



STOP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TOOL

2006 STOP Grants Technical
Assistance Project



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Preface

Each year, STOP state administrators, through deliberative consultation and coordination with a broad range of participants, must develop and submit implementation plans to the Office on Violence Against Women Office (OVW). Implementation plans outline the ways that States and Territories¹ will use STOP funding to enhance responses to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking in accordance with federal priority areas. Plans are comprehensive and the drafting of these documents can be a monumental undertaking. Beginning in FY 2003, states and territories were required to submit full implementation plans every three years. In the intervening years (i.e., FY 2004 and FY 2005), the State could fulfill their certification requirement by providing the Office with a statement indicating whether or not the three-year plan had changed and, if so, outlining the changes in the plan for that year.

The goal of the planning process is the enhanced coordination and integration of law enforcement, prosecution, courts, probation and parole agencies, and victim services in the prevention, identification, and response to cases involving violence against women. States and territories are encouraged to include Indian tribal governments in developing their plans. States and territories should, therefore, consider the needs of Indian tribal governments in developing their law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services in cases involving violence against women. Indian tribal governments may also be considered subgrantees of the State.

How to Use this Tool

In response to several requests from STOP state administrators, the STOP Grants Technical Assistance Project (STOP TA), in coordination with OVW, has developed this *STOP Implementation Plan Tool*. This tool has been developed to facilitate the writing and formatting of annual STOP implementation plans, however **please note that use of the tool is optional**. The tool lists and describes required elements of state plans. It also highlights other optional or recommended types of information you may consider including for greater clarity and cohesiveness of your written implementation plan. How you use this tool is up to you. You may choose to use it as is, by plugging in your state information directly into the document, or you may choose to develop your own organization and formatting scheme, using the tool as a general reference for content.

Implementation Plans are Critical Tools

STOP implementation plans are critical components for the success of STOP state grant programs. They should be used as strategic tools and continual aids for States to plan and monitor their successes in ending violence against women. States can use implementation plans as snapshots of most compelling needs and blueprints of the steps necessary to address them. They can serve as reference documents for state and local agencies and policymakers and may provide one of the only opportunities for key stakeholders from a variety of disciplines to meet and thoughtfully consider how to best serve victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. The

¹ "States" will be hereafter be used as a collective reference for States and Territories

process of planning can present opportunities for States to hear directly from victims and subgrantees about what is working well in their communities and where there are challenges. In short, implementation plans are more than another grant requirement, they can be concrete and useful tools.

Annual State Implementation Plan Reviews

OVW Program Managers generally evaluate plans for general soundness of approach and compliance with the federal statutes and regulations. In order to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to States, OVW has requested that STOP TA staff participate in annual reviews of state implementation plans in conjunction with OVW program managers. STOP TA staff assesses state technical assistance needs and looks for innovative approaches to highlight nationally. This joint process enhances the thoroughness of reviews and increases coordination of OVW and STOP TA assistance to States.

Assistance is Available

OVW is available to assist States in plan development, review, and implementation, and to answer any questions States have. Any and all questions should be directed to Program Managers at OVW (202-307-6026).

AT A GLANCE:

Required Elements for STOP Implementation Plans

Following are the required elements for STOP Implementation Plans:

- ☑ A brief description of your planning process. (1)
- ☑ A description of how you included non-profit, non-governmental victim services in the planning process. (2)
- ☑ A narrative describing how you included Tribes in the planning process. (3)
- ☑ A description of how persons from diverse populations were involved in planning. (4)
- ☑ A statement that describes continuing planning activities related to STOP that will be occurring throughout the year. (5)
- ☑ Data and a brief description of your state population demographics (e.g., general population, rural and urban breakdowns, age, race, gender, physical ability, ethnicities, other relevant data²) and geographical information (6)
- ☑ A concise description of current project goals and objectives. (7)
- ☑ A description of the specific tasks and activities necessary for accomplishing each goal and objective and time frame that identifies when activities will be accomplished. (8)
- ☑ A description of how your implementation plan will build on efforts of previous years. (9)
- ☑ A mention of any major shifts in direction because of re-evaluation or re-assessment of previous efforts. (10)
- ☑ A narrative about the priorities or goals your state has set regarding how STOP funds will be used. (11)
- ☑ General descriptions of the types of programs and projects that will be

