STOP Violence Against Women Act (STOP VAWA)

STOP VAWA

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The overarching purpose of the STOP Violence Against Women Act funds (STOP VAWA) grant program is to enhance the capacity of local communities 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 violent crimes against women. States must allocate their annual award as follows: 25% for law enforcement, 25% for prosecutors, 30% for victim services (of which at least 10% must be distributed to culturally specific community-based organizations), 5% to state and local courts and 15% for discretionary distribution.

Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (STOP) funding is included in the Violence Against Women Act, which was reauthorized in the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 in Division W of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 (VAWA 2022; P.L. 117-103).

In addition, STOP grantees must adhere to all requirements in the DOJ Grants Financial Guide and the OMB Uniform Guidance.

STOP Legislative Authority

Iowa's STOP Violence Against Women Implementation Plan FY2027-2030 (October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2030)

Eligibility

Programs may include, but are not limited to:

- state offices and agencies,
- public or private nonprofit agencies,
- units of local government, nonprofit and
- non-governmental victim services programs.
- law enforcement offices
- prosecutors

A local unit of government is defined as a city, county, town, township, or other general-purpose political subdivision of a state and includes Indian tribes, which perform law enforcement functions as determined by

the Secretary of the Interior.

Statutory Definitions Under 42 U.S. C –3796gg-1-(c)(3):
Law Enforcement – a public agency charged with policing functions, including any of its component bureaus.
Prosecution – any public agency charged with direct responsibility for prosecuting criminal offenders, including such agency's component bureaus.
Victim Services – a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that assists domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victims, including rape crisis centers, 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.
Courts – any civil or criminal, tribal, and Alaskan 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.
Community Based Organization (an organization that):

- Focuses primarily on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking;
- Has established a specialized culturally specific program that addresses domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking;
- Has a primary focus on underserved populations (and includes representatives of these populations) and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking; or
- Obtains expertise, or shows demonstrated capacity to work effectively on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking through collaboration.

Purpose Areas

The purpose of the STOP Violence Against Women Grant Program 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, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women.

Grants under this subchapter shall provide personnel, training, technical assistance, data collection and other resources for the more widespread apprehension, prosecution, and adjudication of persons committing violent crimes against women, for the protection and safety of victims, and specifically, for the purposes of—

1. Training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, (including the crimes of 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)(15)).

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, including implementation of the grant conditions in in section 40002(b) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291(b)).

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 and legal assistance 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 individuals 50 years of age or over, individuals with disabilities, and Deaf individuals 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, legal assistance, and other victim services to such 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, including rehabilitative work with offenders.

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—

A. 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;

B. notifying persons seeking enforcement of protection orders as to what responses will be provided by the relevant law enforcement agency;

C. referring persons seeking enforcement of protection orders to supplementary services (such as emergency shelter programs, hotlines, or legal assistance services); and

D. 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—

A. 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;

B 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));

C. the development of such protocols in collaboration with State, tribal, territorial and local victim service providers and domestic violence coalitions.

Note for purpose area 13: Any law enforcement, State, tribal, territorial, or local government agency receiving funding under the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program under paragraph (13) shall

on an annual basis, receive additional training on the topic of incidents of domestic violence committed by law enforcement personnel from domestic violence and sexual assault nonprofit organizations and, after a period of 2 years, provide a report of the adopted protocol to the Department of Justice, including a summary of progress in implementing such protocol;

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 responding to and addressing such backlogs, including 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.

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

21. Developing, enhancing, or strengthening programs and projects to improve evidence collection methods for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including through funding for technology that better detects bruising and injuries across skin tones and related training.

22. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening culturally specific victim services programs to provide culturally specific victim services and responses to female genital mutilation or cutting.

23. Providing victim advocates in State or local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and courts to provide supportive services and advocacy to Indian victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

24. Paying any fees charged by any governmental authority for furnishing a victim or the child of a victim with any of the following documents:

A. A birth certificate or passport of the individual, as required by law.
B. An identification card issued to the individual by a State or Tribe, that shows that the individual is a resident of the State or a member of the Tribe.

Allowable Services/Costs

STOP VAWA funds may be used for/to:

- Personnel, training, technical assistance, evaluation, data collection and equipment costs to enhance the apprehension, prosecution and adjudication of persons committing violent crimes against women. Children's services must be inextricably linked to providing services to victims of domestic violence. For example, STOP funds may support the expansion of shelter services for battered women to include programs for their children.
- Transportation costs, in limited circumstances, which are reasonable and would enhance a woman's safety, including transportation out-of-state.
- Operational costs of a facility, such as a shelter, however if the project is supported with funds from other sources as well, i.e. VOCA or other funding, the rent and operational expenses must be prorated among the different funding sources. If the shelter owns its own facility, rent for use of that facility may not be charged to the grant at all; however, related expenses such as utilities and building security may be charged to the grant.

