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The Urban Institute



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Washington, D.C. 20037

1997 
REPORT

The

VIOLENCE

Against

Women

Act of 1994

EVALUATION OF THE
STOP FORMULA GRANTS
TO COMBAT VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN

1997 Report:
Evaluation of the
STOP Formula Grants
Under the
Violence Against Women
Act of 1994

March 1997

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We met with well over 100 people during the course of our site visits to 12 states, including state STOP grant administrators, advocates, service providers, law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, judges, and many others. We deeply appreciate their willingness to share their experiences and insights with us. Many of the state STOP coordinators went to great pains to help schedule our visits; their efforts were invaluable in making our trips so successful and we thank them for their time and trouble.

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Highlights of the Report

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322), provides for Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants to states under Chapter 2 of the Safe Streets Act. The grants are “to assist States, Indian tribal governments, and units of local government to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women.”

This report documents federal and state activities and accomplishments in the second year of implementing the resulting “STOP Violence Against Women” formula grants program. It was developed under a competitively awarded grant from the National Institute of Justice to provide a basis for reporting on the progress and impact of the program. Information in the report is based on interviews conducted during site visits to 12 states and on statistical analysis of information provided by the state STOP administrators for all of the subgrants awarded with the first year of STOP funding (FY 1995).

States find the STOP grants easy to use, and appreciate the amount of technical assistance available from OJP and the STOP-TA Project.

State STOP coordinators report that STOP applications are straightforward and clear compared to other federal grant programs. They, and their planning group members, greatly appreciate the flexibility with which the program is being administered, and have had very favorable interactions with staff from the federal Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which administers the grants in the U.S. Department of Justice. Unlike many federal formula grant programs, OJP has committed resources to technical assistance activities with two goals: (1) building the capacity of state STOP coordinators to be effective planners and grant administrators; and (2) identifying and disseminating promising practices so all states may learn about and benefit from each other’s successes. In general, those who have received technical assistance materials or attended technical assistance meetings and consultations conducted by the STOP-TA Project have found them extremely helpful.

OJP acted quickly to get the FY 1996 and FY 1997 STOP funding “on the streets,” although the timing of the FY 1996 distribution was delayed by late passage of FY 1996 appropriations.

Once Congress passed the FY 1996 appropriation for the Department of Justice in April 1996, without which OJP was unable to spend the FY 1996 STOP funds, the office acted promptly to distribute applications. To decrease delay, it rolled the application and the implementation plan into one step rather than the two steps used in FY 1995, but time available to complete the application was still tight. OJP’s FY 1997 STOP appropriation was passed in September 1996. It carried with it the stipulation that the money be in states’ hands within 60 days of passage. To meet this time frame, OJP could only give states two weeks to submit their application after receiving it. No plan review or modifications were possible within this time frame, and OJP waived that requirement. State STOP administrators felt that these time constraints did not allow enough time for them to prepare for their FY 1997 STOP activities in a thoughtful or well-reasoned way.

The STOP planning and grantmaking process is beginning to change interactions among law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service agencies.

Historically, relationships among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim service agencies in many states and communities have been distant or contentious, with little perceived common ground. VAWA is structured to change this dynamic by bringing the parties together, initially as part of planning for STOP, and subsequently as joint or cooperating actors in responding to violence against women. In most of the 12 site visit states, people interviewed felt that “all the players were at the table” and that the STOP planning process created an environment for increased mutual understanding and coordinated program development. This was the first time that such inclusive interactions occurred in several of these states. In addition, some states used their first-year STOP funds to develop an interest in and capacity for collaborative program development in local communities throughout the state. The process of change is likely to be a long one, however, as many people interviewed during site visits also described situations at both the state and local levels in which one or more parties were not interested in participating, or had not been invited to participate by the lead agency. Most state STOP coordinators continue their efforts to bring all players into the process through planning and grantmaking activities. Opening up communication is seen as the first step in a process whose long-term goal is collaboration to develop effective community systems that will reduce violence against women.

Lead agencies with a history of involvement in issues related to violence against women were most adept at strategic planning for STOP funding, but many other agencies learned quickly.

Lead agencies were most likely to follow an effective strategic planning process for use of the STOP funds if they had been responsible for policy related to reducing violence against women for a number of years. Several site visit states had long-standing policy forums for

directing state efforts to reduce violence against women. They were able to hit the ground running when the STOP funds arrived, as they had already invested years in assessing needs and developing priorities. The lead agencies in several other states did not have this history but nevertheless very quickly developed an inclusive approach that produced a comprehensive plan that they proceeded to follow with considerable success. However, some lead agencies could benefit from more technical assistance aimed at helping them develop a long-term strategy for the use of STOP funding.

The process of soliciting STOP subgrant applications and selecting subgrants for award varied greatly from state to state.

Soliciting Subgrant Applications. States varied greatly in how they carried out the STOP subgrant solicitation and award process. Some wrote very specific requests for proposals that paralleled elements in their implementation plans, while others wrote very general requests for proposals. The more specific the requests, the more states were likely to get proposals to do the things they thought were most important. Most states visited distributed their first requests for STOP proposals widely and to a great many types of agencies. In subsequent solicitations these states used what they learned in their first efforts to spread the net even more broadly. However, the lead agencies in a couple of site visit states limited their distribution to criminal justice agencies, and nonprofit nongovernmental victim service agencies had to find out about the money on their own.

Evaluating and Selecting Subgrant Applications. Some states clearly stated the criteria and procedures they would use for rating proposals; others did not. Many states used their stated criteria and followed their procedures to choose the subgrants that received awards. The states without clear criteria or specification of procedures were less likely to choose subgrants in a systematic way. Some lead agencies saw their role and the role of others in the planning group as equal, and abided by the decisions or recommendations of the group; others took the input of the planning group as advisory only and made their own final decisions about what to fund. In a few states initial choices for what to fund through the STOP program were changed by officials higher up in the department administering the program, in the governor's office, or in the state legislature.

State laws waiving filing fees for protection/restraining orders, waiving charges for evidentiary examinations in sexual assault cases, or establishing full faith and credit for protection/restraining orders issued by other jurisdictions were mostly in place, but implementation often lags far behind.

States had laws on the books as required by VAWA; some of these were passed recently as a result of VAWA requirements. However, people we interviewed identified a number of problems with how these laws were implemented. Most states appeared to experience an occasional problem of implementation, and problems were widespread in some states. With respect to filing fee waivers, one or two judges in every state and a fair number of judges in some states refused to waive these fees. Further, women experienced considerable problems

in every state with the expenses of *having the order served*, even if the fee to file it was waived. The laws generally did not cover serving the order on the batterer. People interviewed in a number of states cited consistent difficulties with payments for evidentiary exams in sexual assault cases. The mechanisms reported to pose the most difficulty for the woman were those that required her to apply for reimbursement of costs. According to those interviewed, many administrative difficulties surround the implementation of full faith and credit for protection/restraining orders. The biggest problems are with information—the absence of data systems that allow police and judges to learn about the existence and terms of orders from other jurisdictions, whether in-state or out-of-state.

People interviewed on site visits identified many barriers to effective use of the civil and criminal legal systems, and gaps in services which STOP funds might be used to remedy.

Statutes and Their Enforcement. Site visit interviewees felt that many officials in their states, in all parts of the justice system, still hold attitudes and beliefs that interfere with the systematic application of the law in cases of violence against women. Another difficulty mentioned frequently across the site visit states was that many judges, prosecutors, and sheriffs could continue to win election to their posts even though they ignored changes in the laws related to violence against women, and that because they were elected it was impossible to hold them accountable for failure to follow the law (appointment for life, in the case of judges in one site visit state, made accountability even more difficult). In some of the states visited, domestic violence cases are processed in judicial or magisterial districts with appointed judges or magistrates who are not required to have any legal background to hold their posts. These conditions mean that the law as written often is not the law as practiced.

Training. Many gaps in training were mentioned during site visits. Training is best for new recruits in law enforcement, where considerable progress has been made in developing curricula related to violence against women. Gaps still exist for veteran officers, since many states do not have mandatory in-service training on these topics. Training for judges was mentioned everywhere as a serious problem, as it is not required in most of the states visited. Civilian personnel in law enforcement (e.g., dispatchers) and nonjudicial court staff (e.g., clerks) also were mentioned frequently as needing training in both procedures and attitude.

Victim Services. In every state visited, people interviewed described serious gaps in victim services. Even for services such as battered women's shelters in states where every county is nominally in the catchment area of at least one shelter, available service levels are not able to meet demand. Other services are even less available. Gaps mentioned in specific types of services include post-crisis services that meet the need for longer-term support for battered women and sexual assault victims, and services for children in households where domestic violence is present. Gaps in service coverage for many groups of women were commonly cited, including lack of services for women in rural areas, minority women in urban areas, and women from different language communities.

Structural and Political Barriers. Difficulties in implementing programs or achieving consistent enforcement of laws and policies was made more difficult, in the eyes of many people interviewed during site visits, by political arrangements. Large numbers of law enforcement,

prosecution, and judicial districts sometimes made it difficult to effect change for a whole city, county, or region, and in all parts of the system. Agreement to adopt new procedures or to develop new cooperative arrangements was often spotty, with some units participating in changes and others not doing so.

Data System Gaps. Lack of computer systems both within and across disciplines makes communication and coordination difficult. Even when some elements of the justice system are computerized, more often than not the different systems cannot link together to share information. In a number of states visited, it is nearly impossible for judges in one court to find out about cases going on in a different court, even when they involve the same victim or incident.

STOP funds were allocated with close attention to VAWA's requirements, and served the people intended.

In all, states awarded 765 subgrants with FY 1995 STOP funds. The average amount per STOP subgrant was about \$26,000. Nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service agencies received 38 percent of the funds, followed by prosecution agencies, which received 24 percent, and law enforcement agencies, which received 16 percent. Other governmental agencies (e.g., courts, corrections, public victim service agencies, and state statistical agencies) and private agencies (e.g., universities) also received some funding.

VAWA requires that 25 percent of STOP funding go to nonprofit, nongovernmental agencies for direct victim services, 25 percent to law enforcement, and 25 percent to prosecution, with the remainder available for states to use at their discretion to reduce violence against women. Women victims of violence were the direct beneficiaries of the largest share of grants, followed by victim service agencies, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and the judiciary. Other less common direct beneficiaries of first-year STOP funding were the general public, corrections, health agencies, and children. More than half the projects (58 percent) intended to serve more than one type of beneficiary (e.g., by providing training for law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts).

Direct victim services and training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors were the biggest funding categories using the FY 1995 STOP funds.

VAWA stipulates seven purpose areas for which STOP funds can be used. States gave the most to direct victim services, both in terms of number of subgrants (60 percent) and amount of funds (39 percent). Training for law enforcement and prosecution was next, with 28 percent of the subgrants and 26 percent of the monies. Special law enforcement or prosecution units for domestic violence and/or sexual assault, policy development for law enforcement or prosecution, and data and communication services each received about 10 percent of the funds. The purpose areas receiving the least support and the fewest grants were programs addressing stalking and programs addressing the needs of Indian tribes, which together absorbed 3 percent of the first-year STOP funds.

Domestic violence received far more funding, through more subgrants, than did sexual assault; stalking received very little attention, except as it was considered a part of domestic violence or sexual assault projects. Forty-seven percent of the subgrants focused only on domestic violence, 13 percent were used exclusively for sexual assault, 23 percent expected to cover both needs, and 8 percent addressed all three types of crime. Domestic violence was thus the focus, alone or in combination, of over three-quarters of the grants.

Less than half of the first-year STOP funds were used to support subgrants for underserved populations. Typically, the communities targeted by these subgrants were rural, but a small number of projects focused on highly distressed urban neighborhoods.

Evaluation activities need to receive more attention from state STOP coordinators and subgrantees; technical assistance will help a great deal.

About half of the subgrantees described something about their plans for evaluation as part of their Subgrant Award Report. These plans more often fell under the heading of performance monitoring than of outcome evaluation. Several barriers to evaluating STOP grants emerged from site visits to 12 states, including a lack of understanding about evaluation and how to do it and the lack of data systems needed to gather evaluative information. State coordinators and subgrantees will need a good deal of technical assistance in designing and executing useful evaluations of program impact if we are to learn as much as possible about what STOP accomplished and how its goals should be pursued in the future.

Next year's report will include the first indicators of how STOP funding is impacting victims of violence against women.

During the coming year, Urban Institute researchers will analyze STOP subgrant activity funded with FY 1996 and FY 1997 funds, and impacts on victims and services for the FY 1995 and possibly some FY 1996 subgrants. Urban Institute and four other NIJ-funded evaluation research groups will design and begin to implement national evaluations of particularly promising activities being supported with STOP funds. Finally, the Urban Institute will assemble materials from all of the STOP evaluation researchers to create an *Evaluation Guidebook* for use by state STOP coordinators and subgrantees, including options for how to structure evaluations and how to measure the outcomes of most interest to subgrantees, OJP, and Congress.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>To</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
<i>OJP</i>	<p>3: Finish and distribute the Subgrant Award Report forms as soon as possible (p. 15).</p> <p>4: Take immediate action to create and distribute the Subgrant Award Statistical Summary and the Annual Performance Report for state STOP coordinators (p. 15).</p> <p>5: Increase monitoring of states and lead agencies to assure that planning is collaborative, inclusive, thoughtful, and thorough, that it includes feedback loops from year to year on what is working and what is not, and that plans are modified accordingly (p. 28).</p> <p>6: Increase the examples of good practice it provides to states in the areas of preparing state plans, performance reports, conducting evaluations, providing effective leadership, promoting collaboration, and assuring participation for small agencies, especially those able to reach underserved populations (p. 29).</p> <p>8: Increase assistance to states to identify promising practices to correct gaps in implementation of laws waiving fees for filing protection or restraining orders in domestic violence cases and evidentiary exams in sexual assault cases (p. 33).</p> <p>9: Continue to encourage use of STOP funds to develop the databases that would support full faith and credit (p. 33).</p> <p>10: Continue helping state STOP coordinators to understand both the breadth and the limitations of their options under VAWA (p. 41).</p> <p>19: Clarify how states should classify subgrants in relation to the 25/25/25 split (p. 60).</p> <p>20: Provide guidance on using in-kind resources to meet the STOP match requirement (p. 61).</p>
<i>OJP and STOP-TA Project</i>	<p>11: Give extensive guidance to subgrantees in successful methods and programs for reaching underserved populations (p. 42).</p> <p>12 through 16: Identify and disseminate information about promising programs and practices focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Offering victims post-crisis, longer-term support (p. 42), ▣ Supporting the efforts of small and/or rural organizations, including statewide programs offering technical assistance and local collaborations and coordinating councils (p. 42), ▣ Working with male and female youth toward preventing another generation of women who experience physical and sexual violence (p. 43), ▣ Stalking (p. 44), and ▣ Meeting the needs of American Indian women, both on and off reservations (p. 43).
<i>OJP and NIJ</i>	<p>18. Continue and intensify efforts to improve state and subgrantee evaluation capacity, including both techniques and the development of fruitful relationships with evaluators (p. 60).</p>
<i>State STOP Coordinators</i>	<p>1: Complete a comprehensive plan revision halfway through the STOP program period, to accompany the FY 1998 application (p. 14).</p> <p>7: Identify gaps in legal language and in implementation of laws stipulating waiver of filing fees for protection orders and fees for forensic examinations in sexual assault cases (p. 33).</p>
<i>NIJ and NIJ Evaluation Grantees</i>	<p>17: Focus evaluation studies on the activities and service system changes of most interest to state STOP coordinators and subgrantees (p. 60).</p>
<i>Congress</i>	<p>2: Allow OJP adequate time for the grantmaking process. A minimum of 120 days is required (p. 14).</p>

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322), provides for Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants to states under Chapter 2 of the Safe Streets Act. The grants have been designated the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) grants by their federal administrator, the Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO) in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). They are "to assist States, Indian tribal governments, and units of local government to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women."

This report assesses the progress and accomplishments of the STOP program through January 1997, as required by VAWA. It covers the second year of STOP program authorization. The Urban Institute was selected competitively by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) under authority from the Attorney General to evaluate the STOP grant program and prepare this report. Following a brief summary of the first-year STOP report, submitted to Congress on March 29, 1996, this chapter describes the evaluation activities during 1996, discusses the justice system and victim services environment existing before VAWA, and presents an overview of Chapters 2 through 5.

SUMMARY OF THE 1996 REPORT

The 1996 Report to Congress on the first year of STOP grant activity summarized the history and motivation behind the Violence Against Women Act, and presented brief histories of developments in the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault along with current issues in both fields. It described VAWA's focuses on law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services and the seven purpose areas specified by the Act, noting special legislative emphases on reaching populations underserved because of race, culture, ethnicity,

or language and on reaching geographically isolated communities. It also summarized how OJP handled the administrative steps necessary to distribute the STOP funds as quickly as possible.

The 1996 Report to Congress focused on state implementation plans. In these plans, states told OJP how they expected to implement their STOP formula grants, described their planning processes and state needs, and articulated their probable uses of 1995 STOP funds. Some of the plans revealed quite sophisticated attention to needs assessment and strategic planning for using STOP funds to gain the maximum benefit. However, many of these first-year plans lacked specificity about what the state intended to do and why it elected to support particular activities. Fewer than half of the states conducted a needs assessment prior to developing their plans. Most states convened a planning committee that included representatives from the three STOP focus areas (law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services); many included representatives of other systems, such as the courts, corrections, health and social services, and elected officials.

Most states adhered closely to the legislatively required distribution of support to law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services.

Most states adhered closely to the legislatively required distribution of support, giving at least 25 percent each to law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services (the remaining 25 percent was discretionary). Victim services was the area most likely to receive an allocation greater than 25 percent. The 1996 Report also summarized

state intentions with respect to funding the seven purpose areas. Victim services and training for law enforcement and prosecution staff were the most consistently funded (55 and 52 of the 56 states and territories receiving STOP funding, respectively); helping Indian tribes and addressing stalking issues were the least likely to be funded (12 and 8 states, respectively). State implementation plans for 1995 contained very little information about how the states intended to reach underserved populations, what their timetable was for distributing STOP funds to subgrantees, how they intended to evaluate the impact of STOP funding, or how the funding was to be distributed among domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking activities.

1996 URBAN INSTITUTE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

During 1996 the Urban Institute completed the 1996 Report on STOP activities, worked with OJP to design subgrant reporting forms, designed and conducted site visits to 12 states, conducted analyses of state information for the 1997 Report, and coordinated a variety of evaluation activities related to the STOP grants.

State Site Visits

The Urban Institute conducted site visits to 12 states to learn more about the process of STOP grant implementation and issues of special interest to NIJ, OJP, and Congress.

Planning for the visits occurred in June and July, with the visits themselves taking place from August through November. Findings from these visits appear throughout this report.

The 12 states are New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont in the Northeast; North Carolina, Kentucky, and Texas in the South; Indiana, Minnesota, and Kansas in the Midwest; and California, Nevada, and Colorado in the West. These were selected to provide representation across:

- Geographical region,
- Type of lead agency, and
- Subgrant purpose area.

Additional criteria included:

- Having all subgrants awarded at least by July 1996, and
- Having a broadly inclusive STOP planning committee, with representation from some sectors in addition to law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services.