How to Use This Tool Effectively

Next to each required element you will notice a number in parentheses. You will see these numbers listed throughout the Tool. Each number relates back to the required element, thereby making it easy for you to identify as you use this Tool.

² Generally, this data is from state and local census figures.

supported with STOP grant dollars. (12)

- A description of how the funds will be distributed across law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, and discretionary allocation categories. (13)
- An explanation of how subgrant amounts will be based on the populations and geographic areas to be served³. (14)
- How the state will give priority to areas of varying geographic size with the greatest showing of need based on the availability of existing domestic violence 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. (15)
- A description of methods to be used for solicitation/review of proposals and selection of subgrant projects (e.g., competitive process, sole source funding, funding formula, or combinations of several processes) and for which sectors these methods apply. (16)
- A timeline for your STOP grant cycle. (17)
- A description of specialized technical assistance your office provides to current or prospective subgrantees to assist them in applying for or managing grants. (18)
- Mention whether STOP subgrant projects will be funded on a multiple- or single-year basis. (19)
- A description of how your state will recognize and address the needs of underserved populations as defined by VAWA 2000. (20)
- A description of how the success of STOP-funded activities in your state will be evaluated. (21).

³ It is important to note that OVW requires States to say how it will ensure equitable distribution of funds and give priority based on geographic diversity and service availability. Simply stating that you will do so is not sufficient.

STOP State Implementation Plan Tool

This tool describes one way to format your STOP state implementation plan into a well-organized and succinct document. It describes a variety of sections you may want to include in your plan and outlines the type of information to address under each. The recommended sections are proposed to help organize your implementation plan, make it more understandable, and to provide context to your State's/territories work to end violence against women. Each element listed for inclusion is labeled as *required*, *recommended*, or *optional* so you can make decisions about what will work best for you.

I. Introduction

The purpose of including an introduction is to provide a description of how your implementation plan is organized and a general overview of the content to come. Introductory sections are **optional**, but recommended because they help to orient readers and highlight key sections or points you don't want them to miss. Your introduction should be concise and no more than one page.

Optional elements to include:

- A statement about how your plan is organized;
- an overview or abstract of your plan;
- a description of the overall context for how you are proposing to allocate STOP grant funds;
- your STOP mission statement and/or general goals of your implementation plan, and/or a cover sheet with essential information about your plan included in bulleted points instead of a formal introduction;
- the date on which the plan was approved by the state; and
- the time period covered by the plan.

II. Description of Planning Process

The purpose of this section is to describe the way your implementation plan was developed as **required** by OVW. The following lists outline both the required and optional elements of a good planning process description. This section can be brief; generally it does not need to be more than one to two pages in length.

Required elements to include:

- A brief description of your planning process (**required**); (1)

Formatting Tip

The following make your plan easier to read:

- ✓ Page numbers
- ✓ Tables of contents
- ✓ Running footers/headers with document title

Content Tip

Your approach narrative should relate back to your information included in your "needs" section. For example, if you state there is a high rate of dual arrests in your state, you should indicate how your use of STOP funds will address the problem.

For example, how did you gather information to identify needs? Who was involved in the process? Be sure to specifically identify non-profit, non-governmental victim service providers that were involved. Does your state have a multidisciplinary planning team? How did you get the input of others (i.e., focus groups, meetings, document review only, etc.)?

