



State of Maine
STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant
Program
2022-2025 Implementation Plan

Justice Assistance Council

Maine Department of Public Safety

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I. Introduction

This implementation plan covers the 2022-2025 STOP award years and the four-year grant period of October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2026. The plan was approved by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Justice Assistance Council (JAC) on April 4, 2022. In developing this plan, DPS consulted and coordinated with the required entities specified in 42 U.S.C. 3796gg-1(c)(2). and contracted with the Cutler Institute's Maine Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to gather data to inform the goals for this program and how the funds will be used.

The Federal STOP (Services * Training * Officers * Prosecutors) Violence Against Women formula grant program funds state, local, tribal governments as well as community-based organizations to prevent violence against individuals and their families and provide victim services for victims.

These STOP grants fund law enforcement and prosecution initiatives to deter violent crime including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence and stalking against individuals, household members, and loved ones. In addition, this grant program provides financial support to organizations that provide victim services to individuals, household members, and loved ones who have been subjected to these violent crimes. The State of Maine has received STOP funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) since 1994.

STOP program funds encourage states including Maine to consider a multi-disciplinary approach involving law enforcement, prosecution, the judiciary, victim service organizations, health care professionals, and other community-based organizations, that responds more effectively to violence against individuals, household members, and loved ones. STOP funds are also available to develop advocacy and support services for individuals, household members, and loved ones who have been subjected to violence.

II. Needs and Context

A. Maine Demographics

As of 2020, Maine was the 4th most populous state in New England and 42nd nationally with a population of 1.36 million residents.¹ Maine's population has grown 2.6% since 2010, a net of 33,998 new Mainers through both domestic and international migration.² Of the 100 largest cities in New England, only three—Portland, Lewiston and Bangor—are in Maine.³ Maine is the least densely populated state in New England and 39th nationally with 44.2 residents per square mile.⁴ By comparison, Rhode Island and Massachusetts have 1,018.1 and 883.7 residents per square mile.

¹ United States Census Bureau, Cumulative Estimates of Resident Population Change for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico and Region and State Rankings: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2020 (NST-EST2019-02). (Accessed on September 27, 2021).

² Maine 2020 Year in Review. Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services Office of the State Economist. <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/sites/maine.gov.dafs.economist/files/inline-files/2020%20Year%20in%20Review.pdf>

³ Wikipedia, "List of cities by population in New England," n.d. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_New_England_by_population (Accessed on September 27, 2021).

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/183588/population-density-in-the-federal-states-of-the-us/>

| Reference Period | Maine | New England | United States |
|--|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2020 | 1,362,359 | 15,116,205 | 331,449,281 |
| 2010-2020 Numeric change in population | 33,998 | 671,340 | 22,703,743 |
| 2010-2020 Percent change in population | 2.6% | 4.6% | 7.4% |

In terms of territory, Maine is almost as big as the other five New England states combined.⁶ Aroostook County (the northernmost of Maine’s 16 counties) covers an area larger than Rhode Island and Connecticut combined. Services, especially in the northern part of the state, are spread out and accessing them poses a challenge, particularly in the winter months. Much of northern Maine consists of unorganized territories, areas without a system of local government. Roughly half (45.5%) of the state’s landmass consists of unorganized territories. Residents in these places rely on the state for governmental services. Much of the state’s population (37%) is concentrated in the two southernmost counties – Cumberland and York counties.⁷

Race & Ethnicity

While Maine alternates with Vermont as the “whitest” state, as of 2020, Maine was the most racially homogenous state in the country. According to the 2020 Census, 90.8% of Maine’s population identify as White.⁸ However, more than 95% of Maine’s total population growth is due to non-white populations.⁹ Furthermore, while individuals that identify as Black/African American make up a relatively small percentage of the state’s population, this percentage has almost quadrupled in twenty years, climbing from 0.5% in 2000 to 1.9% in 2020.

⁵ Maine 2020 Year in Review. Maine DAFS Office of the State Economist.

⁶ Netstate.com, “50 State Rankings for Size,” n.d., http://www.netstate.com/states/tables/st_size.htm (Accessed on March 11, 2021).

⁷ United States Census Bureau, (2020). *Maine State Profile*, Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/maine-population-change-between-census-decade.html>.

⁸ United States Census Bureau, (2020). *Maine State Profile*.

⁹ Maine 2020 Year in Review. Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services Office of the State Economist. <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/sites/maine.gov.dafs.economist/files/inline-files/2020%20Year%20in%20Review.pdf>

| Table 2. Maine Population by Race 10,11,12 | 2020 | 2010 | 2000 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| White alone | 90.8% | 95.2% | 96.9% |
| Black/African American alone | 1.9% | 1.2% | 0.5% |
| American Indian & Alaska Native alone | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| Asian alone | 1.2% | 1.0% | 0.7% |
| Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islanders alone | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Two or More Races | 4.7% | 1.6% | 1.0% |

Maine’s two largest cities, Portland and Lewiston, continue to be more diverse than much of the rest of the state with 84.6% of Portland’s residents and 86.6% of Lewiston’s residents identifying as White in 2019.¹³ Each city is located in one of the two Maine counties, Androscoggin and Cumberland counties, that have the lowest percent of residents that classify as White, 87.2% and 86.9% in 2020 respectively. In 2019, a third (34%) of all Portland public school students spoke a primary language other than English.¹⁴ Of the 60+ languages spoken by Portland students, the ten most common are: Somali, Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Kirundi, Vietnamese, Khmer, Kinyarwanda, and Acholi.¹⁵ In Lewiston, 28% of public-school students’ primary language is not English, and the most frequent language spoken by these students at home is Somali. Other common languages include Portuguese, French, and Swahili.¹⁶ Washington County has the third lowest percentage of its population classified as White (89.4%).¹⁷ Of this county’s 31,095 residents, 4.5% identified as American Indians. Additionally, over the past 20 years, the percentage of people living in Washington County that identify as Hispanic has more than doubled, climbing from 0.8% in 2000 to 2.1% in 2020. Many Latino families are drawn by jobs in lobster processing and blueberry picking.¹⁸

¹⁰ United States Census Bureau, (2020). *Maine State Profile*.

¹¹ United States Census Bureau (2010). *Maine, State Population by Race – Maine: 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/2010census/data/> (Accessed on March 15, 2021).

¹² United States Census Bureau (2000). *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 – Maine*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/2010census/data/>.

¹³ United States Census Bureau (2019). *2019 Census Results – Quick Facts – Portland and Lewiston, Maine*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/portlandcitymaine> and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/lewistoncitymaine>

¹⁴ Portland Public Schools “Student Demographics,” n.d., https://mlc.portlandschools.org/about/demographic_data (Accessed on March 11, 2021).

¹⁵ Portland Public Schools “Student Demographics,” n.d., [http://www.portlandschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1094153/File/District%20Information/Fast%20Facts%20October%202016.compressed%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.portlandschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1094153/File/District%20Information/Fast%20Facts%20October%202016.compressed%20(3).pdf).

¹⁶ Bonnie Washuk, “Lewiston student’s ‘excited to learn’ English,” Sun Journal. April 15, 2019. <https://www.sunjournal.com/2019/04/15/lewiston-students-excited-to-learn-english/> (Accessed March 11, 2021).

¹⁷ United States Census Bureau, (2020). *Maine State Profile*.

¹⁸ Hansi Lo Wang, “Maine’s Immigrants Boost Workforce Of Whitest, Oldest State In U.S.,” NPR. April 20, 2017.

Age

Among the populations of all US states, the three northern New England states- Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire have the top-three highest median ages, respectively.¹⁹

| Table 3: States with Highest & Lowest Median Age - 2019 | |
|---|------|
| Highest | |
| 1. Maine | 44.7 |
| 2. Vermont | 42.9 |
| 3. New Hampshire | 42.9 |
| Lowest | |
| 1. Utah | 30.8 |
| 2. District of Columbia | 34.0 |
| 3. Alaska | 34.3 |
| United States | 38.4 |

Maine has the highest median age of any state at 44.7. The median is 1.8 years higher than the next closest state – Vermont – at 42.9. Maine’s median age rose 1.9 years from 2010 to 2019. The state’s aging population presents some challenges as more older persons retire and fewer young people replace them in the workforce.

Poverty

One in nine Mainers (10.9%) has an income below the poverty line.²⁰ This rate places Maine 19th among the states and highest in New England. Poverty rates vary by county and region

Northern Maine counties tend to have higher poverty rates in comparison to the southern counties. In 2019, Washington County’s poverty rate stood at 19.6% - nearly one in every five people – followed by Somerset (18.3%) and Piscataquis (16.5%).²¹ Cumberland (7.8%) and York (7.9%) counties had the lowest rates. For the 2018-2019 school year, 82,073 (46.2%)²² of Maine students were eligible for free

<https://www.npr.org/2017/04/20/524536237/maines-immigrants-boost-workforce-of-whitest-oldest-state-in-u-s> (Accessed October 19, 2021).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, Median Age, by State, 2015-2019, n.d., <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/>. (Accessed on March 15, 2021.)

²⁰ Talk Poverty, Poverty by State - 2019, n.d. <https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/maine-2020-report/>. Accessed on March 16, 2021.

²¹ American Community Survey, 2015-2019 ACS Data Profile: Maine. <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2019/>. Accessed on March 16, 2021.

²² Kids Count, School children eligible for subsidized school lunch in Maine n.d., <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/1566-school-children-eligible-for-subsidized-school-lunch#detailed/2/any/false/574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/any/12834,3339>. Accessed on March 17 2021.

or reduced-price meals compared to 52.3% in the U.S.²³ By comparison, neighboring New Hampshire had a rate of 27.0%. Compounding these poverty figures is the lack of public transportation in most parts of the states as well as a lack of reliable broadband internet. This makes it extremely difficult to access needed services like the courts, applying to public assistance, navigating child protective services and other kinds of critical services.

People with Disabilities

As mentioned earlier, Maine has the highest median age of any state. The percentage of the population with a disability increases with age. Not surprisingly, a large percentage of Mainers have disabilities. In 2019, 340,215 adults in Maine had a disability, which is equal to 1 in 3 adults.²⁴ Among those Mainers,²⁵

- 14% have cognitive difficulty,
- 13% have ambulatory difficulty,
- 9% have independent living difficulty,
- 8% have hearing difficulty,
- 5% have vision difficulty, and
- 4% have self-care difficulty.

Rural counties in Maine have higher rates of disabilities than urban ones. For example, in 2019, 20.1% of all adults (18+) in Piscataquis County have a disability, almost three times as high as the rate in Cumberland County (home to Portland) at 7.7%.²⁶ Statewide, adults with disabilities in Maine experience health disparities and are more likely to have obesity, smoke, have diabetes, and have heart disease. Disability healthcare costs about \$4.5 billion per year, or up to 37% of the state's health care spending.²⁷

B. Underserved Populations

DPS and Maine SAC staff used a combination of census data, a stakeholder survey, focus groups, and consultation with STOP committee members and other partners to identify underserved populations within Maine. This, and the previously detailed demographic data show that, while Maine as a state is predominately White, Maine's population has seen diversification especially in urban hubs and some rural pockets over the past two decades. In response, Maine's domestic and sexual violence coalitions and service providers have integrated and continue to integrate practices of inclusivity, accessibility, and

²³ National Center for Education Statistics, Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: Selected years, 2000-01 through 2018-19 n.d., https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_204.10.asp

²⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019.

²⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Disability Impacts Maine. (2019) https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/pdfs/Maine_Disability.pdf, Accessed on October 20, 2021.

²⁶ United States Census Bureau (2019). *2019 Census Results – Quick Facts – Piscataquis County and Cumberland County, Maine*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cumberlandcountymaine,piscataquiscountymaine/PST045219>.

²⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Disability Impacts Maine. (2019)

non-discrimination into direct services for survivors and community education programs. There has also been increased training for organizations providing outreach activities to underserved populations. Nevertheless, conversations with direct service providers indicate that more still needs to be done to better reach Maine's diverse populations. During the listening sessions held to inform Maine's implementation planning, providers shared that victims who have limited English proficiency are immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and/or new Mainers. Migrant workers remain underserved and face challenges or barriers when seeking services. Lastly, Latinx and African Americans who have been in Maine communities for generations were also identified as in need of more culturally specific services that are not tied to being a new Mainer.

As a large and mostly rural state, a survivor's geographic location also poses challenges to accessing needed services. Maine's public transit system is limited and only present in Maine's southernmost-counties. Therefore, rural Mainers must rely on personal automobiles as their main means of transportation to needed services. Likewise, Maine's island communities are often remote and do not have comprehensive services readily available. Therefore, survivors that live in rural areas or on islands are often underserved.

Lastly, services providers identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning victims, especially youth, as being one of Maine's underserved populations. Research shows that LGBT people are nearly four times more likely than non-LGBT people to be victims of violent crime.²⁸ The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey found that LGBT students are three times more likely to have been forced to have sexual contact in their lifetime.²⁹ While LGBTQ+ services exist throughout Maine, one provider spoke to how service barriers are compounded when a youth of color is seeking LGBTQ+ specific services. LGBTQ+ services, much like mainstream services, are infrequently geared to meet the cultural and/or religious needs of these youth and, therefore, LGBTQ+ youth of color who "exist between these two cultures" fall through the cracks.

C. Additional Context

Index and violent crimes

Historically, Maine's index crime rates have been considerably lower than the U.S. rates and continue to be so. In 2020, crime in Maine decreased 6.1% making 2020 the ninth consecutive year violent crime has decreased in Maine.³⁰ For perspective, the 17,347 index offenses reported in 2020 in Maine equal a crime rate of 14 index offenses per 1,000 which is much lower than the national rate of 25 offenses per 1,000 in 2019.

²⁸ Flores, A.R., Langton, L., Meyer, I.L.H., & Romero, A.P. "Victimization rates and traits of sexual and gender minorities in the United States: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017." Retrieved from <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aba6910>.

²⁹ Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Department of Education. (2019). "LGBTQ Student Health." Retrieved from https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2021-01/2019MIYHSLGBTInfographic_0.pdf

³⁰ State of Maine, Department of Public Safety, "Crime in Maine – 2020," (Augusta, ME: Department of Public Safety, Uniform Crime Reporting Division).

Violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) decreased as a group by 72 offenses in 2020, representing a 4.7% decrease from 2019.³¹ While total homicides remained constant at 22 in 2019 and 2020; the number that were domestic violence-related fell from nine to five.