The group of states selected included one lead agency in public safety/law enforcement, two in prosecution, one in victim services, and eight in a state or governor's planning agency with a criminal justice focus. Most states awarded subgrants in the purpose areas of training, special units in law enforcement and prosecution agencies, policies and procedures, and victim services, so information about subgrants in these areas would be available regardless of which states were selected for visits. In order to cover all the purpose areas, the 12 states included some that made awards for data collection mechanisms (most commonly, developing computerized systems with statewide potential), gave grants related to stalking, and/or provided assistance to Indian tribes with state STOP funds.

Site visits generally lasted three days, and involved teams of two researchers. Interviews were conducted with:

- The state STOP grant coordinator and often with others in the same office who had STOP responsibilities,
- Four to six members of the STOP planning or advisory group,
- Representatives of victim service and advocacy programs who were not on the planning group, and
- Several subgrant recipients working in law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services.

Interviews covered the following topics related to implementation of the STOP grants (a copy of the interview guide is provided in Appendix C):

- The planning process,
- Federal legislative and administrative requirements and supports,
- The subgrant award process,
- Evaluation plans and needs, and
- Gaps in services, laws, and practices; and barriers to full legal remedies and social supports.

Analysis of the 1995 Subgrant Awards

The analysis of the FY 1995 subgrants is based on reports submitted by the states, supplemented as needed by descriptions provided by OJP staff. For FY 1995 subgrants, OJP asked states to submit descriptive information voluntarily on a Subgrant Award Report (SAR) form that was then in draft form. Of the 55 states and territories (hereafter, "states") that had awarded their subgrants by December 31, 1996, 38 completed these forms for all or most of their subgrants.¹ For the remaining states, project managers in OJP wrote brief summaries of subgrant actions. The SARs contained descriptions of many important subgrant characteristics; however, the project manager summaries contained less information.

We developed a database with this information. The SARs for 40 states cover 90 percent or more of their FY 1995 spending on subgrants. The remaining states submitted SARs covering smaller shares of their subgrant spending. In constructing the database, five Urban Institute staff with extensive experience on this project, including multiple site visits, coded SARs and program manager descriptions. The percentage of subgrants coded by a single staff member ranged from 18 (2 percent) to 383 (51 percent). Analyses of these data give a picture of STOP grant activity that is national in scope and covers most of what the states did with their 1995 STOP funds. Many of the findings in Chapter 4 of this report are based on these data, making this report the first opportunity for Congress and other interested parties to learn what is being accomplished throughout the United States with STOP funding.

In FY 1996 and subsequent years, OJP will require states to submit SARs for all subgrants, which will provide data for more complete descriptions of all activities funded under STOP. Urban Institute staff worked with OJP during spring 1996 to develop a draft Subgrant Award Report. We were aware that some aspects of STOP administration were confusing and wanted to help make the forms as clear as possible so the information collected would be appropriate and accurate. Suggestions from the states led to final revisions. The form has been computerized and is available through OJP's Internet linkage.

Coordination of STOP Evaluation Activities

NIJ and OJP, working together, are committed to learning as much as possible about the STOP grant process, and about the ultimate impact of the STOP grants for increasing women's safety and quality of life and for holding offenders accountable. As part of the evaluation grant, Urban Institute staff are writing an evaluation guidebook geared specifically to the needs of STOP grantees and subgrantees. The guidebook, to be completed in the summer of 1997, will walk a project manager or state grantee through the evaluation process, help states identify and measure important outcomes, and provide suggestions for data collection.

Four other evaluation grants sponsored by NIJ in 1996 are assessing the impact of STOP grants in specific areas. The impact of grants for law enforcement and prosecution is being evaluated by the Institute for Law and Justice; grants for victims services by the American Bar Association in collaboration with New York City's Victim Services Agency; grants to support improved data collection and communication by the National Center for State Courts; and Indian tribal grants by the University of Arizona, Department of Indian Affairs. The four 1996 evaluation grants began in October 1996. The Urban Institute serves as the overall coordinator of these four grants and its own evaluation work to assure that the

combined activities of the five national-level STOP evaluations cover the important issues, contribute significant knowledge to the field, and build on each other rather than duplicating efforts. In November 1996, the new grantees met with staff of the national evaluation at the Urban Institute to discuss evaluation goals and to divide the work appropriately among the grantees.

OJP is promoting STOP grantee and subgrantee evaluation efforts through its cooperative agreement with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence to support technical assistance to state STOP coordinators and subgrantees through a project called the STOP-TA Project. Urban Institute staff are working with staff from the STOP-TA Project to introduce the idea of evaluation to state STOP grantees, to identify the outcomes or impacts of STOP activities that practitioners think are important to measure, and to help the STOP-TA Project develop expertise in evaluation so it can offer technical assistance on these matters.

CONTEXT FOR ACTIVITIES UNDER VAWA

Any evaluation of the impact of new federal legislation must take into consideration the environment that existed before the legislation, especially if the legislation authorizes activities that are expected to change that environment in significant ways. The Violence Against Women Act contains very ambitious goals for changing the environment in which women victimized by violence must live and seek help. For the first time, it places in federal legislation the recognition that women victims of violent crimes face common barriers to legal protection, not the least of which is the lack of communication and cooperation among sectors of the justice system and between these sectors and the agencies that provide direct services to victims.

The Violence Against Women Act contains very ambitious goals for changing the environment in which women victimized by violence must live and seek help.

The four subtitles of the Violence Against Women Act—the Safe Streets Act, Safe Homes for Women, Civil Rights for Women and Equal Justice for Women in the Courts, and Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children—target domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and protection against gender-motivated violence. The Act recognizes that problems exist with current laws, rules of evidence, and the policies and procedures of law enforcement and prosecution agencies and the courts. It creates new offenses and tougher penalties, mandates victim restitution, and begins system reforms that will, for example, shield victims during prosecution and increase consistency in sentencing. Recognizing that attitudinal change and knowledge are essential to practical implementation of legal reforms, VAWA authorizes support for prevention, education, and training, and the development of systems for maintaining records on violent incidents and perpetrators and improving communication within the justice system.

In addition, a major emphasis in VAWA implementation is placed on developing or improving collaborative relationships among justice systems and victim-serving agencies. This emphasis on collaboration is key to the probable long-term ability of the legislation to bring about system change. Historically, in many states and communities the relationships among these agencies have been distant or contentious, with little perceived common ground. VAWA is structured to bring the parties together, with the hope that they can find new approaches that ultimately will reduce violence against women and the trauma it produces.

OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

Chapter 2 of this report describes federal activities and accomplishments during 1996 and summarizes information from intensive site visits to 12 states about state responses to federal activities. Chapter 3 uses the site visit findings to describe how states have implemented the STOP grants, including their planning processes, compliance with legislative mandates, gaps in services, and barriers to accomplishing STOP goals. Chapter 4 reports how states are using the STOP funding, based on analysis of subgrant award reports for all 765 subgrants plus findings from the site visits. Chapter 5 concludes with a look ahead to STOP evaluation activities and products for 1997.

CHAPTER 2

Accomplishments— Implementation of the Program at the Federal Level

The Violence Against Women Grants Office in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has shown a serious commitment to making the STOP formula grants serve the purposes of the Violence Against Women Act. Far more than most federal offices administering formula grants, OJP has taken many actions to build system capacity and promote changes in state and local practice that promise to improve outcomes for women victims of violence. As detailed in this chapter, OJP has invested in training and technical assistance for state STOP coordinators, state planning group members, and STOP subgrantees. This investment shows an intent to give the local actors running STOP programs as much help as possible to do a good job and accomplish program goals. In addition, OJP has been prompt in its administration of VAWA funds, responsive to grantee and subgrantee questions and problems, and extremely cooperative with the evaluation team. Some VAWA funds are being administered by the National Institute of Justice to support evaluations of the impact of STOP grants on women's safety and quality of life and on offender accountability. Evaluation results will provide feedback that can further strengthen the program.

Many suggestions and recommendations for OJP made in this and the following chapters are offered in a supportive mode—to increase even further the responsiveness and relevance of OJP's assistance to state coordinators and subgrantees.

FEDERAL ACTIONS ON THE 1996 STOP GRANTS

OJP's STOP Application and Award Process

OJP has been exceptionally effective in awarding the state STOP grants in a timely fashion, given the constraints of the Federal budget process. The administration of the STOP grants

The administration of the STOP grants in 1996 was dramatically affected by delays in congressional action on FY 1996 appropriations.

in 1996 was dramatically affected by delays in budget approval related to the late-1995 government shutdowns and extended negotiations between Congress and the White House to reach a final budget compromise. Grant-making activities that would normally have begun in October 1995, shortly after the

beginning of FY 1996, were delayed until spring 1996 because OJP could not act while funding depended on continuing resolutions. The following schedule of awards resulted:

- April 30 Congress passed the 1996 VAWA budget.
- May 20 OJP mailed 1996 STOP application kits to the states.
- May 28–July 1 OJP accepted 1996 state submissions on a rolling basis.
- Aug–Sept. OJP awarded 51 of the 56 1996 STOP grants.
- October 3, 1996 OJP awarded the remaining five 1996 STOP grants.

Thus, the 1996 STOP grants were on the streets within five months of the time when OJP received its STOP budget from Congress. The process was faster than in the first year because each state's second-year (FY 1996) implementation plan was included as part of its 1996 application instead of requiring two distinct stages as in 1995. This also meant that no special conditions or delays limiting the states' access to funds were attached to the awards.

Congress passed the fiscal 1997 VAWA budget on September 30, 1996, before all of the FY 1996 VAWA funds had been distributed. As part of the conference report attached to the bill appropriating these funds, Congress directed OJP to award the 1997 STOP grants within 60 days of budget passage. This resulted in the following schedule of awards:

- Sept. 30 The FY 1997 VAWA budget passed.
- Oct. 11 OJP faxed 1997 STOP grant applications to the states. To streamline the application process to meet this congressional deadline, OJP did not require the states to submit a third-year (FY 1997) implementation plan. Rather, OJP deemed the 1996 implementation plan operable through the 1997 fiscal year.
- Oct. 25 1997 STOP applications were due, 14 days after states received them.
- Oct. 25–Nov. 30 OJP made 53 of the 56 1997 awards during this five-week period. American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands did not submit their 1997 STOP applications until January–February 1997.

This schedule meant that states received their 1996 and their 1997 STOP grant allocations at almost the same time and had very little time to plan for the third-year funding.

Interactions of State STOP Grantees and OJP Grant Managers

A good part of the job of OJP grant managers is to provide direct technical assistance to state STOP coordinators. OJP staff are in frequent telephone contact with the coordinators to help them implement their STOP grants and to monitor each state's award. Some states require almost daily communication with OJP for short periods of time. Ongoing telephone dialogue has centered on queries and issues such as the following:

- How can children benefit from this program?
- Can men be assisted with these funds and, if so, how?
- Can these grant dollars be used to purchase certain equipment that is necessary to implement a state's program?
- How can a state reach out to underserved populations? and
- How can the state promote collaboration among the law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services communities?

OJP staff members also help state coordinators classify their subgrants correctly as law enforcement, prosecution, nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services, and/or discretionary projects. OJP staff also review all awarded subgrants to ensure compliance with VAWA statutory requirements. Additionally, OJP staff members respond frequently to state STOP coordinators' requests for information about potential innovative approaches to deterring violence against women.

OJP's Cooperative Agreements for Technical Assistance

OJP uses cooperative agreements as part of its strategy to stimulate changes in the culture of police and prosecution agencies and the courts that will benefit women victims of violence who have contact with these agencies. During 1996 OJP continued to support technical assistance to the STOP grantees and subgrantees through several cooperative agreements. The American Prosecutors Research Institute received a cooperative agreement to conduct four workshops for prosecutors who have received STOP subgrants. These workshops focused on state-of-the-art procedures for handling domestic violence and sexual assault cases. The International Association of Chiefs of Police received a cooperative agreement to gather information about the incidence of domestic violence among police officers, and subsequently to hold five regional workshops to help develop innovative, effective approaches to reducing domestic violence of police personnel toward family members. The International Association of Chiefs of Police also received funds to sponsor a national Family Violence Summit. The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) received a cooperative agreement to develop a curriculum for training police trainers and others on the subject of community policing and violence against women. The curriculum is intended to focus both on prevention and on improved crime-solving with incidents of violence against women. In addition, the STOP-TA Project received a second cooperative agreement to continue its technical assistance activities, which are described below.

The STOP-TA Project's Technical Assistance Activities

To help state STOP administrators and subgrantees learn about new approaches and practices, OJP has established the STOP-TA Project. The TA Project is based in Washington, D.C., although it is officially a unit of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The TA Project's activities during its first year (1995) included assisting OJP in holding the July 1995 State Grantee Conference in Washington, D.C., and organizing two on-site consultations for state implementation planning committees in Quincy, Massachusetts, and Seattle, Washington. These activities were described in the 1996 STOP Grants Report to Congress.

During the TA Project's second year of funding, it organized three more on-site consultations, conducted three "promising practices" focus groups, and offered direct technical assistance when requested by individual state grantees and subgrantees. Other TA Project activities supported by its second-year funding, but outside the time frame of this report, include the organization of two regional meetings for state STOP administrators, the first of which was held in February 1997 in Orlando, Florida, and the second of which is scheduled for Salt Lake City, Utah, in April 1997.

On-Site Consultations—San Diego and Duluth

Part of OJP's technical assistance strategy is to provide mentoring experiences for state STOP coordinators through contacts with programs and communities that have developed innovative strategies to combat violence against women. During 1996 the STOP-TA project arranged for state grantees to attend intensive on-site consultations in San Diego, California, and Duluth, Minnesota, to learn about those communities' coordinated responses to domestic violence. Forty-seven representatives of 14 states attended the San Diego consultation.

Thirty-nine representatives from 15 states and three Indian tribes attended the Duluth consultation. A fifth on-site consultation will take place in Rhode Island in April 1997. This consultation will focus on both domestic violence and sexual assault.

The on-site consultations give attendees the chance to see in action all the elements of a coordinated community response to violence against women. Attendees are able to see how the system works, hear formal presentations, ask questions, observe agency activities directly, and share their experiences and home-state implementation issues with other attendees and the conference organizers.

By the end of the Rhode Island consultation, almost all of the states will have participated in one of the five initial on-site consultations. The TA Project hopes to offer several more such consultations throughout 1997, including several with a focus on underserved populations such as rural women or women of color.

The on-site consultations give attendees the chance to see in action all the elements of a coordinated community response to violence against women.

Promising Practices Focus Groups

The OJP technical assistance strategy includes identifying and disseminating information about promising practices to state and local jurisdictions. To this end, the STOP-TA Project held three meetings in January 1997 focused on identifying promising practices in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Each meeting began by identifying issues for which good practices were needed in the areas of victim services, law enforcement, prosecution, and coordinated community response. After identifying the highest priority issues, participants identified promising practices already in existence and described them in detail using a systematic set of criteria supplied by the STOP-TA Project. The STOP-TA Project will use the results of these conferences as the basis for technical assistance manuals and materials. New promising practices will be added as they are identified. The STOP-TA Project will actively disseminate all promising practices identified at these conferences, giving all STOP grantees access to the most up-to-date information about what appears to be working around the country.

Technical Assistance to Individual State Grantees and Subgrantees

OJP sees access to information as important for state STOP coordinators and subgrantees and supports it through the STOP-TA Project, which offers technical assistance to individual state grantees and subgrantees in a variety of formats. The TA Project supports a toll-free 800 number for telephone consultations, provides written materials, makes referrals upon request to national experts or peers in other communities, and shares promising program models with anyone who calls. The Project also offers analysis on issues emerging from the implementation of VAWA.

NIJ's Research Agenda Supporting the STOP Program

The National Institute of Justice receives funds from OJP to conduct research supporting the purposes of the STOP program. These funds are intended to foster partnerships between the practitioner and the research communities to produce technically competent research data that are relevant and useful to practitioners. The FY 1996 research awards fell into two areas, the first of which received the major portion of funds: (1) conducting impact evaluations of STOP grants in the areas of law enforcement and prosecution, victim services, data collection, and supports to Indian tribal governments; and (2) other evaluations and related research on violence against women. Chapter 5, on future plans for STOP evaluation, describes the impact evaluation grants in more detail. This research program extends the work begun in FY 1995, which covered three major areas: (1) a national evaluation of the STOP program (which is supporting this Report on STOP activities and related work); (2) program evaluations at the state, local, or tribal government level; and (3) evaluations of other state or local efforts to counter violence against women.

THE STATE PERSPECTIVE

The perspective of states on the federal administration of the STOP grants is based on the site visits to 12 states conducted by the Urban Institute (described in Chapter 1). The findings reported below are based on summaries of multiple interviews in each state with staff of the lead agency, the sexual assault and domestic violence coalitions, law enforcement and prosecution agencies, and subgrantees.

OJP Administrative Requirements

During our site visits to 12 states, we inquired about state perceptions of OJP administrative requirements. We also asked about the quality and responsiveness of the technical assistance available through OJP project officers and the STOP-TA Project. Reactions by states to the federal administration of the program was generally positive. Positive comments were received in most of the states we visited in the following areas:

- STOP applications are straightforward and clear, compared to other federal grant programs.
- The flexibility of the grants was widely appreciated.
- Lead agency staff reported very favorable interactions with OJP staff when questions arose. State coordinators reported that OJP staff have been very helpful and responses have always been timely even when a question calls for new interpretations of the law, which takes OJP a couple of days to get back with the answer.

The states we visited generally felt that the reporting requirements from OJP are straightforward, reasonable, and not excessively burdensome. While one state thought the subgrant reporting form was lengthy, others expressed surprise that the Department was not collecting more information. They may not realize that OJP will soon be distributing Annual Performance Report forms for subgrantees to use in documenting their accomplishments, as required by VAWA.

OJP's reporting requirements are straightforward, reasonable, and not excessively burdensome.

The information-gathering burden involved in completing these forms will be greater than for the award reports, as the award reports pertain to the beginning of a project whereas the annual performance reports pertain to year-by-year accomplishments, which must be documented.

Areas in which problems were reported included:

- A number of the state STOP coordinators thought the guidelines were too vague. They would have liked clearer and more detailed guidelines about a number of things, including how to create a comprehensive long-range plan, what should go into the written state implementation plan, the subgrant-making process, and expectations for evaluation. Several coordinators wanted more detailed instructions and specific guidelines about what types of projects are eligible to receive VAWA funds.
- A number of the state STOP coordinators wanted help on evaluation design.

The biggest problem with STOP grant administration, cited by state coordinators and often also by state planning group members, related to the shortness of the turnaround time from notification of fund availability and receipt of application forms until the applications were due in Washington, D.C. The quick turnaround time constrained any efforts to conduct systematic needs assessments or engage in significant long-range planning. A period of 120 days was seen as the minimum time needed to allow for adequate planning. The problem of severely limited turnaround time applied more to the second and third years of STOP funding (FY 1996 and 1997) than to the first year. Another complicating factor in 1996 was that several Department of Justice program applications for funds to support expanded response to domestic violence were due at about the same time, and all had short deadlines. Since most of the state STOP administrators had responsibilities for some of these other grants programs, the timing posed a problem for them. Some of the same difficulties were described by applicants for subgrants, with respect to their own state's timing and application process. Some states, and some localities, require budget approval before federal funds can be expended. When this delay is added to the time required by the lead agency to prepare an RFP, review applications, and make subgrant awards, a considerable period of time may pass before subgrantees receive funds.

