



**Recovery STOP Violence Against Women Grant
Program
Implementation Plan
Federal Fiscal Year 2009-2011**

**Department of Children and Families
Domestic Violence Program Office**

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I. Introduction

Florida's STOP funding is administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families, Domestic Violence Program Office (the Department). Florida's Recovery STOP Implementation Plan will follow the same organizational structure set forth in the STOP Implementation Plan tool designed by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and will incorporate seven of the fourteen federal statutory program purpose areas under the OVW Recovery Act Stop Program 42 U.S.C & 3796gg(b).

- *Training law enforcement officers, judges and other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence;*
- *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 sexual assault and domestic violence;*
- *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 sexual assault and domestic violence;*
- *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 crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence;*

- *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;*
- *Maintaining core victim services and criminal justice initiatives, while supporting complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families;*
- *Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services programs, including sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence 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 crimes against women, including crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence.*

Since 1995, when the STOP Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Formula Grant Program provided funding to the state of Florida, a multidisciplinary approach to combating domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking has been a number one priority. Florida’s STOP program’s primary goal is to develop a collaborative approach among law enforcement, prosecution agencies, the courts, and victim service providers to increase victim safety through arrest and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking crimes.

Given Florida’s geographic size, expanding infrastructure, and diverse population, the state proposes to utilize recovery stimulus funding to competitively bid for additional services, as well as enhance existing programs that continue to demonstrate promise and success in the field of training law

enforcement, prosecution, and judicial providers of services to victims of domestic violence.

II. Description of Planning Process

Part of Florida's Recovery Implementation planning process involved an online survey that was administered to 303 statewide providers, including prosecution services, law enforcement, victim services providers, courts, and tribal representation. The survey tool emphasized the overall intent of the VAWA STOP American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding in developing and maintaining employment of criminal justice and victim services personnel, supporting strategies that create and preserve jobs, and promote economic growth while strengthening law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim services response to violent crimes against women.

Additionally, the survey was sent to the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, the Florida Prosecuting Attorney's Association, and the Office of the State Courts Administrator to share with their providers. The survey was sent via email as well as posted on the Florida Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program website on March 13-19, 2009. A copy of the survey is attached for reference.

The survey asked respondents to provide answers to three (3) questions:

- (1) Provide program information indicating what victim populations they serve.
- (2) Rank 12 areas according to need in providing services to victims and holding offenders accountable; (1-highest need, 5-lowest need): Court Advocates, Direct Domestic Violence Services, Direct Sexual Assault Services, Legal Services for Victims, Retain; or Hire Staff, SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner), SART (sexual assault response team), Specialized Law Enforcement Services, Specialized Prosecution Services, training for Community/Professionals, Training for Agency Personnel, and Work Preparation Training for Victims.
- (3) Provide comments on what is Florida's greatest need in terms of providing services to victims and holding offenders accountable.

Of the 303 surveys administered, there were 58 responses, with most respondents reporting from direct victim services programs, and prosecution agencies. The greatest service request was for direct victim, legal, and prosecution service funding.

Non-Profit/Non-governmental Victim Service Participation

Florida included nonprofit and nongovernmental victim service participation in this planning process by soliciting input from both the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), the statewide, nonprofit nongovernmental, professional organization for Florida's certified domestic violence centers; and the Florida Coalition Against Sexual Violence (FCASV), a statewide non-profit, non-governmental agency that serves as Florida's coordinating body advancing the issue of sexual violence in the State of Florida. Both coalitions provided email responses addressing collaborative victim service program needs that could be met with Recovery Act stimulus funding.

Diverse and Underserved Populations

Both FCADV and FCASV have a very diverse membership and it is through their participation in this planning process that Florida will be able to include "voices from underserved populations." FCADV has several sub-groups or caucuses which represent disenfranchised, traditionally oppressed, and frequently underrepresented groups of individuals. Caucus meetings provide an opportunity for caucus members to obtain support and work on issues to be brought forward to the entire FCADV membership. The caucus provides a common, collective voice to speak out for the caucus members. FCADV currently has six caucuses: Rural Caucus, Women of Color Caucus, Hispanic/Latin Caucus, Lesbian and Bisexual Caucus, Children's Caucus, and the Battered and Formerly Battered Women's Caucus. Currently the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence has numerous unique projects involving elder and disabled populations. The FCADV has a statewide project involving training for those working with elderly abused women. One program in particular last year built separate living accommodations for elderly women in Shelter. All 42 certified domestic violence centers are now equipped to accommodate handicapped populations requiring specialized service provisions.

