RFA 202007122

STOP Violence Against Women

Formula Grant

Application

# Application Details and Instructions

Purpose and Background

The Department of Public Safety (DPS), through the Justice Assistance Council (JAC), is seeking proposals to support Maine communities in their efforts to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to respond to violent crimes against women and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women.

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. DPS has been the state administrative agency (SAA) for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women, Stop Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program since 1995.

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

<https://www.maine.gov/dps/grants/documents/stop-additional-information.pdf>

**A.** **Maine’s Program Priority Areas**

The Office of Violence Against Women requires that each state develop an implementation plan that describes how states will use STOP funding to enhance responses to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in accordance with VAWA purpose areas. Maine has identified six priority areas that will assist in carrying out the goals of the STOP Violence Against Women Program. Grant funds may be used for activities that address one or more of the federal purpose areas and one or more of Maine’s priority areas. Other considerations are to address the needs of underserved populations and equitable distribution of funds on a geographic basis, need, and population.

The plan represents the work of the JAC and stakeholders from law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, and victim services. The priority areas represent types of grant projects/activities that will be supported by the grant funding. Maine’s STOP Implementation Plan can be found on the DPS website at [https://www.maine.gov/dps/grants/documents/2017-Maine-STOP-Implementation-Plan.pdf.](https://www.maine.gov/dps/grants/documents/2017-Maine-STOP-Implementation-Plan.pdf)  Please see the implementation plan for the specific priority areas.

**B**. **Limitations of Fund Use**

1. The STOP Grant is for increasing a victim’s access to services and intervention rather than prevention and education.
2. STOP funds should be used for projects that serve or focus on adult and teen women victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Children’s services supported with the funds must be the direct result of providing services to an adult primary victim. In general, victims served with STOP funds must be adults or teens. STOP funds may support “complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families.”
3. Prohibition on Public Awareness or Community Education: The grantee agrees that grant funds will not be used to conduct public awareness or community education campaigns or related activities. Grant funds may be used to support, inform, and for outreach to victims about available services.
4. Prohibition on Curriculum Development: The grantee agrees that grant funds will not be used to support the development or presentation of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking curriculum for primary or secondary schools. The grantee further agrees that grant funds will not be used to teach primary or secondary school students from an already existing curriculum.

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

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

1. Grant funds are subject to Federal accounting and audit requirements including the prohibitions on co-mingling funds. Organizations that receive Violence Against Women Act STOP funding along with other Federal funds must treat the funds independently with separate cost and reporting centers.
2. Consultant costs must follow the applicable federal grant guidelines, Office of Management and Budget Cost Principles 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E: Cost Principles (200.400 – 200.475), and state policy.
3. Nothing above current State rates are to be used for calculating mileage (currently $.45 per mile). Per Diem rates are found at <https://www.maine.gov/osc/travel> and lodging rates are found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
4. No arrangement shall be made by the Sub-grantee with any other party for furnishing any services herein contracted for without prior review and approval of the contracting agreement by the Grant Administrator.
5. No grant funds may be spent for construction, office furniture, or other like purchases, e.g., copiers, air conditioners, heat lamps, fans, file cabinets, desks, chairs, and rugs.
6. Grant funds may not be spent for out-of-state conference fees, out-of-state travel, or out-of-state lodging unless a waiver is approved.

**D.** **Activities That May Compromise Victim Safety and Recovery**

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

**E. Unallowable Activities**

Grant funds under the STOP Program may not be used for unauthorized purposes, including but not limited, to the following activities:

* Lobbying;
* Fundraising;
* Research projects;
* Physical modifications to buildings, including minor renovations.
* Purchase of real property
* Construction

## **Eligibility to Submit Bids**

All interested parties are invited to submit bids in response to this RFA. The applicant must not have outstanding debt or delinquent reports due to DPS for STOP.

Eligible entities include:

Courts, Tribal Courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts

Law Enforcement

1. Municipal Police Departments
2. Sheriff’s Offices
3. Maine State Police
4. Other state law enforcement agencies
5. Tribal Police Departments

Prosecution

1. Maine District Attorney’s Offices
2. Office of the Attorney General

Victim Services Providers.

1. Non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence or sexual assault victim service organizations.
2. Non-Profit Organizations: You must submit written documentation showing that you are a public or private non-profit organization to submit a proposal under this RFA. You must provide documented proof of non-profit status for the current year along with your proposal.
	1. Documented proof of non-profit status could be a copy of your current State of Maine Articles of Incorporation authorization document (Form MNPCA-6 from the Secretary of State, Corporate Examining Section), or a copy of the authorization from the Federal Department of the Treasury, certifying Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or a state sales tax exemption certificate.
	2. If you are currently established as a public non-profit organization, such as a public school, a State, County or municipal government organization, acceptable documentation would be a cover letter indicating such, submitted on appropriate agency stationery and signed by a public official authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the public entity.
3. Culturally Specific Organizations, Community Based Organizations: The term ‘community-based organization’ means an organization that:
	1. Focuses primarily on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
	2. Has established a specialized culturally specific program that addresses domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
	3. Has a primary focus on underserved populations (and includes representatives of these populations) and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
	4. Obtains expertise, or shows demonstrated capacity to work effectively, on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking through collaboration; and
	5. Is primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups; **and**
	6. Is providing services tailored to the unique needs of that population.