Technical Assistance

During site visits we asked people about their experiences with the July 1995 grantee conference and other sources of federal technical assistance. Most people found the conference very helpful, although several people with strong experience in the field would have liked more new information. For many others the conference was their first opportunity to hear about model programs and promising approaches and to network with others in the field. A number of attendees noted the motivational effect it had on their team—an enthusiasm which they were able to bring back to their state planning group. Several grant coordinators mentioned that they would have preferred more information during the conference about the format of applications, the eligibility of particular types of projects, and more specific guidelines. Several states noted an absence of information on sexual assault. In general, these comments mirror the initial feedback received by OJP directly from participants and the conference evaluation forms. Descriptions of the conference and the initial feedback are covered in more detail in the 1996 Report.

Those who attended the on-site STOP-TA technical assistance consultations had entirely favorable responses. Several people noted that they are anxiously anticipating the sexual assault consultation scheduled for April in Rhode Island.

Wide variation existed within states regarding the use of the National Resource Centers and other national resources listed in Appendix B. Those interviewed who were most connected to victim services (either direct services and/or coalition staff) tended to be most familiar with the resources and to take the greatest advantage of them. Everyone who used these resources found them very helpful. Others were familiar with them but rarely used them. The State Justice Institute provided a model training program for judges for one state to use in developing their own curriculum for prosecutors and judges. Several people expressed a need for a National Resource Center dedicated to sexual assault issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

State STOP coordinators and subgrantees could use a great deal of guidance and technical assistance in a variety of areas, including planning, writing effective proposal solicitations, stimulating collaboration, conducting evaluations, and identifying promising practices. Needs vary depending on prior experience, sophistication with planning and grants administration in a policy rather than in an accounting context, and state priorities for VAWA. Chapter 3 discusses these issues in more detail, and includes recommendations for specific types of guidance and technical assistance. Recommendations included in this chapter focus on federal grantmaking and grant-monitoring procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 1: States should do a comprehensive plan revision halfway through the STOP program period.

OJP should require states to do a comprehensive reassessment of their implementation plans for FY 1998, which will be the midpoint of the six years of STOP funding. Many states submitted relatively brief plans covering only their first year of STOP funding, which was acceptable to OJP given the short turnaround time for plan submission. Further, OJP asked only for a plan update for FY 1996 funds, not for a complete multiyear plan. In addition, states were not required to submit any plan updates or reassessments to receive third-year (1997) funding due to the short turnaround time for issuing the grants. These circumstances combine to make it advisable for states to take a serious look at where they are, where they have come from, and where they want to go for the remainder of the STOP grants period. In particular, they should assess whether their current approaches are going to get them where they want to go, or whether they have to rethink their strategies. Further, they should devote more planning time and resources to evaluation in these updates so the impact of STOP funding can be documented.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Congress should allow OJP and the states adequate time for the grantmaking process to function in a coherent and well-reasoned manner. A minimum of 120 days is required for this process.

For both the FY 1996 and FY 1997 STOP funding, the timing of final congressional passage or other congressional stipulations posed significant difficulties, as described above. Some of the problems have nothing to do with VAWA specifically (e.g., government shutdowns and continuing budget resolutions affected many federal programs), but others do. Congress should refrain from imposing arbitrary deadlines (e.g., the requirement contained in the Conference Committee Report that STOP funds be awarded within 60 days after passage of the appropriations legislation) that effectively prohibit OJP and the states from conducting an orderly and thoughtful grants program.

RECOMMENDATION 3: *OJP should finalize the Subgrant Award Report forms and distribute them to states before states lose the opportunity to require their completion as part of the conditions of subgrant awards.*

OJP expects to require Subgrant Award Reports (SARs) for each subgrant funded with STOP FY 1996 and subsequent-year monies. But some states felt their subgrantees would not complete these forms unless doing so were made a requirement of their subgrant award documents. For at least some states, these documents are already done or in the process of completion for FY 1996 awards, and OJP still does not have the final version of the SAR in place. At least a few states have already had their new subgrantees fill out the draft SAR, which has more narrative and is not as specific as the final SAR will be. Immediate action is required by OJP to assure that all states use the SAR for all of their FY 1996 and FY 1997 subgrants.

RECOMMENDATION 4: *OJP should take immediate action to draft, get comments on, and finalize the Subgrant Award Statistical Summary, on which subgrantees will report their activities using STOP funds and the effects of these activities, and the Annual Performance Report form, on which state coordinators will summarize subgrant activity and impact.*

The VAWA legislation requires reports to Congress on certain minimum outcomes of STOP funding, mostly in the area of the number and characteristics of victims served through subgrant activities. Other impacts are also important and vary with the type of project funded. Victim services grants can comply most easily with congressional mandates to report the numbers and characteristics of victims served and might also be able to report some short-term effects of service, such as information gained, attitude change, or actions taken (e.g., restraining orders), or longer-term effects, such as greater safety, quality of life, or peace of mind. Other types of grants would have different impacts. For training grants, one might want to know whether trainees changed their knowledge and attitudes immediately after training, whether these changes persisted over time, and most importantly, whether any changes in treatment of victims, agency procedures, and interagency cooperation followed from the immediate effects of training. Grants with other purposes will have other, but equally complex, potential outcomes. The Subgrant Award Statistical Summary needs to allow subgrantees to report a wide variety of potential impacts. In addition, OJP needs to include some ways to report larger system changes such as increased collaboration among agencies or improved community environment. Finally, the Annual Performance Report form needs to be developed, on which state STOP coordinators can summarize the activities of all subgrantees and their combined impact on important outcomes.

State STOP coordinators commented on the absence of guidance from OJP with respect to evaluation and documenting STOP's impact. They are worried that if, at the time of subgrant award, they do not incorporate into the subgrant paperwork the specific outcomes that must be tracked to show program impact, the subgrantees will not collect the necessary information. This is a legitimate worry, shared not only by state STOP administrators but also by quite a number of subgrantees. OJP needs to act as quickly as possible to fill this gap if it expects to obtain documentation of program impact from STOP subgrantees and state coordinators.

Accomplishments— Implementation of the Program at the State Level: An Assessment of 12 States

Prior to the arrival of the first STOP funds in 1995, coordination among law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service agencies was rare. Only a limited number of communities had succeeded in bringing these agencies to the same table for the purposes of coordinating their efforts to improve their response to violence against women. In most communities across the country, relationships among law enforcement, prosecution, and especially nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service agencies simply did not exist and even communicating was challenging. In many places, decades of hostility and animosity between these agencies predated VAWA. In light of this history, it is important to recognize that the widespread multi-agency communication and coordination VAWA has already stimulated is a significant accomplishment in and of itself. With the goal of increasing VAWA's effectiveness still further, this chapter focuses on the challenges states are confronting and how they can improve their efforts. While some of the findings may appear to be critical, the accomplishments to date must not be underestimated. The STOP grants are already yielding important organizational improvements, and real system change is not accomplished in a month or even in a year.

STOP grants are already yielding important organizational improvements. Most communities do not have good relationships between law enforcement and prosecution agencies and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim service agencies. Real system change is beginning, but cannot be accomplished in a month or even in a year.

Findings in this chapter are based on Urban Institute site visits to 12 states and represent the views of staff of lead agencies, state coalitions against sexual assault and domestic violence, representatives of law enforcement and prosecution agencies, other members of the planning group, and selected subgrantees.

THE STATE PLANNING PROCESS

Choice of Lead Agency and Inclusiveness of the Planning Group

The location of the lead agency, whether in a state law enforcement, prosecution, or victim services agency, did not affect its ability to mobilize interest and commitment to the planning process. What *did* make a difference was that agency's own motivation and commitment to VAWA issues and the idea of collaboration, and whether the agency usually played a policy role or usually had duties related only to administering state and federal funds.

About half the states we visited had dynamic lead agencies, several of which had pre-VAWA policy responsibilities for state approaches to reducing violence against women. The lead agencies in several other states, while not as pro-

In most states visited, people were very satisfied with the lead agency's actions as STOP coordinator, and with the openness of the process.

active, were perceived as the right agency for the job by everyone interviewed. In all of these states, satisfaction with the performance of the lead agency in the role of the STOP coordinator was high. Planning groups were generally large, extremely inclusive, sought and obtained partic-

ipation from underserved populations, made sure victims' perspectives as well as those of justice agencies were heard, and provided planning group members with good feedback about decisions. In the most pro-active states the planning group met frequently to develop the first-year STOP plan, and many continue to meet regularly to discuss issues related to STOP and other initiatives to reduce violence against women.

Most of the people interviewed in these states felt the process was very open. In addition to planning group meetings, many of these states had statewide or regional meetings designed to solicit input from as broad a range of people as possible. Some states also held open meetings of their planning group so anyone interested could attend and contribute. Several states that were trying to be inclusive had trouble getting the right actors to come to the table. In the first year, representatives of law enforcement and prosecution were the most likely to be absent of their own volition, perhaps not seeing the STOP funds as particularly relevant to them. This problem is disappearing as coordinators in these states work to convince these sectors to get involved, and as the increased funding from STOP funds in the second and subsequent years attracts their attention.

In several other states, the lead agency offered little direction or shape to the planning or subgrant solicitation process. These problems often followed an extremely contentious selection of lead agency. At best, the agencies in these states were seen by those we interviewed as

not doing much. In one state, the lead agency relied on local governmental entities to solicit, review, and recommend funding for STOP applications. This approach precluded implementation of any statewide vision or strategy, and the planning group did not develop one. In these states the administrators defined their role and the role of the planning group very narrowly. For instance, they saw their role as making suggestions for the first-year implementation plan only, not as developing a strategic plan for the six-year STOP period. One state disbanded its planning committee after the first-year plan was written.

Some people in these remaining states commented that the lead agencies resisted input from some sources, did not work collaboratively in the planning process, ignored the recommendations of the planning group, produced strategies or subgrant awards without a collaborative element, did not distribute information about the availability of STOP funding widely, or selected among subgrant applications without applying clearly stated and universal criteria. Two states sent notification of first-year STOP funds availability only to agencies in the criminal justice system; nonprofit victim service agencies had to find out about the money on their own. Another limited much of its second-year STOP law enforcement funding to special nonprofit victim advocacy groups developed to work with law enforcement agencies. Whereas most of the states we visited intended to expand the inclusiveness of their planning effort in the second year of STOP funding, these few states did not.

Finally, lead agencies differed in how they used input from the planning group in creating their state implementation plan. In all states we visited, the actual writing of the state plan was undertaken by a member of the planning committee or by the state coordinator. Most lead agencies included their planning group members in a joint decision-making process leading up to the plan, and also incorporated the results of any systematic needs assessment procedures. The plans were reviewed by the planning committee members in most of the 12 states we visited. In the other states, state coordinators incorporated the results of any planning and outreach meetings into a state plan without further input from the planning group or other interested parties in the state. Participants in the planning groups in these states reported that they either did not know what the final plan said, or did not think the final plan reflected the consensus of the planning group. Finally, in some states plans were changed by people external to the planning process. Planning group recommendations may have been accepted by the lead agency and sent forward, only to be changed later at higher levels of their department. We also encountered situations in which an attorney general, governor, or legislature had more influence on the final plan than did either the planning group or the lead agency. Future implementation plans should identify the sources of input and provide opportunities for review by planners and outside groups.

Most lead agencies included their planning group members in a joint decision-making process.

How Closely Did the Process Approximate a Long-Range Strategic Planning Process?

The hope of Congress and of OJP for programs under VAWA is that these funds will be used by states to make a significant and permanent difference in how violence against women is handled in each state. The most desirable long-run impact of these funds would be that women

are safer and can lead their lives without fear of sexual assault or battering, and that offenders are held accountable for their actions. No one expects that this vision of STOP's impact will be achieved soon, or easily. The difficulty of the task suggests that only a carefully designed long-range strategy for how to change state infrastructures has a chance of making a difference. The July 1995 conference held in Washington, D.C., for teams of five or six planning group members from each state was designed to convey to state coordinators and their teams the importance of such a strategy, and to offer suggestions for how to develop one.

In the context of STOP funding, a strategic planning process should have the following steps, each of which is discussed at greater length below:

- Assessing needs,
- Assessing the availability of non-STOP resources for reaching some of the goals,
- Establishing first-year priorities and plans for subsequent years,
- Asking for what you want—writing requests for proposals with enough specificity that applicants will propose projects that fulfill the plans,
- Assessing proposals against clear, public, and previously agreed-upon criteria,
- Selecting for funding a balanced portfolio of projects that fit the plans, and
- Establishing a feedback loop for the short and the long term, to assure that projects are accomplishing what they proposed and to reassess the plan periodically to be sure it still fits the circumstances and vision of the state.

Assessing Needs

The planning process consisted of meetings of the planning committees, plus other activities in most states we visited. In most of these 12 states, the planning committee sponsored open meetings to solicit advice and comments from interested parties. In several states, the lead agencies traveled around the state holding regional meetings that were open to the public.

Of the states we visited, relatively few conducted systematic needs assessments on which to base their first-year plans. States that did conduct needs assessments did so by polling service, advocacy, and criminal justice agencies, by holding state-level or regional meetings that were open to the public, or both. Most of the states that did this type of needs assessment were also the ones with a pre-VAWA history of organization and action in the area of violence against women. Thus, these states added to their already fairly extensive knowledge of state needs, based on their pre-VAWA activities, by trying to be very inclusive in identifying and prioritizing gaps and barriers that VAWA funding could address for the first-year plan. None of the 12 states did a systematic audit of services available, nor did any state seek information from women themselves through a survey either of households or of victims known to service agencies.

Several states that did not conduct needs assessments prior to writing their first-year plan were committed to doing so with either their first-year or their second-year STOP money. Plans for needs assessments took several forms, including (1) a survey of victims, to inquire what types of services they want, and their knowledge of and access to current services;

(2) audits of victim service agencies to see which are providing what types of services for which victims of violence against women, where they are located, and therefore which geographically based populations are being missed; and (3) audits of law enforcement and/or prosecution agencies to identify needs in the areas of training, special units, and policies and procedures.

For a number of the states we visited, needs assessment consisted only of members of the planning group brainstorming in small groups about what they thought was important for their own focus areas (law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services). In some states these ideas were discussed further by the whole planning group after being proposed, and some structure of priorities was assigned. In the view of those we interviewed, the effectiveness of this method for selecting priorities depended on the inclusiveness of the planning process.

Assessing Non-STOP Resources

There are quite a number of federal grant programs currently available that support activities related to violence against women, including several VAWA programs run through health or social services agencies and COPS, VOCA, and Byrne funds. Different statutes govern how these funds may be used, and people we spoke with during site visits expressed some confusion about how these various programs are expected to relate to each other, which activities are best funded by different programs, and how to coordinate the various programs. There is some activity at the federal level, including a Family Violence Working Group, joint planning between STOP and COPS for technical assistance, and some joint program plans, but more could be done to clarify funding options and target populations and to get this information into the hands of state and local program planners.

In addition, many of the states we visited had state-appropriated funds for a number of activities that could also be funded under STOP. Training was chief among these, but some states also had funds to support domestic violence and sexual assault services, development of special prosecution units, and development of specialized data collection systems. Some states looked at the non-STOP resources available for different activities before making their final decisions about what to fund with STOP. They wanted to use the STOP money to fill gaps, not to fund things that were going to be covered from other sources, even if it was clear that the activity was a top-priority need. For instance, states with good support for law enforcement training from state sources chose to use their STOP law enforcement funds for other purposes, even though the planning group agreed that training was a top priority. However, many other states did not consider their STOP decisions in light of other available resources.

Establishing First-Year and Subsequent Priorities

States followed different strategies in allocating their first year (FY 1995) STOP funds. Each state received about \$426,000, regardless of its size. This relatively small amount of first-year funding influenced the planning decisions of many states.

Some states identified where they wanted to be at the end of the six-year STOP program. They then developed at least the outlines of a multiyear plan as part of the activities they undertook before getting their first STOP funding. Most of these states made the long-range

nature of their strategy explicit by assuring, or at least implying, continued funding for several years to projects funded with FY 1995 STOP monies. These states solicited proposals that would start small the first year, when there was very little STOP funding, but whose first-year activities were the first step in a clearly defined multiyear strategy to build capacity and expand services. These states were also in a better position to make good decisions about second- and third-year STOP funding when, as it happened, the turnaround time for those monies was extremely short.

The states that developed long-range strategic plans used their first-year money in two ways. First, they funded the developmental stages of projects that would expand in the second and third years of STOP funding. Examples include (1) supporting the development and pilot testing of a computerized victim services client tracking system; and (2) grants to victim services agencies for planning and pilot testing approaches to reaching underserved populations.

Second, they funded statewide projects that laid the groundwork and developed infrastructure needed for future activities. Examples include (1) putting a great deal of STOP resources into multidisciplinary training teams charged with conducting training for all relevant stakeholders in rural areas and promoting the development of local coordinating councils in the same areas that could apply for and run collaborative STOP-funded projects in future years; and (2) supporting a statewide victim services coalition to help small local programs build capacity and develop strategic plans for expanding their services in the future using STOP funding.

However, not many states achieved this level of strategic planning. More common was the attitude that the state should do nothing until OJP sent notice that the money was on its way (after final passage of appropriations legislation). Several states justified this behavior by their attitude that no federal money is real until the check is in the mail. Therefore, planning before the money arrived would only be a waste of time. The result in these states was very little planning on a year-by-year basis and no long-range planning at all.

These states used their first-year money for activities that they felt were needed and could stand alone if the first year should prove to be the only year funded. Examples of projects funded on the basis of this rationale include (1) developing a uniform incident reporting form to be used by every law enforcement agency in the state; (2) developing a computerized case tracking system for prosecution offices; and (3) developing curricula for and conducting training programs for police.

Finally, one or two states did not establish priorities beyond picking two or three of the legislatively prescribed purpose areas. They solicited proposals using only the most general framework, guidelines, and criteria for funding.

Writing Requests for Proposals

All of the states visited used some form of proposal process to identify potential projects to fund. However, these processes differed widely across states. The biggest differences lay in specificity and targeting.

States with the most detailed and strategic plans tended to write the most specific requests for proposals. They knew what they wanted and described it in some detail to

prospective bidders. These states tended to get what they asked for—proposals that addressed the needs identified in their plans.

At the other extreme, states with limited or no planning tended to write very general requests for proposals. Sometimes these states were not very happy with the quality or scope of proposals they received, which often covered a wide range of activities. It was not uncommon for these states to get many proposals supporting the same activity but in different jurisdictions. For example, five prosecutors might ask for money, each wanting to develop a prosecution manual for domestic violence cases. Or, three police departments might ask for money, each to develop its own computerized data system. When this happened, it was sometimes hard to get applicants to work with other similar agencies to develop a common product, such as a statewide manual or data system.

Occasionally, states did not receive any proposals for an activity they really wanted to fund. This usually happened because the STOP coordinator did not do any developmental work with the types of agency that could do the job. That is, the coordinator did not target when targeting would have been appropriate. Targeting involves designing a particular project to be done by a particular agency or type of agency. To make this work, proposal requests must be written specifically for the project and distributed to the types of agencies that can do the work. Sometimes it is also necessary to cultivate relationships with such agencies early to be sure they are interested and will apply.

Some states targeted more than others, and some did not do it at all. The primary basis for targeting was recognition that the project needed a particular skill or access to a particular community. Examples include (1) allocating funds for projects to assess needs in minority communities (e.g., among African-American, Hispanic, or migrant worker women) and requesting proposals only from organizations functioning in those communities and run by their members; (2) allocating funds to statewide sexual assault or domestic violence coalitions to conduct statewide needs assessments or capacity building in their areas of expertise; and (3) allocating funds for data system development, systematic program audits, or surveys and either restricting eligibility to agencies with the necessary technical skills or negotiating with only one qualified agency to conduct the work.