Indian Tribes of Florida

The Department has reached out to the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs (FGCIA) informing them of The STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program. The FGCIA was also included in the Recovery STOP survey request. The Department will continue to maintain contact and provide information to the Council on STOP funding announcements.

Continued Planning

Florida will continue planning activities related to Recovery STOP throughout the grant period by reviewing quarterly performance measure data and will make adjustments to the program as needed.

Performance

The Department strives to collaborate with community partners, all the while recognizing that Florida's vast geographic size encompasses many diverse communities, sometimes requiring unique strategies for combating crimes against women. The Domestic Violence Program has developed realistic program goals relative to the populations supported by STOP grant funding. The Department remains committed to assist our sub-grantees by offering evidence – based practice models, state of the art training opportunities, and continued technical assistance for all providers of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking services. The following performance measures were designed by the Domestic Violence Program with great thought and conviction, emphasizing that in order to indeed hold perpetrators accountable, and in order to genuinely be successful, the programs we fund must also maintain the highest performance expectations and commitment to the projects they oversee.

STOP Recovery Act Prosecution Measure:

Increase the number of domestic violence cases filed that result in prosecution. (The Department requires that the prosecution attains 80% of cases referred will result in prosecution for domestic violence.)

STOP Recovery Act Law Enforcement Measure:

Domestic Violence crimes will decrease by 10% (The Department has contracted with eight law enforcement agencies that will participate in a research-based project that identifies high risk potentially fatal domestic violence cases.)

STOP Recovery Act Courts Measure:

Increase Judges knowledge and awareness of holding perpetrators of violence against women accountable. (Florida's Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) will collaborate with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) and organize one statewide event that will train Judges on holding perpetrators of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and Stalking accountable.)

STOP Victim Services Measure:

A minimum of 75% of all domestic violence and sexual assault project training attendees will score 80% or higher on competency based exams administered at the conclusion of each training. (The Department is contracting with 11 competitively bid victim services programs. The FCADV will partner with and provide expert training and technical assistance to victim services project participants.)

III. Types of Programs Supported by Grant Funds

Due to a slumping economy affecting Florida's primary tourism and agricultural industry, Florida is experiencing one of the largest ever percentage decreases in employment at 4.5 percent. In 2008, housing foreclosures in Florida were the 4th highest in the country, and so far in 2009, Florida is 2nd. These disturbing factors all contribute to the state's current reductions in private agency and local government services. Cutbacks have already resulted in layoffs of essential employees, with downsizing of services at almost every level of government and community based organizations. Florida has always placed a significant emphasis on coordinated community response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Coordinated community response to violence against women will remain a priority for Florida's Recovery STOP Implementation Plan funding initiatives. The Recovery Act funding will allow many essential services to continue, services that remain integral to victim safety and offender accountability.

1. Prosecution Services

The Department has always conducted a fair and impartial competitive process for procuring Prosecution services with STOP funding. Each State Attorney's Office is offered STOP funding. There are 20 regionalized state attorney circuits in Florida, with 20 residing State Attorneys. Each State Attorney has the option to draw down STOP funds for their region.

The Domestic Violence Program works closely with the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association (FPAA), to elicit input from the state's prosecuting attorneys, provide training, and develop a budgetary formula based on available STOP prosecution funds. Each State Attorney receives their fair share of STOP funds. To date, there are 17 out of 20 prosecution agencies requesting STOP funding. Should the other three agencies decide they want to participate in the Recovery Act STOP grant opportunity, the funds will be re-distributed to include the additional partners.

