

Justice Assistance Council Meeting Minutes

Date: June 8, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Location: Zoom meeting

Call to Order

Francine Garland Stark called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. A quorum was confirmed with 10 members present.

Attendance

Members Present:

- ❖ Francine Garland Stark - Executive Director, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
- ❖ Derek Gorneau - Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
- ❖ John Kilbride - Police Chief, Falmouth
- ❖ Deborah Poulin - Acting Deputy Director, Office of Behavioral Health
- ❖ Emily Atkins Cathcart – General Counsel, DHHS
- ❖ Elizabeth Ward Saxl - Executive Director, Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- ❖ Lisa Bogue - Deputy Attorney General/ Chief of Criminal Division, OAG
- ❖ Shira Burns - Executive Director, Maine Prosecutors Association
- ❖ Craig Wolff – Assistant, U.S. Attorney's Office
- ❖ Amy Quinlan – State Court Administrator

Partners and Staff

- ❖ Julia Bergeron Smith - Director, Maine Statistical Analysis Center
- ❖ Tara Wheeler – Katherine Cutler Institute
- ❖ Madison Burke – Katherine Cutler Institute
- ❖ Steve Lemieux – Contract Grants Manager, Department of Public Safety
- ❖ Michelle Morse - Senior Grants Specialist, Department of Public Safety
- ❖ Augustin Buyeye - Grants Specialist, Department of Public Safety

Members Absent:

- ❖ Alicia Hunter
- ❖ Mary Kunhardt
- ❖ Lieutenant Colonel Scott Brian
- ❖ Lincoln Ryder

❖ Rebecca Austin

Introductions

Council members, DPS staff, and partners introduced themselves, representing law enforcement, victim service organizations, state agencies, the judiciary, prosecution, and research partners from the Catherine Cutler Institute.

Derek Gorneau welcomed everyone and introduced Steve Lemieux, the Department of Public Safety's new Contract Grants Manager. Steve shared a little about his professional background, noting that he spent the past fourteen years working in compliance, auditing, and financial regulation before joining DPS.

Agenda Overview

The meeting focused on reviewing and approving previous meeting minutes, receiving updates on Maine's STOP Grant Implementation Plan, and discussing survey and data collection efforts currently underway. The Catherine Cutler Institute team delivered several presentations on planning activities, stakeholder engagement, and grant performance data.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Members reviewed the April 28, 2026, JAC meeting minutes. A minor correction was noted regarding Director Lincoln Ryder's title, which had been incorrectly entered in the draft minutes.

Motion: Chief John Kilbride moved to approve the minutes as amended.

Second: Deborah Poulin.

The motion passed unanimously.

STOP Implementation Plan Update

Julia Bergeron Smith provided an update on the development of Maine's STOP Grant Implementation Plan.

Julia reported that stakeholder engagement activities continue to move forward. The statewide survey received 92 responses, representing a 38 percent response rate. Interviews with subgrantees and partner organizations are ongoing, and the team continues to review available data and conduct outreach to ensure broad representation throughout the planning process.

Attention is being given to increasing participation by tribal communities and other groups whose perspectives are often underrepresented in statewide planning efforts.

Julia outlined the next steps in the planning process, including completing interviews, analyzing survey results, developing draft recommendations, and preparing the implementation plan for council review.

Survey Results and Stakeholder Engagement

Madison Burke presented a preliminary analysis of the stakeholder survey findings.

Survey respondents represented a broad range of disciplines, including law enforcement, domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, prosecutors, legal services, and state agencies. Law enforcement personnel accounted for the largest group of respondents.

While overall participation was strong, Madison identified opportunities for additional outreach to tribal communities, organizations serving older adults, and court-related stakeholders.

Council members discussed potential contacts and organizations that may assist with future outreach efforts and help ensure that a diverse range of perspectives is reflected in the final implementation plan.

- ❖ Maine Council on Aging (Jessica Maurer)
- ❖ Elder Abuse Institute of Maine
- ❖ Detective Candace (York County)
- ❖ Sheriff representatives involved in elder abuse initiatives

STOP Grant Overview and Subgrantee Data Review

Tara Wheeler presented an overview of the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, including federal funding requirements, allocation categories, and implementation planning expectations.

Tara also presented findings from recent Maine STOP subgrantee performance reports from calendar years 2023 and 2024. The review demonstrated strong reporting compliance among funded programs and highlighted the impact of STOP-funded services across Maine.

Key findings included:

- ❖ Twenty-three unique subgrantees reported program activity.
- ❖ Reporting compliance was nearly 100 percent.
- ❖ Domestic violence services represented the largest area of program activity, followed by sexual assault and stalking services.
- ❖ Thousands of victims received advocacy, legal assistance, crisis intervention, and related support services.

- ❖ STOP-funded programs provided training opportunities for victim advocates, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and other professionals working to address violence against women.

The presentation also highlighted ongoing needs identified by subgrantees, including housing support, transportation assistance, behavioral health services, and continued funding for victim-centered programming.

Council Discussion

Members discussed survey findings, outreach strategies, federal priorities, and emerging service needs identified by subgrantees.

The discussion emphasized the importance of maintaining strong stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation planning process and ensuring that the final plan reflects the needs of communities across Maine.

Next Steps

The Catherine Cutler Institute team will continue stakeholder interviews, survey data analysis, and outreach activities throughout the summer.

Survey results are expected to be distributed to council members for review during the week of June 22. A subcommittee meeting is scheduled for June 23, and additional updates will be provided at the next JAC meeting.

Members were encouraged to remain engaged in the planning process and respond to requests for feedback, participation forms, and supporting documentation as needed.

Adjournment

Francine Garland Stark thanked members and partners for their participation and continued commitment to the STOP planning process. The meeting adjourned following the STOP implementation planning discussion and presentation.