Assessing Proposals

Ideally, requests for proposals should include clearly stated criteria against which proposals will be evaluated. Responders can then design proposals consistent with these criteria and know how their ideas and plans will be evaluated. Also ideally, state implementation plans will be specific enough to know whether particular proposals should be considered high, medium, or low priority in relation to the plan. Finally, the people rating or grading the proposals should be knowledgeable in the field and not have any conflicts of interest (that is, not being a rater of proposals with which they are in direct competition for funding).

Ideally, requests for proposals should include clearly stated criteria against which proposals will be evaluated.

States varied considerably in their adherence to these ideals. The states with the clearest and most specific requests for proposals were most able to rate applicants against a uniform

set of criteria. Some states relied on either their entire planning group or a smaller subgroup to rate applications, and also to prioritize high-quality applications against elements in their implementation plan. In some states these activities were the decision-making process; in other states the deliberations of the planning group were taken as advisory only by the state STOP coordinator. Yet other states did not rely on the planning group for proposal review because some group members were applicants and the state wanted to avoid any conflict of interest. Some states in this situation recruited reviewers from knowledgeable state agency personnel and pursued a systematic review process.

Other states employed a more informal review process at the state level. One state had a formal review at the local level with the most promising applications being referred up to the state coordinator, who made final decisions without input from the planning group. In states without a uniform set of criteria for judging applications, some people told us that they felt the final decisions were somewhat arbitrary. In several states members of the planning group were never informed of the final decisions; at the time of our visits, often months after grants were awarded, planning group members still did not know who had received funding or for what. Their ability to function as a planning group was thus severely impaired.

Selecting a Balanced Portfolio

Balance can mean many different things. The VAWA legislation incorporates a number of criteria related to balance, including the 25/25/25 split of funds required among law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services; the attention to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and a focus on underserved populations. Other possible dimensions of balance mentioned by people during site visits include increasing the number of projects with true collaboration among all sectors; extending STOP funding to omitted sectors of the justice system (judges, corrections, civil courts); the seven legislatively defined purpose areas; and tradeoffs between supporting or expanding existing services versus extending services to people and places currently without any assistance. During site visits we heard opinions about several of these potential criteria for balance.

The VAWA legislation builds a good degree of balance into the STOP grant portfolio through its allocation of 25 percent of the STOP funds to each of law enforcement, prosecution, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services. Many states achieved this balance with no trouble. In some states, however, the problem for the first year of STOP funding was that relatively few applications were received in particular areas. For example, some states had few applications from law enforcement and/or prosecution agencies or few applications in high-priority areas such as rural or other underserved populations. When they did not get proposals for some projects they wanted to fund, a couple of states carried over some first-year STOP money they had allocated to a particular purpose rather than fund lower priority projects. These states intended to negotiate with some potential grantees to elicit more appropriate proposals in the second year. These states realized that their obligation to meet the 25/25/25 split could be done over the first two years of STOP funding, rather than having to be met in the first year. Other states did not take advantage of this flexibility, or perhaps did not know of it. They felt they spent some of their money on lower quality proposals to meet one of the 25 percent requirements when they had more high-quality proposals than they could fund in another focus area.

A second aspect of “balance” in a STOP grant portfolio is the degree to which projects reflect the collaborative goal of the legislation and of OJP. About half of the people interviewed in the states visited felt that the 25/25/25 split hampered efforts at collaboration. They felt too much funding was given to agencies in a single focus area (law enforcement, prosecution, victim services) for work within that focus area and without the participation of representatives from other focus areas. Other people interviewed noted that their state had found ways to support collaborative projects within the 25/25/25 framework, while other states used their discretionary funds to support collaborative projects. In the future, it would be very helpful for OJP to identify promising collaborative practices, and also to establish reasonable rules for allocating funding for multidisciplinary projects to each of the three focus areas to meet the requirements of the law and still allow flexibility and creativity.

Another “balance” issue that came up repeatedly was the absence of attention to judges and courts in the VAWA legislation. Some states funded court-related projects from their discretionary monies. Other states believed that this was not allowed and did not fund any court- or judge-related projects even though they thought these projects were needed from the point of view of filling the gaps and barriers for victims of violence in their state. OJP mailed letters to state administrators and governors with the second-year application packets encouraging more court-related programs.

States also needed to consider the balance in subgrant awards in the needs of victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, tradeoffs between expanding existing services versus extending services to new geographic areas or populations, distribution across the seven purpose areas described in the legislation, and prioritizing STOP funding for activities that did not have alternative state or local sources of support. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of how 1995 STOP funds were distributed across several of these dimensions.

Establishing a Feedback Loop

Part of any good planning process is establishing procedures for getting feedback on how the plan is progressing. In the case of the STOP grants program, this means assessing each year’s grants portfolio against the details of the plan. It also means devising a way to know whether the innovative projects funded with STOP monies are working as expected. Of course, it is too early for any of this feedback to be available, but it is not too early for states to be thinking of setting up feedback procedures and future planning schedules. Several of the states we visited have kept their planning group active, others have used it very little, and still others have let it lapse altogether. The most effective use of STOP funding in future years will depend on state commitment to ongoing planning and reassessment.

Part of any good planning process is establishing procedures for getting feedback on how the plan is progressing.

The Timing of States’ STOP Grantmaking Process

Most states visited were able to award their first-year STOP funds by July 1, 1996. A few awarded them as early as January 1996, but these states were generally the ones that did not use a systematic strategic planning or proposal solicitation process. Most states awarded all

of their subgrants during one relatively short time period, but some delayed the start of some grants for a variety of reasons, and some saved funds for a second round of applications to allow agencies that were late in hearing about the grants to apply. Several states still had not awarded all of their first-year STOP funds as of December 31, 1996 (one state did not award any of its first-year money by this date). The timetable for second-year funding (FY 1996) was further complicated and delayed by federal government shutdowns and the failure to pass a final budget until April 30, 1996. OJP could not begin the grantmaking process until its budget was final, so states did not see the FY 1996 funds until August and September 1996, when FY 1996 was almost over.

Delays in receiving spending authorization from the Department of Justice were compounded by requirements in some states that the legislature formally appropriate all funds before state agencies can spend them, whether the funds are federal or state. Since some state legislatures meet only once every two years, and since the second-year STOP funds were not appropriated by Congress until after some state legislatures had already gone home for the year, states with these requirements have difficulty moving the money in a timely manner.

Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration

The STOP grants program has a significant commitment to promoting collaboration among the agencies and services involved in helping women victims of violence. In trying to identify collaborative activities and state efforts to promote them during our site visits, we found it helpful to think of two prerequisites to collaboration—communication and cooperation.

Communication

Communication is a very simple concept, involving people talking to each other and sharing information. A minimum goal of communication is to stay out of each other's way, and avoid making each other's job harder. A higher level of communication involves gaining an understanding of each other's job and an appreciation that all jobs need to be done and done well. On our site visits we heard that many communities do not have even minimal communication among the service sectors that need to be involved in STOP.

In many communities and states, STOP brought all the actors to the table for the first time.

Sometimes police and prosecutors do not talk with each other to explain what each needs from the other. Often, victim service agencies, if they exist, have no formal or informal working arrangements with law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, or medical and other relevant services and may have a history of negative relationships. In these communities, the first step is to get people talking with each other. Many people interviewed during site visits felt that the STOP planning activities stimulated this process at the state level, and they hope it continues.

During site visits we found examples of STOP program activities opening lines of communication and reducing distrust at both the state level and in a number of local communities. However, in far too many instances establishing communication was described as a first step that still needed to happen. A number of those we interviewed did not believe that simply including letters of support from local law enforcement or prosecution agencies in applications

was sufficient assurance that collaboration or even communication will take place. Often, they are merely a response to the state STOP agency's requirement that the agency demonstrate collaboration. The local victim service agency may not feel it is in a position to refuse to sign a letter of cooperation even though it is not being given a significant role in the project. In the future, to be funded a project application should be required to include a description of how the agencies will collaborate in the project and how the project's resources will be disbursed to accomplish this.

STOP program activities have opened lines of communication and reduced distrust at both the state level and in a number of local communities. STOP grant coordinators understood that the VAWA legislation and OJP place a premium on collaboration. Most states visited had at least some STOP activities with collaborative elements.

Cooperation

A second stage that communities may reach after opening communication is cooperation or coordination of activities across sectors or within the same sector across jurisdictions. The former involves two agencies acting in tandem so that each makes the other's job easier. At both the community and the state level it is also usually necessary to develop cooperation within the same sector across jurisdictions.

Most states we visited had at least some STOP activities and elements that could be considered cooperative or coordinated. The composition and activities of the planning group in most states met this definition. Examples of first-year STOP subgrants that did so include (1) a sheriff's office and a police department agreeing to develop routines for sharing information; (2) a police department establishing procedures to call a victim service agency when it gets a domestic violence or sexual assault call and meet a victim advocate at the scene or hospital (where the police do their job of evidence collection and the victim advocate does her job of supporting the victim and explaining what the police are doing and why it is necessary); (3) police and prosecutors getting together to write a joint procedures manual after coming to an understanding about how each person will be able to do his or her job more effectively if the other one does the same.

Collaboration

Establishing cooperative procedures is a significant accomplishment. Collaboration goes one step further, often occurring at the level of a whole community. At best, collaboration involves everyone sitting down together to decide what needs doing and then examining how each agency can contribute to doing it, together with all the other agencies and actors. In many instances this may involve changing agency behaviors or whole community structures to accomplish the goals.

In most states visited, the STOP grants coordinator understood that the VAWA legislation and OJP placed a premium on collaboration, but they were not always sure about how to promote it. Nevertheless, the state STOP programs developed a number of mechanisms for encouraging collaboration. For instance, most state STOP coordinators we visited included in their requests for proposals a requirement that the applicants demonstrate cross-sector

collaboration as a criterion for funding. These requests did not always define collaboration, but the presence of the requirement at least got prospective applicants to think about what it might be.

As already noted, in a number of states visited, the planning process itself was a first step in establishing collaborative relationships. Some states chose to use all of their money in ways that were most likely to stimulate collaboration. One state created a multidisciplinary statewide training team that conducted training in many rural areas. Part of the training was to help establish local coordinating councils whose members would include those attending the training. In turn, these councils were expected to continue the planning and process of institutional change in their own communities, and to develop joint or multidisciplinary STOP grant proposals for future years. This strategy also had the advantage of helping many small rural agencies, which by themselves probably could not have developed winning proposals, to join forces, develop a plan and a project, and obtain financial support to carry it out.

Another way to promote communication, and possibly future collaboration, is to require that all training funded through STOP be cross-disciplinary, both with respect to who develops and presents it and with respect to who attends it. Finally, in some states STOP coordinators or planning group members took post-funding actions to bring together several recipients who each got small grants for the same purpose and convince them to work collectively on a single joint product. In one state, further post-funding actions eventually resulted in achieving support for this product (a prosecutor's manual) from every relevant agency in the state.

Recommendations—The Planning and Allocation Process

When considering the findings of the site visits, it is important to remember that the states were selected because they seemed to be very inclusive and to cover a variety of issues, based on their implementation plans (see Chapter 1 for selection criteria). Many other states' implementation plans suggested less inclusiveness. Since we found numerous points for comment and recommendation even in the states visited, the likelihood is that the remaining states and territories need as much help as these 12 states, and may need even more help if their STOP program is to achieve maximum effectiveness for communities and for victims of violence against women.

RECOMMENDATION 5: OJP should increase its monitoring of states and lead agencies to assure that planning is collaborative, inclusive, thoughtful, and thorough, that it includes feedback loops from year to year on what is working and what is not, and that plans are modified accordingly.

States whose STOP implementation most closely resembled a strategic planning process appear to be making the most effective use of STOP funds. It would be most useful if OJP could encourage and teach STOP lead agencies in other states how to do this, with the goal of reducing the situations in which money is wasted on duplicative efforts or spent on activities that do not build capacity and long-term system change.

RECOMMENDATION 6: *OJP should increase the range and amount of examples of good practice that it provides to states, in several areas.*

Because STOP is a formula grant program, OJP has been reluctant to offer states much guidance in critical areas. States like the flexibility of STOP a great deal, and are not asking for directives or mandates. But state coordinators and subgrantees very consistently asked for samples of good practice in the following areas:

- What should go into a state plan,
- What can be counted as an in-kind match (see also Chapter 4),
- What should go into annual performance reports for states and subgrantees,
- Evaluation options, designs, measures, tactics,
- Models for effective leadership by state STOP coordinators—options for planning, suggestions on how to develop a balanced group of subgrants, and models for effective behavior,
- How to designate subgrant activities as law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services for the purposes of making the 25/25/25 allocation (see also Chapter 4),
- How to strengthen and support small and/or rural agencies of all types so they are able to participate as STOP subgrantees, in either independent or collaborative projects,
- Criteria to be met before a project should be considered collaborative, and
- How to promote collaborative efforts, and then how to handle them administratively, on issues such as the 25/25/25 split.

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

The states we visited appear technically to be in compliance with VAWA's requirements that they have laws waiving filing fees for protection or restraining orders in domestic violence cases, and waiving the costs of forensic examinations in sexual assault cases. There is less consistency in state laws establishing full faith and credit for protection/restraining orders.² Many states do not have these laws with respect to orders issued in other states; more states have them with respect to orders issued by different jurisdictions within state, but even this is not universal.

As with all laws, problems are more likely to arise in practice rather than in the existence or wording of specific statutes. This section reports what we learned during site visits about how well the laws are being applied in practice in the 12 states visited.

As with all laws, state laws providing the waivers required by VAWA are more likely to run into problems of practice rather than in the existence or wording of specific statutes.

Waiver of Filing Fees for Domestic Violence Cases

Most of the states we visited had long-standing state legislation covering waiver of filing fees for protection/restraining orders. Several states had passed such legislation since the passage of VAWA and as a result of the VAWA requirements. One or two other states we visited had passed similar legislation three years ago, while VAWA was being considered in Congress. The likelihood is that the legislatures in these states were influenced to act by their knowledge that VAWA would soon require them to do so.

Despite the presence of adequate laws, the states visited still had some problems with the practice of waiving fees, and in some states these problems were significant. Many of the relevant state statutes include the words “*may waive*,” but do not require judges to do so. In one state, the law said such fees may “be waived for those who cannot afford to pay.” Such wording leaves some confusion about whether the waiving is mandatory or discretionary, and if discretionary, whether there is any way to deal with cases where waiver is refused, or with judges who consistently refuse to waive fees for filing protection or restraining orders in domestic violence cases.

In all 12 states visited we were told that some judges will not waive fees, and in some states this problem appeared to be fairly widespread. We were told of judges who approve of charging women filing fees for protection orders because they believe it discourages women from making frivolous complaints. In addition, we sometimes heard that a woman would have to pay filing fees initially, but would be reimbursed from fines imposed on the batterer once the court rendered judgment in the case. This situation still imposes up-front costs to the woman that may be a barrier to her taking action. Finally, the statutes cover filing fees, but do not necessarily cover fees for *serving the offender with the order*. The people interviewed said that it was more common in their states for women to have to pay for getting orders served than for filing. If it is Congress’ intent that financial considerations should not get in the way of a woman taking out a protection order and having that order be effective, then attention needs to be paid to the issue of serving the order, in addition to the issue of filing it.

Waiver of Charges for Sexual Assault Evidentiary Examinations

The state coalitions reported that medical costs and cumbersome restitution mechanisms in sexual assault cases continue to be a barrier for victims and discourage many women from seeking needed medical care and undergoing examinations to collect evidence needed for prosecution.

Most of the 12 states visited had long-standing state legislation covering waiver of charges for forensic examinations in sexual assault cases. A couple of our site visit states passed such legislation post-VAWA and as a result of its requirements. Other site visit states had passed similar legislation three years ago, during final congressional consideration of VAWA. These state legislatures acted on the basis of their knowledge that VAWA would soon require them to do so.

Hospitals conduct forensic examinations in sexual assault cases, and incur substantial costs in doing so. Costs are highest if doctors do the examinations (up to about \$800); lower (between \$200 and \$300) if they are conducted by trained nurses as is done in Sexual Assault

Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs. State laws vary in the mechanism they specify for reimbursing hospitals for these costs and relieving victims of the need to pay for them. Some state laws require local law enforcement agencies to reimburse hospitals; others require reimbursement from the county where the crime occurred; others use the state's Crime Victim Compensation Board to process claims from hospitals or from victims; some allow hospitals to file with the victim's insurance, company if she has one; and some leave the reimbursement mechanism vague.

Most of the 12 states we visited had no state appropriation for covering these costs, and those that did usually did not appropriate enough funds to cover the need. One state had a back-up fund that could pay for examination costs if other mechanisms failed. The various payment mechanisms, or lack of them, still leave victims with a financial burden in quite a number of states. In only one state we visited was the responsibility for covering the cost of evidence collection in sexual assault cases placed with the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction, although law enforcement would have the clear and indisputable financial responsibility for evidence collection for all other types of crime.

Most of the payment mechanisms established by the site visit states still leave some victims with either primary or secondary responsibility for payment, because either they or the hospital have to apply for compensation to cover the cost of the exam. If the victim must apply, she must pay the hospital first and then seek reimbursement. Situations where hospitals may, and do, seek payment from victims include:

- Low levels of reimbursement by counties do not cover most of the hospital's cost,
- The victim has medical insurance that will cover the cost of emergency care,
- Crime Victim Compensation Boards take years to pay claims, although they send an award letter relatively quickly, or
- Crime Victim Compensation Boards or county agencies reject victim claims for reimbursement because police reports indicate that a case is "unfounded" or because the victim "fails to cooperate with prosecution."

The level of claim rejection is high enough in some states to be a real cause for concern (1 in 7 claims in one state, 10 in 13 in another). Further, the criteria for rejecting a claim for reimbursement appear to ignore certain facts about sexual assault cases, such as the low likelihood of ever locating the perpetrator and, therefore, of having the case go to prosecution.

A further part of the difficulty with sexual assault examinations is that only part of the procedure is forensic; the rest is medical. In fact, many women seek medical care in emergency rooms after a rape without intending to report the crime to the police. More and more emergency rooms whose staff have received sexual assault training have a policy of urging every woman to have the examination even if she is not planning to report at the moment, because should she change her mind after the initial trauma subsides, the evidence will remain good for a certain period of time. Most SANE programs take this approach. In these situations, should the woman have to pay the cost of evidence collection? To date, many Crime Victim Compensation Boards say that she should, and will not reimburse. Several states we visited had other funds they used to fill in the gaps, but often it was difficult for victims to obtain reimbursement.

An additional difficulty arises in identifying which costs are medical and which are forensic. In at least two states, states paid for "evidence collection" but not "follow-up services." However, the latter might include laboratory fees for processing the evidence samples, which could be expensive and should rightfully be considered forensic. In some states, each county made its own arrangements to reimburse for these costs, but rates varied across the counties and in some cases were significantly less than the cost of the exam. Hospitals then had to cover the cost or try to pass it along to the victim.