Domestic violence assaults decreased by 6% in 2020. However, while index rates provide an accurate picture of homicide, they are not as reliable when it comes to domestic violence. There are two reasons for this. First, domestic violence is typically underreported. Second, there is no single index for domestic violence. There are a number of crimes that, when perpetrated by a family member or intimate partner, are considered domestic violence. Among these are assault and murder, which are captured in index figures, but other crimes which are also considered domestic violence, such as threatening, terrorizing, violation of protection from abuse orders, and stalking, are not reflected in index figures. As a result, index crime figures are an underrepresentation of domestic violence. In fact, domestic violence resource centers across the state have fielded a record number of calls and electronic messages during the pandemic. From September 2020 to September 2021, helpline calls with survivors were up 13% compared to the previous year and contacts through email, texts, secure chat, and video services were up by 67%.³²

In 2020, 489 incidents of rape were reported, which is a 4.9% decrease compared to the 514 incidents in 2019. However, this decrease indicates that some survivors are not reporting to law enforcement, a fact influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as there was not a similar reduction in the number of victims reaching out to Maine's statewide sexual assault hotlines.³³

Hate Crimes

Data from the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE) reveal that the number of hate crime incidents reported in Maine by law enforcement steadily decreased from 2008 to 2017; however, it rebounded upwards in 2020 with 83 incidents.³⁴ From 2008 to 2012, Maine averaged 56.2 bias/hate crime incidents annually across the state. This average fell to 32.8 for the 2013 to 2017 period, a 41.6% drop. Nationally, while the average number of incidents also fell during this same period, the decline was much smaller at 8.7%.

Sex trafficking

Human trafficking has emerged as an area of challenge in Maine and is being addressed by the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) as well as sexual assault and domestic violence agencies and various faith-based organizations and community based non-profits. It is mentioned here because this issue is addressed somewhat differently by domestic violence and sexual violence groups. One challenge associated with providing services for trafficking victims stems from the multiple forms of abuse perpetrated against them and the need for long-term residential treatment to address physical and

³¹ Crime in Maine, 2019 & 2020 reports.

³² Gillian Graham, "Maine crime statistics fail to show extent of domestic violence," Portland Press Herald. December 5, 2021. <https://www.pressherald.com/2021/12/05/maine-crime-statistics-fail-to-show-extent-of-domesticviolence/> (Accessed December 6, 2021).

³³ News Center Maine Staff, "Overall crime down in Maine for ninth straight year," News Center Maine. December 1, 2021. <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/crime/overall-crime-rates-in-maine-decrease-motor-vehicle-theft-arson-reports-increase/97-2e5f0c36-ee2b-415f-b2a5-9968f5d12ebb> (Accessed December 3, 2021).

³⁴ Maine figures obtained from <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/downloads-and-docs>

socio-emotional needs.

Addressing Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in Maine

In an effort to provide additional and specific context about what is being done to address sexual violence and domestic violence in Maine, the following subsections offer key highlights from the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) and the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV).

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

MECASA is at the forefront of efforts to eliminate sexual violence in Maine. MECASA comprises seven Sexual Assault Support Centers (SASCs) and seven Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) which reported serving over 5,000 unduplicated sexual assault victims (primary and secondary) during calendar year 2021. MECASA also engages in public policy and tracks legislation that advocates for victims and survivors of sexual violence.

2021 SASCs Data Highlights

Total contacts: 21,516
Clients receiving services: 4,989
Number of service hours: 15,831

MECASA supports local efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence in ways that are coordinated, connected, and which model best practice. In order to do this, MECASA offers a range of statewide efforts, including: statewide quality assurance standards, outcome evaluation for prevention and intervention, data collection

and reporting; training for local providers (including trainings by service type, monthly topical webinars and peer sharing calls, an annual statewide conference; statewide tools such as a standardized advocate training curriculum and toolkits for training both prevention and intervention staff); and targeted technical assistance on a range of topics.

Multiple Means of Support Services

At the forefront of MECASA’s victim services work are the seven Sexual Assault Support Centers. These regionally based centers provide the following services:³⁵

- A 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline for information and support to survivors, their loved ones, and systems partners.
- Support groups; including traditional closed groups, experiential groups, and drop-in outreach groups.
- Support and advocacy for victims/survivors of sexual violence and their families in a range of community settings including incarcerated facilities.
- 24/7 accompaniment for victims/survivors who choose to seek the sexual assault medical forensic exam, other medical attention, report to the police, and/or go through the criminal justice system no matter when the violence was perpetrated.
- Referrals to mental health professionals and other community services.
- Systems advocacy including civil action, Title IX, PREA, and prosecution support.
- School, community and professional education programs.
- Referrals for civil legal representation in Protection from Abuse, Title IX, employment, housing, and other civil legal matters.

³⁵ Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, “Member Centers,” n.d., <http://www.mecasa.org/member-centers/>. Accessed on August 17, 2016.

Local SASCs seek to provide services in many formats and in many locations, to ensure that, no matter what barriers may present, clients can have their needs met in a way that is most appropriate to their circumstances.

Multidisciplinary Response for Child and Adult Victims of Sexual Assault

The multidisciplinary response to sexual assault is a nationally-recognized best practice for responding to both adult and child victims/survivors. A multidisciplinary approach to sexual violence improves the quality and quantity of forensic evidence; increases law enforcement's ability to collect information, file charges, and refer to prosecution; results in increased prosecution rates over time.³⁶ Local sexual assault support centers have coordinated local Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) since the 1990's. In addition to SART, multidisciplinary response to sexual assault also consists of facilitating and participating in local anti-trafficking multidisciplinary teams (Maine currently has 5 established teams, all facilitated or co-facilitated by sexual assault advocates), and the development of CACs.

CACs are facilities where children suspected of experiencing sexual abuse go to be interviewed. MDT members attend the interview and coordinate their investigation of the case together, while advocates provide emotional support and referrals to the family. Each CAC has a multi-disciplinary team that provide an array of services to sexually abused children and their families. The CAC coordinates the case review with all team members, including law enforcement, child protective services, etc., eliminating the need for the abused child and their family to travel to multiple agencies and interviewed multiple times. In 2021, Maine's seven CACs provided 1,319 forensically sound interviews and provided over 3,000 hours of family advocacy services. Currently the seven CACs in the state serve 14 of Maine's 16 counties. The Washington Hancock County CAC is under development and when fully staffed will mean full CAC coverage for the entire state. Maine's CACs are supported and represented by MECASA.

CACs are also able to connect non-offending parents and care givers to trauma-informed attorneys at Pine Tree Legal Assistance through a special direct referral system. Civil legal services can be an important way to immediately protect victims of child sexual abuse from the perpetrator, and to establish or modify family court orders to protect children who have been sexually abused. Civil legal attorneys at PTLA work closely with advocates from the CACs to offer families free legal representation and support to navigate these complicated legal situations. In 2021, Pine Tree Legal Assistance worked on 178 cases where child sexual assault was the primary legal issue.

Civil Legal Services

In addition to prioritizing direct referrals for child sexual abuse cases from the CACs, Pine Tree Legal Assistance also represents adult survivors of sexual assault in civil legal cases. Most often, these cases are referred directly from the SASCs to Pine Tree Legal using a direct referral system, and an advocate from the SASC connects the survivor directly with Pine Tree Legal. Next, a trained paralegal contacts the survivor to gather general information and conduct a trauma-informed intake. The survivor then meets with an attorney for a consultation. In 2021, Pine Tree Legal represented 262 survivors of sexual assault

³⁶ Cameron, C, and Helitzer, D. (2003). Impact evaluation of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/203276.pdf>

in civil legal matters, including Protection from Abuse, Fair Housing, and Title IX cases. Pine Tree attorneys and the SACS advocates work closely together to support survivors through the court process, ensuring that civil legal services are delivered in a trauma-informed, victim centered manner. Pine Tree Legal is often able to assist survivors with other civil legal matters identified through the course of representation, such as housing, discrimination, education, and consumer issues.

Community and Systems Change

SASCs and CACs, in addition to providing direct services to survivors and their families, are agents of change in their communities. Every SASC engages in dedicated programming to prevent sexual violence through the public health model of prevention. Prevention programming increases protective factors and decreases risk factors through a multi-level approach that focuses on individual, community, and societal level change. Preventionists teach about healthy sexuality in classrooms, develop tools for educators to lead education efforts, support community programs like jails and shelters to develop consent-based and affirming policies, teach parents about raising confident and safe children, and much more. Through multi-disciplinary relationships, SASCS also help educate their systems partners and advocate for change in practices that don't support survivors' access to safety, healing, and justice. In FY21 SASCs and CACs engaged in over 1,500 events and efforts of training, community education, outreach, policy change, and coalition building. These efforts reached over 38,000 Mainers.

Maine Sex Trafficking & Exploitation Network (STEN)

Though all local sexual assault support centers engage in anti-trafficking services and systems development at the local level, MECASA also has dedicated anti-trafficking programming at the statewide level. The Maine Sex Trafficking & Exploitation Network, a program of MECASA, offers training, technical assistance, and resources to people and organizations working to combat human trafficking in Maine. Among the services this initiative delivers are:³⁷ training and technical assistance, tools to help anti-trafficking advocates and service providers be more effective in their efforts, coordination of the Maine STEN Provider Council, emergency funding for survivors, web resources, and public policy advocacy.

Through MECASA's Maine Human Trafficking Survivor Fund, funds are available to meet the immediate emotional, psychological, and physical health and safety needs of human trafficking victims/survivors when other resources are unavailable or unable to do so. In FY21 the fund supported 21 survivors to meet 83 immediate needs with over \$36,000 of support distributed to Maine survivors. In FY21 MECASA also hosted Maine's first Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Conference that supported multi-disciplinary teams responding to CSEC around the state to develop local protocols.

Accessible Services

MECASA and its member programs have made accessibility to support for survivors a priority through initiatives like rural specific programming, transportation support for clients, the development of LGBTQ+ accessibility model policies, and engaging in readability assessment and training. In FY21, MECASA focused on improving language access for services. The project included a new model policy for centers around the state, a training series for advocates, translation of vital documents for services, a

³⁷ Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, "Member Centers," n.d., <http://www.mecasa.org/member-centers/>. Accessed on August 18, 2016.

multi-language outreach campaign, and the integration of live closed-captioning options for trainings. MECASA also engages biannually in a Population Services Assessment that looks at the quantity and quality of services to survivors from specific populations. These reports help Sexual Assault Support Centers and Children’s Advocacy Centers adjust their practices to be more inclusive and equitable.

Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

MCEDV provides leadership and coordination for Maine’s response to domestic abuse and violence. MCEDV’s membership is comprised of eight Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs) and the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine, which provides culturally and linguistically specific services for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs) provide services for people affected by domestic abuse and violence, dating abuse, stalking, elder abuse and sex trafficking and exploitation. They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, via 24-hour helplines. In Fiscal Year 2021, the DVRCs served 13,175 people affected by domestic abuse, including 1,800 concerned community members who were supporting people affected by abuse.

The DVRCs offer a range of programming for survivors of abuse, including:

- 24-Hour Helpline
- Safety Planning
- Legal Advocacy
- Sheltering and Housing
- Support Groups
- Community Education
- Prevention Education
- Domestic Violence-Child Protective Services
- Advocacy

MCEDV supports their efforts through grant administration, technical assistance, training, and monitoring compliance with quality assurance standards.

Legal Assistance for Survivors

Domestic Violence Resource Centers support survivors in navigating Maine’s civil and criminal legal systems. All DVRCs employ specialized legal advocates and either have on-staff attorneys or partner with community-based legal resources such as Pine Tree Legal. In FY 2021, DVRC Legal Programs served 5,638 people, an 18% increase in people served over 2020, as pandemic court delays kept Mainers in legal limbo. Help with protection orders is the single most common type of legal assistance provided through the DVRCs. Last year, advocates and DVRC attorneys helped survivors obtain 2,292 protection orders, and the impact reached beyond the adult survivors; 63% of the people who obtained protection orders had children, and 65% of the final orders obtained also covered children. Civil legal representation for survivors, particularly in more complex family matters cases, remains a significant unmet need in Maine, and MCEDV and its members are working to address that need by increasing the internal capacity of DVRCs, recruiting and training more attorneys to be part of Maine Volunteer

2021 DVRC Data Highlights

Total people served: 13,175

- Victim/Survivors Served: 11,374
- Community members served: 1,800

Total contacts: 99,599

- Crisis helpline calls: 17,555
- Non-helpline support calls: 39,122
- Electronic connections: 15,219
- Face-to-face contacts: 27,703

Who did we help?

- 129 victims of sex trafficking
- 276 people who identified themselves as LGBTQ+
- 1,339 people who shared they have disabilities
- 2,057 who were homeless

Lawyer's Project, offering financial assistance to cover legal representation, and expanding existing partnerships with local attorneys and legal aid providers.

Providing Safe Harbor, Preventing Homelessness

DVRC Residential Programs provide emergency sheltering, transitional services, housing navigation and homelessness prevention support. In FY 2021, these programs served 963 Mainers. Emergency sheltering includes the use of traditional shelter buildings, as well as hotels and the Trafficking Safe House that is owned by MCEDV and operated by member program Safe Voices. However, DVRC Residential Programs are about much more than emergency sheltering. Recognizing that shelter beds alone can never be the long-term solution that survivors and their children need, MCEDV and the DVRCs are increasingly focused on preventing homelessness by helping survivors navigate the housing system and by advocating for more affordable, safe, and family-sized housing. DVRCs provided 34,935 shelter bed nights in FY 2021 – more than in any recent year – but were only able to shelter 24% of survivors who asked for the service, illustrating the need to dramatically increase the options available so that people can have safe homes for the long term.

Changing Maine's Systems, Institutions & Communities

MCEDV works to shift the way Maine's systems and people respond to domestic abuse and violence. To that end, the DVRCs all convene multidisciplinary High-Risk Response, Enhanced Safety Planning, and/or Coordinated Community Response groups. Meanwhile, MCEDV participates in numerous statewide task forces, commissions, and committees, including the Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse and Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel and Elder Justice Coordinating Partnership. MCEDV's Executive Director sits on the Maine Criminal Justice Academy's Board of Trustees and chairs the Deadly Force Review Panel. In addition to these multidisciplinary partnerships, MCEDV members all provide education and technical assistance to a wide range of community and state systems. In FY 2021, MCEDV staff spent 272 hours training 2,728 Maine professionals - including nurses, law enforcement officers, advocates, child welfare workers and mental and behavioral health professionals - to effectively recognize and respond to domestic abuse, and 1,864 hours providing technical assistance regarding policy and practice related to domestic abuse for advocates, policy makers and systems partners. At the community level, DVRCs are engaged in youth-focused prevention education and community-focused public awareness efforts throughout the year.

