**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Public Safety**

**RFA# 202401020**

**STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Lisa Bosse **Title:** Contract Grant Manager**Contact Information:** lisa.bosse@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** February 16, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **ApplicationSubmission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** March 1, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Applications must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov |

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFA, have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
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| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Department** | Department of Public Safety |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **JAC** | Justice Assistance Council |
| **STOP** | Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution |
| **OVW** | Office on Violence Against Women |
| **Department** | Department of Public Safety |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The Department of Public Safety (DPS), through the Justice Assistance Council (JAC), is seeking applications to support Maine communities in their efforts to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to respond to violent crimes against women and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women as described in this RFA. This document provides instructions for submitting applications, the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded Applicant(s).

The STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution) Program promotes a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to enhancing advocacy and improving the criminal justice system’s response to violent crimes against women. It encourages the development and improvement of effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to address violent crimes against women as well as the development and improvement of advocacy and services in cases involving violent crimes against women. DPS has been the State Administrative Agency (SAA) for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women, Stop Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program since 1995.

STOP Program funding may support personnel, training, technical assistance, data collection, and equipment costs to enhance the apprehension, prosecution, and adjudication of persons committing violent crimes against women, and to provide or improve services for victims. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) stipulates that the use of the funds must address one or more of the twenty-four STOP VAWA federal program purpose areas. Additional information on the STOP Program as well as the details of the federal program purpose areas can be found on the DPS grants webpage at: <https://www.maine.gov/dps/about/justice-assistance-council>.

## General Provisions

1. From the time this RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding this RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of this RFA. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the application process, at the State’s discretion.
2. Issuance of the RFA does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a response to the RFA. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings, where applicable.
3. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Applications are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified in Part III of the RFA.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. The application must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFA and the awarded Applicant’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFA will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in applications received in response to the RFA.
9. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

## Eligibility to Submit Applications

Applicants must not have outstanding debt or delinquent reports due to DPS for STOP.

Eligible Applicants include organizations falling under one or more of the following classifications:

1. **Law Enforcement**
	1. Municipal Police Departments
	2. Sheriff’s Offices
	3. Maine State Police
	4. Other state law enforcement agencies
	5. Tribal Police Departments
2. **Victim Services Providers**
3. Non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence or sexual assault victim service organizations.
4. **Non-Profit Organizations**

You must submit written documentation showing that you are a public or private non-profit organization to submit a proposal under this RFA. You must provide documented proof of non-profit status for the current year along with your proposal.

* + 1. Documented proof of non-profit status could be a copy of your current State of Maine Articles of Incorporation authorization document (Form MNPCA-6 from the Secretary of State, Corporate Examining Section), or a copy of the authorization from the Federal Department of the Treasury, certifying Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or a state sales tax exemption certificate.
		2. If you are currently established as a public non-profit organization, such as a public school, a State, County or municipal government organization, acceptable documentation would be a cover letter indicating such, submitted on appropriate agency stationery and signed by a public official authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the public entity.
1. **Culturally Specific Organizations,** **Community Based Organizations**

The term ‘community-based organization’ means an organization that:

* + 1. Focuses primarily on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
		2. Has established a specialized culturally specific program that addresses domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
		3. Has a primary focus on underserved populations (and includes representatives of these populations) and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
		4. Obtains expertise, or shows demonstrated capacity to work effectively, on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking through collaboration; and
		5. Is primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups; and
		6. Is providing services tailored to the unique needs of that population.

Note: The organization must do more than merely provide services to the targeted group; rather, the organization must provide culturally competent services designed to meet the specific needs of the target population.

1. **Faith Based Organizations**

Consistent with [28 C.F.R. Part 38](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2016-title28-vol1/CFR-2016-title28-vol1-part38), faith-based, and community organizations that statutorily qualify as eligible applicants are invited and encouraged to apply.

Recipients of direct financial assistance from the Department must not discriminate on the basis of religion in the delivery of services or benefits in Department-funded social service programs.

* + 1. Recipients of direct financial assistance from the Department cannot use Department funding to support religious activities such as worship, religious instruction, and proselytizing;
		2. Recipients of direct financial assistance from the Department that engage in religious activities must ensure that:
			1. the activities are separate in either time or location from Department-funded activities; and
			2. the beneficiaries of the DOJ funded activities freely choose to participate in the recipients’ religious activities; Grant-funded programs are not permitted to discriminate in the provision of services based on a beneficiary’s religion and
		3. Faith-based or religious organizations are eligible to participate in Department programs on the same basis as other organizations and, in doing so, shall retain their independence and may continue to carry out their missions, including the definition, practice, and expression of their religious beliefs.

## Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFA.