Full Faith and Credit for Protection/Restraining Orders

A few of the states we visited had statutes granting full faith and credit to protection or restraining orders from other states; most had statutes assuring full faith and credit to protection or restraining orders issued in one city or county within the state when the woman moved to another jurisdiction. Several of the 12 states visited had passed full faith and credit laws in the year prior to our visit. People interviewed noted some problems with knowledge of any laws that might exist among law enforcement officers and judges. Several states are including the information in upcoming training.

In all of the states we visited, people interviewed acknowledged difficulties in implementing their laws regarding full faith and credit for protection/restraining orders. Honoring orders issued in other states was a major problem; people knowledgeable on the subject reported continuing difficulties in getting these honored. Even for within-state mobility, however, most people interviewed said that enforcement was still a problem. Interviews with law enforcement and prosecution personnel and victim advocates found that everyone recommends that a woman get a new protection order if she moves from one jurisdiction to another within a state, if she wants to be sure the order will be enforced.

The most significant barrier to full faith and credit mentioned during interviews is the lack of inter- and intrastate databases through which officials in one jurisdiction can verify the validity of protective orders issued in other cities, counties, or states. A number of states are currently developing statewide databases to aid in this process. Other difficulties cited include concerns that:

- Out-of-state protection orders were not created with the same level of due process required in the new state,
- Non-local protection orders do not have all the elements required for protection orders in the new location, and
- Non-local protection orders have stipulations that would not be included in the new location.

There are also technical legal differences in the meaning of orders from different states and localities.

Recommendations—Legislative Mandates

RECOMMENDATION 7: *State STOP coordinators should identify gaps in legal language and in implementation of laws stipulating waiver of filing fees for protection orders and fees for forensic examinations in sexual assault cases.*

States should try to ensure that victims do not pay for costs of evidentiary examinations. To encourage analysis of legislative gaps, OJP could ask each state to identify issues related to these three legislative mandates as part of its next implementation plan. Domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions should be involved in providing these answers. If this is the approach, OJP should include very specific questions for states to answer with respect to compliance with the spirit as well as the letter of the laws. The answers should provide a national picture of both legal and practical compliance with congressional intent. Alternatively, an independent effort to examine these issues in every state could be funded.

RECOMMENDATION 8: *OJP should increase its assistance to states in identifying promising practices to correct gaps in implementation of laws waiving fees for filing protection or restraining orders in domestic violence cases and evidentiary exams in sexual assault cases.*

OJP, through its STOP-TA Project, should publish documents that would describe promising practices and help states develop strategies to gain compliance with the intent of the laws. Promising practices could include training for every type of professional involved with the issue (law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, judges and other court officials, probation and parole officers), protocols and procedures, database development and maintenance, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 9: *OJP should continue to encourage use of STOP funds to develop the databases that would support full faith and credit.*

The STOP-TA Project could disseminate promising practices to help states develop these databases and train relevant professionals in their use. Development of databases needs to be guided by professional advice to ensure that products are compatible across states and across within-state jurisdictions and systems (e.g., law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts) and can be linked to national data systems.

GAPS AND BARRIERS

Identification of gaps and barriers in services and approaches to ending violence against women was one of the most important contributions of the site visits. Because we spoke with a variety of people in each state, getting local as well as state perspectives, the interviews yielded a broader array of gaps and barriers than appear in most state plans. Further, we learned about these issues in a fair amount of detail. The findings below describe gaps and barriers, as

perceived by the people we interviewed, related to the areas of state legislation and its enforcement; training; victim services; population coverage; and interagency coordination.

State Legislation and Enforcement

Most of those interviewed were satisfied with the existing state legislation in the areas of domestic violence and sexual assault. In many cases, these laws were only recently passed as the result of much hard work, and people are waiting to see how they are implemented. Some people cited a few issues still being pursued through legislative action in one or more of the twelve states, including:

- Addressing violence in dating relationships and among teens,
- Preventing domestic assaults from being pled down,
- Giving police the ability to arrest when a threat to kill a partner is made,
- Reviewing and improving evidentiary rules to enhance prosecution,
- Changing how polygraphs and cameras are used in court, and
- Eliminating the presumption of joint custody of children in cases involving domestic violence.

Those we spoke with expressed much greater concern about the gap between state legislation and its enforcement than about the need to create new laws. Policy and protocol development is one missing link between the law and its enforcement. In several states those interviewed mentioned that stricter implementation guidelines were needed for prosecutors and police departments. Some states had recently implemented legislation requiring that such protocols be written. Some of those interviewed indicated that even when states or jurisdictions adopt model arrest policies for domestic violence, they are not applied consistently.

People we interviewed during site visits mentioned many more concrete examples of legal gaps and barriers in the area of domestic violence than they did in the area of sexual assault. When we asked specifically about sexual assault issues, people in most of our states acknowledged that there were problems, but had far fewer concrete examples to offer. Interviewees often said themselves that sexual assault had gotten less attention in their state than domestic violence, and they hoped in the future to identify the most pressing sexual assault issues and to develop more specific approaches for resolving them.

In most states, people interviewed believed that enforcement of the laws varied widely across the state. While at least a few communities in every state carried out the laws, people in every state said that they also had areas where the laws were not being implemented at all. Interviewees in the states suggested that the lack of enforcement and follow-through is caused by a number of factors:

- In many states there is a lack of accountability with respect to knowing or following new laws among judges, prosecutors, and sheriffs, who are elected or appointed for long terms and do not report to an administrative authority,
- Some states do not require a legal background or relevant knowledge for many

positions of importance (including the judges and magistrates who rule on domestic violence cases), and

- There is an overall lack of awareness and understanding about sexual assault and domestic violence on the part of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges in many areas.

A couple of states did note, however, that improvements have been made, particularly by law enforcement, and that the current challenge lies in generating a similar level of change among prosecutors and judges. People in some states reported that police had more accurate knowledge of current law than did judges, due to more consistent training requirements for police that kept them updated on changes in the laws.

Stalking legislation is on the books in every state, but enforcement and effective intervention are seen as a major problem in all the states we visited. Policies for applying these laws are not well developed, and relatively little training in applying stalking laws has been provided for law enforcement officers or prosecutors. Model programs for serving stalking victims have not been developed and evaluated, or are not widely known. Most of those we spoke with believe that stalking is a serious and very threatening form of violence against women, but are unsure of how to respond effectively.

Training

Each of the twelve states visited identified training as necessary to continue to change attitudes, promote better understanding, and alter the practices of those who have interactions with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. People in a majority of these states expressed the need for further training of law enforcement officers, judges, and prosecutors. Several states also mentioned the need to train probation and parole officers, health care providers, victim service providers, and court staff. The amount of training that already existed prior to VAWA varied significantly from state to state, suggesting that the need for additional training is ongoing and deep. In several states, we heard that turnover makes training difficult, whereas others did not see turnover as an issue. Several of those interviewed noted the need to institutionalize training, precisely so that new cohorts continue to be trained.

People in a majority of states visited said that law enforcement officers, judges, and prosecutors needed more training; several also mentioned the need to train probation and parole officers, health care providers, victim service providers, and court staff.

Training for Law Enforcement Personnel

Many states include material about domestic violence and sexual assault in their mandatory curricula for new law enforcement recruits, but have no requirements that current law enforcement personnel attend in-service training on these topics. Some states, and some local departments, have in-service modules on these topics, but personnel may choose other modules and never receive this material. In states that trained new law enforcement officers in domestic violence but did not provide in-service training for officers already on the force,

attrition in law enforcement agencies was actually viewed positively because it resulted in trained officers replacing untrained officers. Clearly, training that updates the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of current employees is as necessary as training for new recruits. Further, unsworn personnel in sensitive positions, such as civilian police dispatchers, need training as much as sworn officers.

Judges and Other Court Personnel

The need to make training mandatory for judges was brought up frequently in many states. Many people stated that those who most need the training are the least likely to come to voluntary training sessions. Judges were identified as the least likely to be required to attend training, but often the most in need. In two states visited, the State Supreme Court recently required all judges to attend training on family violence issues. This mandate worked well in one state but those interviewed said it created widespread resentment among judges in another. In a third state, the law requires judges to attend annual training that covers issues of violence against women. Over 85 percent of judges attend, and the training seems to be well accepted.

Other court personnel were sometimes mentioned as needing a good deal of training. Court clerks and other administrative court staff often are the first people women encounter in the court system. They can help women understand the complexities of court procedures and requirements, or their lack of helpfulness can be all it takes to discourage a woman from going forward. Some people interviewed said these court personnel get little training in their state. Also, they do not stay in their positions very long, so constant training of new employees is necessary but often missing. One of our site visit states used some of its FY 1995 STOP funds to support the development of a training videotape for these personnel. The tape covered technical legal issues related to forms and procedures, and also covered attitude and approach. It was well received by court personnel and might be used as a model to fill this training gap in other states.

Victim Services

The level of existing support for victim services varies widely across the 12 states visited. In some states, victim service agencies receive significant levels of operating support from state general funds or special funds (e.g., marriage license and divorce filing fees), but others receive much less or none at all. In the majority of states, much stronger support exists for domestic violence programs than for sexual assault programs, even when the support is not all that strong for domestic violence services. Despite the fact that existing domestic violence services cannot keep

The majority of states have much stronger financial support for domestic violence programs than for sexual assault programs, but it is still not adequate to the need.

up with the service demands placed on them, many of those interviewed said there was even a greater need for direct services funding for sexual assault. The sexual assault programs were described in several states as being less organized, having less of an infrastructure, and more likely to face an ongoing struggle to survive. A number of states recognized the need to pay

more attention to sexual assault and expressed their intention to use future STOP funding to do this, as well as to give some consideration to the co-occurrence of sexual assault and domestic violence for many women and the services necessary to help them with both. Specific service gaps mentioned frequently during our site visits included the need for longer-term, noncrisis services and services directed toward children.

Longer-Term Services

The majority of states described their victim services as being crisis oriented and short-term focused, but expressed the need to provide a longer-term focus and related services. For victims of domestic violence, crisis services were seen as being insufficient to enable a woman to remain apart from her batterer and to become self-sufficient. More follow-up and long-term supportive services were seen as needed, including transitional and affordable housing, job training, and child care. Legal assistance for victims was identified as a gap in a number of states. Whether provided by a nonprofit victim services program, legal aid, or court personnel, assistance with filling out court paperwork and court accompaniment was seen as inadequate. Women undergoing civil battles regarding divorce, custody, or visitation were often left on their own. Cutbacks in legal aid have strongly affected many communities.

More follow-up and long-term supportive services are needed.

People on site visits expressed the need to see increases in these needed services through the actions of the responsible agencies as well as the desire to use STOP funds to help women access these services through case management. Ongoing counseling and support were also mentioned as longer-term needs. The lack of shelter services for substance-abusing women also was noted in one state visited.

Victims of sexual assault also need services beyond the crisis moment, and the general lack of such services was mentioned as a gap. Long-term counseling and advocacy to support a woman through the sometimes lengthy criminal process were often lacking. But even more important, many women who require help to deal with the psychological consequences of a sexual assault are well past the time when they might have reported to the police or become involved in the criminal justice process. Their mental health needs may be serious, but often go unmet. Finally, adult survivors of childhood sexual victimization, whether incestuous or involving non-family members, often have major mental health problems that go unaddressed. They also have some legal options for redress of which they may be unaware, and they may not have access to any competent advice about whether or how to exercise those options.

Children Affected by Domestic Violence

Services for children affected by domestic violence were mentioned in several states as a newly recognized gap in their service provision. Domestic violence victims, when asked for their greatest concerns, often mention concern for their children. Types of services mentioned included individual and group counseling for children who live in households where their mother is being battered and interventions for such children when they are themselves being abused or are at serious risk of abuse. Those services that do exist for children were often only available for families residing in shelters, but little existed for the period before or

after. Others mentioned the need to increase their understanding of the relationship between domestic violence and child maltreatment and their capacity to deal effectively with families where both occur.

Population Coverage

VAWA contains an important emphasis on using STOP funds to reach underserved populations. Therefore, we asked people during our site visits which population groups seemed to be the most in need of services and the least able to access them. The groups most often identified were women in rural areas, language minorities, and racial and cultural minority women in urban areas. We discuss gaps in services for each of these groups below. Other populations mentioned as not adequately served by traditional services include the physically and mentally disabled, homeless, and gay and lesbian victims.

Rural Women

Rural areas in the majority of the 12 states are underserved. In most of these states, people interviewed said that many women living in rural areas do not have access to a domestic violence program, and even fewer have access to a sexual assault program. While several states

Many women living in rural areas do not have access to a domestic violence program, and even fewer have access to a sexual assault program.

have a limited number of service providers mandated to serve all of the counties in the state, those interviewed say that many of these programs are unable to reach out effectively to communities several hours away. Transportation is a huge barrier to serving women in rural communities. Other issues, such as the isolation, the tightness of small communities, and the importance of family net-

works, further distinguish the needs of women in rural areas and the difficulties in serving them. In general, smaller and rural areas appeared to have more variation than major urban areas in their overall community response to domestic violence. An individual judge plays a much greater role in a community where he or she is the only judge than in larger cities where there are many judges. People interviewed said the same thing about the influence of particular prosecutors and sheriffs in outlying areas.

Cultural and language differences play a particularly important role for rural areas with migrant farm workers and American Indian tribes. Several states identified a number of barriers to protecting women on American Indian reservations. American Indian women often live in isolated areas and thus generally face the problems of women in rural areas. Reservations are poor, and lack of funds for services was often cited as a problem in several states. In addition, overlapping legal jurisdictions create problems in communication and consistency of enforcement across law enforcement agencies and courts. These problems are exacerbated by differences in policies and training received by personnel in the overlapping jurisdictions. A good deal of work needs to be done before women on Indian reservations will experience cooperative interactions among all of the players in dealing with their problems of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Language Minorities

Non-English-speaking minorities confront a language barrier in addition to dealing with all of the other issues faced by victims of violence against women. Many of those interviewed identified these barriers in their state. The severity of this difficulty depends in large part on where such victims live. Some victim service agencies with many clients from a particular language group are able to hire bilingual staff. However, others serve areas where a multitude of languages are spoken, and they are still learning how to reach out to them. Language barriers also exist for perpetrators brought into the criminal justice system. Many places acknowledged that they are not reaching minorities at all; they are struggling with the issue, but have not yet found solutions.

Minority Women in Urban Areas

According to the people we interviewed, minority women in urban communities are also being underserved in many of the states visited. Several victim service providers expressed their concern about this, and many are struggling with how to reach out to women in these communities. In several communities, people noted that minority women are much less likely to report the crimes against them and are less trustful of law enforcement. In addition, many victim service agencies are themselves primarily staffed by paid and volunteer nonminority women.

Some states have committed significant portions of their STOP funds to reach women in these urban minority communities and have gone to considerable lengths to assure participation by appropriate provider agencies. Techniques include restricting funding access to organizations serving these communities and staffed by their members, offering assistance in preparing proposals, making commitments for expanded funding in future years as these organizations gain experience in delivering services, and asking successful agencies to share their expertise with others who might also develop the capacity to perform this work. The activities in these states could serve as models for other states as they try to fill identified gaps in population coverage.

Interagency Coordination

There has been significant progress toward interagency coordination as a result of VAWA. As noted above, representatives of different agencies, public and private, are sitting down together—planning and undertaking joint programs to reduce violence against women as part of the STOP grant program. However, the process of building strong, collaborative relationships takes time and commitment. As a result, lack of coordination at the state level, the local level, or both remains a significant barrier to providing effective services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Coordination may occur at any level within a state and both across or within a given discipline. The level of coordination at the state level varies, as discussed in the VAWA planning section above. Within every state there are examples of extensive coordination at the local level, but strong local level coordination throughout the state is rare. Inconsistent coordination among agencies at all levels has led to both gaps and duplication of services.

Local History

The lack of appropriate attitudes or understanding on the part of a key player significantly affects interagency coordination at any level. Individual judges, prosecutors, and various agency administrators were mentioned throughout the site visits as not being interested in working together with victim service agencies. In some cases, they would not come to meetings or task forces if invited, or they would come but not participate. Conversely, a history of distrust and resentment sometimes made it difficult initially for representatives of victim services and advocacy organizations to think about working collaboratively with law enforcement and prosecution agencies in their communities. VAWA state coordinators and planning group members in a number of states reported making efforts to overcome these barriers, many of which appear to be moving in the right direction.

Structural and Political Barriers

In several states, political arrangements are major barriers to coordination. At the local level, many states have large numbers of individual judicial districts, prosecutory districts, and law enforcement jurisdictions. In many states, judges, district attorneys, and sheriffs are elected officials and very powerful figures in the community. Getting them to the table has proved difficult. In some places, judges who were elected were more accountable to their public, while in other places the opposite was true. Where important elected officials at the state or local levels were genuinely interested and concerned about the issue of violence against women, they lent significant visibility and support to the implementation of VAWA within their community.

Hiring freezes were another issue being experienced in a couple of states visited. Having STOP monies to spend does not overcome the difficulty of bringing staff on board when a governor, county, or city officials declare that no one can be hired. In the states affected, STOP program development has been delayed by these freezes.

Data System Gaps

Effective communication is essential for a coordinated response to violence against women. The lack of computer systems both within and across disciplines makes coordination more difficult and is considered a barrier in its own right. Even when agencies have developed computer systems to help improve services, these systems often cannot link to systems used in other agencies and thus do not help with interagency coordination. For example, in a number of states it is nearly impossible for judges in one court to find out about cases going on in a different court, despite the fact that they involve the same victim or incident. Most states remain unable to track protection orders across county lines, although many are planning statewide registries.

Recommendations—Removing Gaps and Barriers

People interviewed during site visits identified many gaps and barriers that prevent women victims of violence from getting needed services and legal redress. The most important gaps and barriers identified are:

- Full implementation of domestic violence and sexual assault laws at the local level,
- Training for personnel in every sector, with particular attention to mandatory training for current personnel (as opposed to new recruits) and for judges and court system personnel,
- Direct support services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, everywhere and for everyone, but particularly for underserved populations of rural women, urban minority women, and women affected by language barriers,
- Long-term support and legal services, and
- Criminal justice and victim services data systems that record the necessary information and can link effectively with each other.

One intent of the VAWA legislation is to assist states in overcoming the barriers that prevent them from effectively confronting violence against women. As will be further described in Chapter 4, many states funded subgrants to meet specific gaps or barriers identified during their planning process. In several states, the planning process around the STOP funding appears to have been a catalyst for both state and local coordination across disciplines. However, there are a number of issues that the VAWA legislation does not speak to clearly, with which states are continuing to struggle. The following recommendations address these issues.

RECOMMENDATION 10: OJP should continue helping state STOP coordinators to understand both the breadth and the limitations of their options under VAWA.

OJP has already issued guidance and direction on a number of key issues. OJP has encouraged states to spread their STOP focus among all three types of violence against women, either through a victim services program which serves all types of victims or local collaborations of domestic violence and sexual assault programs. It has clarified that funds in the discretionary category can be used for projects directed toward judges and other court personnel. And it has defined options for using STOP funds for services to batterers (allowable), and restrictions on using STOP funds for victims' civil legal needs other than those related directly to protection from further abuse.

Nevertheless, some of these issues continue to be confusing to states, or they desire further clarification about their options. Across the country, state after state and community after community stress the lack of understanding among judges, their lack of accountability, the disproportionate power they often hold, and their importance in the process of combating violence against women. Some state committees and planning agencies chose to interpret courts as being a part of either the prosecution or discretionary funding streams, whereas others excluded courts from the planning process and the possibility of receiving any funds. OJP should continue to clarify acceptable uses of STOP funds with respect to judges and court personnel so that states wishing to address the needs of the court system with VAWA funds can feel free to do so, and the importance of including the judicial system in the collaborative process is underscored.