The Domestic Violence - Child Protective Services Program

For nearly three decades, DVRCs have embedded specialized advocates within Maine's child welfare system. These advocates work with survivors of domestic abuse who become involved with the system, seeking to ensure that the CPS response to domestic abuse focuses on holding the person using abusive behaviors to account while promoting safety for both children and their protective parent. In addition to working directly with survivors, the DV-CPS Advocates partner closely with CPS staff, providing specialized consultation and guidance to workers to help them improve their response to survivors and enhance their ability to intervene effectively with the abusive party. MCEDV coordinates this program and sits on the Maine Child Welfare Advisory and Child Death and Serious Injury Panels as well as the Justice for Families Task Force. MCEDV staff consult on policy and protocol development and provide extensive foundational and advanced training for child welfare personnel.

The Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Program Network

Maine's Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (CDVIPs) exist to support the safety of victim-survivors, to hold people who use violence against their intimate partners to account, and to

change the core beliefs that lead to abusive behaviors. Previously known as “Certified Batterer Intervention Programs,” they are 48-week long group educational programs. Since 2019, MCEDV has provided administrative and programmatic support for the CDVIP network as part of a contract with Maine’s Department of Corrections (MDOC). This support includes administering the reimbursement of fees for low-income program participants, offering training for program facilitators and monitors, and providing programmatic oversight. In FY 2021, MCEDV presented the report, *Initial Findings on the Effectiveness of Maine’s Certified Batterer Intervention Programs* to the legislature, describing work to assess the value of Maine’s CDVIPs and making recommendations to guide subsequent legislative changes to enhance programs’ impact.³⁸ MCEDV is currently working with Maine’s CDVIPs to coordinate new information-sharing practices with local prosecutors’ offices to enhance victim safety and offender accountability because of that legislation. MCEDV has drafted guidance documents for both CDVIPs and prosecutors as well as checking in about implementation progress at monthly CDVIP network meetings. Additionally, MCEDV partners with the MDOC to facilitate the biennial multi-disciplinary review of Maine’s certification standards related to CDVIPs.

The Liberation Fund

For a survivor of domestic abuse, just one expense – no matter the amount – can be a barrier when trying to move toward safety and freedom. Founded in July 2020 with private donations, the Liberation Fund exists to enable DVRCs to provide survivors with critical resources and immediate relief to increase their safety and financial stability. The fund is administered by MCEDV with direct reimbursements to the DVRCs for expenses they have paid on behalf of survivors. Since its inception, the Liberation Fund has helped over 600 survivors across Maine. In 2021, MCEDV provided \$155,495 in direct financial assistance, covering expenses like legal fees for complex cases; car payments and repairs; substance use disorder treatment; GED credentials; heating oil; and more. The Liberation Fund is a cornerstone of MCEDV’s efforts to center economic justice in its advocacy work.

III. Description of the Planning Process

A. Brief description of the planning process

A requirement of receiving STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program funding is that the state must develop a statewide implementation program targeting resources at identified priorities that will yield the maximum impact in responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Developing this plan requires an analysis of data on these violent crimes, an assessment of what has already been funded, and documentation of what is needed to address these issues in the state.

The Maine Department of Public Safety (DPS) is assisted by the Maine Justice Assistance Council (JAC), which was formed in 1986 during Governor McKernan’s administration to function as a justice policy board to develop broad-based strategies to address persistent crime issues in the state and to review community-based funding applications. The JAC is engaged in implementing effective crime prevention strategies in Maine. The Council is designated as an officially constituted advisory board by Executive Order to provide planning and guidance and to seek input on justice system policy from justice system practitioners, key stakeholders, and advocates.³⁹

³⁸ Find report at: https://www.mcedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Legislative-Review-2021_FINAL.pdf

Membership of the Justice Assistance Council consists of the following:

- Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or his/her designee
- Representative of a domestic abuse prevention organization
- Director of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy
- A District Attorney
- Director of the Office of Substance Abuse or designee
- Commissioner of the Department of Corrections or his/her designee
- One Sheriff
- Law Enforcement Coordinator, U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Maine
- Two Police Chiefs
- Associate Commissioner for Juvenile Services, Department of Corrections
- Chairperson of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse or designee
- Representative of a statewide law enforcement agency
- Attorney General or his/her designee
- Representative of a victim services group

In January 2020, the Maine Justice Assistance Council (JAC) entered into a partnership with the Maine Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to update the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program plan. However, the COVID-19 crisis curtailed the initial work on the plan and interfered with normal planning activities. On March 27, 2020, OVW Acting Director, Laura Rogers, issued a memo that recognized the need for states to focus on other priorities and extended the planning period to FY 2022. Therefore, Maine continued to follow their FY2017 implementation plan through 2021 and resumed planning efforts in the first quarter of 2021. This implementation plan covers the federal fiscal years 2022-2025 and builds upon the successes previous Maine plans have achieved in reducing violence against individuals, household members, and loved ones. The premise behind the program is that only through collaboration will the goals in this plan be achieved.

Stakeholder Engagement

To begin formulating the 2022-2025 STOP Implementation Plan, the Maine SAC started by reviewing the goals of the 2017-2020 plan, census and secondary data related to STOP-funded activities, and the results from the FY2017 stakeholder survey. The Maine SAC consulted with DPS and determined a two-phase data collection and stakeholder engagement strategy.

- **Phase One:** Survey stakeholders and hold listening sessions to gather data.
- **Phase Two:** Use survey and listening session data and stakeholder engagement to guide the activities of and membership of the planning committee.

On April 5th, 2021, the Maine SAC brought this proposed strategy to the JAC quarterly meeting. The JAC approved the two-phase data and stakeholder engagement plan.

STOP Implementation Planning Survey (April-July 2021)

The first step of the data collection phase involved the Maine SAC and DPS developing a survey

³⁹ State of Maine Department of Public Safety, n.d., <https://www.maine.gov/dps/grants/index.html>, Accessed on September 20, 2021.

distribution list that aimed to include a robust representation of stakeholders throughout all 16 counties in Maine. The list included individuals from the law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim service organizations including culturally specific and tribal organizations. Next, the Maine SAC designed a survey to collect data on:

- the domestic violence and sexual assault services/supports that are in most need of continued funding in Maine;
- how available funds should be allocated between the areas of victim services, enforcement, prosecution, and education/outreach;
- the biggest challenges to addressing domestic and sexual violence in Maine; and
- promising practices for addressing domestic and sexual violence.

The survey was reviewed by DPS staff, the JAC chair, and the Commissioner of Public Safety and was submitted to and approved by the University of Southern Maine Institutional Review Board. In June, the survey was launched online using Qualtrics. Between June 18 and July 6, 2021, four emails were sent on behalf of Commissioner Sauschuck that detailed the goal of the survey, provided a survey link, and reminded participants of the deadline to submit their response. Of the 203 individuals invited, 85 stakeholders responded to the survey. Survey results were analyzed by the Maine SAC and are detailed below in Section E.

Listening Sessions and Tribal Leaders Forum (August-November 2021)

After the survey data were analyzed, the Maine SAC and DPS held listening sessions with the goals to learn more about the biggest challenges of addressing domestic and sexual violence in Maine and to identify the specific and unique needs and challenges of victims/survivors, especially for culturally specific and underserved communities. In August and September of 2021, the Maine SAC extended listening session invitations to 20 stakeholders from Maine's sexual assault and domestic violence service organizations, advocacy centers, and the executive directors of Maine's sexual assault coalition, domestic violence coalition, and tribal domestic and sexual violence coalition. Three one-hour listening sessions were held and a total of 13 individuals participated. Insights and themes from those sessions are detailed below in Section E.

On November 1, 2021, the Department of Public Safety mailed invitations to Maine's tribal Chiefs that lead the four federally recognized tribes that comprise five communities in Maine: Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point, and Penobscot Indian Nation. The invitation was for a virtual forum between DPS staff and tribal leaders on November 17, 2021, held via Zoom. The invitation detailed that the forum's aim was to learn more about the challenges tribal communities are facing when combating domestic and sexual violence and to better understand what barriers tribes have experienced in accessing funding for this work. Two additional email invitations with information about the session were sent by DPS staff after the initial letter was mailed.

One tribal Chief attended the forum and offered his opinions regarding the STOP implementation plan and Maine's current and intended use of STOP program funds. This meaningful dialogue helped DPS to better understand why tribal communities have not applied for STOP funding in the past and what barriers would keep them from applying in the future. The reasons aligned with those shared by the executive director of Maine's tribal domestic and sexual violence coalition. These important insights are included in Section E.

STOP planning committee activities (October 2021-April 2022)

Between October 1st and November 1st, DPS staff sent multiple emails to stakeholders in Maine inviting them to be committee members or collaborative partners. Most of these stakeholders had already been engaged in these efforts by participating in the survey and/or focuses groups while a couple were learning about the planning process for the first time. This outreach detailed the goals of the implementation planning process, forecasted the planning efforts that would take place between November 2021 and January 2022, and provided notice of committee meeting dates and dates for reviewing the draft plan. After using a doodle poll to determine the times that worked best, the 1.5 hour meetings were held virtually on November 22nd and December 2nd. A meeting agenda and supporting documents were shared via email with all committee members in advance of the meeting and a meeting recap was shared via email after the meeting. The following bullet points detail the areas of focus for each meeting:

November 22, 2021, Virtual Meeting

- Review survey and listening sessions findings;
- Discuss any missing data, representation, or concerns;
- Discuss Maine's subgrant application process and grant-making strategy; and
- Complete initial review of Maine's previous grant goals and objectives.

December 2, 2021, Virtual Meeting

- Continue review of Maine's previous grant goals and objectives;
- Address any additional areas of concern; and
- Develop goals and objectives for the 2022-2025 implementation plan.

After incorporating initial edits, additional data, and areas of concerns, all STOP committee members and collaborative partners were emailed a full draft of Maine's 2022-2025 STOP Implementation Plan on December 15, 2021 and were given a one-month period to provide feedback, edits, and detail any concerns. In January and February 2022, DPS and Maine SAC staff received and incorporated these edits into the plan. DPS and Maine SAC also share the draft plan with the ALSO Chicago STAAR Project. STAAR project staff provide feedback and insights through two Zoom meetings. Committee members reviewed the technical assistance provider's feedback and incorporated it into the final version of the plan in March 2022. The final draft of Maine's 2022-2025 STOP Implementation Plan was shared with all committee members and collaborative partners and was approved on April 4, 2022, by the JAC.

B. Documentation of planning committee member participation

The STOP implementation planning process requires participation, consultation, and coordination with designated entities. *Table 4. Planning Committee Member Participation* offers information about the individuals who participated as members of the planning committee. The previous section (Section A) offers a detailed narrative description of the planning committee meetings and activities. Appendix A includes copies of Implementation Planning Participation Forms for planning committee members.

| Table 4. Planning Committee Member Participation | | | Participated in survey and/or focus group | Attended virtual planning committee meeting(s) | Received draft plan and final plan |
|--|--|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Entity Type | Name | Title and Organization | | | |
| State sexual assault coalition | Elizabeth Ward Saxl | Executive Director, Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| State domestic violence coalition | Francine G. Stark | Executive Director, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| State law enforcement organization | Lt Colonel Bill Harwood ⁴⁰ | Deputy Chief Maine State Police | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Prosecution entity | Andrew Robinson | Androscoggin County District Attorney | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Prosecution entity | Lisa Marchese | Criminal Division Chief, Office of Maine Attorney General | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tribal Representative | Chief William J. Nicholas ⁴¹ Sr | Tribal Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township | Yes | No | Yes |
| Underserved organization | Gia Drew | Program Director, Equality Maine | No | Yes | Yes |
| Underserved organization | Jaye Martin | Executive Director, Legal Services for the Elderly | No | Yes | Yes |
| Culturally specific organization | Jeffrey Smith | Grant Manager, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Culturally specific organization | Melinda Novella | Program Coordinator, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other entity | Heather Putnam | Victim Witness Coordinator/Law Enforcement Coordinator, U.S. Attorney's Office – District of | No | Yes | Yes |
| State Administrative | Dennis Corliss | Acting State Court Administrator | No | No | Yes |

⁴⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Bill Harwood participated in our two committee meetings, was a member of the JAC Committee and a member of the Homicide Review Panel. He received the initial draft of our Implementation Plan in December 2021 to review and provided feedback. Lieutenant Colonel Harwood retired from Maine State Police in March 2022; therefore, we were unable to obtain a signed Participation Form.

⁴¹ Chief Nicholas was a member of the planning committee and participated in the Virtual Forum for Tribe Leaders on November 17th. Chief Nicholas intended to attend the December planning committee meeting but ended up having other commitments. He was provided the initial draft Implementation Plan in December 2021 and the final draft Implementation Plan in March 2022; however, he did not complete and return the Participation Form.

⁴² Former State Court Administrator, James Glessner, was involved with the STOP Grants for many years. However, he announced his retirement in November 2021 and was not able to complete this Implementation Plan Project with us. At the end of December 2021, Dennis Corliss was placed in Acting Capacity State Court Administrator and was provided the initial draft Implementation Plan in December 2021 and the final draft Implementation Plan in March 2022. He did not complete and return the Participation Form.

C. Consultation with other collaboration partners

Table 5. Collaborative Partners lists partners that were engaged during the drafting of the implementation plan. Collaborative partners were identified in a few ways. First, because the Justice Assistance Council works with the Department of Public Safety to review applications and grant STOP subaward applications, all members of the JAC engaged in implementation planning efforts either as a planning committee member or a collaborative partner. The “Other entity” collaborative partners listed in Table 5. are all JAC members representing various entities.

A combination of census data, insights drawn from survey responses and listening sessions, as well as consultation with stakeholders that were involved in previous implementation planning efforts informed how the state selected and meaningfully consulted with organizations as committee members and collaborative partners. Immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ individuals, elderly, tribal, and rurally located Mainers were all identified as underserved populations with barriers and lack of access to services. For this reason, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine, Equality Maine, and Legal Services for the Elderly staff were included as planning committee members while the Wabanaki Women’s Coalition and sexual assault and domestic violence victim service providers that serve rurally located Mainers were asked to be collaborative partners. Finally, sexual assault and domestic violence victim service providers that serve Mainers in urban areas were also included as collaborative partners as this is where Maine’s most diverse populations are located.