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

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

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

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

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1. Meaningful Sexual Assault Services

The State will evaluate whether the interventions (projects) are meaningful sexual assault services that are tailored to meet the specific needs of sexual assault victims including ensuring that projects funded under the set aside have a legitimate focus on sexual assault and that personnel funded under such projects have sufficient expertise and experience on sexual assault. The State will assess the percentage that a project addresses sexual assault and count this toward the State’s overall set aside requirement.

Questions asked to determine “Meaningful Sexual Assault Services”:

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

A description of how the applicant involved victim service programs in the planning process. Grant applicants must consult with tribal, State, or local victim service programs during developing their grant applications to ensure that proposed services, activities, and equipment are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence. A signed Consultation/Collaboration Agreement (sample included) 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

## **Awards**

Congress has prescribed a distribution of funds to fulfill the mission of the STOP VAWA. For this release, proposals will only be accepted in the categories with funding in the approximate amounts provided in the table below. When completing your proposal, please select the applicable category for the work being proposed.

1. At least 5% of the anticipated award amount will be allocated for the state, local, or tribal courts;
2. At least 25% will be allocated for Law Enforcement;
3. At least 25% will be allocated for prosecutors; and
4. At least 30% will be allocated for Victim Services, of which at least 10% is to be distributed to culturally specific community-based organizations.
5. Under VAWA 2013, 20% of the total funds granted to a state shall be allocated for programs or projects in 2 or more allocations (victim services, courts, law enforcement, and prosecution) that meaningfully address sexual assault, including stranger rape, acquaintance rape, alcohol or drug-facilitated rape and rape within the context of an intimate partner relationship.
6. The remaining 15% is discretionary, may be used for any of the categories at the discretion of the JAC, and are used to fund projects consistent with the intent of the Act, including those fostered by agencies/organizations that would not ordinarily qualify for funding under the other categories. Discretionary funding is not a category that can be applied for but will be awarded by the reviewers.

What this means is that any applicant deemed eligible to apply for STOP funding must apply to the category that is the focus of their proposal.  For example, a victim service organization that is proposing to do training for law enforcement can apply under the law enforcement allocation.  **Do not** select multiple categories and make sure that your selection is clear and distinct. Likewise, a prosecutor who is proposing to hire a victim-witness advocate can apply under the victim service allocation. The amounts provided for FY20 are anticipated and may be depending on the final allocations from the Federal STOP program.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Allocation Category** | **Prior Year Funding Available** | **FY20 Anticipated Funding** | **Maximum Funding Amount Per Category** |
| **Victim Services** | $229,000 | $292,183 | $521,183 |
| **Law Enforcement** | $0 | $243,486 | $243,486 |
| **Prosecution** | $415,463 | $243,486 | $658,949 |
| **Courts** | $79,000 | $48,697 | $127,697 |
| **Discretionary** | $0 | $146,092 | $146,092 |
| **Total** | $723,463 | $973,944 | $1,697,407 |

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

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

1. **Federal Statutes Governing the STOP VAWA Program**

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

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# KEY PROCESS EVENTS

## **Submitting Questions about the Request for Applications**

Any questions must be submitted by e-mail to the Grant Coordinator identified on the [Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) by August 27, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. local time. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: “RFA# 202007122 Questions”. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on-time e-mail transmission and receipt.

Question & Answer Summary: Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## **Amendments to the Request for Applications**

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

## **Submitting your Application**

Applications are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via email, to Proposals@maine.gov. Applications must be received by September 10, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. local time. Applications received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be ineligible for award consideration for that annual application enrollment period.

Only applications received by email will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.

Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission: “RFA# 202007122 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”

Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or WORD file and must include pages 10-20 of this RFA document.

For this grant, the current year application will be available in a separate file from the RFA document and will be located at: <http://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>

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# APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION

## **Scoring Weights and Process**

1. Scoring Weights: The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

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| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Maximum Points Available** |
| Organizational Qualifications and Experience | 25 points |
| Proposed Services | 40 points |
| Cost Proposal | 35 points |
| **Total Points** | * + 1. **points**
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1. Scoring Process: The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to the assignment of points for each of those sections. All eligible applications will be rated, and rank-ordered according to the rating score in each STOP allocation category. Applications will be funded in descending order, highest to lowest score, subject to funding availability.

Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the Grant Review Team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks & budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, along with the amount and quality of proposed matching funds or services.

1. Selection and Award: The final decision regarding the award of the contract will be made by the JAC subject to approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. Notification of selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department. Issuance of the RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Bidder. The Department reserves the right to reject all proposals or to make multiple awards.