Legal assistance to victims and treatment for batterers were two areas that many states identified as needs, but noted that these were not explicitly identified by the VAWA legislation as appropriate uses of funds. Several states chose to interpret the guidelines so that prosecution funds or discretionary funds could be used to fund legal aid for civil matters indirectly related to battering (e.g., child custody or child support issues), while others decided that such activities were ineligible. None of the states we visited that identified batterers' treatment as a gap in services were using their STOP funds to fill that need, although FY 1996 STOP guidelines from OJP make it clear that such projects are eligible for STOP funding.

RECOMMENDATION 11: OJP and the STOP-TA Project should give extensive guidance to subgrantees in successful methods and programs for reaching underserved populations.

Given the extent to which many victims' service agencies are struggling (and failing) to reach out to minorities and non-English-speaking communities, more assistance in this area needs to be provided. Agencies that have successfully incorporated the needs of nonmajority populations should be encouraged to share their experiences with others wishing to do the same. Similarly, lessons must be drawn from successful rural outreach programs. The STOP-TA project could write and disseminate issue briefs describing promising practices in this area. Further, OJP could more aggressively disseminate models for training and outreach related to specific underserved populations.

RECOMMENDATION 12: OJP and the STOP-TA Project should identify and disseminate model programs focused on offering victims post-crisis, longer-term support.

The general concern that many victim service representatives expressed regarding the lack of longer-term support is unlikely to be addressed by funding designed to promote legal aspects of protecting women. These organizations need to coordinate with counseling, social service, and housing agencies in their communities to ensure that victims of violence receive the longer-term support they need once they leave a shelter (in the case of domestic violence) or once the immediate crisis is past (in the case of sexual assault). Other organizations may be more appropriate providers of additional supportive services, but connections should be made to ensure that women have access to and receive those services.

RECOMMENDATION 13: OJP and the STOP-TA Project should identify and disseminate model programs and approaches for supporting the efforts of small and/or rural organizations, including statewide programs offering technical assistance and local collaborations and coordinating councils.

A number of interviewees noted that smaller, often rural organizations—in some cases, victim services providers and in others, prosecution or law enforcement agencies—lack the staff time or expertise to write grant applications. Organizations most in need of grant funds often do not apply, making it difficult for states to reach the underserved. Planning agencies must take the necessary steps to ensure that areas in need not only know about the availability of

funding, but have the capacity to apply competitively, or that statewide agencies fill these gaps by sponsoring training, supporting pilot studies with subsequent dissemination efforts, or providing necessary technical assistance.

RECOMMENDATION 14: *OJP and the STOP-TA Project should identify and disseminate information on promising programs that work with youth toward preventing another generation of women subjected to violence.*

An overall need remains to educate and increase awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault among teenagers. In several states, people interviewed saw strategies for intervening with adults as a short-term solution, while early intervention and changing young people's attitudes were seen as necessary for long-term change. Work in schools and youth groups serves two purposes—identifying young women who are already experiencing sexual or physical violence in their relationships, and changing attitudes and behavior to prevent future violence against women. People interviewed felt the need for prevention and education models and promising practices to teach both young women and young men that date rape and battering are not acceptable, to teach alternative modes of behavior, and to teach young women assertiveness and techniques for resisting coercion and violence.

RECOMMENDATION 15: *OJP and the STOP-TA Project should identify and disseminate information about promising programs focused on stalking, either as independent projects or in conjunction with programs focused on domestic violence or sexual assault.*

States do not appear to be focusing on stalking. Mention of stalking nearly always occurred in the context of subgrants which also focused on domestic violence and/or sexual assault. A needs assessment may be necessary to evaluate whether this approach misses significant amounts of stalking or whether it captures most serious incidents. It will also be important to monitor subgrantee activities to assess the extent to which they address stalking in their activities.

RECOMMENDATION 16: *OJP and the STOP-TA Project should identify and disseminate information about promising programs and practices focused on the needs of American Indian women, both on and off reservations.*

VAWA allows a specific set-aside for meeting the needs of reservation-based Indian women, and OJP has allocated 4 percent of all STOP funds to support grants to Indian tribal governments. Some states are also using their own STOP grants to support work with Indian tribes. However, in those states where we talked with representatives of services for Indian woman, it was clear that they felt the issues had only begun to be addressed. Further, all of the STOP attention is focused on reservation-based women; Indian women in urban areas (about two-thirds of all Indian women) are not specifically identified as a target group. Some people mentioned their needs when speaking about urban minority communities, but more attention may need to be directed toward establishing coordination mechanisms for meeting the needs of reservation-based and urban Indian women who are victims of battering or sexual assault.

CHAPTER 4

State Subgrant Awards

This chapter provides a first look at how states are spending STOP grant funds. Recognizing that collaborative efforts are needed to respond to violence against women, the legislation required that at least 25 percent of the funds be used for victim services, 25 percent for law enforcement, and 25 percent for prosecution. The remaining 25 percent could be allocated at the discretion of the states. The legislation also defined seven purpose areas for which funds could be spent, with the understanding that states would identify their priorities through an inclusive planning process (see Chapter 3) and select projects in these areas accordingly. The legislation clearly indicates that STOP grants are intended to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. This chapter reports how states used their FY 1995 funds—the number and size of subgrants, the recipient agencies, beneficiaries of the projects, the activities that are being undertaken, and the extent to which these activities are meeting the goals of the legislation and addressing identified needs. The chapter also reports on plans of states and subgrantees to evaluate the STOP grants, discusses the barriers facing these evaluations, and identifies topics on which additional research is needed. The analysis is based on subgrant awards for FY 1995, illustrated and elaborated with findings from the site visits. At the time of this analysis, states had not yet made subgrant awards from their FY 1996 and FY 1997 STOP funds.

It is important to note that these are initial findings that may change over the next few years. In the first year (FY 1995) of STOP, each state and territory received approximately \$426,000. States were allowed to use up to 5 percent of their allocation for administrative activities and up to \$25,000 for planning (some states used considerably less than these sums). Thus, most states had a bit more than \$380,000 to be spent on program activities. In 1996 and subsequent years, OJP is distributing substantially larger formula grants to the states, the District of Columbia, and all but the smallest territories. States may well change their strategies in the coming years as they receive considerably more federal funds and develop more experience working in this program area. Therefore, it is important to remember that this report deals with the first year of a six-year program, a year in which states had only a limited amount of funding.

The findings are further limited by the fact that not all FY 1995 subgrant funding is included in this analysis. One state did not award its FY 1995 funds until FY 1996, so it is not included. Information is missing on other FY 1995 awards because subgrant reports, which were optional, were not submitted. Overall, data are available for 90 percent or more of the FY 1995 funds in 40 states, for two-thirds or more of the subgrant funding in an additional 13 states, and for 30 percent of the funding in two states.

OVERVIEW OF FY 1995 SUBGRANTS

The FY 1995 subgrants included in the database totaled \$19,659,191.³ The average amount per subgrant was nearly \$26,000, although some were quite small (reaching a low of \$326) and others were very large (reaching a high of \$277,778). In all, 765 subgrants were awarded, averaging 14 per state. Some states made one or two large awards, while others funded many small subgrants. At the extremes, six states made more than 25 subgrant awards, while six made fewer than five. The subgrantees were typically funded for a period of just under a year, but some were funded for as long as two years. The following sections describe the distribution of these awards.

Allocation of Funds across Victim Services, Law Enforcement, and Prosecution

Defining the Requirement

States are keenly aware of the requirement that by the end of the second year of STOP funding at least 25 percent of the funds should go to victim services, 25 percent to law enforcement, and 25 percent to prosecution. However, we found considerable difference in

Some states define the focus by the type of agency that receives the subgrant and others by the type of agency or person that benefits from the efforts. Multidisciplinary projects are difficult to allocate to the appropriate categories in ways that reflect dollars devoted to particular purposes.

the interpretation of this requirement among the states we visited. Interviews during state site visits reveal that the criteria that lead agencies are applying in allocating their funds across the three focuses vary. Some states define the focus by the type of agency that receives the subgrant and others by the type of agency or person that benefits from the efforts. For example, if a victim services agency received funding to provide training to law enforcement officers, some states categorized this funding as victim services because of the nature of the recipient agency, whereas others would categorize it as law enforcement.

gategorized this funding as victim services because of the nature of the recipient agency, whereas others would categorize it as law enforcement.

Although one goal of the 25/25/25 split is a multi-agency response to violence, relatively few of these first-year subgrants involved true collaborative efforts. States intend to press for more collaboration in the future. However, as states move toward funding more collaborative

and cross-disciplinary subgrants, the accounting and allocation process will become more complicated. Multidisciplinary projects are difficult to allocate to the appropriate categories in ways that reflect dollars devoted to particular purposes. One lead agency made an allocation based on its assessment of project activities. Another allocated the entire amount for a multidisciplinary project to law enforcement because the organization funded was a law enforcement agency. In one state, local areas were asked to apply for special units that included collaboration among victim services, law enforcement, and prosecution. Funds in this state were distributed more equally across the three areas within each subgrant.

We used several criteria to assess how STOP grants were being used to meet the needs in these three areas, including the type of agency receiving the funds, the project activities as reported by the state, and the beneficiaries for whom the funds were being used. In general, these three analyses produced similar findings on how the funds were spent, as shown in the following sections.

The Distribution of Awards

Our subgrant analysis suggests and our site visits confirm that most states met the split primarily by funding separate grants to organizations working in each of the three areas, choosing type of agency as the means of defining the requirement. States awarded subgrants to many different types of organizations, including private nonprofit victim services providers, state- or local-level law enforcement and prosecution agencies, coalitions or associations, universities, and hospitals, for example. These recipient, or subgrantee, agencies often have historically played very different roles in the response to violence against women, and the type of agency may reflect very different uses of the funds. For example, victim advocates generally play a different role when they work for a nonprofit victim services agency than when they work out of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office. For the purpose of this analysis, subgrantees were categorized into five types of agencies:

- Law enforcement agencies
- Prosecution agencies
- Private nonprofit victim services agencies
- Other governmental agencies, such as courts or corrections or public victim services, health, social services, or other public agencies
- Other private-sector agencies (aside from victim services) and partnerships of two or more different types of agencies

The number of subgrant awards, the average funding level, and the total awarded to each type of agency are shown below in Table 1, while the percentage of STOP funds awarded to each type of agency is illustrated in Figure 1. This shows that nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services agencies received 38 percent of the funds, followed by prosecution agencies, which received 24 percent of the funds, and law enforcement agencies, which received 16 percent.

The funding pattern indicates that projects undertaken by private victim services agencies tend to be smaller in scale. The largest projects funded with first-year STOP funds were often undertaken by agencies other than victim services, law enforcement, or prosecution. These

Table 1: Distribution of FY 1995 Subgrants across Agency Types

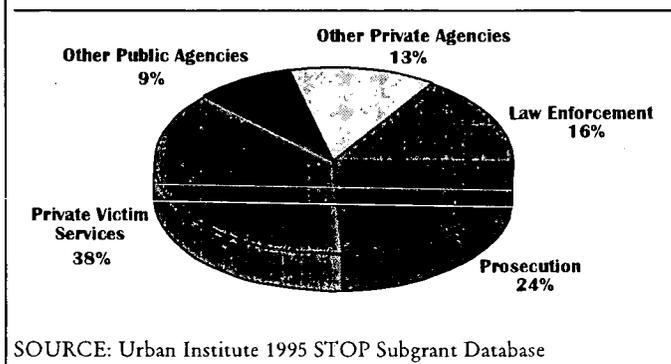
Type of Subgrantee	Number of Subgrants	Average Amount of Subgrants	Total Amount of Subgrants
Private Victim Services	371	\$19,656	\$7,292,533
Prosecution	146	\$30,842	\$4,502,945
Law Enforcement	112	\$28,126	\$3,121,936
Other Government	55	\$32,028	\$1,761,537
Other Private Sector/Partnerships	68	\$36,424	\$2,476,850

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

might be state statistical agencies, universities, or database development organizations awarded subgrants to develop reporting forms, registries, linkages among statistical systems, and similar infrastructure projects. It should be noted that STOP funds may be used in combination with a variety of other funds (such as Byrne or VOCA monies) to support projects much larger than the STOP subgrant award amount would indicate. Because information about additional funding (beyond the match) is not available, the

size of overall project budgets is not known with complete certainty. Based on the information available, it appears that private victim services agencies often received smaller grants to provide services to victims or undertake smaller projects within their communities. Large awards to public or private agencies other than law enforcement, prosecution or victim services (or to partnerships of these three) often supported large statewide training projects or needs assessments to benefit law enforcement, prosecutors, or victim services, and thus are counted within those categories although they are being conducted by a different type of agency. In one state, partnerships between local law enforcement, prosecution, and private victim services agencies received large awards to support intensive coordinated responses in three counties. Another large subgrant was provided to a court to implement a unified database system to integrate criminal, civil, and family courts.

The amount of funding awarded to particular types of organizations varied substantially across states. Some states awarded no funds to a particular category of organization, other states awarded between 1 percent and 24 percent of their funds to organizations in a given category, while still other states gave agencies in the category 25 percent or more of the STOP funds. The distribution of funding is shown in Table 2. Private victim services agencies received at least 25 percent of the funds in the majority of states and received no funds in the fewest states. Law enforcement agencies, on the other hand, were the most likely to receive no funds and the least likely to get 25 percent or more.

Figure 1: Percentage of STOP Funds Awarded to Different Types of Agencies

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

Table 2: Allocation of FY 1995 Funds by Subgrantee Agency

Subgrantee Agency	Number of States or Territories		
	No Funds	1–24% of Funds	25% or More of Funds
Law Enforcement	14	24	17
Prosecution	8	22	30
Private Victim Services	6	5	44

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

STOP funds went to organizations at the state, regional, county, and city level. Over one-third (36 percent) of subgrantee agencies were county-level agencies, but many others were state-level (26 percent), regional (22 percent), or city-level (15 percent). However, a subgrantee may implement its STOP project across its jurisdiction or catchment area, beyond this area, or within a more focused area. For example, a local-level victim services agency might receive a grant to provide training to an entire region. Information pertaining directly to the scope of the project rather than the scope of the implementing agency was not available for this analysis.

To assess compliance with the 25/25/25 split requirement, we looked at states' reports of how they assigned their funds to victim services, law enforcement, and prosecution.⁴ These findings show a pattern similar to the one we saw when looking at which types of agency received subgrants. Victim services subgrants accounted for 41 percent of all funds; law enforcement for 25 percent; prosecution for 25 percent; and 10 percent remained in the discretionary category.⁵ Again, the distribution of funding for these areas varied by state, as shown in Table 3. Nearly every state awarded 25 percent or more of its funds under the victim services category, and most of the states awarded 25 percent or more of their funds under the law enforcement and prosecution categories.

Table 3: Focus of FY 1995 Subgrant Activity

Focus of Activity	Number of States or Territories		
	No Funds	1–24% of Funds	25% or More of Funds
Law Enforcement	2	16	37
Prosecution	4	13	38
Private Victim Services	0	1	54

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

VAWA requires that to count as victim services, funds must meet two criteria—they must go to a nonprofit nongovernmental victim services agency, for the provision of services to victims. If we use this more stringent definition of victim services, many more states are not yet meeting the victim services spending allocation. Although 25 states have awarded at least 25

percent of first-year STOP funds to private nonprofit victim services agencies for direct services to victims, 10 states have not awarded any subgrants that meet that definition, and 20 states have awarded some funds but less than 25 percent to such projects. This suggests that the awards designated for victim services in these states are going to public agencies, rather than private nonprofits, or to private nonprofits for uses other than direct services. Across all states, 23 percent (\$4,540,900) of all STOP funds went to private victim services agencies to provide direct services to victims, and 14 percent (\$2,751,633) went to private victim services agencies for other purposes, such as training or policy development. Because states have two years to comply with the legislative mandate, it is possible that in the second year these states will allocate resources to the types of subgrants that will bring them into compliance with VAWA.

The Use of Discretionary Funds

Most people interviewed in every state visited liked having 25 percent of the funds available for discretionary uses, and many would have liked even more flexibility. How states chose to

People interviewed in every state visited liked having 25 percent of the funds available for discretionary uses, and many would have liked even more flexibility.

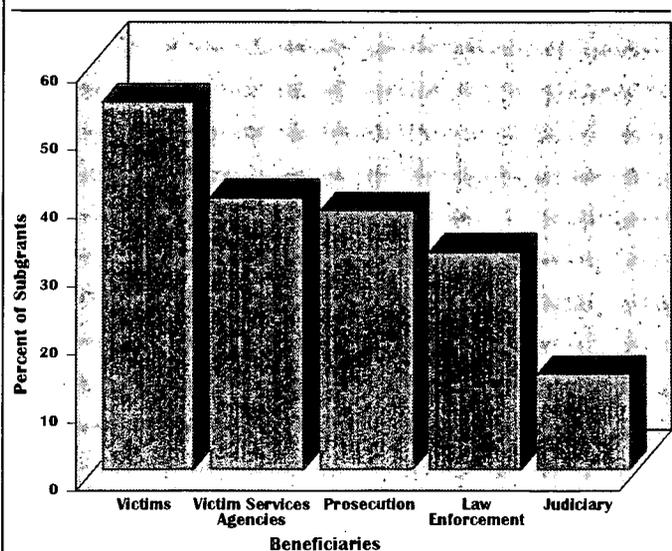
use the discretionary funds varied widely. Some states used the discretionary funds to fund more activities in a particular area, depending on the applications they received. Many states used the discretionary money to fund more victim services projects, one state used its funds for prosecution, and still others spread it more evenly across the three areas. One state split the discretionary funds equally across the three areas, despite the fact that there were more qualified applications from victim services. Other states chose to use the discretionary funding for special projects. One state used the discretionary funds specifically to address statewide needs. A few others used their discretionary funds for purposes that did not fit into the other three categories, such as training for health care providers, training for judges or court personnel, court database development, or training for probation and parole staff.

Direct Beneficiaries

Regardless of the type of recipient agency, projects could seek to serve any of a number of different types of beneficiaries. We considered victims to be direct beneficiaries only of those subgrants that work with them directly, since all of the projects are intended to benefit them ultimately. Specific agencies (i.e., victim services or law enforcement) were considered to be beneficiaries of grants that provided them with resources or enhanced their existing ones, by supporting staff or training, for

use the discretionary funds varied widely. Some states used the discretionary funds to fund more activities in a particular area, depending on the applications they received. Many states used the discretionary money to fund more victim services projects, one state used its funds for prosecution, and still others spread it more evenly across the three areas. One state split the

Figure 2: Direct Beneficiaries of Subgrants



SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

example. Subgrants often benefited more than one group. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of funds benefiting different populations. Victims were the direct beneficiaries of the largest share of the grants, followed by victim services agencies, prosecution, law enforcement, and the judiciary. Other possible but less common populations receiving services included perpetrators, children, the general public, corrections, health agencies, and many others. More than half the projects (58 percent) sought to serve more than one type of beneficiary.