While collaborative partners did not participate in the two virtual planning committee meetings, all collaborative partners were invited to participate in the stakeholder survey and/or focus groups and were also invited to review and provide comments on the full draft of the implementation plan. Sexual assault and domestic violence victim services providers reviewed the draft plan alongside coalition staff and submitted their questions and edits jointly.

| Table 5. Collaborative Partners | | |
|--|----------------------|---|
| Entity Type | Name | Title and Organization |
| State sexual assault coalition staff | Katie Kondrat | Equity and Access Coordinator, Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault |
| State sexual assault coalition staff | Kayce Hunton | Intervention Coordinator, Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault |
| Sexual assault victim service provider | Arian Clements | Executive Director, Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine |
| Sexual assault victim service provider | Tamar Perfit Mathieu | Executive Director, Penquis Rape Response Services |

Table 5. Collaborative Partners

| Entity Type | Name | Title and Organization |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Domestic violence victim service provider | Rebecca Hobbs | Executive Director, Through These Doors |
| Domestic violence victim service provider | Pat Smith | Executive Director, Hope and Justice Project |
| Domestic violence victim service provider | Susan Norwood-Burns | Legal Advocacy Director, New Hope for Women |
| Domestic violence victim service provider | Shawna Lund | Outreach Advocacy Director, Family Violence Project |
| Tribal Coalition Representative | Donna Brown | Executive Director, Wabanaki Women’s Coalition |
| Culturally specific organization | Iman Hussein | Communications and Development Coordinator, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine |
| Other entity | Amy M Heino | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Substance Abuse |
| Other entity | Richard Desjardin | Director, Maine Criminal Justice Academy |
| Other entity | Dr. Ryan Thornell | Deputy Commissioner, Depart of Corrections |
| Other entity | Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton | Waldo County Sherriff’s Office |
| Other entity | Colin O’Neil | Associate Commissioner, Department of Corrections - Juvenile Services |
| Other entity | Lucia Chomeau Hunt | Directing Attorney, Family Law and Vitim Rights, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc. |

D. Consultation with Tribes

Maine has five federally recognized Indian tribes. Each of these Indian tribes has a dual domestic and sexual violence victim services organization for members who live on or off the reservations as well as non-members. The Department of Public Safety invited Maine’s five tribal Chiefs to participate in a virtual forum to discuss the STOP implementation plan and Maine’s current and intended use of STOP program funds. The tribal offices and chiefs of the five tribes that were contacted to engage in this conversation were:

- Edward Peter-Paul, Chief, Aroostook Band of Micmacs
- Clarissa Sabattis, Chief, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- William J. Nicholas Sr, Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township
- Maggie Dana, Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point
- Kirk Francis, Chief, Penobscot Nation

These five tribal leaders were also invited to review the draft STOP Implementation Plan, as was the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Women’s Coalition, who met virtually with Maine SAC research staff in September to provide insights and concerns that were included in the implementation plan. Additionally, some of the tribal domestic violence and sexual assault violence prevention advocates were invited to and responded to the stakeholder survey that was deployed in June and were invited to

participate in the listening sessions that were held in late summer.

While tribal input was limited during this planning period, DPS will continue to attempt to broker meetings between the State and the tribes on domestic and sexual violence issues, so their voices are heard and inform how STOP funds are to be implemented in the State of Maine.

E. Summary of major concerns raised during the planning process

Stakeholder Survey Results

The Maine Department of Public Safety worked with the Cutler Institute's Maine Statistical Analysis Center to survey key stakeholders including law enforcement, court system and civil legal services employees, district attorneys, corrections staff, culturally specific programs, and tribal and non-tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalition/center staff. The survey was meant to capture insight into the challenges of addressing domestic and sexual violence in Maine, as well as stakeholders' awareness of strategies and promising practices related to these areas and their opinions on how to prioritize and target funds to address them.

Survey questions were drafted by the Maine SAC research team based on discussions with, and priorities identified by the DPS. The online survey was sent to 203 potential survey participants in June of 2021. A total of 85 stakeholders fully completed the survey for a response rate of 42%.

Domestic violence – needs and funding allocations

All respondents were asked to consider and rank in order of most need the top five domestic violence services/support that need continued or additional resources and/or funding in Maine. Respondents indicated the following services as most in need of continued or additional resources:

- direct/immediate victim services (79%),
- long-term support services (60%),
- emergency shelter/transitional housing services (58%),
- legal advocacy (48%), and
- the coordination of cross-disciplinary teams (29%).

Respondents were also asked how any available funds should be allocated to address domestic violence. Respondents indicated that the largest proportion of available funds (42%) should be allocated to victim services, followed by enforcement (21%), prosecution (20%), and education/outreach (18%) (See *Table 6. DV Funding Allocations* below).

| Table 6. DV Funding Allocations | Overall (n=83) | LE (n=51) | Non-LE (n=32) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Victim Services | 42% | 40% | 45% |
| Enforcement | 21% | 23% | 17% |
| Prosecution | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| Education/Outreach | 17% | 17% | 18% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Three-fifths (61%) of the key stakeholders that responded to the survey identified as law enforcement. Therefore, in an effort to see how this stakeholder group influenced the overall mean totals for each funding category, the allocation of funding responses were separated and reviewed in the groups of law

enforcement (61%) and non-law enforcement (39%). Once the allocation responses were split by group type, the data showed that non-law enforcement respondents allocated 5% more to victim services than respondents who identified as law enforcement and 6% less to enforcement activities.

Domestic violence—challenges and promising practices

When asked to share the biggest challenge Maine faces (other than lack of funding) in its efforts to address domestic violence, respondents identified:

- availability of shelter (45%),
- availability of victim services in rural or isolated locations (40%),
- availability of housing (40%),
- availability of victim services in general (31%),
- the current court system structure (31%), and
- availability of legal service (29%).

When asked to share the single most promising practice they have heard about in Maine or elsewhere for addressing domestic violence, respondents most often reported themes related to collaboration/coordinated community response, victim services, prosecution, law enforcement efforts, and training for professionals. A summary of these responses can be found below in *Table 7. Domestic Violence Promising Practices*.

| Table 7. Domestic Violence Promising Practices | Number of responses/ themes (n= 30) |
|---|--|
| 1. Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration - especially between law enforcement, victim advocates, district attorney, and the court systems; including high risk response teams and multi-discipline task forces. | 19 (63%) |
| 2. Victim Services - including rapid response to victims for support services; high risk case assessment; multidisciplinary support such as shelter/housing, transportation, substance abuse treatment, and legal services; high-risk response team. Examples of successful programs: DV resource center model, high-risk multi-disciplinary response teams, and Blueprint for Safety. | 15 (50%) |
| 3. Prosecution and Law Enforcement Efforts - including designated DV investigators, prosecutors, and victim advocates; more collaborative approach between law enforcement, prosecutors, and advocates; trauma-informed court proceedings; and specially trained prosecutors to allow for consistency in court proceedings. | 13 (42%) |
| 4. Training Professionals - specifically more advanced training for law enforcement (interviewing techniques), and judicial officers (trauma-informed and mental health informed). The Center for Court Innovation was listed as offering specialized training for judicial officers and having best practices for court proceedings. | 6 (20%) |

Sexual violence – needs and funding allocations

All respondents were also asked to consider and rank in order of most need the top five sexual violence services/support that need continued or additional resources and/or funding in Maine. Similar to the responses for domestic violence, respondents indicated the following services as most in need of continued or additional resources:

- direct/immediate victim services (87%),
- long-term support services (67%),
- emergency shelter/transitional housing services (58%),
- legal advocacy (52%), and
- the coordination of cross-disciplinary teams (36%).

Respondents (n=83) were also asked how any available funds should be allocated to address sexual violence. They indicated that the largest proportion of available funds (41%) should be allocated to victim services, followed by enforcement (19%), prosecution (22%), and education/outreach (18%) (See *Table 8. SA Funding Allocation*). The emergency shelter/transitional housing services response surprised some advocates. In this context, this response may be connected to the needs of trafficking victims.

| Table 8. SA Funding Allocations | Overall (n=83) | LE (n=51) | Non-LE (n=32) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Victim Services | 41% | 40% | 43% |
| Enforcement | 19% | 21% | 16% |
| Prosecution | 22% | 22% | 22% |
| Education/Outreach | 18% | 17% | 19% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

As was done for the domestic violence funding allocations, the sexual violence allocation of funding responses were separated and reviewed in the groups of law enforcement (61%) and non-law enforcement (39%). When the allocation responses were split by group type, non-law enforcement respondents allocated 3% more to victim services than respondents who identified as law enforcement. Non-law enforcement respondents also allocated 2% more to education/outreach than respondents who identified as law enforcement while there was no change in prosecution allocations.

Sexual violence – challenges and promising practices

When asked to share the biggest challenge Maine faces (other than lack of funding) in its efforts to address sexual violence, respondents identified:

- availability of victim services in general (45%),
- availability of victim services in rural or isolated locations (45%),
- availability of shelter (33%),
- the current court system structure (32%),
- availability of housing (27%), and
- the availability of culturally specific victim services and resources (24%).

When asked to share the single most promising practice they have heard about in Maine or elsewhere for addressing sexual violence, respondents most often reported themes related to victim services, collaboration/coordinated community response, prosecution, and law enforcement efforts, and training for professionals. A summary of responses can be found in *Table 9. Sexual Assault Promising Practices*.

| Table 9. Sexual Violence Promising Practices | Number of responses/ themes (n= 31) |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Victim Services - including services tailored to the community being served such as culturally specific services and services available in many languages; locating victim advocates in law enforcement agencies. The children's advocacy center model was listed 5 times as a successful model. | 13 (42%) |
| 2. Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration - especially between law enforcement, victim advocates, district attorney, and the court systems, also hospital/medical staff and DHHS staff; including multi-disciplinary/agency task forces, and regional coordination meetings. | 12 (50%) |
| 3. Prosecution and Law Enforcement Efforts - including a Victim Witness Advocate to be posted in prosecutor's office and law enforcement agency; prosecutors specialized in prosecuting sexual violence cases to ensure expedience, competence, and consistency; stricter laws for sexual violence crimes. | 8 (26%) |
| 4. Training Professionals - specifically trained medical staff for treatment and kit collection, more advanced training for law enforcement (engaging/interviewing victims & identifying human trafficking), and training for prosecutors and judicial officers (sexual trauma and resources). | 8 (26%) |

Listening Session Results

While the stakeholder survey results offered insight into Maine’s great challenges, funding needs, and promising practices, the information gleaned was broad. Therefore, three listening sessions were held in an effort to more fully contextualize the survey results and offer a more granular look at the challenges that are unique to Maine’s communities. Attendees of these sessions included executive directors and other staff of domestic and sexual violence victim service programs, centers, and coalitions. The organizations that participated have service areas ranging from Maine’s most populous counties like Cumberland and York, to Maine’s most rural counties, Franklin and Piscataquis.

Contextualizing Maine’s Top Challenges

The listening sessions centered on the top six challenges (other than lack of funding) for addressing domestic and sexual violence as identified by the survey:

- Availability of victim services in rural or isolated locations
- Availability of shelter and housing
- Availability of victim services in general
- Availability of legal services
- Availability of culturally specific victim services and resources
- The current court system structure (i.e., processing of DV/SA cases, court filing, scheduling, etc.)

The moderator asked participants to review the bulleted list (shown above) and to speak to what resonated most for their organization and service area. Across all sessions, the participants agreed that the survey had accurately captured many if not all of the top challenges facing their organizations and communities. One participant shared, “It is like you wrote down all of my challenges,” while another

stated “I don’t know if there is anyone who could argue with [this list].”

However, as each group discussed the challenges, it quickly became clear that it was important to distinguish between the *availability* of services/resources and the *accessibility* of services/resources. Current funding and programming enable many service providers to offer a wide range of services. However, those services are not always accessed or seen as accessible because of barriers related to getting to the services or the services getting to those in need. As one participant explained:

“We can make them available, but they are not always accessible to people, whether it is because of transportation issues, or they don’t see our organization or services as something that they can access because of generational ideas about reaching out for help in the State of Maine or culturally specific needs in accessing services. So, availability is one thing and I think we are working really hard to make them available and accessible.”

With this distinction in mind, participants went on to describe how there are three major “availability” challenges in Maine - comprehensive direct legal services, affordable and safe housing, and transportation.

Unmet need for comprehensive civil legal services.

Participants across all listening sessions identified available civil legal services as a “massive need” and “of critical importance” when seeking to effectively aid adult and youth victims of domestic and sexual violence. For many, collaborating or referring clients to Pine Tree Legal Assistance, a nonprofit that provides free civil legal services to low-income Mainers, has enabled their clients to access legal services which would otherwise not be available. Likewise, some participants described relationships with local attorneys that provide services at reduced fee or pro bono. However, the need for comprehensive direct legal services greatly outweighs the current availability.

Multiple participants described that the most frequently sought civil legal service is help with protection from abuse orders and the family matters related to those orders, such as divorce, custody, housing, etc. One participant described that, while their advocates are available to assist with a protection from abuse order (PFA),

“Many times, having an attorney would be very helpful for the person for the PFA and also especially when there are kids involved if there is a divorce and parental rights, custody, support and other issues. We cannot possibly meet the demand for help with those situations and it’s very hard because you have to prioritize and say no to people when you know that having access to an attorney would make a huge difference for their safety and their economic well-being for the long-term.”

Furthermore, civil legal services and sufficient representation are even less available in rural Maine than in Maine’s largest cities since far fewer attorneys practice in rural areas. Until there are incentives or supports put in place to bring lawyers to rural areas and increased funding for legal representation, providers do not see the challenge abating.

Inadequate safe housing options.

When discussing long-term housing options for victims of violence, participants stressed that available, affordable, safe housing is at a premium in Maine and housing in rural areas is frequently poorly maintained or is nonexistent. An added barrier for college towns or areas with high levels of tourism is that housing demand and availability fluctuate drastically throughout the year.

Participants detailed that their clients obtain housing vouchers but often end up in a shelter for months because they are unable to secure housing. One participant described, *“People who qualify for and obtain vouchers for permanent housing cannot find housing that passes inspection, aligns with the composition of their family, is located in a town where they have access to transportation and other needs they have in order to thrive.”*

For emergency sheltering, a big challenge is finding shelter that is safe within the community where the survivor currently lives and this is where they have access to the services, relationships, and resources that support their wellbeing. Yet, even if a shelter is present or nearby, participants described that survivors do not access shelter for various reasons. For instance, one provider detailed, *“Our shelter is a shared living facility. You share a bedroom, kitchen, everything. It is just not adequate for sheltering a variety of people who might need shelter. It’s so stressful already, right, and then you are putting them into this crazy environment.”* A staff member of a culturally specific organization specified,

“Our clients don’t feel comfortable in shelters because they don’t feel that the shelter staff truly understand how to meet their needs. It may be that they do not have the right space to pray... or there isn’t any Halal food available for instance. If they need things that are very culturally or religiously specific, they are less inclined to want to be a part of it or be there.”

For some, family obligations or having their profession tied to the land they live on are additional barriers that keep survivors from relocating to a shelter. Furthermore, shelters are, by design, focused on immediate rather than longer term needs.

With all of this in mind, participants spoke to successes that have come from funding tied to the pandemic recovery to support survivors to safely stay in their current residence or community by paying for the mortgage, a down payment or lease, or an extended stay in a hotel room or campsite. While adequate housing will continue to be a major challenge in Maine, participants shared that consistently available and ongoing financial support beyond pandemic-related funding would have a significant impact.