- A description of how you included non-profit, non-governmental victim services in the planning process **(required)**; (2)
- narrative describing how you included Tribes in the planning process **(required)**; (3)
- description of how persons from diverse populations were involved in planning **(required)**; and (4)
- a statement that describes continuing planning activities related to STOP that will be occurring throughout the year **(required)**. (5)

Related attachments:

- A list of names and affiliations of individuals on your state planning team, if you have one, and/or others involved in the plan development **(recommended)**; reference attachment in text;
- agendas from planning meetings **(optional)**; and
- letters of support from members of your planning team, subgrantees, and/or organizations and agencies in your states **(recommended)**.

III. Needs and Context

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the context of violence against women in your state and to outline the needs of victims and subgrantees. This section presents the information and data⁴ on which your plan is based (and show how the plan and STOP funds are being used to respond to these identified gaps). This section should generally be brief and no more than three to five pages.

Elements to include:

- Data and a brief description of your state population demographics (e.g., general population, rural and urban breakdowns, age, race, gender, physical ability, ethnicities, other relevant data⁵) and geographical information **(6) (required)**;
- indication of regions or populations within the State where need for

NOTE:

It is generally more effective to use state and local data than to attempt to apply national statistics to your state.

⁴ States should recognize and take advantage of multiple sources of information that can be used to highlight needs. This includes focus group information, statewide or local surveys, and information supplied by subgrantees themselves (e.g., a State can ask each subgrantee to describe its catchments or service areas.

⁵ Generally, this data is from state and local census figures.

services is greatest (i.e., where domestic violence and sexual assault services are unavailable or inaccessible) (**recommended**);

- relevant crime statistics pertaining to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking for your state (e.g., incidents of rape, number of domestic violence homicides, reports of stalking, protection order violations, dual arrests, arrests broken down by age, race, gender, ethnicity; arrests and/or incidents broken down by county, region, rural vs. urban, etc.)⁶ (**recommended**);
- a summary of key findings from local or statewide needs assessments or evaluations related to violence against women (e.g., a statewide court watch program annual report that detailed needs, or a local sexual violence programs evaluation of the impact of the justice system on rape victims) (**recommended**);
- a brief description of state violence against women laws or policies that have directly impacted the direction of your implementation plan (e.g., a new law requiring law enforcement officer training on domestic violence and sexual assault, where STOP will fund training) (**optional**); and
- to the extent they directly impacted the planning process, a brief description of other statewide efforts and resources devoted to addressing the issue of violence against women (e.g., your state has a state-funded grant program for similar purposes) (**optional**).
- **Related attachments:** copies of (or excerpts from) statewide reports, planning documents, needs assessments, evaluations, or research studies (**optional, reference attachment in text**).

IV. Plan Priorities and Approaches

The purpose of this section is to outline the specific priorities of your STOP grant program and to describe the approaches your state will take to address them. This section should comprise the major bulk of your state plan. Accordingly, to make reading and locating information easier, we have divided the section into several subsections. The *priorities and approaches* section may be up to 20 pages long, although a more concise narrative generally is easier for readers to follow. Do not be afraid to include bulleted lists, charts, and work plans in place some of the narrative.

A. Identified Goals

Required elements to include:

- Concise description of current project goals and objectives. (Avoid summaries of past accomplishments.) (**required**); and (7)
- description of the specific tasks and activities necessary for

Content Tip

Your approach narrative should relate back to your information included in your “needs” section. For example, if you state there is a high rate of dual arrests in your state, you should indicate how your use of STOP funds will address the problem.