Distribution Across the Seven Legislative Purpose Areas

We examined state priorities for actions to reduce violence against women by looking at the distribution of STOP funds across the legislative purpose areas and the extent to which each is being addressed. The seven legislative purpose areas are:

- Training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors,
- Special units for law enforcement/prosecution,
- Developing policies and/or protocols,
- Developing data and communication systems,
- Developing/enhancing victim services,
- Programs addressing stalking, and
- Programs addressing the needs of Indian tribes.

States may provide less funding to a purpose area because the purpose is not of critical importance to them, because they have less capacity or experience in addressing that issue, or because other funding is available. Victim services was the most heavily funded purpose area (in terms of both number of subgrants and amount of funding), followed by law enforcement or prosecution training, policy development, special units, and data collection. Programs addressing stalking or the needs of Indian tribes received few grants and little funding. The training subgrant awards were the largest on average; subgrants for data, special units, policy development, and victim services were moderate in size; and subgrants addressing the issue of stalking or needs of tribes were quite small. For the nation as a whole, the distribution of funds across the various purpose areas is shown in Table 4, while Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of the FY 1995 STOP funds spent in each area. The two largest areas of funding were victims services (39 percent) and training for law enforcement and prosecution (26 percent). Other areas of substantial funding included policy and protocol development (11 percent), special units for law enforcement and prosecution (11 percent), and data and communication systems (9 percent). Note that the amount spent on the needs of Indian tribes does not include other VAWA funds allocated by OJP to that purpose area and reflects the fact that not all states have tribes within their boundaries.⁶

For the most part, the purpose area activities were conducted by organizations that traditionally worked in that area—these agencies had the experience and interest in writing proposals and conducting the needed work. Thus, training and special unit subgrants were most likely to be awarded to law enforcement and prosecution agencies and least likely to go to private victim services agencies. Subgrants for victim services went mostly to private victim

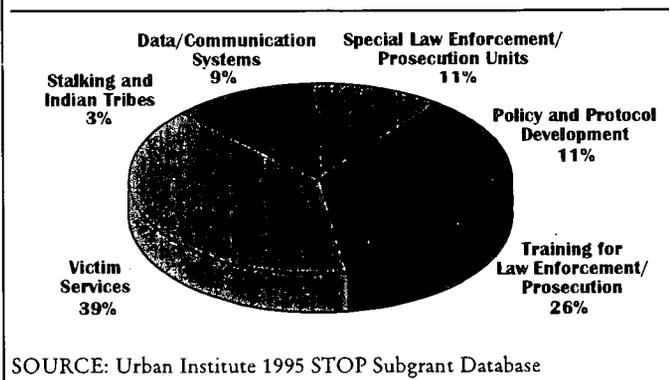
Table 4: Distribution of FY 1995 Subgrants across Purpose Areas

Purpose Area	Number of Subgrants	Average Amount of Subgrants	Total Amount of Subgrants
Develop/Enhance Victim Services	456	\$16,227	\$7,383,509
Law Enforcement/Prosecution Training	217	\$22,989	\$4,965,634
Policy/Protocol Development	119	\$16,808	\$2,000,101
Special Law Enforcement/Prosecution Units	103	\$19,353	\$1,993,329
Data/Communications Systems	80	\$20,514	\$1,641,119
Stalking	27	\$11,161	\$301,346
Indian Tribes	26	\$8,383	\$217,953

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

services agencies, although some were awarded to law enforcement or prosecution agencies. Policy subgrants were most likely to be awarded to prosecution agencies and least likely to go to private victim services agencies (which may indicate the need for policy development in the area of prosecution). Data collection subgrants went most often to law enforcement and other governmental agencies (besides prosecution), least often to private victim services agencies (suggesting that these projects may focus on the development of databases for law enforcement agencies). However, some subgrants were awarded to one type of agency to provide services or training for a different discipline. These efforts were generally seen as a strategy for increased cross-agency collaboration, although further evidence of this will be the extent to which activities conducted during the project involve joint efforts by agencies from different disciplines.

It should be remembered that decisions on purpose areas are strongly influenced by the priorities identified by states in the planning process, by the quality of the applications they received, and by the availability of funds from other agencies to fund high-priority items. In general, the pattern of awards is consistent with the site visit findings that the most pressing needs were in the area of victim services and training. However, the lack of attention to stalking may also reflect the fact that many people say they need more information on how to respond to stalking—more information on model programs, policies, and legislation.

Figure 3: Allocation of STOP Funds by Purpose Areas

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

Distribution of Effort across Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking

The federal legislation specifies that STOP funds must be used on projects that focus on domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. It does not specify any particular distribution of funds across these types of violence, and it leaves complete discretion to the states to fund projects that focus on one, two, or all three crimes. We looked at how states chose to address these forms of violence in their subgrant funding decisions.

Domestic violence received far more funding and grant awards than sexual assault, and stalking received very little (except insofar as it was considered a part of domestic violence or sexual assault). The majority of projects focused on only one type of violence, but many (40 percent) focused on two or more. Forty-seven percent of the subgrants focused on domestic violence alone; 13 percent on sexual assault only; 23 percent on both domestic violence and sexual assault; and 8 percent on all three types. Domestic violence was thus the focus (alone or in combination with sexual assault and/or stalking) of over three-quarters of the grants. The distribution of subgrants and funding across the three types of violence is shown in Table 5.⁷

Table 5: Distribution of FY 1995 Subgrants across Type of Crime

Focus Area	Number of Subgrants	Average Amount of Subgrants	Total Amount of Subgrants
Domestic Violence	604	\$20,602	\$12,402,193
Sexual Assault	343	\$15,731	\$5,395,781
Stalking	72	\$11,850	\$853,181

SOURCE: Urban Institute 1995 STOP Subgrant Database

State-by-state analysis revealed that no state spent less than 28 percent and one state spent all of its funds on domestic violence. No state spent more than half of its funding on projects related to sexual assault, although several states did split their victim services funds relatively evenly between the two areas. Thirty-four states did not spend any STOP funds on stalking.

Evidence from site visits to 12 states suggests that, despite the significant dearth of services for domestic violence victims, particularly in rural areas or special populations, sexual assault programs are even less available. Perhaps the disparity between grants focusing on the two types of crime indicates that domestic violence is a more common and widespread crime in the community. However, many states voiced concern that not only are sexual assault programs greatly underfunded, but they also tend to be located in smaller victim services agencies that do not have experience in applying for funds or a strong network within the state to help them formulate their priorities and compete for grants. For example, rape crisis centers are even more likely than domestic violence programs to have very small paid staffs (if any) and less likely to have access to experienced proposal writers. A subgrant project in one state was developed to address this issue directly by providing technical assistance specifically to develop capacity in rape crisis centers. A four-day retreat was held to work with the centers to develop strategic plans, identify needs, write grant applications, and consider what hiring another staff person can mean for an existing staff of only four or five persons.

Only one grant addressed stalking by itself; all the others addressed it in combination with domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The lack of emphasis on stalking in the subgrants is reflected in the overall lack of discussion and efforts against stalking in the states where site visits were conducted. Several states made no effort to include stalking in their subgrants or planning discussions. Others included stalking as a focus area of training grants, although the primary emphasis in most cases is still domestic violence. One state is holding a statewide summit on domestic violence and stalking issues to identify state needs and future directions. Subgrant projects such as this will provide a clearer understanding of whether efforts to reduce or eliminate stalking should be integrated into ongoing work being done with domestic violence and sexual assault, or whether efforts should focus specifically on stalking.

Addressing the Needs of Underserved Populations

OJP encourages states to use STOP funds to address the needs of previously underserved victim populations, including racial, cultural, ethnic, and language minorities as well as rural communities. The Gaps and Barriers section of Chapter 3 describes the needs of underserved populations and barriers to addressing those needs identified by states during the site visits. This section focuses more specifically on the extent to which states used their STOP funds to improve services to these victim populations. Using the information included in the Subgrant Award Reports, we analyzed the extent to which subgrants include explicit efforts to reach and serve an underserved population.

Less than half (42 percent) of the STOP funds were used to fund subgrants intended to reach underserved populations.⁸ These projects make up 53 percent of the subgrants included in this analysis. The extent to which this funding will actually be dedicated to underserved populations cannot be determined from the data. The entire project may be dedicated to addressing the needs of an underserved population, or efforts within the project may actually be limited.

Extending services to underserved areas within states was an important priority in a number of states. Typically, the underserved community was rural, but a small number of projects focused on highly distressed urban neighborhoods. Subgrants focusing on geographically underserved areas represented 45 percent of the funds awarded to all projects targeting the underserved and 52 percent of the subgrants.

The site visits shed light on the extent to which states made explicit efforts to reach the rural areas they identified as being underserved. Many states did very little to attract or encourage applications from rural areas, but to the extent that rural areas applied for funds for eligible projects, their applications received priority. Other states took more direct steps to reach out to rural communities and to ensure that they received a significant share of the funds. One state decided early on that its largest metropolitan area would not receive any STOP monies. Through a needs assessment, it identified 19 rural areas that desperately needed victim services and is using STOP funds to provide training and services and further assess the needs of these communities. Coordinating councils are being developed in each community to identify the needs of the communities and to apply for funds. A council was also developed to address the needs of two Indian tribes. Another state made a special effort to reach rural areas through a series of community forums in outlying areas to identify needs and encourage the communities to begin developing applications.

A few states funded individual subgrants to increase the capacity of rural areas to address violence against women. One state provided funding to an existing project that works with migrant farmworker groups, many of whom are from Latin America and do not speak fluent English. The project trains two volunteer women in each of the groups to be sexual assault/domestic violence liaisons between members of their community and local service providers. The STOP funds are being used to provide training for the service providers (health clinics, crisis line workers, police, and shelters) and to conduct more outreach to the communities. Another interesting model funded by another state serves three rural counties through a “circuit-riding” domestic violence prosecutor who serves as a one-person special unit in these counties. This special prosecutor conducted an assessment of judges, hospitals, and prosecutors to determine what they are doing to assist victims of violent crimes, developed a plan to address women’s service and support needs, and prosecutes domestic violence cases in each county.

States dedicated fewer projects and less money to serving groups defined by racial/ethnic, linguistic, or other characteristics such as physical disability, age, sexual orientation, or migrant status. Again, states indicated during site visits that programs are still struggling with how to reach these populations. One victim services provider, for example, received a subgrant to conduct focus groups with African-American and Vietnamese women to identify their needs and better address their concerns. This project is doing outreach in underserved neighborhoods, has developed a list of on-call interpreters for domestic violence cases, and is producing materials in multiple languages. In another state, the interests of underserved populations were reflected in a policy of allocating a specific proportion of all STOP subgrant funds to particular populations, thus spending 25 percent of the fund on the needs of Indian tribes and 25 percent on the needs of women of color.

When rural areas applied for funds, their applications received priority, but only a few states made a serious effort to attract or encourage applications from rural areas.

The State Matching Requirement

OJP requires matching funds of at least 25 percent of STOP funds for subgrants awarded to agencies other than private victim services providers. Non-federal sources, either cash or in-kind, may be used to meet the match. High rates of compliance with the match requirement were found among subgrants included in this analysis.⁹ Matching funds totaling 23.6 percent of the STOP funds are reported for those subgrantees required to meet the match. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the match comes from in-kind sources, while 38 percent comes from cash matches. Consistent with the legislative requirement, we found that private victim services agencies were not likely to report matching funds, while all other types of subgrantee were.

Most states included in the site visits reported few if any problems in meeting the matching requirements. Several states noted that the ability to use in-kind matches was critical. Concerns were raised by two states that the matching requirement tended to limit the number of applications received from prosecutors. The lead agencies are trying to encourage the use of in-kind matches, which prosecutors are less familiar with. These states also noted that clearer guidelines on in-kind matching would be useful, as well as information on other federal regulations about program income and nonsupplantation restrictions.

Evaluation of STOP Grant Activities

The VAWA legislation contains some evaluation requirements, and OJP has encouraged states to evaluate their subgrants. We examined whether states and subgrantees planned to report their progress on their planned activities (performance monitoring) and whether they also planned to assess the outcome or impact of their work. Questions about current or planned evaluation activities were also included in the site visit interviews. In addition to documenting any state- or subgrantee-level evaluation efforts being planned, we asked about any data resources—in law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, or courts—available to support evaluation activities related to violence against women, the types of outcomes and other measures one might examine in an evaluation, and the issues that states and subgrantees most wanted studied in an evaluation.

It is fairly common, regardless of the activity or service being examined, to find that state and local administrators and service providers have not given much thought to evaluating the impact of their programs. The STOP grants program is no exception. It appears that states and

States included in the site visits reported few if any problems in meeting the matching requirements.

subgrantees will need a good deal of assistance in designing and executing useful evaluations of program impact. Subgrantee plans for evaluation more often fell under the heading of performance monitoring than of outcome evaluation. Information on eval-

uation plans was available for approximately half of the subgrantees. In 77 percent of these, performance monitoring activities such as keeping track of the number of professionals trained or victims sheltered were planned. The other 23 percent proposed evaluation activities designed to assess the impact or outcome of the program, such as surveys to assess agencies' policy changes or officers' enhanced knowledge or attitudes subsequent to a training session.

Although contacts in several states explained that few subgrantees planned to do any evaluation, and this was one of the weakest aspects of subgrantee grant applications, in no state did planning group members identify evaluation as a major criterion in their requests for proposals. Several people felt that subgrantees should have more guidance on how to track progress, and toward this end one state sponsored a one-day workshop on evaluation. Another state had no state-level evaluation plans but is trying to get subgrantees to think about their goals and how they would know if they were reaching them. Several states are trying to have subgrantees complete a standardized information form; some states have had to modify the forms to fit the wide diversity of STOP projects while others have simply abandoned the effort. Yet other states intend to ask subgrantees to complete by hand whatever numbers they can, but they recognize that this is very time consuming and will still not amount to an evaluation. One person also commented that small agencies could only do so much and so the state is more lenient with them.

While several lead agencies had evaluation departments (or a staff person devoted to research), one agency explained that staff cutbacks left them with no evaluation staff and several others simply had no internal research expertise. Some of these states admitted to having little capacity to analyze even simple subgrantee performance monitoring data and had no ideas for impact evaluation. One state has convened an evaluation team to review evaluation data.

At least two states visited are funding (or plan to fund) state-level evaluations of their STOP grant activities. One of these states has very limited statewide data and will limit the evaluation to five counties. It expects the evaluation to be primarily qualitative. It is also applying for another federal grant to supplement this evaluation study. The other state is very large and plans to include both process and impact measures in an evaluation of several local demonstration projects.

Several states also funded data development projects as part of the regular grantmaking activities. These tended to be limited to a single discipline—law enforcement, prosecution, or victim services—and had the goal of making data systems in different geographic areas more consistent or, in the case of victim service agencies, simply networking them via computer. While some of these data projects may yield data useful for evaluation purposes, these cannot be done immediately. Furthermore, law enforcement and prosecution systems are very unlikely to include any victim outcomes of interest.

Several barriers to evaluating STOP grants emerged from the site visits. One was a lack of understanding of the kinds of evaluations needed and how to do them. A second was the lack of data systems needed to gather information for evaluations. This was particularly critical to evaluation of interagency collaboration, which requires examination of how cases are handled by multiple agencies in a community.

The term “evaluation” was interpreted quite differently by different people we interviewed. When asked about plans for evaluation, many people described various ongoing or planned grant-monitoring or performance-monitoring activities, rather than evaluations of changes resulting from project activities. These consisted of periodic site visits to subgrantees and compiling basic information on the number of cases processed (e.g., law enforcement officers trained, cases prosecuted, victims served, etc.) and expenditures to date. They also plan to examine whether certain project objectives are being met, such as collaborating with other organizations in the community or staying on schedule. This type of response was especially common among grant administrators responsible for administering and monitoring the performance of other grant programs such as COPS, VOCA, and Byrne, and small private nonprofit service providers who relied heavily on grants to support their work. In addition to performance-monitoring activities, many STOP recipients are evaluating specific training or other direct services by having beneficiaries complete an “evaluation form” designed to solicit direct feedback.

Many people interviewed understood evaluation to mean more than performance monitoring, and there was widespread—but not universal—interest in both process (or qualitative) evaluation and more rigorous outcome (or quantitative) evaluation research. While limited evaluation efforts are under way in some communities, many were quick to report how challenging it was to conduct meaningful evaluation research. Furthermore, a number of people identified evaluation as one of the biggest gaps in their community’s efforts to address violence against women. In some of these communities, they admitted not having an evaluation component, and this worried them because they did not know what was or was not working. They explained that they needed evaluation results to plan effectively for the future, rather than “just spend money on services.” One state coordinator explained that their office had two grants from non-STOP sources that had major evaluation components. The coordinator felt that grants designed to develop health and social service programs had a long tradition of evaluation and that those in the criminal justice area should also.

The lack of routine data collection at the agency level that might support evaluation efforts is as serious an obstacle as are issues of definition and measurement. This limitation was found to some degree in every state and community visited. STOP grantees faced many different types of data limitations. Many states said that they do not have state or local data systems—especially in rural areas—able to support even basic evaluation efforts. Others commented that limited data systems exist but did not allow one to identify domestic violence or sexual assault cases. Some states said that their tradition of “local control” often meant resistance to efforts to develop statewide reporting or data systems. In such situations, people interviewed explained that it would be difficult even to count the number of cases of interest, let alone track them over time or through various justice and social service systems. Other people explained that they had data systems that could generate numbers of cases with various characteristics, but little else. Finally, among the small number of states with relatively good discipline-specific data systems, there was little capacity to link these systems.¹⁰

Of great interest was an ability to link cases over time and through various systems: law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim services. Unfortunately, few, if any, communities have a comprehensive, multi-agency data information system that provides this kind of information. Several states have very centralized multi-agency data systems in various stages of development. These are very sophisticated and expensive projects that have been in development for many years prior to the passage of VAWA. Some of these systems may still present various limitations. In one state, for example, the new system was confined to the criminal justice system and would not include civil actions. Even among these states, however, few had detailed plans for using these new data systems for STOP grant evaluations.

There are many other challenges involved in collecting useful evaluation data. Victim services agencies interested in evaluation are often unable to stay in contact with victims, so follow-up data to assess longer-term impact cannot be collected. Further, these agencies must also grapple with complex confidentiality issues as they think about the possibility of linking their data with other victim services agencies or with justice agencies.

Several people commented that they had not received guidance from federal officials on the types of evaluation expected from grantees or subgrantees and they anxiously awaited such guidance. To date, OJP has concentrated on getting programs in place and its technical assistance strategy under way. It has offered little guidance on how to go about evaluation and has not disseminated the Subgrant Award Statistical Summary or the state Annual Performance Report forms that ask for specific impact information. Many planning group members and state-level contacts commented that they were struggling with complex issues such as how one defines and measures success. They were uncertain about how to document that a program is meeting its goals and what impact they are having on reducing violence against women. They questioned how one measures outcomes such as increasing collaboration or violence that has been prevented. They also asked for guidance on how to link statistics to project activities and goals in ways that place the numbers in context and “tell the real story.” The Evaluation Guidebook being developed by the Urban Institute for OJP will be available in late summer of 1997 to assist states with evaluation issues.

The site visits also identified a number of specific topics for future evaluation. These topics covered a wide variety of subjects related to violence against women. While not all are

related to STOP funding, these topics suggest research needed to help victims. High on the list of priorities was evaluation of the effectiveness of:

- Anti-stalking programs,
- Cross-training efforts,
- Training of mental health professionals,
- Supervised visitation centers,
- Electronic monitoring systems, and
- Coordinated community response.