[Lack of transportation.](#)

One challenge that was not identified in the survey as a top challenge but was discussed in tandem with other challenges throughout the listening sessions is the lack of available public transportation outside of the Greater Portland region. Like housing, safe, affordable, and reliable methods of public transportation is a larger, ever-present issue for rural residents. Without a public transit system, rural Mainers must rely on personal automobiles as their main means of transportation. Owning a car, and all of the associated costs of maintaining a vehicle, is financially out of reach for many. Therefore, transportation is a huge barrier to victims accessing domestic and sexual violence services. One participant shared, *“We have such a hard time with transportation, so many people live outside of the immediate area where all of the services are available. That is where the rental units, if they are available, are. People don’t have the ability to come into the office to meet with us.”*

The COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional layer of challenge to public transportation. Innovative options like The Presque Isle Loop bus service, which aimed to offer a public transit service in the less-densely populated Aroostook County, was shut down due to the pandemic just as it was taking off. Participants shared that, due to health safety concerns, their organizations’ transportation services have been halted for all rides except for emergencies. One participant talked about using funding to secure

taxi rides for victims only to find that when they tried to reach various cab companies, each had a shortage of drivers due to the pandemic. Another participant who serves rural areas described, *“So, it’s taxis or the police if we can make it into some kind of a situation that [the police] are willing to transport for... like if clients need to do a PFA or go into a shelter.”*

Traditional public transportation solutions are designed for areas with high population density and a less-expansive geography. Therefore, providers did not think adding more traditional bus service, like the Concord Coach Line, would be practical. Instead, participants thought that there needed to be increased flexibility with funding in order to increase instances of people getting from rural areas to service areas. This includes helping with a down payment on a vehicle, paying for someone to get their license, or providing assistance with a car purchase. One participant summed up this strategy when they shared, *“It’s definitely about funding and financial resources... We cover four counties, we are really spread out and most of the people we work with would benefit from having their own, reliable transportation just because of where they live.”*

Need for Victim Service Maintenance and Expansion

The majority of the listening session participants currently are or at some point in the past have been a STOP subgrantee. This enabled participants to share how this funding has directly supported their efforts. Across the board, STOP funding has helped organizations maintain the core services that are in high demand. One participant described, *“STOP grant funding is already a critical part of what we are doing”* while another stated, *“It is an award that can be used for the core services that we’ve seen to be extremely effective.”* Thus, STOP funds have often been vital to organizations sustaining their services, rather than using this funding for the expansion of services.

With that in mind, the listening sessions also made it strikingly clear that there is an overwhelming need for more funding to expand services and staffing. One participant detailed, *“What I am hearing from folks most consistently is the sheer volume of the work and the numbers of people needed to do it. And that is true across the state... in high population areas and the rural areas as well.”* Participants from organizations that serve the Portland area each described how the high demand for services means advocates may only have time to help survivors with the most pressing need, like a protection from abuse order, and they may be unable to provide holistic safety planning tailored to the unique needs of each victim. One participant described this as, *“a constant juggling of do you try to get as many people through or do you help them as broadly as possible? We are constantly having to weigh that.”* Another participant shared, *“In Washington and Hancock counties it is not unusual for there to be multiple reach outs to the hotline at the same time. So, the number of people that need to be available in real time is great.”*

Furthermore, staff shortages mean that organizations are unable to meaningfully expand their services or reach underserved populations. One participant explained, *“It takes money and staffing to dedicate people to do outreach and to build a network and trust in the communities that don’t typically seek out our services in order for them to come forward and for us to adequately respond to what they are saying they need.”*

A final piece of victim service expansion is the need to fund technology. What the COVID-19 pandemic has solidified is the need to invest in technology that enables providers to reach individuals remotely. Participants talked about needing to purchase all their staff cellphones and laptops in order to move to virtual advocacy. While some service providers quickly embraced a virtual service world and were able to pivot and meet client needs, other programs could not afford this initial expense and the ongoing

maintenance of this technology. One participant explained,

“The technology need is huge... A lot of our work has gone virtual during the pandemic. So, everything soared to online platforms and online support groups and chats and online trainings. I think, thinking of victim services in that way and in terms of accessibility is important. I don’t think it is going away. I think that when we extend broadband to our more rural areas that more people have access to, and remote hardware and all the things, the more we will have people utilizing our services.”

Need for Competitive Salaries and Specialization

Another side of staffing, which goes beyond having funds to pay more people to provide services, is having funding to pay competitive salaries. Whether at a police department, District Attorney’s Office, or victim service organization, participants spoke about how adequately compensating staff increases staff tenure which, in turn, builds the organization’s collective historical knowledge and ability to meet the needs of the people they serve. For example, one participant explained how offering a competitive salary and full benefits is the difference between having a position with frequent staff turnover and having a staff person with a varied skill set who has built relationships and trust in the communities and systems they engage. Unfortunately, most providers shared that they have seen very high rates of staff turnover and an inability to fill open positions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to competitive salaries, participants also described the need for funding to support in-service training and specialization in the medical, legal, and law enforcement professions, including judges and prosecutors, to better serve victims of domestic and sexual violence. For example, one participant described a “specialized domestic violence/sexual assault detective” that performs “really great quality investigations and communicating with victims” but that they are the only officer with this training in all of Androscoggin County. Likewise, others described the advantages that come from judges and court staff being trained in handling domestic and sexual violence cases and nurses or other emergency room staff that are trained in forensics examinations. One participant summed up the collective sentiment that specialization needs to be prioritized and supported in these fields when they stated, *“Being able to fund specialization and be responsive to the evolving realization of what engagement is best within these issues... is important and will strengthen the system overall.”*

Cultural challenges

Listening session participants were asked to discuss the availability of culturally specific services and the communities that are underserved in Maine. Groups discussed victims who have limited English proficiency; victims who are immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and/or new Mainers; victims with a physical disability, mental health, or substance use issues; LGBTQ+ victims; victims experiencing housing insecurity; victims who live in rural or island communities; migrant workers and their children; elder survivors of domestic or sexual violence; and Black and Latinx Mainers who are not asylum seekers, immigrants, or refugees but that have been in Maine for one or more generations. Across the board, it was recognized that expanded resources, programming, training, and staffing are needed to reach and serve these groups more comprehensively. In fact, service providers and coalitions are working to build stronger partnerships with the community-based organizations that are already embedded in and trusted in those communities as well as hire staff that reflect the demographic composition of these communities.

Two types of cultural barriers that complicate serving underserved populations were identified during the sessions. First, a mistrust of service providers and white-dominated organizations. One culturally

specific service provider explained, *“Within the immigrant refugee community there is the added challenge of people not trusting the advocates themselves and seeing them as a reflection of a system rather than someone who is genuinely there to help them.”* This can mean that some survivors do not seek services because they think their needs cannot fully be met. While this perception and need for more culturally specific services present ongoing barriers, mainstream providers are serving culturally specific communities. For instance, Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs) in Maine served 187 people who identified as immigrant or refugees in fiscal year 2021.⁴³ Of the 187 people who identified as immigrant or refugee, most received multiple services and a wide array of non-residential services were provided to 184 victims/survivors. DVRCs sheltered 22 victims/survivors, housed 22 victims/survivors in transitional housing, and provided 33 victims/survivors with legal services. The MCEDV Executive Director explained, *“While the DVRCs do not fully meet everyone’s needs, they are serving many, and the data indicates that the numbers accessing these services has increased each year.”*

The second cultural challenge that was acknowledged in the sessions relates to serving victims who live in rural or island communities. It was noted that rural and island communities are unique and that *“everyone knowing everyone else’s business”* can help or hinder a situation of sexual or domestic violence. Relatedly, the culture of trust and collaboration between small-town police departments and victim service organizations also greatly impacts the support and services victims receive. One participant described, *“In each of the counties and each department it depends on who their chief is, what the culture is of their departments, whether they're going to call us or not or refer survivors to us or not... Until there's a cultural move or shift and I'm not sure that we'll ever get there.”* Another participant shared, *“Some of the towns and cities work really well with us while others won't give us the time of day.”* Further elaboration on this topic identified that, in these small communities where the same people have been in their positions for years, a miscommunication or negative experience between a police department and victim service provider from a decade ago can taint present relationship building efforts. Furthermore, departments in larger counties like Cumberland have more resources, staff, and longer working relationships that can be relied upon when issues arise. Therefore, the larger takeaway from these discussions is that various kinds of cultural barriers exist, and that building trust is key to creating stronger partnerships that will increase services and supports to underserved communities.

Need for Further Institutional Responses

While discussing the challenges that face their communities, listening session participants described the existing relationships and institutional responses that support victims of domestic and sexual violence. For example, Cumberland County’s Enhanced Police Intervention Collaboration⁴⁴, a program in which advocates work with law enforcement officers to respond to domestic violence incidents, was identified as a longstanding successful partnership. When speaking to more recently established relationships, one rural provider highlighted their collaboration with local lodges to house survivors. The participant explained that not only did this enable them to provide emergency sheltering that was not otherwise available, lodge owners also *“told us our partnership with them kept them open and staffed at the start of the pandemic when tourism was nonexistent.”*

⁴³ Data provided by the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

⁴⁴ <https://www.throughthesedoors.org/advocacy-services/epic-enhanced-police-intervention-collaboration/>

Many of the relationships discussed by participants stem from Maine's system-based collaborations, task forces, coalitions, high-risk response teams, and enhanced safety planning teams. One participant described how, *"Anywhere there is institutional support at a really high level, those projects and services tend to go really really well,"* and cited an ongoing partnership between coalitions, the Office of Child and Family Services, and local programs. Yet, participants also spoke to a variety of instances where a lack of institutional support and sole reliance on relationships hinders their work. For example, one participant detailed how their team's ability to receive court dockets ahead of PFA cases is reliant on who the court clerk is and that *"those relationships dictate those practices."* Another shared that, when several judges retired, their lack of relationships with the new judges impeded their ability to provide the same level of advocacy as before. Likewise, a participant described, *"We just lack consistency when it comes to collaboration with law enforcement across the four counties. We consistently get police reports from some departments, you know, they come in every day, and other ones we haven't seen one for years."*

Therefore, while important enhanced coordination and multi-agency cooperation throughout the state are present and thriving, there is still more work to be done in this area. Policies, procedures, and protocols at various levels of the system and between its entities must continue to be developed and implemented to support this work. Relationships will continue to be imperative to building systems-based responses and should be leveraged to support comprehensive, consistent, and reliable procedures and practices statewide.

Concerns Raised During Planning Meetings

Concern: One concern that was discussed at a planning committee meeting, in two separate discussions with a tribal Chief and the head of the tribal coalition, as well as in two listening sessions, is that subawards are not for large amounts of money that can sustain a position or program for many years. Furthermore, having the subaward period be for only one year deters applicants from applying.

Resolution: Effective October 1, 2021, DPS began administering STOP subawards as a two-year grant period which will allow recipients to use their project funds over a longer period of time and allow for more sustainability of a project.

Concern: A second concern discussed by the same groups as the one above, is that the grant application process can be daunting for smaller, community-based service providers that do not have grant-writers on staff. This has meant that potential subgrantees, especially from tribal organizations and organizations that serve culturally- and community-specific victims of violence, do not apply because the application process is difficult, and they do not think that the benefits of the award will outweigh detractors like the subaward not fully covering the staffing and resources needed to administer the award and that the award period does not support sustained programming.

Resolution: As noted above, DPS heard the concerns about the award period and have extended it two-years going forward. Additionally, DPS staff will increase communication and outreach to subrecipients throughout the grant period. DPS grant staff will also conduct site visits of subrecipients to review grant processes, answer questions, and ensure grant requirements are met.

Concern: A concern raised by planning committee members and at one of the listening sessions is how STOP funding can adequately support both core services and innovative services in Maine. Additionally, stakeholders who were less familiar with STOP funding wondered how this funding is coordinated with other funding, like VOCA and FVSPA.

Resolution: As explained in the next section, DPS staff regularly collaborate with DHHS staff to ensure efforts are not duplicated and strategies are shared. As part of the ongoing coordinating planning efforts with DHHS, the STOP Administrator will seek to understand gaps that STOP funds might fill in addressing this critical need. In terms of providing funding for core and innovative services, the Maine RFA includes all federal STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program Purpose Areas as well as the implementation plan goals and objectives. This encourages the submission of applications that fund core services as well as those seeking to fund new or emerging needs and JAC RFA review committee members are aware of the need to support both core and new services in Maine.

F. Coordinating with FVPSA/VOCA/RPE

DHHS Collaboration

The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Health and Human Services staff meet regularly to review strategies and discuss areas of common interest in terms of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Both entities are also represented on the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse and as a result, collaborate monthly. As noted above, DHHS staff members were involved in the development of this plan. The working relationship between the STOP program and DHHS's Violence Prevention Program (which manages RPE, FVPSA, SASP, VOCA etc.) is critical to the coordination of shared strategies and to protect against duplicative efforts. For much of this year, the position which coordinates DHHS's Violence Prevention Program has been unfilled. However, the program is now fully staffed and DPS and DHHS staff have begun to meet again.

IV. Documentation from Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Court, and Victim Services Programs

This documentation in the form of letters from current grantees or State- or Territory-wide organizations representing prosecution, law enforcement, courts, and victim services is contained within Appendix B. The letters, which detail need, use, and expected result of the grant funds as well as the demographic characteristics of the population to be served were submitted by the following individuals:

- **Prosecution:**
 - Lisa Marchese, Esq., Deputy Attorney General
 - Maeghan Maloney Esq., Maine District Attorney, Kennebec & Somerset Counties
- **Law Enforcement:** Steven Goldberg, Captain, Westbrook Police Department
- **Court:** Anne H. Jordan Esq., Manager of Criminal Process, State of Maine Administrative Office of the Courts
- **Victim Services:**
 - Rebecca Hobbs, Executive Director, Through These Doors
 - Rebecca Austin, Director of Advocacy, Intervention, & Prevention Services, Safe Voices
 - Chet Randall, Acting Executive Director, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc.

V. Plan for the Four-Year Implementation Period

A. 2022-2025 Goals and Objectives

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 and the development and improvement of advocacy and services in cases involving violent crimes against women.

Maine 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 four goals that will guide the efforts of Maine's STOP Violence Against Women Program award. Survey and listening session data from the current implementation planning process, as well as review of 2015-2019 Maine STOP-funded subgrantee reported data, was integral to goal and objective setting for the 2022-2025 Implementation Plan.

