and Partnerships section of the Community Tool Box, available at http://bit.ly/1bYIz9r

- The Wilder Research Center *Collaboration Factors Inventory* is based on twenty factors that look at the history, goals, communication, membership characteristics, process and structure, and resources of a collaborative initiative. http://bit.ly/I8Ek09

- Community Tool Box Part C, *Promoting Interest and Participation in Initiatives* http://bit.ly/17VpsbD

- Community Toolbox *Training for Conflict Resolution* http://bit.ly/1enfzZ2

Reaching Out to Underserved Populations

- Warrier, S. *Outreach to Underserved Communities – A Curriculum in Five Modules.* Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (2000). https://vawnet.org/material/outreach-underserved-communities

Technology to Assist with Collaboration

- Cobb, J. 15 Free Online Collaboration Tools. http://bit.ly/1gwvpml

This article lists and describes free online collaboration tools and applications.

- Google Groups http://bit.ly/1ftHGDY

This free online tool provides a place to host online or email discussions, upload files, and create customized group web pages.

- Meeting Scheduling Tools
  - Doodle http://bit.ly/1f6Bbfn
  - Meeting Wizard http://www.meeting-wizard.com/
- Online Whiteboard
  - Scribblar.com http://bit.ly/1f6BdE3

    Scribblar is a free, online whiteboard and collaboration tool.
- Skype http://bit.ly/1gNXSDu

Skype allows for free calls via the Internet and free video conferencing.

- Survey Tools

Survey Monkey http://svy.mk/1jLBkHm

Zoomerang http://bit.ly/1eJi0Cv

Survey Monkey and Zoomerang offer free basic packages for online surveys