

Proposal
Implementation Plan for
Recovery Act Stop Violence Against Women Formula Grant
Funds

*The **Recovery Act Stop Violence Against Women (STOP VAW) Formula Grant** program is authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5) (the "Recovery Act") and by 42 U.S.C. 3751(a).*

The STOP VAW grant program is a federal grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. Each State is eligible to receive funding according to a formula, the funds are granted to a "State Administrative Agency" (SAA) which is responsible for oversight and management of the funds. The SAA for Connecticut is the Office of Policy and Management.

To further the purposes of the Recovery Act, OVW encourages States to target Recovery Act funding to hiring and retaining criminal justice and victim services. The scope of the OVW Recovery Act STOP Program is defined by fourteen statutory purpose areas and identified program activities
<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/docs/recovery-stop-program.pdf>

Connecticut is eligible to receive \$1,819,310 in federal OVW funds from the Recovery Act. This is a 25% state match grant with a 24 month grant period. According to the federal program regulations, the funds must be allocated as follows:

- o At least 30 percent will be allocated for nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services, of which at least 10 percent is to be distributed to culturally specific community-based organizations;*
- o At least five percent will be allocated for courts;*
- o At least 25 percent will be allocated for law enforcement;*
- o At least 25 percent will be allocated for prosecutors*

These funds are intended to stimulate economic growth while improving responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Given that the Recovery STOP VAW grant is a "one-time" award, the federal agency has encouraged the State to propose activities and deliverables that can be accomplished without additional USDOJ and state funding.

*The state is required to submit an **Implementation Plan** specific to the purposes of the Recovery Act. The State must develop the Recovery Act **Implementation Plan** through deliberative consultation and coordination with nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services programs including sexual assault and domestic violence programs, faith-based organizations and community-based organizations.*

We are seeking comment on the following proposed types of projects to be implemented with the support of the Recovery STOP VAW funds. The final Implementation Plan will be submitted to the federal agency for review and approval.

Proposed Projects and Uses

1) Expand Staff at Domestic Violence Shelters for 24/7 coverage

In response to the need for greater access to shelter-based services for domestic violence victims, we propose to create 3-4 FTEs positions to provide expanded staffing and coverage in domestic violence shelters. Currently, the DV shelters around the state have varying hours and levels of staff coverage. Some are unable to provide access to shelter-based services on a "24/7 basis". The new positions will enable 3-4 shelters to increase their hours, staff and service levels for the duration of the grant period.

2) Competitive Grants: Teen Dating Violence Outreach Initiative

We propose to offer a competitive grant opportunity to create an outreach and intervention initiative focused on teens whom are victims of dating violence. Research shows that as many as one in three teens will experience dating violence and two-thirds of them will never report it. Dating violence is not only dangerous but it can have a long-term impact on the emotional and physical health of teen victims with consequences that follow into their adult lives. Employment opportunities will be created in community-based organizations to design the initiative, manage implementation of the outreach and intervention activities, develop media and materials and deliver services and activities.

Components of the initiative may include;

Development and delivery of specialized training for school staff to help respond to teens experiencing dating violence.

Technical assistance to schools in developing guidelines for responding to complaints of dating violence, involvement of law enforcement, services for victims, appropriate consequences for abusive students.

Development and delivery of a media campaign focused on Parents to inform them about dating violence warning signs, how parents can help keep their children safe and resources for help if violence is suspected in a teen's relationship.

Development and delivery of a media campaign focused on Teens to inform teen victims about their rights to safety inside and outside of school, how and where to seek help and what to expect for an appropriate criminal justice system response and consequences for students who abuse.

3) Competitive Grants: Training on Abuse and Victimization in the Digital World

We propose to offer a competitive grant opportunity to develop and deliver a training program on abuse and victimization in the digital world. In today's world, electronic devices are critical tools for communication. However, in the wrong hands, tech devices, cell phones and websites can be turned into tools of abuse.

Abusers can easily extend their controlling behavior into the digital world; fear and intimidation through high-tech channels are just as dangerous as abuse in the non-digital world. Yet, many adults working in the criminal justice system are unfamiliar with how technology is used to stalk and victimize; and they need to learn how to intervene and assist victims. Employment opportunities will be created for community-based organizations to design the training curriculum, assess training needs, manage implementation of the training, develop media and materials and deliver training services.

Components of the project may include;

Training for Practitioners: Train community-based providers and criminal justice staff on how technology is used to abuse and stalk victims, dangers of stalking, and how to respond to victimization.

Technical Assistance to criminal justice staff and providers on how to use technology to reach out to victims and provide web-based resources to inform victims on criminal proceedings, pursuing civil justice, seeking crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy support.

4) Competitive Grants: Technical Assistance for Community-based Organizations

Many small community-based organizations are providing valuable social and health services to specific cultural populations yet they may lack the skills and expertise to help victims in addressing sexual violence and domestic abuse issues. We propose to develop a technical assistance project that will enable small organizations to build their capacity and skills in providing culturally competent assistance to under-served communities. A service provider with expertise in sexual assault and domestic violence issues will collaborate with small organizations that represent under-served populations to develop a linguistically and cultural appropriate training and outreach project. Employment opportunities will be created for the technical assistance provider and the community organizations to collaboratively design and deliver the training.

Components of the initiative may include:

Development and delivery of an outreach campaign for specific under-served populations to inform victims of where to get help and how to use the criminal justice system.

Development and delivery of culturally competent training for service providers on how to help victims, how the criminal justice systems works, resources available to victims, criminal proceedings, offender sanctions and victim's rights.

5) Establish a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program (SANE/SAFE) to implement HB 6361:

We propose a pilot project that will provide centrally coordinated staff and services to ensure that adult and adolescent sexual assault victims have rapid access to forensic exams. Currently, some area hospital lack practitioners with the expertise and training to perform forensic exams on sexual assault victims in a timely way. Often, victims must wait several hours until a qualified nurse or physician is available to collect the forensic evidence. A coordinated pool of qualified examiners will provide victims with the appropriate level of care, as well as ensure that evidence is collected according to a uniform procedure leading to better investigations and successful prosecution of offenders. Employment opportunities will be created for a community-based provider to serve as the Coordinator for the project to manage the development of the services and collaborate with the criminal justice agencies.

Components of the Project include:

Training for sexual assault forensic examiners.

Development of agreements with hospitals, site standards, data collection procedures, oversight of practices and protocols.

Centralized dispatch procedure to send “on-call” qualified examiners to area hospitals needing services.

6) Expand Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Units

We propose to establish two new sexual assault victim advocates positions to provide support services to victims whose offenders are in prison or in the community. The advocates will serve as liaison with parole units, prisons and police to keep the victim informed of the offender’s placement in the community or in prison, and provide parole or police officers with information concerning risk to victims. Employment opportunities will be created for two positions in victim service provider organizations to provide service to victim as well as provide law enforcement officers with information to ensure community safety.

7) Develop Training for professionals with a role in criminal court cases

We propose to create a training project for Court staff, prosecutors and other professionals involved in criminal court cases including agencies and organizations that provide offender sanctions programs. Employment opportunities will be created for an organization to collaborate with the criminal justice agencies to assess training needs, design and deliver the training.

8) Preserve Specialized Prosecutor Positions

We propose to preserve six prosecutor positions that are dedicated to prosecuting domestic violence and sexual assault cases. The current level of state and federal grant funds is insufficient to support the salaries, fringe and indirect costs associated with these positions.