Goal #1:

Increasing the ability for Maine victims of crime to access trauma-informed, victim-centered direct services that support safety and healing by upholding key victim services and expanding services to underserved areas and populations. The Justice Assistance Council funding will:

Objectives:

- Support the ability of all domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking victim service providers to continue to deliver appropriate and accessible victim services to Maine victims/survivors by providing at least 35% of available funding to these organizations each fiscal year from 2022-2025.
- Increase the extent to which established and emerging cultural and population-specific providers and mainstream providers can deliver domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking services to communities of color, cultural communities, LGBTQ+, elders, youth, rurally isolated, people with disabilities, people who are deaf/Hard of Hearing, victims of sex trafficking, and immigrants/refugees.
- Ensure the ongoing or enhanced ability of victims/survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, to access high quality, trauma-informed medical care and medical forensic examination related to their victimization by supporting 50 professional training opportunities in 2022-2025, and by supporting Maine's hospital and healthcare systems to develop and implement trauma-informed universal education and screening policies that include assessment for non-fatal strangulation and head/brain trauma.

Strategies for Goal #1:

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the JAC will support goal #1 through outreach efforts such as performing site visits to current grant recipients to further develop professional, collaborative relationships and to provide insight on managing grant funds and submitting reimbursement requests. In 2022-2025, Department of Public Safety Grants Unit also plans to enhance communication efforts to potentially new grant recipients through outreach efforts to culturally specific and underserved groups by providing an overview of the Grant Application Process and assisting with any questions/issues that the entity may face. Maine's domestic violence coalition, MCEDV, and sexual

assault coalition, MECASA, will continue to support DPS's outreach efforts to engage with emerging entities as they continue to play a central role in sustaining critical core victim services and expanding services to underserved areas and populations. Examples of recent efforts around goal #1 include Maine Transgender Network (MaineTransNet), Maine's only transgender led and focused community organization, becoming a STOP subgrantee, STOP funding being used to support a group-specific cross-training pilot project for sexual assault advocates and transgender advocates, and STOP subgrants supporting domestic violence resource centers to expand outreach to remote rural and island communities and to victims who are elderly and/or disabled.

Goal #2:

Enhance coordinated community response by better synchronizing and integrating the intervention and mitigation efforts that address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking and by developing evidence-based policies, procedures, and protocols to bolster system-based responses and enhance information sharing. The Justice Assistance Council funding will:

Objectives:

- Support collaboration through the coordination of multi-disciplinary teams in all 8 prosecutorial districts, including system-based victim services, prosecutors, community-based victim services, law enforcement, medical services, and other disciplines from 2022-2025.
- Support the creation and implementation of policies, procedures, and planning processes within and across disciplines related to effective response and information systems to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking from 2022-2025.

Strategies for Goal #2:

The Department of Public Safety and the JAC will support goal #2 by continuing to give priority to STOP Grant applications that seek to develop, sustain, and enhance coordinated community response efforts, including law enforcement training related to domestic abuse, risk assessment and management teams, and regional multi-disciplinary task forces. Furthermore, there is overlap in the membership between the JAC and the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCDSV). The STOP Administrator as well as the Executive Directors of MCEDV, the Wabanaki Women's Coalition, and MECASA serve on the Commission. This keeps the JAC apprised of statewide initiatives and opportunities for collaboration and maximizing impact of scarce resources. Furthermore, the MCDSV monthly meetings include robust sharing of training opportunities across the state, sharing of reports developed by the multi-disciplinary membership on emerging and ongoing issues related to the prevention of and intervention into domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking.

Goal #3:

Enhance the ability of the criminal and civil justice systems to provide a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and evidence-informed response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Justice Assistance Council funding will:

Objectives:

- Expand access to online and in-person trainings for prosecutors, law enforcement, judicial officers, medical personnel, system-based advocates, and other first responders to ensure the development of content knowledge and skills needed to respond to instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking from 2022-2025.

- Provide and expand opportunities for comprehensive training for law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officers, and bail commissioners to enhance understanding around the use and limitations of ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment), including proper administration of the tool to ensure that it is being used only for eligible crimes and eligible relationships, and that items are being scored correctly.
- Support initiatives by criminal and civil justice systems to review and enhance their victim notification systems, including policies and protocols to ensure they are proactive, trauma-informed, and prioritize the safety of victims. Access to clear and timely information is essential to victims' ability to understand options and make informed decisions that enhance their safety and overall well-being.

Strategies for Goal #3:

The Department of Public Safety and the JAC will support goal #3 by prioritizing STOP Grant applications that seek to address gaps in accurate information sharing to victims and that include intentional and thoughtful collaboration with community-based victim service providers. Community-based victim service providers are experts in safety planning and providing trauma-informed services. They are in regular contact with both systems and non-systems involved victims and best positioned to lift and center the wide range of victim experiences, needs, and hopes, as a result. DPS and the JAC will also prioritize STOP Grant applications that seek to develop criminal justice system collaboration with healthcare partners to enhance response and improve care provided to victims who have been strangled.

Goal #4:

Reduce domestic violence-related homicides within the state by implementing recommendations of Maine's Homicide Review Panel.

Law Enforcement Objectives:

- Ensure access by all law enforcement agencies to specially trained Domestic Violence Investigators located either within the Offices of the District Attorney or law enforcement agencies to support thorough evidence collection and investigative follow up in domestic violence cases.
- Include questions about non-fatal strangulation in all law enforcement interviews with victims, at every call for service, no matter the initial impression of whether an assault has occurred.
- Increase the number of trainings to focus law enforcement attention on high-risk offenders, including when investigating incidents over time involving the same people.,
- Conduct internal agency reviews as required by MCJA Policy 3, Standard #23, whenever a domestic violence offender commits homicide or harm resulting in serious injury during the time a permanent Protection from Abuse Order is in effect or when there was past agency involvement with the people involved.
- Strengthen the practices of law enforcement agencies related to sharing investigative reports with and making referrals to community-based victim services providers to promote safety planning and access to trauma informed services.
- Implement statewide policy and procedures recommendations from the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse Firearms Relinquishment Working Group.

Prosecution Objectives:

- Enhance understanding around the use and limitations of ODARA and use ODARA as one of the considerations in determining whether to use deferred disposition.

- Consider the impact on subsequent charge enhancements and on the defendants' status regarding prohibitions to possess firearms when reducing charges and accepting pleas.
- Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when a person is convicted of a crime of domestic violence that prohibits them from owning or possessing a firearm, to support relinquishment.
- Recommend Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs in all deferred dispositions and/or sentencings as the appropriate and effective community intervention in cases involving domestic violence.
- Enhance regular communication with victims about the status, timeline and progress of prosecution through ongoing contacts by prosecutors, victim witness advocates and/or trial assistants, including seeking continuances to enable victims to participate meaningfully in sentencing.

Judicial Branch Objectives:

- Provide a standard cover sheet to all family matter paperwork and Protection from Abuse Order complaint paperwork that provides information about community domestic violence organizations, legal assistance and law enforcement.
- Connect plaintiffs with community-based domestic violence organization advocates prior to dismissing Protection from Abuse Orders.
- Support statewide implementation of the ODARA and integrate ODARA scores into bail commissioner and judicial decision making.
- Participate in local and statewide coordinated community response task forces and specialized interagency training on domestic abuse.

Corrections Objectives:

- Implementation by county correction facilities policies and procedures to ensure the relinquishment of firearms to law enforcement by persons legally prohibited from possessing them when that person is released from a jail facility.
- Permanently fund specially trained Domestic Violence Probation Officers statewide to propel effective supervision of people who commit domestic violence and continue to seek control over victims through direct contact, claims of homelessness, and pressure on the victims to reunite.
- Train all probation officers statewide regarding domestic abuse and violence.
- Provide timely notification and communication to victims regarding the furlough and/or release of offenders, as well as safety planning in those circumstances.

Healthcare Objective:

- Adopt evidence-based instruments to screen patients (including children, teens, and older adults) at each healthcare encounter privately and regularly, and especially during pregnancy and postpartum, for experiences of physical abuse and/or coercive controlling behavior in their intimate and familial relationships, while appreciating that the focus of screening is less on victims disclosing abuse, and more on providing information to all patients that help is available in many forms, from many systems, when patients are ready to access services. The questions must be asked at regular intervals rather than carrying forward the patient's prior responses to all future encounters.
- Develop and implement comprehensive domestic violence educational programs in

collaboration with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, which prepares members of the health care team including nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants as well as support staff such as certified medical assistants and certified nursing assistants. At a minimum, these programs should include foundational education about the dynamics of domestic abuse and violence, need for routine universal screening and education, trauma-informed mandated reporting practices, referrals to community-based victim services, and recognizing signs and symptoms of non-fatal strangulation and head injury and the applying the appropriate care and treatment.

Strategies for Goal #4:

The Department of Public Safety and the JAC will support goal #4 by using the recommendations of Maine's Homicide Review Panel and the Firearms Relinquishment subcommittee of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse to inform the development of the requests for applications by distinguishing how recommendations align with the priorities. The JAC will prioritize grant applications that articulate a vision for practical implementation of repeat recommendations from Maine's Homicide Review Panel and applications that seek to develop, sustain, and enhance coordinated community response efforts, training efforts, and multi-disciplinary task forces efforts related to reducing domestic violence-related homicides.

Distribution of funding

The following offers a description of how funds will be distributed across the law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, and discretionary allocation categories:

1. At least 5% of the FY21 funds from OVW had to be awarded to state, local, and/or tribal courts;
2. At least 25% of the FY21 funds had to be earmarked for law enforcement;
3. At least 25% of the FY21 funds had to be earmarked for the prosecution category;
4. At least 30% of the FY21 funds had to be earmarked for victim services, of which at least 10% has to go to culturally-specific community-based organizations;
5. At least 20% of the total FY21 funds had to be earmarked for projects with sexual violence that fall within two or more of the categories; and
6. The remaining 15% is for discretionary.

B. Statutory Priority Areas

Sexual Assault Set-Aside

Maine is committed to funding projects which address sexual assault, and to meeting the statutory set-aside, and has several ways to ensure that sexual assault projects are emphasized. The STOP Administrator and Justice Assistance Council (JAC) work closely with Maine's standalone sexual assault coalition the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA). MECASA's Executive Director is a regular participant in JAC meetings and we are currently working to have her officially appointed as a member of the Council, as she formerly held the seat designated for a representative of the Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, which she formerly chaired. In addition, the STOP Administrator is in monthly, if not weekly, contact with MECASA staff. This close working relationship is a critical factor in meeting the set-aside.

When the annual RFA is released, it is sent to many entities that might submit a sexual assault related project. In addition, MECASA sends it out to all of the sexual assault victim service providers, including

those who are not part of the coalition, like the Wabanaki Women's Coalition, Pine Tree Legal Assistance and MaineTransNet, encouraging them to apply. Additional conversations are held at the coalition level to encourage applications from MECASA members. The coalition director also works with other disciplines, like Maine's Prosecutors' Association, to develop projects which meaningfully address sexual assault. In addition, conversations are currently underway at the JAC to assess and address barriers to applying which have been identified by sexual assault service providers. MECASA's Executive Director, Elizabeth Ward Saxl recently said, *"We are so grateful for all the work the Department has done to ensure that STOP grants are meeting the needs of a wide range of survivors, including those who have experienced sexual harm. These grants continue to be a critical part of how we fund comprehensive services statewide."*

Once the proposals are submitted, for each priority area, the JAC has a sub-committee that reviews the applications. Those who are approved for funding undergo an assessment by experts in the field, typically staff of the sexual assault coalition, to determine whether or not they are "meaningfully addressing sexual assault". These staff refer to OVW guidance, including the STOP FAQ document, to carefully assess each proposal against the standards.

Progress has been made toward meeting the set-aside across two or more categories, and the set aside was met in FY20 and FY21. Currently, funding is supporting a live-answer statewide hotline, SAFE nurses, sexual assault support groups, and culturally specific work through the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. If the 20% set-aside is not met, additional funds will be released to encourage sexual assault applications. But, to date, Maine's strategies have been largely successful in meeting our statutory obligations in this area.

Goals and objectives for reducing domestic violence homicides within Maine

As previously detailed in Goal #4, Maine aims to reduce domestic violence-related homicides within the state by implementing recommendations of Maine's Homicide Review Panel. The recommendations specific to Maine's STOP implementation plan include objectives in the areas of law enforcement, prosecution, the judicial branch, corrections, and healthcare.

Maine's Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel was established after a 1997 law charged the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, a statutory subcommittee, to establish the Panel. The Panel is mandated to:

- "Review the deaths of persons who are killed by family or household members;"
- "recommend to state and local agencies methods of improving the systems for protecting persons from domestic and sexual abuse including modifications of laws, rules, policies, and procedures following completion of adjudication;" and
- "collect and compile data related to domestic and sexual abuse."⁴⁵

The Panel meets on a monthly basis to review and discuss domestic abuse homicide cases. The Panel is multi-disciplinary, with experts from a variety of disciplines across the state such as from the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Attorney General, District Courts, State

⁴⁵ The 13th Biennial Report of the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel. Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse. <https://apps.web.maine.gov/ag/docs/DAHRP-Report-for-Posting-ACCESSIBLE.pdf>

Forensic Services, Victim Service Programs, and Maine State Police. Furthermore, some Panel membership overlaps with the previously detailed Justice Assistance Council, such as Maine's domestic violence and sexual assault coalition executive directors, which keeps the JAC apprised of the Panel's efforts.

The Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel play a significant role in prevention and intervention work in Maine by using case reviews to identify potential trends in domestic abuse in order to recommend systemic changes that could prevent future deaths from occurring in Maine. However, the panel chair and Criminal Division Chief of the Office of Maine Attorney General, Lisa Marchese, notes that, while "In the past 20 years, the Panel has made recommendations that have resulted in legislative and system changes with the goal of keeping victims safe and holding offenders accountable. The Panel has also made repeated recommendations that have not yet resulted in change." The Panel continues to seek systemic change in policy and practice and continue to bolster Maine's coordinated community response to domestic violence.

In 2018 and 2019, 18 domestic abuse homicides occurred in Maine, accounting for nearly 43% of Maine's total homicides over the two year period.⁴⁶ The twenty-year lookback of data from 1998-2020 shows that perpetrators use firearms more than any other method to commit intimate partner violence homicide in Maine.