- Outreach to support, inform, and provide outreach to victims about available services. For example, a shelter could distribute brochures listing the signs of domestic violence, describing the services available, and providing a hotline number to access the services. Initiatives designed to reach victims, rather than raise awareness generally, may be supported with STOP funds.
- Pro-rated share of food for emergency client needs and the pro-rated share of food purchases for domestic violence shelter resident's use.
- Provide services to incarcerated victims but only to address the domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking victimization experienced by the incarcerated individual, including both crimes experienced while incarcerated and crimes experienced at other points in their youth and adult lives.
- Gift cards to clients are only allowable to the extent that they are used for allowable costs under STOP, such as the purchase of emergency food for STOP clients or gas for victims to attend court, appointments etc., related to the victimization. Agencies must acquire a receipt from the client which documents only allowable items (food or gas-in the example) were purchased.
- Rent and Deposits to cover a victim's first month's rent. Deposits are also allowable if the grantee has a deposit policy.
- Meaningful access. Agencies are encouraged to allocate funds to support activities that help to ensure individuals with disabilities and deaf individuals and persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful and full access to their programs. For example, grant funds can be used to support American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services, language interpretation and translation services, or the purchase of adaptive equipment. Applicants proposing to use grant funds to create websites, videos and other materials must ensure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities and grant funds must be allocated for these purposes.
- Services to LGBT victims to provide services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Gay, bisexual, and transgender male victims who request services cannot be refused such services based on their sex.
- School programs to support programs in schools to the extent that they fit within one or more of the STOP program's statutory program purpose areas. For example, STOP funds could be used to provide support groups that meet at school for dating violence victims or to provide information to students about services available to help victims of dating violence. However, STOP funds may not support general prevention programs in schools.
- Civil Legal Assistance to support civil legal assistance and advocacy services including legal information and resources and divorce for: 1) victims of domestic violence and 2) non-offending parents in matters that involve allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Co-location of services. However, if any of the underlying services at the center cannot be funded through STOP VAWA, such as substance abuse counseling, then the staffing for those services still cannot be supported through this purpose area, just the co-location. For example, co-location costs might include a centralized intake person, rent, or security.
- SANE/SAFE programs and related activities including: SANE/SAFE personnel; expert testimony of SANE/SAFE personnel; forensic evidence collection kits ("rape kits"); equipment, such as colposcopes, swab dryers, and lights; outreach efforts to inform victims about available services; victim advocate personnel to accompany victims through the forensic examination process; on-going counseling services for victims; and/or on-call time of the SANE/SAFE personnel.

Unallowable Costs

VAWA funds may not be used for/to:

- Children. Support services that focus exclusively on children.
- Curriculum for primary or secondary schools to support the development or presentation of a domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and/or stalking curriculum for primary or secondary schools. Funds may not be used to teach primary or secondary school students from an already existing curriculum.
- Legal or defense services for perpetrators of violence against women.
- Public awareness campaigns. The production or broadcasting of public awareness announcements or media campaigns or community education campaigns or related activities. Grant funds may be used to support, inform, and conduct outreach to victims about available services.
- Inherently religious activities.
- Leasing or purchasing vehicles.
- Renovations. Including minor renovations such as painting or replacing carpeting.
- Moving household goods to a new location or acquiring furniture or housing in a new location when a

survivor is leaving a shelter.
- Immigration fees for immigration fees for battered immigrant women.
- Law enforcement equipment including uniforms, safety vests, shields, weapons, bullets, and/or armory.
- Drug and alcohol programs to pay for chemical dependency or alcohol abuse programs.
- Research.
- Construction projects.
- Acquisition of land or real property.
- Fundraising including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions.
- Substance abuse counseling.
- Criminal defense work, including defending women who assault, kill, or otherwise injure their abusers.

Unallowable Costs Relating to Activities that Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery

The following activities have been found to jeopardize victim safety, deter or prevent physical or emotional healing for victims, or allow offenders to escape responsibility for their actions and cannot be supported with STOP VAWA funds:

- Procedures or policies that exclude victims from receiving safe shelter, advocacy services, counseling, and other assistance based on their actual or perceived age, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health condition, physical health condition, criminal record, work in the sex industry, or the age and/or gender of their children.
- Procedures or policies that compromise the confidentiality of information and privacy of persons receiving OVW funded services.
- Offering perpetrators the option of entering pre-trial diversion programs or placing batterers in anger management programs.
- Requiring mediation or counseling for couples as a systemic response to domestic violence or sexual assault or in situations in which child sexual abuse is alleged.
- Requiring victims to report sexual assault, stalking, or domestic violence crimes to law enforcement or forcing victims to participate in criminal proceedings.
- Relying on court-mandated batterer intervention programs that do not use the coercive power of the criminal justice system to hold batterers accountable for their behavior.
- Supporting policies or engaging in practices that impose restrictive conditions to be met by the victim in order to receive services (e.g., attending counseling, seeking an order of protection).

Reporting Requirements

Performance reports are due annually on or before March 15th in online MEI Impact Tool. https://www.vawamei.org/grant-program/stop-formula-grant-program/. See ____ for more information on performance report requirements.

Grantees are required to gather and maintain relevant programmatic and financial data. During desk audits, on-site monitoring and any other time you can be asked to provide supporting documentation.

Match Requirements

Match is required for all agencies, except victim service providers and tribal government organizations. Those funded with STOP VAWA funds will calculate their required match by taking the total amount of grant funds requested and divide by 1/3.

Certified Assurances

To download a copy of the subgrantee's certified assurances for STOP Violence Against Women (STOP VAWA or VAWA) formula funds click **here**.

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