Currently, the 17 State Attorney Offices have proposed to use Recovery Act funding to hire new attorney, victim advocate, and investigator positions that would have been left vacant due to budget cuts. Several agencies are utilizing recovery funds to retain positions that would have been adversely affected by agency layoffs. Two State Attorneys are purchasing equipment that will enhance their service delivery systems. Out of 17 offices, 10 are hiring or retaining victim advocates, and five are hiring or retaining an attorney position. Florida's prosecution services continue to demonstrate their commitment, regardless of difficult economic times, to serve victims, and prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault crimes.

Prosecution Performance Measures:

- 1) *The provider shall provide domestic violence and/or sexual assault prosecution services to victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence.*
- 2) *The provider shall document the number of domestic violence and/or victims receiving services.*
- 3) *The provider shall identify and document the number of jobs created.*
- 4) *The provider shall identify and document the number of jobs retained.*
- 5) *The provider shall identify and document the number of Victim Advocates supported by grant funding.*

2. Law Enforcement Services

Specialized domestic violence law enforcement units will be funded under the Recovery STOP grant. Normally, a typical law enforcement unit may be comprised of one or more staff that is dedicated to domestic violence crimes. Staff may include but is not limited to detectives, patrol officers, investigators, victim liaisons, civilian case coordinators, data entry staff, and other support staff, as needed.

With STOP Recovery funding, Florida proposes to expand Jessica Gonzales Victims Assistants (JGVA) programs to eight additional locations based on the current success of Florida's InVEST project. The project known as the Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) simply means specialized law enforcement units working together with domestic violence advocates targeting high risk domestic violence crime cases. InVEST is a law enforcement model designed for a true coordinated community response to domestic violence homicide.

Florida's InVEST model first originated as a law enforcement investigative unit within the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) in 1999. The InVEST program was designed as a collaborative community-based response system for addressing fatal domestic violence incidents. The InVEST team reaches out to domestic violence victims in the community by working with a specialty trained detective, administrative support person, and an advocate from a local certified domestic violence center. In response to the success of the program and the addition of STOP Recovery funding, FCADV is partnering with the Florida Attorney General's (AG) office to provide additional VOCA (victims of crime act) funding to eight domestic violence centers to develop similar partnerships with eight Florida police departments modeling the Jacksonville InVEST project. The Department also set aside STOP Recovery funding for law enforcement officer training addressing the serious domestic violence risks victims face when leaving their abusers.

Many law enforcement agencies in Florida are reaching out to secure funding for this type of a collaborative approach to community policing in domestic violence crimes. Currently, Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants are placed in several sheriff offices, with a special emphasis on training law enforcement officers in protocol involving triage with other local, statewide and national law enforcement resources, in order to ensure victim safety and perpetrator accountability. Florida's Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) program will be used as a model for expansion of this program.

Law Enforcement Performance Measures:

- 1) *The provider (law enforcement) shall hire and/or retain one specialized law enforcement detective.*
- 2) *The provider shall collaborate daily with the VOCA funded domestic violence advocate on any new domestic violence cases, and assist in identifying the perpetrator, track the abusers history, and identify high-risk fatality occurrences.*
- 3) *The provider will document the number of new and repeat domestic violence cases reviewed.*
- 4) *The provider will document the number of arrests.*
- 5) *The provider will attend training and participate in the statewide fatality review team meetings.*

3. Statewide Courts

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA): OSCA was created to assist the courts in developing a uniform case reporting system that provides the judiciary information involving the budgetary and operational activities of the courts. The State Courts Administrator serves as the liaison between the court system and the legislative branch, the executive branch, the auxiliary agencies of the Court and national court research and planning agencies. OSCA will receive Recovery STOP funding to increase opportunities for domestic violence related education and information for judges, court administration staff, clerks of court, and other key participants.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is partnering with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) in a new court service targeting adult victims of domestic violence attempting to maneuver an often confusing and conflicting domestic violence/drug court system.

STOP Recovery funding will hire a domestic violence advocate who will be located in the court. The primary role of this advocate will be to screen Dependency and Drug Court cases in order to identify any domestic violence victims in the system and connect them to community services. The advocate will work closely with court staff, judges, attorneys, and outside partners such as the local certified domestic violence center, substance abuse and mental health providers and other partners to ensure that domestic violence victims receive the services they may need to keep them safe and also assist them with other overlapping issues.