Congress has prescribed a distribution of funds to fulfill the mission of the STOP VAWA. For this RFA, proposals will only be accepted in the Law Enforcement category and the Victim Services category for funds remaining from the F2023 STOP award. Preference will be given to Culturally Specific Victim Service organizations to ensure we meet STOP Federal Requirements.

Currently there is $75,699 available from the F2023 STOP Grant Award. This is the only funding being offered through this RFA.

The period of performance for these awards is anticipated to be from **April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.**

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| **Allocation Category** | **Funding Available** |
| Law Enforcement | $44,201 |
| Victim Services | $31,498 |

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

1. **Applicable Legislation**

The legislation and regulations governing the STOP VAWA program as noted below can be found on the OVW website at <https://justice.gov/ovw/legislation.htm>.

**PART II ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

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1. **Required Activities**
	1. **Match Requirement**
		1. There is a 33% match requirement imposed on grant funds under this program. Awards made under this grant program may support up to 67% of the total cost of each project. The Applicant must specifically identify the source of the 33% non-federal portion of the budget and how match funds will be used. Applicants may satisfy this match requirement with either cash or in-kind services.

The formula to calculate matching funds is:

(Federal Funds requested / 0.67) x .33 = match

Example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Federal funds =** | **$100,000 (67%)** |
| **Matching funds =** | **$49,253.73 (33%)** |
| **Total program costs =**  | **$149,253.73 (100%)** |

Exception: VAWA 2005, as amended, created a provision eliminating the match in certain circumstances and providing for waivers of match in other circumstances. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. 13925 (b)(1) provides:

* + - 1. No matching funds shall be required for any tribe, territory, or victim service provider under the victim services allocation category; or
			2. Other entities may petition for a waiver of match conditions because of significant financial need.
	1. **Maine’s Program Priority Areas**
		1. The Office of Violence Against Women requires that each state develop an implementation plan that describes how states will use STOP funding to enhance responses to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in accordance with VAWA purpose areas. Maine has identified six (6) priority areas that will assist in carrying out the goals of the STOP Violence Against Women Program. Grant funds may be used for activities that address one or more of the Federal purpose areas and one or more of Maine’s priority areas. Other considerations are to address the needs of underserved populations and equitable distribution of funds on a geographic basis, need, and population.
		2. The plan represents the work of the JAC and stakeholders from law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, and victim services. The priority areas represent types of grant projects/activities that will be supported by the grant funding. Maine’s STOP Implementation Plan can be found on the DPS website at <https://www.maine.gov/dps/about/justice-assistance-council>.
		3. Please see the 2022 – 2025 implementation plan for the specific priority areas: <https://www.maine.gov/dps/about/justict-assistance-council>.

1. **Allowable Use of Funds**
	1. The STOP Grant is for increasing a victim’s access to services and intervention rather than prevention and education.
	2. STOP funds should be used for projects that serve or focus on adult and teen women victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Children’s services supported with the funds must be the direct result of providing services to an adult primary victim. In general, victims served with STOP funds must be adults or teens. STOP funds may support “complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families.”
	3. **Prohibition on Public Awareness or Community Education**

The grantee agrees that grant funds will not be used to conduct public awareness or community education campaigns or related activities. Grant funds may be used to support, inform, and for outreach to victims about available services.

* 1. **Prohibition on Curriculum Development**

The grantee agrees that grant funds will not be used to support the development or presentation of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking curriculum for primary or secondary schools. The grantee further agrees that grant funds will not be used to teach primary or secondary school students from an already existing curriculum.

 As always, projects can continue to conduct interventions in schools and can fund outreach about available services.  For example, a subgrantee could conduct dating violence support groups in schools, as this would constitute an intervention.

 Example: Teens may not know what an abusive relationship is, so they would not be able to access the services without some education to help them understand why they would need the services in the first place as well as what services are available.  However, education on topics such as healthy versus unhealthy relationships would cross the line into prevention rather than access to services.

* 1. Grant funds are subject to Federal accounting and audit requirements including the prohibitions on co-mingling funds. Organizations that receive Violence Against Women Act STOP funding along with other Federal funds must treat the funds independently with separate cost and reporting centers.
	2. Consultant costs must follow the applicable federal grant guidelines, Office of Management and Budget Cost Principles 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E: Cost Principles(200.400 - 200.475) which can be found at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>, and state policy.
	3. Nothing above current State rates are to be used for calculating mileage (currently $..50 per mile). Per Diem rates are found at <https://www.maine.gov/osc/travel> and lodging rates are found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**
	1. No arrangement shall be made by the Sub-grantee with any other party for furnishing any services herein contracted for without prior review and approval of the contracting agreement by the Grant Administrator.
	2. No grant funds may be spent for construction, office furniture, or other like purchases, e.g., copiers, air conditioners, heat lamps, fans, file cabinets, desks, chairs, and rugs.
	3. **Activities That May Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery**

The subgrantee agrees that grant funds will not support activities that may compromise victim safety, such as pre-trial diversion programs not approved by OVW or the placement of offenders in such programs; mediation, couples counseling, family counseling or any other manner of joint victim-offender counseling; mandatory counseling for victims, penalizing victims who refuse to testify against their abusers, or promoting procedures that would require victims to seek legal sanctions against their abusers (e.g., seek a protection order, file formal complaint); or the placement of perpetrators in anger management programs.