⁶ These statistics can be often obtained from state departments, law enforcement agencies, or statewide sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions.

accomplishing each goal and objective and time frame that identifies when activities will be accomplished **(required)**. (8)

B. Relation to Prior Implementation Plans

Required elements to include:

- A description of how your implementation plan will build on efforts of previous years **(required)**; and (19)
- mention of any major shifts in direction because of re-evaluation or re-assessment of previous efforts **(required)**. (10)

C. Priority Areas

Elements to include:

- Narrative about the priorities or goals your state has set regarding how STOP funds will be used **(required)**; (11)
- general descriptions of the types of programs and projects that will be supported with STOP grant dollars **(required)**; (12)
- an description of how funds will be distributed across law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, and discretionary allocation categories⁷; you may choose to include this information in table format **(required)**; and (13)
- an explanation of how subgrant amounts will be based on the populations and geographic areas to be served⁸ **(required)**. (14)

Related attachments:

- Your most recent subgrant listing with contact information, brief descriptions of each project, and their allocation group/sector, and purpose area(s) addresses **(optional, reference attachment in text)**.

D. Grant-making Strategy

The purpose of this section is to describe the decision-making processes and techniques your state will use to distribute STOP funds and to show how these methods of grant-making best meet you state needs and identified goals.

⁷ States are not required to address all of the federal STOP program purpose areas. Additionally some subgrant projects may fulfill more than one purpose area. For example, a State with a substantial elderly population has decided to find specialized units for prosecuting domestic violence and sexual assault against elder women. This one project could address purpose area 1 (prosecutors and staff would need training), 2 (a specialized unit would be established), 3 (protocols would be developed), 9 (it may involve training or forensic medical personnel), and 10 (it would focus on crimes against elder women).

⁸ It is important to note that OVW requires States to say how it will ensure equitable distribution of funds and give priority based on geographic diversity and service availability. Simply stating that you will do so is not sufficient.

Elements to include:

- A description of how the state will give priority to areas of varying geographic size with the greatest showing of need based on the availability of existing domestic violence 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, which may include Indian tribes. **(required)**; (15)
- a description of methods to be used for solicitation/review of proposals and selection of subgrant projects (e.g., competitive process, sole source funding, funding formula, or combinations of several processes) and for which sectors these methods apply **(required)** (16);
- a timeline for your STOP grant cycle **(required)** (17);
- a description of specialized technical assistance your office provides to current or prospective subgrantees to assist them in applying for or managing grants **(required)** (18); and
- mention whether STOP subgrant projects will be funded on a multiple- or single-year basis **(required)** (19).

Related attachments:

- Copies of solicitations/requests for proposals **(optional, reference attachment in text)**.

E. Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims

Elements to include:

- A description of how your state will recognize and address the needs of underserved populations as defined by VAWA 2000⁹ **(required)**. (20)

For example, a discussion of special solicitations, technical assistance provision, or other activities you are undertaking that are designed to increase numbers of grants submitted related to underserved groups, highlights of any special projects you are/will be funding to benefit underserved communities, and/or description of ways you have incorporated representatives from diverse/underserved communities in your STOP grant planning and distribution processes.

F. Barriers to Implementation

The purpose of this subsection is to point out any issues or problems that could affect your timeline or impede your ability to carry out the approach you have described. It is

⁹ Populations underserved because of geographical location (such as rural isolation), underserved racial and ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status or age, and any other populations to be underserved by the state planning process in consultation with the Attorney General.

completely **optional**, but can be useful for you to explore in your planning. It can also alert OVW and STOP TA about any needs you may have.

Elements to include:

- A description of possible barriers that could affect your STOP grant implementation (e.g., your state may need to turn back unspent funds, or you may be lacking enabling legislation to meet certification requirements for STOP)¹⁰ (**optional**);
- an explanation of what could/will be done to overcome these barriers (**optional**); and/or
- a delineation of any technical assistance (from OVW or STOP TA) that might assist you in resolving these issues (**optional**).

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

The purpose of this section is to describe the processes you will use and information you will collect to determine the success of STOP-funded projects in your state.

Element to include:

- A description of how the success of STOP-funded activities in your state will be evaluated (**required**). (21)

For example, a description of monitoring processes such as site visits, desk review, and data reporting (beyond federal requirements) required of subgrantees, a description of any formal statewide or local evaluations of STOP projects that are planned for this fiscal year¹¹, and/or mention of any existing data that you will be tracking as an indicator of program success (e.g., if criminal justice data on violence against women is collected in your state, you could use increase in prosecution rates as an indicator of the success of prosecution training programs).