Primary responsibilities of the advocate include:

- Identifying domestic violence victims in the court system
- Ensuring appropriate translation services are provided to the victim when needed
- Tracking the batterers compliance with any case plans or court orders
- Providing training and domestic violence consultation to court staff

The Dependency/Drug Court Project is located in an underserved rural community where women are often trapped with their abusers due to a lack of employment possibilities, affordable housing, transportation and day care. For a number of battered women, their effort to be safe is complicated by involvement with the Dependency/Drug Court system. The goal of this project is to reach out to these victims and provide them with the assistance that they need to navigate the various systems and also receive the help that they need to be safe in their community.

Secondly, the Department is contracting with the OSCA to develop in collaboration with the FCADV a statewide domestic violence/sexual assault summit where national experts will train Florida's Judges on model policies and 'best' practices for holding perpetrators of violence against women accountable.

Court Performance Measures:

- 1) *The provider shall report on the number of jobs created.*
- 2) *The provider shall report on the number of jobs retained.*
- 3) *The provider shall report on the number of victims served.*
- 4) *The provider shall report on the number of Judges trained.*

4. Victim Services

a. Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV)

The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the statewide, non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence service provider, will receive STOP Recovery funding to support statewide efforts to reduce domestic violence with two innovative projects reaching both rural and urban underserved communities throughout Florida. Support will be provided to participating domestic violence centers through technical assistance and enhanced services.

In Florida, child abuse investigations are conducted by the Department of Children and Families "or its agent" (s.39.301 (7) F.S., in this case, 'agent' meaning a sheriff's office that has taken on the responsibility to conduct child abuse investigations. Currently Florida has seven counties in which sheriffs conduct the investigations. Each county sheriff's office requires the same agency training and protocol for its child abuse investigators as required under Florida Statute for Department personnel. In addition, sheriff's child abuse investigators follow the same law enforcement protocol established by their respective law enforcement agencies.

Last year, , Florida's Department of Children and Families initiated a pilot project located in the Northeast Region of the state designed as a *collaborative approach to meeting the needs of adult victims involved in the child welfare process*. Knowing that child abuse agencies have historically been lacking in appropriate techniques necessary to work with adult victims experiencing domestic violence, a domestic violence

national expert was hired to train child abuse protective investigators (PI's) in the dynamics of domestic violence, appropriate high-risk domestic violence assessment techniques, and safety planning for the adult victim and the children. Florida believes it's critical to educate child welfare professionals in appropriate ways to view adult victims of domestic violence as victims and not perpetrators of abuse. The goal is to support adult domestic violence victims, and find ways to appropriately refer them for services, and ultimately prevent unnecessary child removals. Protective investigators were selected to attend the specialized training and were qualified as domestic violence specialists in each PI unit. This special project was part of a larger systemic foster care re-design project in the Northwest Region of the state. Since the project's inception in 2006, there has been a 41% reduction in out-of-home child placement. We believe that by partnering with the child welfare agencies in this manner and incorporating domestic violence specialists in the protective investigation units, we can continue to assist adult domestic violence victims in their ability to remain safely with their children in their homes.

In keeping with the above child welfare practice, FCADV will expand the project and partner with seven local Florida certified domestic violence centers to employ, train, and co-locate a domestic violence advocate within each of the seven sheriffs' offices with child protective investigation units. Additionally, extensive lethality assessment and safety-planning training will target child welfare professionals working with families experiencing domestic violence.

The second STOP Recovery Act funded project will provide enhancement for statewide domestic violence legal services. As a result of a recent FCADV survey of 100 women in shelter involved in the "Listening Project" that provides women in shelter the opportunity to comment on existing services and discuss their needs, victims expressed a strong desire to receive legal assistance. STOP Recovery Act victim services funds will expand existing injunction and court appearance services, and develop additional supports such as assisting victims in dealing with credit issues that may keep them from obtaining affordable housing, securing safe transportation, and employment opportunities.

b. Competitive Victim Services Projects

The Department advertised a statewide competitive bid to certified domestic violence centers and certified rape crisis centers to provide services to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking victims.