* 1. Grant funds under the STOP Program may not be used for unauthorized purposes, including but not limited, to the following activities:
		1. Lobbying;
		2. Fundraising;
		3. Research projects;
		4. Physical modifications to buildings, including minor renovations.
		5. Purchase of real property
		6. Construction
1. **Meaningful Sexual Assault Services**

The State will evaluate whether the interventions (projects) are meaningful sexual assault services that are tailored to meet the specific needs of sexual assault victims, including ensuring that projects have a legitimate focus on sexual assault and that personnel funded under such projects have sufficient expertise and experience on sexual assault.

The State will assess the degree to which the project addresses sexual assault and count this toward the State’s overall set aside requirement.

Questions asked to determine Meaningful Sexual Assault Services:

1. Are services driven by the needs of the victims?
2. Do the services provided have a purpose or objective?
3. What is the rate of utilization?
4. Do the services improve the lives of victims?
5. Is the data collected statistically significant?
6. **Demonstrated Victim Service Involvement**

Applicants must consult with tribal, State, or local victim service programs during the development of their grant applications to ensure that proposed services, activities, and equipment are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

A signed Consultation/Collaboration Agreement must be submitted with the application unless the applicant is the victim service entity (see **Appendix B**). Letters of consultation/collaboration should provide details about the role of partners in the development of the project, the history of collaboration among the partners, what each will contribute to the project, and the financial or in-kind compensation that will be provided.

**PART III KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

## Submission of Questions

* 1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
		1. Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix A** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
		2. Questions must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFA as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
		3. Submitted Questions must include the RFA Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
	2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the State’s Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## Amendments

All amendments released in regard to this RFA will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

## Application Submission

* 1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFA.
		1. Any e-mails containing original application submissions or any additional or revised application files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.
1. **Delivery Instructions:** Applications must be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at proposals@maine.gov.
	1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.

Application submission e-mails that are successfully received by the proposals@maine.gov inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.

* 1. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail application submissions that have the requested files attached will be accepted.
	2. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to check with its organization’s information technology team to ensure that security settings will not encrypt its application submission.
	3. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time as described above.
	4. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202401020 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include:

The Applicant’s completed **Application Form** (found in Part V of the RFA) and all required information and attachments as stated in the form.

Completed/signed **Consultation/Collaboration Agreement Form** (Appendix B) for each partner organization.

1. The Application Form must be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file.
2. Applicants are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFA or Application Form for the purpose of extending their response. Materials not requested will not be considered part of the application and will not be evaluated.

**PART IV APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. **Evaluation Process – General Information**
	1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.
	2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that all contracts are awarded to the Applicants that provide the best value to the State of Maine.
	3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the applications received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to applications, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Applicants must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.
	4. Failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFA may result in the application being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFA specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal.
2. **Scoring Process:** The evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed below. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.
3. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Qualifications and Experience | 30 |
| Proposed Project  | 40 |
| Budget  | 30 |
| **Total Points**  | **100 points** |

1. **Selection and Award**
	1. Following scoring, all eligible applications will be rated, and rank-ordered according to the rating score in each STOP allocation category. Applications will be funded in descending order, highest to lowest score, subject to funding availability.
	2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
	3. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFA, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.
	4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
2. **Contract Administration and Conditions**
	1. The awarded Applicants will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with the appropriate riders as determined by the issuing Department.
	2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110)). This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.
	3. Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Applicants in the finalization of the contract.
	4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Applicant must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

**PART V APPLICATION FORM**

## Applicants must use the Application Form embedded below to submit their application in response to this RFA.

## The Application Form may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.



**APPENDIX A SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

This form should be used by Applicants when submitting written questions to the RFA Coordinator.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, enter “N/A” under the RFA Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary. Submit this document in WORD format, not PDF.

|  |  |
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| **Organization Name:** |  |

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| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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**APPENDIX B CONSULTATION/COLLABORATION AGREEMENT FORM**

A signed Consultation/Collaboration Agreement must be submitted with the application unless the applicant is the victim service entity. The form may be obtained by double clicking on the icon below.