¹⁰ You may also wish to state whether your implementation plan includes unspent funds from prior years.

¹¹ Note that formalized outcome-based evaluations of your STOP state program or subgrant projects are not currently required by federal statute. Measurements of project success could be as simple as determining that subgrantees accomplished the goals/activities specified in their grant proposal (i.e., process evaluations)

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief summary or wrap-up of your implementation plan and to highlight any major points you want to leave with the reader. This section is **optional**, but recommended, because it helps to increase the general cohesiveness and clarity of your document.

Element to include:

- A summary of key points made in your implementation plan.

VI. Additional Factors to Consider When Formulating and Implementing a Statewide STOP Plan

Many State Administrators are charged not only with the duties to distribute and monitor STOP funds, but also to establish and take the lead in the development of a plan to implement the Violence Against Women Act and examine the impact of VAWA in their States through program evaluation. In addition to the tips listed above, here is a list of elements to help you in the development of a strong, diverse, and inclusive planning body; factors to consider when making funding decisions; and points to think about for purposes of monitoring the progress of subgrantees and evaluating programs. The T.A. Project is available to answer your questions and help you develop strategies through telephone consultations or intensive, on-site consultations in your State.

A. The Planning Body: Structure and Process

Consider:

- Whether all relevant disciplines (e.g., law enforcement prosecution, court personnel, domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions) have been included on the Statewide planning team.
- Whether the planning team gives equitable representation and attention to the four crime areas of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- Whether all the disciplines are equally represented, and have equal power on the planning team.
- Whether the individuals on the planning team are committed to improving their particular discipline's response to violence against women through collaboration with other disciplines.
- Whether those on the planning team are committed to working collaboratively on a statewide level in the effort to improve the response to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- Whether the planning team should be made a permanent part of the Administrative Agency by applying administrative funds to secure support staff and to cover other planning team expenses.
- Whether the State STOP Agency has made an ongoing effort to develop a strong working relationship with the state sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions. For example, has the State STOP Agency:
 - * Consulted the statewide coalitions' strategic plans?
 - * Participated in coalition functions, such as meetings?
 - * Communicated with coalitions in a meaningful way?
 - * Invited coalition representatives to State planning meetings?
 - * Made an effort to ensure that the message delivered to the coalitions is filtering down to member organizations?
 - * Provided leadership by pointing to common goals when difficulties arise?
- Whether an effort has been made to identify the populations in the State that have been traditionally under-served by the criminal justice system and/or victim services, and to solicit input from them.
- Whether planning team meetings have been ongoing and regularly scheduled? If so, are all of the players remaining actively involved? If not has an effort been made to determine the reasons for the decrease in participation?

B. Funding Decisions

Consider:

- Whether a formal or informal needs assessment was conducted or should be conducted to determine the most pressing needs of victims in the State, and whether duplicity of effort can be avoided by utilizing one conducted by either of the Statewide Coalitions or another reliable source.
- Whether funding is being applied equitably to the crime areas of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- Whether research results, treatises, and other learned texts were consulted in order to determine the kinds of activities that are most effective in achieving the desired results (for example, have planning team members read available materials on whether pro-arrest policies are effective in reducing recidivism rates?).