There were 32 applicants whose proposals were independently reviewed by three program specialists. Eleven victim services providers were selected to receive grant funding. Due to Florida's expansive demographics, the state is divided into six regions. Geographically, every area of the state will be represented by a victim services project. Of the 11 projects, six are providing sexual assault services, and five will provide domestic violence services.

c. Linguistically and Culturally Specific Services

Additional funds are set aside to fund direct linguistically and culturally specific services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. The Department advertised a competitive bid for allocating the Linguistically and Culturally Specific Services. There were two proposals submitted with one project selected. The targeted population is clustered in one of the poorest regions of the United States where the primary census is a Hispanic migrant worker population involving a high incidence of domestic violence and child welfare involvement. The Hispanic migrant women in this region are heavily involved in having a disproportionate number of their children removed due to family domestic violence. The project will focus on support services for the Hispanic migrant women, and will provide extensive training for the child welfare professionals working with this underserved population of women.

e. Underserved Victims

The Department intends to address the needs of rural, disabled, handicapped, minority, and elderly victims, a traditionally underserved population in Florida, through support from STOP Recovery Act funds. The special Recovery Act projects slated to start July 1, 2009, fully embrace the knowledge that women and children who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking historically remain "underserved". It is through services, such as those supported by Recovery Act funding, that providers will promote self-sufficiency, resourcefulness, competency, and survival techniques to victims normally financially, physically and/or emotionally dependent on their abusers. It is also the intent of the Department to integrate cultural competency training into the different statewide events. Cultural competency training would encompass working with traditionally disenfranchised groups, such as individuals from ethnic,

racial, deaf, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered cultures, and dealing with worker-client cultural differences.

Victim Services Performance Measures:

- 1) *The provider shall document the number of jobs created.*
- 2) *The provider shall document the number of jobs retained.*
- 3) *The provider shall document the number of victims served.*
- 4) *The provider shall document the number of trainings.*
- 5) *The provider shall document the number of attendees at training.*

IV. Allocation of Funds

Florida intends to allocate its Recovery STOP funding as indicated in the table below. Stimulus Award - \$6,976,652

| STOP RECOVERY ACT ALLOCATION BY CATEGORY | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Category | Percent | Funding Amount |
| Administration | 5.06% off the top | \$353,040 |
| Balance for Services | | \$6,278,987 |
| Courts | 5% | \$313,949 |
| Law Enforcement | 25% | \$1,569,747 |
| Prosecution | 25% | \$1,569,747 |
| Victim Services (-10% for CS) | 34.94% | \$2,039,951 |
| Culturally Specific Services- | 10% of victim services amount | \$188,370 |
| Discretionary (used for victim services) | 15% | \$941,848 |

Administrative Funds

The Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program currently uses the ten percent STOP administrative funding for salaries, expenses, and training. Based on the limited timeframes established for expending the new Recovery STOP funds, the DV Program proposes to expand the administrative funding allocation of the Recovery Act STOP Grants funding to include hiring one or more intern positions that would support the Recovery STOP projects through the collection of data and analysis of outcomes. This will only require the use of approximately 5% of the administrative allocation. The remaining allocation is

being added to the victim services category to expand statewide efforts to reduce domestic violence.

V. Evaluation of Success of Grant Funded Activities

The Florida Department of Children and Families is the state administrating agency for the U.S. Department of Justice VAWA S.T.O.P formula grants.

To measure the success of grant funded activities funded under the Recovery Act STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, the Domestic Violence Program Office will require quarterly project performance and financial reports from all recipients receiving funding. These reports will be submitted electronically and include fiscal, statistical, and narratives of completed activities within a given quarter. These reports will be used to provide information to the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in the sub-grant award and performance reports submitted annually. Quarterly reports will be carefully reviewed to track performance contract deliverables and on-site monitoring visits will be conducted periodically, at least once per calendar year, for those programs involved in provision of direct client services.

The State of Florida also monitors all federal grants through a state contract process that provides the following assurances: (1) contract managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the contracts through the on-going review of grant deliverables; (2) the Department has a contract oversight unit (COU) that is responsible for conducting yearly risk-assessments on the Department's contracts, which determines through high risk factors which contracts need to be monitored on-site; and, (3) the Department's standard contracts require a financial and compliance audit based on the level and type of funding provided.