In cases where the perpetrator used a firearm to kill but had been prohibited from possessing firearms, the Panel has frequently observed gaps in the enforcement of civil Firearms Relinquishment Orders that accompany qualifying Protection from Abuse Orders. In response to this, a multi-disciplinary subcommittee of the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse is currently engaged in the development of statewide policies and procedures to ensure the relinquishment of firearms to law enforcement by persons legally prohibited from possessing them in this work. The following list includes information about some of efforts being completed by a MCDSA workgroup:⁴⁷

- A new Information Sheet for Defendants on how to relinquish firearms was created to be incorporated into the service packet of protection order documents. After review and input by the Department of Public Safety, the Judicial Branch has approved the form and it's anticipated to be rolled out with the revised PFA form in 2022.
- A new Communication from Law Enforcement to the Courts of a Defendant's Relinquishment Compliance form was created so that a specific law enforcement agency (designated by the court in issuing a firearms relinquishment order) will communicate back to the court whether any firearms were relinquished by defendant and what those firearms were. This form will live in the court file and will be provided to the plaintiff-survivor upon receipt by the court. This will ensure both the court and the plaintiff-survivor have adequate information to address any non-compliance. It is also anticipated to be rolled out with the revised PFA form in 2022.
- A new process for quickly transmitting the PFA service packet from the court to the law enforcement agency needing to serve the PFA and the law enforcement agency designated to

⁴⁶ The 13th Biennial Report of the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel.

⁴⁷ Issues Identified by October 2019 and February 2020 Panel Discussions on Firearms Relinquishments. Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence internal documentation.

coordinate firearms relinquishment was developed by the workgroup. The court clerk will be responsible for uploading a copy of the Temporary PFA into the METRO system and calling the appropriate dispatch center to alert them to the new Temporary PFA that needs to be served. A Guidance for Community Partners that outlines and details the process is being used as a training tool in implementing the process change.

Implementation of the three above projects is ongoing as are workgroup efforts related to ensuring actual notice of a relinquishment obligation is given to a defendant after a criminal conviction, enhancing the utility of the response when it's believed that the defendant has not relinquished all weapons or they have been relinquished to a third party relative, reviewing Department of Corrections and jail policies and practices that manage relinquishment of weapons when a defendant becomes a prohibited person while incarcerated, and other issues like how to ensure tribal courts and law enforcement are integrated into this process in a systematic, thoughtful, and lasting way.

C. Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims

The JAC and STOP program strive to recognize and meaningfully address the needs of underserved populations. Several entities in Maine are critical in assessing these needs and developing meaningful responses to marginalized victims, and the STOP program director regularly interfaces with all of them. Five of these are groups, described below, which provide regular opportunities for planning.

- Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCDSV) is statutorily charged with advising the legislature and administration on issues related to domestic and sexual violence. This group meets monthly and includes a broad mix of people from across Maine representing many populations, some of which are underserved. Four seats are specifically set aside for members representing underserved populations. Additionally, over the years, a number of the six at-large seats have also represented marginalized communities. MCDSV regularly discusses issues related to underserved populations and helps inform systems responses, including the work that the STOP program engages in.
- Immigrant Resource Center of Maine (formerly known as the United Somali Women of Maine), a member of both MCEDV and MECASA, serves immigrant and refugee communities and provides services in more than fourteen languages. IRCM has received STOP funding for many years and works closely with the STOP Administrator to highlight program gaps and needs related to these communities.
- The five federally recognized tribes in Maine each have a domestic and sexual violence center, funded through the OVW Tribal Program. Collectively they comprise the Wabanaki Women's Coalition (WWC). WWC is represented at the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse and, as a result, interfaces with the STOP Administrator on a regular basis.
- The Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) recognizes that marginalized and underserved victims are disproportionately subject to sexual violence. As a result, MECASA prioritizes assessing the needs of these populations and creating strategies to better address their unique needs and barriers and has a full-time staff position dedicated to doing so. To guide this work, MECASA conducts a semi-annual Sexual Violence Population and Services Assessment. This report helped inform this implementation plan. MECASA uses the results of this to prioritize the needs for training, coalition building, policy, and practice. One example of the many programs and initiatives MECASA has undertaken to meet these needs was the

creation of the statewide LGBTQ+ Advisory Council. One of the priority projects emerging from that group was the need for Trans-specific support groups. STOP was able to fund a pilot project in three regions of the state to engage in support group-specific cross-training for sexual assault advocates and trans advocates and then to offer co-facilitated support groups.

- The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and its member programs, since their inception, have integrated practices of inclusivity, safety, accessibility, and non-discrimination into both direct services for survivors and community directed education and training programs. The staff and board of MCEDEV include persons of color, LGBTQ+ identifying people, elder, and rural individuals, many of whom are also survivors of abuse and violence. MCEDEV is part of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Council with MECASA and publishes LGBTQ+ specific materials. The core curriculum in the training for all domestic violence resource center advocates integrates content from Praxis International's Advocacy Learning Center, OVW Technical Assistance Provider, framing both individual and system advocacy in cultural competence, liberation, and collaboration. In May 2021, MCEDEV sponsored training for advocates from member programs and several culturally specific agencies assisting immigrants and refugees on serving Muslim survivors of domestic violence, engaging a national consultant to do a needs assessment and to develop and deliver the content. STOP Grants have supported domestic violence resource centers to expand outreach to remote rural and island communities and to initiate contact with victims who are elderly and/or disabled.

Funding for culturally specific services and activities for underserved populations

Maine recognizes that the culturally specific set-aside is an important part of addressing the needs of underserved populations. While the rewriting and narrowing of the federal definition resulted in only a few of Maine's organizations being eligible for this funding in the past decade (the five Wabanaki DV/SA providers and the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine), other organizations have begun to meet eligibility criteria, one of which, MaineTransNet, has been awarded a STOP subgrant for FY 2019 and FY 2021.

The JAC, through the Contract Grant Manager at the Department of Public Safety, ensures that the monies set aside to fund culturally specific services and activities for underserved populations are equitably distributed among eligible entities by sending the annual RFA directly to organizations that serve underserved and community-specific populations when it is released. These providers are aware of the set-aside and are encouraged to apply. MECASA and MCEDEV further encourage their applications; in the past MECASA has even assisted the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine with their applications.

When reviewing STOP subgrant applications, the JAC ensure the culturally specific set-aside is met by looking at who will be served, how the services will be provided, whether the community to be served has been involved in planning for the delivery of the services, and whether there will be outreach to that community regarding the availability of the services. To further ensure this set-aside is met or exceeded in future years, the JAC aims to increase their outreach to eligible culturally specific community-based programs and make sure they are aware of the funding opportunity and encouraged to apply. Members of the Department of Public Safety Grant Unit will work with identified culturally specific entities to help them understand the requirements of the grant and apply for the funding as needed.

D. Grant-making Strategy

Since 1995, the Maine Department of Public Safety (DPS) has been the state administrative agency (SAA) for STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program. The Maine SAA is responsible for: preparing the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program application for funding, accounting for and spending award funding, determining and awarding funding to sub-grantees, monitoring sub-grantee activities, providing technical assistance to sub-grantees as requested, and submitting progress reports to the Office on Violence Against Women. The STOP program provides crucial financial resources to state and local governmental agencies as well as community-based organizations working on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. Most years, the SAA issues a request for application (RFA) to organizations that are interested in addressing violence against individuals, household members, and loved ones. The Maine RFA includes all federal STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program Purpose Areas as well as the Implementation Plan Priority Areas. By including all federal STOP purpose areas Maine has found that the submission of new or emerging needs is continually encouraged by the Justice Assistance Council (JAC).

Timeline for the Stop Grant Cycle

| Date | Activities |
|-------------|---|
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop RFA grant application kit |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ RFA material forwarded to Maine’s Division of Procurement Services for Approval |
| July | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ RFA Notice sent to Kennebec Journal for public notice▪ Distribution of grant application kit to applicants▪ Bidder’s conference and/or question period |
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Applicants submit grant applications to Division of Purchases▪ Committee Chair review proposals with Contract Grant Manager prior to distribution for review and consensus scoring |
| Late August | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review and scoring of applications by JAC Review Teams▪ Award decisions made at the JAC meeting |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All applicants and Division of Procurement Services notified of results and special conditions▪ Award sub-grants▪ Contract processing |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Begin technical assistance and monitoring of grants▪ Earliest date to start drawing down funds |

Ensuring eligible entities are aware of funding opportunities, including projects serving underserved populations

In Maine, these federal funds are earmarked for the following areas, and all eligible organizations are encouraged to apply:

Law Enforcement

- Municipal police departments
- Sheriff's departments
- Maine State Police
- Other state law enforcement agencies
- Tribal police departments

Prosecution

- Maine District Attorney's Office
- Office of the Attorney General

Victim Service Providers

- Non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence or sexual violence victim service organizations
- Non-profit organizations
- Tribal domestic violence and sexual violence service organizations
- Culturally-specific community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- 501 (c)(3) or state agency administering a forensic examiner program

Court

- Administrative Office of the Courts
- Supreme, superior, district, and/or specialty courts in Maine
- Tribal Court

Discretionary

- Any of the above listed eligible organizations or other eligible entities that have a proposal for consideration

Ensuring subgrantee consultation with victim service providers

During the Request for Application process, DPS ensures that all grant applicants meaningfully consult with tribal, State, or local victim service programs during the course of developing their grant applications in order 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. 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. If this step was overlooked or not considered complete a Special Condition would be placed on the subgrantee to complete this process before being issued a contract.

Prioritizing areas of varying geographic sizes and greatest need

Priority may be given to varying geographic size showing the greatest need based on the availability of existing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking programs for the population and geographic area to be served in relation to the availability of such programs for other such populations and geographic areas.

Distributing monies equitably between urban and rural areas

Funds are generally distributed between rural and urban areas of the state. However, the vast majority of Maine is rural and as a result, projects are more frequently awarded to rural programs.

Crystal Judson Purpose Area

Maine currently does not plan to use the “Crystal Judson” purpose area.

VI. Conclusion

As the Department of Public Safety moves into the next four years of partnerships with stakeholders across the state, we are confident that we will continue to effectively leverage STOP funds to address the specific needs of Mainers. DPS and the JAC will use the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in this plan and continue to leverage Maine’s system-based collaborations to best address Maine’s most pressing challenges and expand access to trauma-informed, victim-centered direct services and enhance coordinated community response by better synchronizing and integrating the intervention and mitigation efforts that address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking. DPS and the JAC will continue to evaluate proposed projects and how to best achieve overall statewide goals so that STOP funding can continue to make a significant, positive impact at the local and state level.

Appendix A. Implementation Planning Participation Forms

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Type of Agency: Sexual Assault Coalition

If population specific organization, please specify which population: _____

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: I had a scheduling conflict but was able to provide feedback outside of the meetings via email

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Elizabeth Ward Saxl
Signature Elizabeth Ward Saxl Digitally signed by Elizabeth Ward Saxl
Date: 2022.03.30 10:38:15 -04'00'
Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to _____ at _____ by _____.

State/Territory: _____

Administering Agency: _____

Participant Agency: _____

Type of Agency:

If population specific organization, please specify which population: _____

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): _____

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name _____

Signature Francine Stark

Date _____

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Office of Maine Attorney General

Type of Agency: Prosecution

If population specific organization, please specify which population: _____

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

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Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Lisa Marchese
Signature Lisa J Marchese Digitally signed by Lisa J Marchese
Date: 2022.03.31 12:05:28 -04'00'
Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Androscoggin County District Attorney's Office

Type of Agency: Prosecution

If population specific organization, please specify which population: _____

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable


If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Andrew S. Robinson
Signature 
Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.g by March 31, 2022.

Maine

State/Territory: _____

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: EqualityMaine

Type of Agency: Population Specific Organization

If population specific organization, please specify which population: LGBTQ+

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Gia Drew

Signature 

Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Legal Services for the Elderly

Type of Agency: Population Specific Organization

If population specific organization, please specify which population: Maine's seniors

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Jaye Martin
Signature Jaye Martin
Date March 31, 2022

Digitally signed by Jaye Martin
Date: 2022.03.22 13:20:47 -04'00'

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Type of Agency: Population Specific Organization

If population specific organization, please specify which population: Immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Jeffrey Smith
Signature Jeffrey Smith Digitally signed by Jeffrey Smith
Date: 2022.03.31 08:13:16 -04'00'
Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Type of Agency: Population Specific Organization

If population specific organization, please specify which population: Immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Melinda Novella

Signature Melinda Novella

Date March 31, 2022

STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Planning Participation

Please send back to Lisa Bosse at Lisa.Bosse@maine.gov by March 31, 2022.

State/Territory: Maine

Administering Agency: Department of Public Safety

Participant Agency: US Attorney's Office, District of Maine

Type of Agency: Other

If population specific organization, please specify which population: _____

Other: _____

Planning Team Meeting Date(s): 11/25/21 12/2/21

Did you receive notification of meeting dates at least one month in advance? Yes No

How were you notified? (check all that apply)

Email In-person Phone call Website post Letter Other: _____

Were you able to participate in the meetings? Yes No

If yes, how many meetings did you attend? All Some

Meeting format: (check all that apply) Teleconference Video conference In-person

If no, please explain: _____

During the meeting(s), were you able to freely provide input, ask questions, share concerns, and propose goals? Yes No Partially

Did you receive a draft of the Implementation Plan *and* a list of major concerns raised during the planning process? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were you given at least one month to review the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Were the major concerns raised during the planning process included in the draft plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Did you provide comments or recommended changes to the draft plan? Yes No

Did you receive a copy of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

If applicable, do you believe your recommended changes to the draft plan were adequately addressed in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No Not applicable

If no, please explain: _____

Overall, were the feedback, concerns, recommended goals, etc. of planning group participants adequately reflected in the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have any concerns with the content of the Final Implementation Plan? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Name Heather Putnam
Signature Heather Putnam Digitally signed by Heather Putnam
Date: 2022.04.03 19:50:17 -04'00'
Date March 31, 2022

Appendix B. Letters of Support

Maeghan Maloney
District Attorney

Frayla Tarpinian
Deputy District Attorney



Kennebec County Courthouse
95 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330
(P) 207-623-1156 or 207-623-1157
(F) 207-622-5839

Somerset County Courthouse
41 Court Street, Skowhegan, ME 04976
(P) 207-474-2423 or 207-474-5517
(F) 207-474-7407

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICT IV

March 17, 2022

Ms. Nadine M. Neufville
Acting Director
Office on Violence against Women
145 N. St., NE, Suite 10W. 121
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Ms. Neufville:

I am the elected District Attorney for Kennebec and Somerset Counties, Maine. I further serve as the elected President of the Maine Prosecutors Association. Our office offers assistance to all victims of crime to include sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

Half of the counties in Maine benefit from the STOP grant funding to fund four (4) assistant district attorneys. The four assistant district attorneys serve the counties of York, Androscoggin, Oxford, Franklin, Kennebec, Somerset, Penobscot, and Piscataquis. The goal is to enhance the ability of the criminal justice system to provide a trauma-informed, victim centered, and evidence-informed responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In recognition of widely different approaches to prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, the Central Maine District Attorneys (Districts III, IV, and V) are applied together to create a coordinated response.