- Whether there is a funding decision-making protocol in place that describes the types of decisions to be made, who will make the decisions, and what level of decision each individual can make in a given situation.
- Whether potential funding conflicts of interest are handled by requiring that planning or grant review team members to recuse themselves during the review of grant applications in their disciplines.
- Whether priority has been given 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.
- Whether the number and amount of subgrants made has been based on the population and geographic area served by programs.
- Whether STOP dollars have been distributed equitably on a geographic basis, including rural and non-urban areas of various geographic sizes.
- Whether adequate input and grant applications have been solicited from women from diverse backgrounds and from representatives of organizations working to serve these women.
- Whether applications have been solicited from organizations and agencies that have been traditionally committed to addressing the needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.
- Whether the plan somehow achieves a balance among all of the potential ways of utilizing STOP dollars in:
 - * Supporting programmatic work of established organizations or agencies or providing seed money for new organizations or satellite offices;
 - * developing or refining agency policies that address the response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking;
 - * developing and implementing training programs for law enforcement prosecution, or victim services personnel; and
 - * conducting data collection and/or evaluations of STOP-funded programs.
- Whether statewide programs have been funded in any of the above areas (for example, a statewide multidisciplinary training program or the development of a statewide law enforcement policy).

C. Monitoring and Evaluating Subgrantees

Consider:

- Whether the State Administrative Agency has made an effort to ensure that collaboration between local or regional programs will take place in a meaningful way, such as through the enforcement of mandatory cooperative agreements.
- Whether to require all or some agencies or organizations to self-evaluate the success of their STOP-funded activities, and, if so, what kind of evaluations to require.
- Whether to develop a statewide evaluation that will be used for all STOP-funded programs, or a particular sub-group of programs working on similar projects (for example, one could measure the extent to which services to communities of previously under-served women have been enhanced by STOP dollars).
- Whether in-depth scientific evaluations of the progress of one or more STOP-funded programs should be funded, and, if so, which program(s) to evaluate, and what type of evaluation will be most useful.
- What type of evaluation will be most useful. Consider the following types of evaluations:
 - * Impact evaluation measures whether a project achieved what it wanted to achieve.
 - * Process evaluation supplies information about how a project operates and documents the procedures and activities undertaken.
 - * Performance monitoring provides data on project activities and accomplishments.

D. Funding to Faith-Based and Community Organizations

Consistent with President George W. Bush's Executive Order 13279, dated December 12, 2002, and 28 C.F.R. Part 38, it is OVW policy that faith-based and community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants under OVW programs are invited and encouraged to apply for assistance awards to fund eligible grant activities. Faith-based and community organizations will be considered for awards on the same basis as any other eligible applicants and, if they receive assistance awards, will be treated on an equal basis with all other grantees in the administration of such awards. No eligible applicant or grantee will be discriminated for or against on the basis of its religious character or affiliation, religious name, or the religious composition of its board of directors or persons working in the organization. Faith-based organizations receiving OVW assistance awards retain their independence and do not lose or have to modify their religious identity (e.g., removing religious symbols) to receive assistance awards. OVW grant funds, however,

may not be used to fund any inherently religious activity, such as prayer or worship. Inherently religious activity is permissible, although it cannot occur during an activity funded with OVW grant funds; rather, such religious activity must be separate in time or place from the OVW funded program. Further, participation in such activity by individuals receiving services must be voluntary. Programs funded by OVW are not permitted to discriminate in the provisions of services on the basis of a beneficiary's religion.

Dos and Don'ts:

Helpful Organizing Hints

Following are some helpful organizing hints:

- DO edit and proofread or get someone else to. Typographical errors and grammar mistakes will detract from your final product;
- DO make sure all of your sections relate to one another for instance, link state population statistics to how you will meet the needs of underserved minorities;
- DO number all pages;
- DO use simple, direct, active-voice language;
- DO include a table of contents and/or tools that show, at-a-glance, how your implementation plan is organized;
- DO be consistent: if any information is contradictory, explain why and its relevance;
- DO simplify concepts;
- DO use most recent demographic, crime and other statistical information, preferably from your state, rather than national studies;
- DO use succinct, bulleted points as much as possible;
- DO break up sections with section headings;
- DON'T use form letters of support, use individualized letters that specifically support your plan and its goals are much more compelling; and
- DON'T include information that is not relevant to your proposed plan, such as descriptions of laws on violence against women that do not impact the use of STOP funding.