I am pleased to report that the success of the STOP grant has been tremendous. The four (4) assistant district attorneys have completed a best practices manual for Maine prosecutors on sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. They have conducted a state-wide continuing legal education class focused on strangulation and will do another class focus on the new manual in October. They have also conducted training of law enforcement throughout the state and will be training at the state-wide police chiefs meeting in May 2022.

The Maine Prosecutors Association is grateful to receive the support from the Maine STOP Violence Against Women Grant Program. Hopefully, our use of this funding helps to lessen the severe impact of crime on victims and leads them on the path to becoming survivors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Maeghan Maloney'.

Maeghan Maloney
District Attorney

AARON M. FREY
ATTORNEY GENERAL



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
6 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0006

TEL: (207) 626-8800
TTY USERS CALL MAINE RELAY 711

REGIONAL OFFICES
84 HARLOW ST. 2ND FLOOR
BANGOR, MAINE 04401
TEL: (207) 941-3070
FAX: (207) 941-3075

125 PRESUMPCOT ST., STE. 26
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103
TEL: (207) 822-0260
FAX: (207) 822-0259

14 ACCESS HIGHWAY, STE. 1
CARIBOU, MAINE 04736
TEL: (207) 496-3792
FAX: (207) 496-3291

March 30, 2022

Ms. Allison Randall
Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women
145 N Street NE Suite 10W. 121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Randall:

I am the Chief of the Criminal Division of the State of Maine Office of the Attorney General, and I serve on the State of Maine Justice Assistance Counsel.

The STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program has made possible a new statewide Victim Witness Advocate Coordinator Pilot Program designed to improve prosecution and victim services by providing training, technical assistance, and support for over sixty Victim Witness Advocates (“VWA”) and other prosecution-based victim service professionals. The VWA Coordinator also engages in stakeholder outreach and policy implementation efforts to improve multidisciplinary coordination for domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, crimes against children, and human trafficking crimes.

Victim Witness Advocates provide vital linkages between crime victims, the criminal justice system, and community resources. They work with Mainers from all walks of life, including those most vulnerable to gender-based and interpersonal violence: people with economic disadvantages or those living in rural communities, people with disabilities, children and older people, non-white individuals, immigrants and new Americans, people who don’t speak English as a primary language, LGBTQ individuals, and members of Maine’s five tribal communities. The VWA Coordinator helps ensure that VWAs perform their work according to best practices using a victim-centered, trauma-informed lens. Ultimately, the goals of the VWA Coordinator Pilot Program are to improve access to consistent, high-quality support and services and to increase victim participation in the criminal justice process.

Having access to the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant has made a tremendous difference for our VWAs and for Maine crime victims and has helped to unify those working to support survivors of gender-based violence with improved consistency throughout the state. We are grateful for this opportunity and support the Maine Department of Public Safety’s STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant application.

Sincerely,

Lisa Marchese

Lisa Marchese, Esq.
Deputy Attorney General



Sean Lally
Chief of Police
570 Main Street
Westbrook, Maine 04092
Phone: 207-854-0644
Fax: 207-854-0657

POLICE DEPARTMENT

March 3, 2022

Ms. Allison Randall, Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women
145 N Street Suite 10 W 121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Randall,

This letter is to let you know that Westbrook Police Department strongly supports the State of Maine's current application for STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Funds. We have been pleased to be a recipient of these funds for the past few years to support the work of the EPIC (Enhanced Police Intervention Collaboration) Program.

The EPIC Program is a collaboration between Westbrook Police Department (and other police agencies in Cumberland County, Maine) and Through These Doors (TTD), the local domestic violence resource center. The STOP Grant funds the position of the EPIC advocate, a TTD advocate, who works alongside law enforcement officers to provide support and services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking after a law enforcement call for service or interaction. As a team, law enforcement officers and the advocate go to and connect with victims to provide comprehensive follow-up services. This approach breaks down a variety of barriers that can prevent survivors from being able to take that first step on their own. The EPIC advocate also facilitates high-risk response teams, both with individual law enforcement departments and county-wide. Through this program, the advocate and officers have identified gaps in victim safety and offender accountability and worked together to resolve those issues.

In this grant cycle, there is also a focus on increasing additional services to individuals who are older and/or who are refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrants. The EPIC advocate will utilize the expertise of other TTD advocates who specialize in working with these populations when cases arise. In addition, the EPIC advocate will increase the identification of stalking cases in these communities, work with those victims/survivors directly, and will assist law enforcement in identifying training needs and promote increased knowledge around stalking.

This program meets some of the needs that have been addressed by the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel; it increases a focus on high-risk offenders, provides support to survivors seeking around protection orders, shares investigative reports with the domestic violence advocates, and provides a direct warm referral to the local domestic violence resource center.

In 2021, Through These Doors conducted a survey of law enforcement officers who were partners in this grant. The survey results showed that 98% of the officers who worked with an EPIC advocate said that it had enhanced their ability to offer support and safety planning to victims of domestic violence. In addition, survivors have been grateful for the team approach between law enforcement and the advocacy agency. The STOP grant has been essential to fund the programming that provides these critical services.

Sincerely,

Steven Goldberg
Captain
Westbrook Police Department

STATE OF MAINE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
125 PRESUMPCOT STREET
PO Box 4820
PORTLAND MAINE 04112

Ms. Allison Randall, Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)
145 N Street NE Suite 10W. 121
Washington, DC 20530

March 3, 2022

RE: Letter of Support, State of Maine STOP Implementation Plan, 2022-2026

Dear Ms. Randall,

I write this letter on behalf of the State of Maine Judicial Branch in full support of the proposed STOP Grant Implementation Plan proposed by the Maine Department of Public Safety. This well researched and thought-out plan will provide victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking with desperately needed services and support that will allow them to free themselves of violence and fear and move on to lead safe, healthy and productive lives.

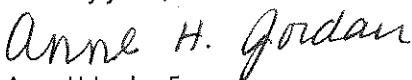
As you know, in the STOP formula grants, federal law requires that 5% of the annual formula funds awarded to a state be set aside for Court purposes. The State of Maine, which operates a single unified statewide court system, uses these funds to provide vital training, services and products that allows our courts to serve these victims and survivors in ways we otherwise could not fund or provide.

For instance, in recent years the funds were used to train bail commissioners on the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking and to provide them with training on the use of the ODARA risk assessment score in setting bail. It allowed bail commissioners to truly understand the risks victims and survivors face when fleeing these offenders and to properly analyze the facts and impose appropriate bail conditions. In another program, we trained over 100 court certified guardian ad litem and mediators on the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault and staking in the family law arena. Clerks have also been trained on best practices when encountering a victim or survivor at the clerk's window.

In the last 10 years, and especially in the last 2, Maine has seen an explosion in the number of new immigrants and asylum seekers who move to here seeking a new life and a new home. These individuals have come here from across the globe and the Maine court system is legally and morally obligated to provide services in many different languages¹. For this grant cycle, we were fortunate to be awarded funds that will allow us to translate over 120 court forms used in our criminal, family, child abuse and protective custody and protective order dockets into 8 different non-English languages. This program, for which there were no state funds available, will allow the Courts to serve these new Mainers in a just and equitable manner.

As the former Commissioner of Public Safety and SAA for the State of Maine, I understand and deeply appreciate the vital role that Federal STOP funds play in making Maine a safer, more just place for victims and survivors to live and thrive. The Maine Judicial Branch enthusiastically supports the new implementation plan. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Anne H Jordan Esq.
Manager of Criminal Process

¹ A recent Portland Press Herald report indicated that at last count over 56 different languages were spoken at Portland High School. Growing up, only two languages, English and French, were heard in Maine.



P.O. Box 704
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: (207) 767-4952
Fax: (207) 767-8109
Email: info@throughthesedoors.org
www.throughthesedoors.org

February 26, 2022

Ms. Allison Randall, Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)
145 N Street NE Suite 10W. 121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Randall:

This letter is to let you know that Through These Doors, Cumberland County Maine's domestic violence resource center, strongly supports the State of Maine's current application for STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Funds.

Through These Doors (TTD) has been the grateful recipient of STOP grant funds for several years. Funds support TTD's work in Maine's only women's prison and reentry center. The Maine Women's Center and the Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center reduce recidivism and increase accountability among female offenders, nearly all of whom identify as having experienced domestic and/or sexual violence. Our partnership with the Centers allows TTD advocates to meet with women who are incarcerated and post-incarceration to support them in their attempts to prepare for reentry in the community, stay safer in the future, and maintain healthy relationships with their partners and families.

This funding is unique, few grants are available to work with people who are incarcerated; few funders understand the need to support women even while working to hold them accountable for their own actions.

Women we work with in the Centers are the biggest proponents of our work and have glowing comments when asked about this project. In one recent group, the women shared feelings about their future lives once released. Each shared a sense that she was no longer the same person. One participant stated that she had "found herself in here" while another stated "we are not returning to ourselves. We are recreating ourselves." These comments and others demonstrate experiences of tremendous change and growth. TTD is honored to be a part of that.

The demographic characteristics of the population to be served is determined by who is incarcerated. In the past, we have seen a population that is largely white, all adults (few seniors), who speak English. Since these facilities are the only women's facilities in Maine, they reflect some of the same demographics as the rest of the state.



P.O. Box 704
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: (207) 767-4952
Fax: (207) 767-8109
Email: info@throughthesedoors.org
www.throughthesedoors.org

Thank you for taking our support for this project into account as you make your determinations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Hobbs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Rebecca Hobbs
Executive Director



Working to End Domestic Violence

Formerly Abused Women's Advocacy Project

Administration Office: P.O. Box 713

Auburn, Maine 04212-0713

Tel (207) 795-6744

Fax (207) 795-6814

Helpline 1-800-559-2927

www.safevoices.org

March 4th, 2022

Ms. Allison Randall, Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)
145 N Street NE Suite 10W. 121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Randall,

Safe Voices would like to express our support of the State of Maine's application for STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program. Safe Voices is a domestic violence and sex trafficking resource center serving Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin County.

For many years, our Franklin County advocacy program has received STOP grant funds. Our Franklin County victims services program seeks to provide comprehensive advocacy and support services for victims of domestic violence, sex trafficking, stalking, and dating violence, resulting in improved and enhanced victim safety and self-sufficiency. Survivors living in Franklin County often face complex and increased barriers to living a life free of violence including lack of transportation, limited resources, lack of shelter, limited access to medical care, increased response time from emergency responders, and limited access to technology. During the last fiscal year, with the support of STOP grant funds, Safe Voices provided advocacy to 223 survivors living in rural Franklin County, and actively worked to decrease these barriers and increase survivors' safety.

In addition to the long-standing support for our Franklin County victim services program, Safe Voices recently received support for our violence intervention program. Safe Voices' Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), called "Alternatives to Abuse," is educational in nature, focusing on accountability for people who use abusive behaviors while teaching how to recognize the beliefs that support abusive behavior in a relationship and ways to change those beliefs and actions. Participants are often referred through the courts, probation, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or are self-referred. In addition to elevating accountability of perpetrators and addressing domestic violence in our communities, Safe Voices' DVIP also provides opportunity for survivors to engage with Safe Voices to access supports and services for their safety and wellbeing. As part of the program, Safe Voices advocates initiate contact with each DVIP participant's partner. This outreach serves as a means of bridging the gap between court proceedings and advocacy support when the survivor has not yet connected with services.

The need for continued support from STOP grant funds for our programs, and many others around the state, cannot be understated. Without this support, survivors in Maine would see a drastic decrease in the accessibility of support and safety net services essential to live free from abuse and violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Austin".

Rebecca Austin
Director of Advocacy, Intervention, and Prevention Services

Farmington (207) 778-6107 • Norway (207) 743-5806 • Rumford (207) 369-0750

Safe Voices is funded in part by: The Maine Department of Health and Human Services; Maine State Housing; The Tri-Valley, Oxford and Androscoggin United Way; and is a CDBG Assisted Agency of the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn.





PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

P.O. Box 547
Portland, ME 04112-0547
(207) 774-4753
<https://ptla.org>

March 1, 2022

Ms. Allison Randall, Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)
145 N Street NE Suite 10W. 121
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Ms. Randall,

Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc. (PTLA) would like to express our support of the State of Maine's application for STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program.

Since 1967, Pine Tree Legal Assistance has provided free legal services to low-income people throughout the State of Maine. Pine Tree secured its first grant for an attorney litigating Protection from Abuse (PFA) cases over 40 years ago and has continuously supported and expanded civil legal representation for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking since that time. Now, Pine Tree has a statewide unit of specialist attorneys and two dedicated paralegals focused on the civil legal needs of survivors.

In 2021, Pine Tree Legal Assistance provided legal services to Maine families and individuals in 6,748 cases, affecting 11,206 people. Of those cases, attorneys in Pine Tree's statewide Family Law and Victim Rights unit handled 1,292 civil legal cases on behalf of survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Pine Tree's clients represent the breadth of demographic characteristics seen throughout the state. Of clients served in 2020:

- Two out of three were women.
- One in three had a disability and more than half had someone in their household with a disability.
- One in five was a single head of household with children.
- One in six was age 60 or older.
- One in seven was a racial minority.
- One in eleven was a veteran.

STOP grant funds support one staff position at Pine Tree, a Family Law and Victim Rights Paralegal who provides trauma-informed initial intake with survivors who are referred from sexual assault crisis and support centers, domestic violence resource centers, and child advocacy centers across the state. After collecting demographic information, the paralegal gathers legal paperwork and takes the case to the



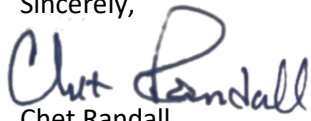
Pine Tree Legal Assistance is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). As a condition of the funding received from LSC, PTLA is restricted in certain activities in all of its legal work, including work supported by other funding sources. PTLA may not expend any funds for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C §2996 et. seq. or by Public Law 104-134. Public Law 104—234 §504(d) required that notice of these restrictions be given to all funders of programs funded by LSC. For a copy of these laws or any further information, please contact Chet Randall, Acting Executive Director, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, PO Box 547, Portland, Maine 04112; Tel. 207-774-4753.

team for assessment and assignment to an attorney. The paralegal also communicates with the referring advocate regarding the case, schedules the initial appointment with the attorney, and provides support to attorneys and survivors during Protection From Abuse hearing dockets, where multiple cases are scheduled and resolved at one time.

Without STOP funding, this crucial piece of Pine Tree's victim services project would not be funded, significantly reducing our organization's capacity to provide legal representation to survivors in Maine.

We strongly support the State of Maine's Application for STOP funding so that Pine Tree and other victim services providers can continue to provide direct services to survivors, increasing their safety and security through civil legal representation. We hope you will continue to fund the State of Maine so that these services can continue for some of the most vulnerable Mainers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chet Randall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Chet Randall

Acting Executive Director