State and local contacts were also interested in understanding:

- The impact of different types of counseling for sexual assault victims,
- The effect of domestic violence on juveniles (especially in rural areas),
- Effectiveness of civil court advocacy (and orientation to and demystification of the court process generally),
- The impact of prosecuting without the victim's testimony,
- The impact of joint custody on children from families with a history of domestic violence, and
- The impact of legal advocates and/or specialized courts on appearance rates.

People we talked with on site visits are also interested in knowing whether the following outcomes result from their STOP activities:

- Higher rates of reporting, arrest, prosecution (including successful prosecution without the victim's testimony and with due regard for her safety), conviction, and incarceration,
- Better evidence collection, fewer dismissals and plea reductions, and longer sentences,
- Increased accountability among law enforcement officers and judges,
- Higher levels of victim cooperation,
- Fewer domestic homicides and less serious injuries to victims,
- Changes in batterers' behaviors over time,
- Long-term shifts in attitudes within the community (and less victim blaming),
- Increase in community knowledge about how to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault, and
- Involvement of a broader segment of the community in responding to violence against women.

Finally, many people interviewed, especially victim services providers, emphasized the need to develop better measures of victim satisfaction and sense of safety. They proposed using victim-based and community-wide surveys to generate more qualitative indicators of support for

women, including (a) women's experiences, (b) their quality of life and general well-being, and (c) their knowledge and understanding of various resources and options available to them. They also wanted to focus on the needs of battered women beyond short-term crisis intervention, and they pointed out that women's safety should be the outcome of primary interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 17: NIJ evaluation activities should focus on the particular activities and service system changes suggested by state coordinators and subgrantees. This includes the five grantees funded to conduct national evaluations of STOP program activities, plus any other research activities related to STOP that NIJ funds.

STOP subgrants are being used to fund a wide array of activities, not all of which lend themselves to evaluations that are national in scope. However, participants in the STOP planning process in the 12 states we visited articulated both program types for which we need more knowledge about impacts, and specific impacts or outcomes they care about most. Their suggestions were reviewed in this chapter, and make a good starting place for the NIJ-funded national evaluators and other NIJ STOP-related research to begin their thinking about what elements of STOP activity they should evaluate and what outcomes they should use as criteria of success.

RECOMMENDATION 18: Federal efforts to support the capacity of states and subgrantees to report on the impact of their projects should continue and be intensified, including both techniques and approaches, and examples of how to develop productive relationships with evaluators.

NIJ should continue its support for the development of evaluation methods. OJP should expand the technical assistance to states on evaluation techniques, and also on how states and subgrantees can find an evaluator with whom they can develop a productive relationship. Evaluation is needed if we are to learn from the passage of VAWA. As noted in this chapter, states need to build their capacity to learn from the STOP grants and report to the public and Congress the impact of expanded efforts to serve victims and reduce violence against women.

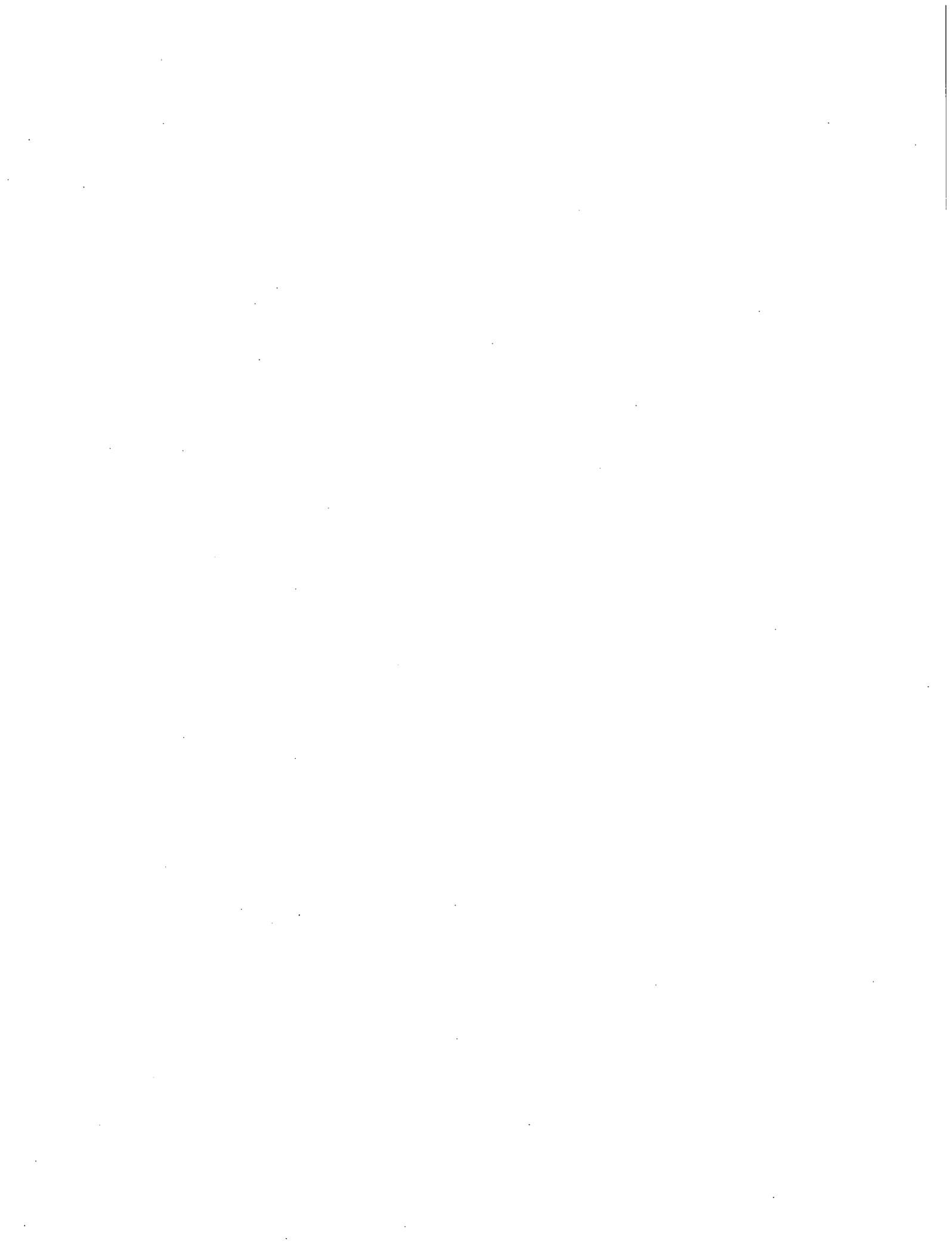
RECOMMENDATION 19: OJP should clarify how states should classify subgrants in relation to the 25/25/25 split.

There is considerable confusion in some states about how to classify a subgrant into the three congressionally mandated categories (law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services). In particular, OJP should stipulate whether subgrants are to be classified by the recipient agency or by the immediate beneficiary. Clearer guidelines would help reduce the contentiousness we encountered in some states over whether state awards are consistent with the legislative guidelines. Although OJP provided examples of collaborative activities in the most recent

application kits, further efforts need to be made to encourage states to fund subgrants that are collaborative or support activities that benefit agencies and actors in more than one focus area (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, and other, discretionary agencies).

RECOMMENDATION 20: OJP should provide guidance on how to use in-kind resources to meet the STOP match requirement.

It would be extremely helpful to have OJP put together guidelines on the use of cash and in-kind matching. Different federal grants programs have different regulations on matching, and it would encourage more agencies to apply for funds if they knew exactly how they could access and use matches, especially in-kind matches. This is particularly critical for agencies such as prosecutors' offices, which often do not have access to cash.



CHAPTER 5

Future Plans

Urban Institute Activities for 1997 and Beyond

During 1997, Urban Institute staff will conduct the research necessary to complete the 1998 Report and will undertake other evaluation-related tasks.

- The Urban Institute will create databases for the FY 1996 Subgrant Award Reports and also for those of FY 1997, if they are available. This information will be analyzed to provide national summaries of STOP grantmaking activities similar to those that appear in Chapter 4 of this report.
- The Urban Institute will develop databases and conduct analyses on Annual Performance Reports from FY 1995 and possibly some FY 1996 STOP subgrantees, assuming that the formats for these reports receive final clearance and are distributed to states and to subgrantees in time for them to report the impact of their activities by the end of December 1997. These reports will provide the first glimpse of whether the activities funded with STOP monies are making any difference, and for whom. At a minimum, we should be able to report on the following legislatively mandated impacts:
 - Number of victims served and
 - Characteristics of victims served, including race/ethnicity, gender, and age.
- Because many subgrants do not have services to victims as their direct activity, nor do they have victims as their direct or most immediate beneficiary, these victim-related impacts will not be relevant to them. Therefore, we hope these subgrantees will be asked by OJP to report other outcomes of their activities, including:
 - Number of training sessions held and the number and agency affiliation of people attending training,
 - Products (such as manuals, protocols, written procedures, and training curricula) and what happened to them (such as number of agencies reviewing and considering them for adoption, number of agencies formally adopting them, number of situations in which they have been used, etc.),

- Victim outcomes, such as improved safety and improved quality of life,
 - Within-system impacts, such as increased numbers of police cases going to prosecution, increased numbers of prosecution cases going to court, increased criminal prosecutions of violators of restraining or protection orders, etc.,
 - Cross-system impacts, such as increased number of cases responded to with a police-victim advocate team, increased number of permanent restraining/protection orders filed with the help of victim advocates located in courtrooms, establishment of local anti-violence councils with broad community representation, etc., and
 - Community-wide attitude change indicating reduced tolerance for violence against women.
- The Urban Institute will work with the four NIJ-funded STOP evaluation grantees funded in FY 1996 to coordinate all STOP evaluation activities under the aegis of NIJ (see below).
 - We will develop an evaluation guidebook intended for wide circulation to help STOP state coordinators and subgrantees design effective evaluations. The guidebook will contain information about how to choose an evaluation design, how to structure an evaluation, and how to measure the important outcomes of subgrant activity. It will be available in summer 1997.
 - The Urban Institute will design three to five evaluations to assess the success of specific aspects of the STOP program. The topics selected for Urban Institute evaluation work will be coordinated with those selected by the four new NIJ evaluators and will not duplicate their efforts.
 - For the years beyond 1997, we will conduct one or more of the evaluations designed in 1997 and continue to work with NIJ's new evaluation grantees to assure coordinated and integrated overall assessment of the STOP program's impact.

Technical Assistance Activities for 1997

The STOP-TA Project expects to continue and expand its technical assistance activities in 1997. It expects to support several more consultations involving visits to model programs in the domestic violence and sexual assault areas. It will continue with its work on promising practices, including the development of written materials for dissemination. In addition to promising projects identified by the STOP-TA Project directly, those identified during site visits by Urban Institute researchers will be conveyed to the STOP-TA Project for dissemination. The Project has held its first regional meeting for state STOP coordinators (in Florida on February 20–21) and expects to hold the remaining three regional meetings during spring 1997. Finally, the STOP-TA Project will continue to offer individual consultations to state coordinators and grantees.

New NIJ-Funded Research Activities

NIJ has funded four evaluations focused on the STOP program, in addition to the work of the Urban Institute. The four new evaluators and their special focuses are:

- Institute for Law and Justice, Washington, D.C.; Tom McEwen, Project Director. Subject: law enforcement and prosecution activities under STOP (training, special units, and policy development).
- American Bar Association, Washington, D.C., and Victim Services Agency, New York City; Laura Nickles, Project Director. Subject: STOP-funded victim services.
- National Center for State Courts, Williamsburg, VA; Susan Keilitz, Project Director. Subject: STOP-funded data collection and communication projects.
- Department of Indian Affairs, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Eileen Luna, Project Director. Subject: Activities of Indian tribes receiving STOP formula subgrants and STOP Violence Against Indian Women discretionary grants.

The Urban Institute will serve as overall evaluation coordinator for the STOP program. We have the responsibility to see that our activities and those of the four new evaluation grantees complement and support each other, do not duplicate efforts or present unnecessary burdens to state grantees and subgrantees, and cover the major areas of interest in the STOP program. The Urban Institute will have the responsibility for providing national data covering all STOP subgrants, using databases we create from the Subgrant Award and Annual Performance Reports.

The Urban Institute and the other four evaluators will also use these databases to identify projects that might be appropriate for more focused evaluations on particular program models within each evaluator's subject area. In addition, each evaluator has taken the responsibility to produce certain information of use to all the other evaluators and to design measures or recommend outcomes and indicators in its area of expertise that others may use. For example:

- The Institute for Law and Justice is analyzing the language of state statutes regarding waiver of filing fees and cost of evidentiary exams, and is developing indicators of the level of cooperation or collaboration reached by a community.
- The American Bar Association is developing a typology or scheme for classifying and describing victim services programs, is assessing implementation issues with respect to waiver of filing fees and cost of evidentiary exams, and is collecting measures of victim outcomes.
- The University of Arizona is identifying the statutes under which Indian tribes in each state interact with local justice agencies.
- The National Center for State Courts is compiling an inventory of relevant data systems currently available in states and also being developed, whether they use STOP or some other funding base.
- The Urban Institute, in addition to preparing the STOP subgrant databases for everyone's use, is identifying all major federal sources of funds related to domestic violence and sexual assault, whether through justice, health, mental health, or social services agencies, and is preparing a summary of major changes in related programs (e.g., welfare, employment and training, child welfare, health care) that are happening in states, based on other work in progress at the Urban Institute.

Recommendations for measures and indicators that develop from this work will be incorporated into the evaluation guidebook to be produced by Urban Institute staff.

In addition to the evaluation activities just described, the National Institute of Justice will continue to support a grants program aimed at developing a greater understanding of activities under the STOP formula grants. NIJ will solicit investigator-initiated projects within the general substantive framework established by VAWA, OJP, and NIJ.

1998 Annual Report

The final activity for the coming year will be preparation of the 1998 Annual Report on the STOP program. The activities of all five NIJ evaluation grantees will contribute to this report, which will be prepared by the Urban Institute. The 1998 Report will be the first to contain some information about the numbers and characteristics of victims served through STOP funding. It should also be able to document performance on a number of other criteria such as training and data system development.

APPENDIX A

FY 1996 STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program List of Designated State Agencies

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(202) 307-2019 - fax

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/VAWGO>

APPENDIX B

National Resources

Focus	Resource	Phone
Domestic Violence/ Stalking/Sexual Assault	National College of District Attorneys	713-743-1843
Domestic Violence/ Stalking/Sexual Assault	International Association of Chiefs of Police	800-THE IACP
Domestic Violence/ Stalking/Sexual Assault	Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence	206-634-1903
Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault	State Research and State Data Efforts on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault— Justice Research and Statistics Associates	202-842-9330
Domestic Violence/Stalking	National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV)	800-537-2238
Domestic Violence/Stalking	Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody	800-52-PEACE
Domestic Violence/Stalking	Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP)	800-903-0111
Domestic Violence/Stalking	Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF)	888-RX ABUSE
Domestic Violence/Stalking	National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)	303-839-1852
Domestic Violence/Stalking	National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)	202-543-0773
Domestic Violence/Stalking	National Domestic Violence Hotline (TX Council on Family Violence)	800-799-7233
Domestic Violence/Stalking	American Prosecutors Research Institute	703-739-0321
Sexual Assault	National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)	717-232-6745
Sexual Assault	National Alliance of Sexual Assault Coalitions	860-282-9881
Domestic Violence	National Clearinghouse for Defense of Battered Women	215-351-0010
Domestic Violence	Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Family Violence Prevention Fund	800-313-1310
Domestic Violence	Battered Women's Law Project of the National Center on Women and Family Law	212-674-8200
All Victims	National Victim Center	703-276-2880
All Victims	National Organization for Victim Assistance	202-232-6682

APPENDIX C

Master Site Visit Protocol

I. PLANNING PROCESS

The Analytic Issues:

How close did the state process come to a strategic planning model with needs assessment leading to priority setting leading to action in pursuit of long-term goals? How often and at what stages was planning a political, bureaucratic, or arbitrary process?

Was the planning process inclusive? Were an appropriate range of agencies, victim advocates, and areas of the state given a voice?

What did the planning process look like—coordination, cooperation, or collaboration?

Ask Lead Agency:

1. Get a brief description of lead agency's mission, responsibilities, and activities. How does the STOP project relate to other agency activities in focus area, agencies involved, and tasks required? How and why was the lead agency selected?
2. What other agencies have worked with you on the STOP grants? Compile a list and note for each (1) the type of agency (e.g., law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, courts, corrections, other); (2) whether public or private; and (3) location (state-level or community-based).
3. Have there been any changes between the first and second years in the partner agencies? Have any agencies been dropped or added? (If so, please explain what has happened and why.) Note on the list.

4. What additional agencies may become partners and when?
5. Who actually wrote the plan? How did the writing and review process work?

Ask Lead Agency and Others as Appropriate:

6. Are there any agencies that *wanted* to be involved in the planning process in the first year but were not? What about the second year? Are there any agencies that *should have* been involved in the planning process but were not? (Which agencies? What happened?) What about the second year?
7. How early in the process did each agency get involved, and what phases of the project have they been involved in? How did they become involved (invited, volunteered, fought their way in, etc.)? What role has each agency had? Do the plans call for a change in their role (advice and review vs. working partners, for example)?
8. How often and in what forum do partners interact on STOP grant/VAWA tasks (multidisciplinary working committees, committees composed of representatives from a single type of agency, etc.)? What are the major topics for discussion? How good is participation? What limits those that are not very active (politics, budgets, interest)?
9. Have particular issues or obstacles interfered with collaboration among the partners? (Describe.) If the obstacles have been overcome, how was the problem solved? If not, what would help?
10. How were needs identified (needs surveys, focus groups, public hearings, etc.)? Who directed the effort and who provided the input? (For example, did staff at battered women's shelters survey clients for their perceptions of improvements needed in the justice system?) How was this useful, and what else might have been done?
11. What process was used to select between competing needs? What issues came up regarding the need for support for special populations, areas of the state, or particular agencies?

II. INTERACTIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Analytic Issues:

- Are the states complying with the legislative mandates? Which ones are difficult for them?
- What comments and suggestions do grantees have about the reporting and state plan requirements?
- Is DOJ providing appropriate guidance and technical support to states?

Ask the Lead Agency:

12. Do any of the federal requirements connected with the grant pose problems for you? If yes, please describe.
13. What challenges have the matching funds requirement posed, and how have they been met?
14. Do you have suggestions for improving the DOJ guidelines and instructions on preparing the state plan?
15. Do you have suggestions for improving the DOJ reporting requirements and forms?
16. In general, how timely have DOJ services been, and what effects have any timeliness problems had?
17. The following activities are intended to help STOP grantees. Which have you participated in? For those, what did you find helpful and why? How could the assistance be improved in the future?
 - a. The July 1995 conference
 - b. STOP grants technical assistance conferences (in Quincy, MA, and Seattle, WA)
 - c. The technical assistance provided by DOJ's contractor, Joan Kuriansky of the Pennsylvania Coalition against Domestic Violence
18. What else could DOJ do to facilitate your work?

Ask All Agencies:

19. Which, if any, of the following federal or federally supported sources for technical assistance have you used? For those used, what help did you get? Was it satisfactory?
 - a. National Resource Centers such as the Battered Women's Justice Project, the Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, the Resource Center on Child Protection and Custody, the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, the Pennsylvania Coalition against Domestic Violence
 - b. The State Justice Institute
 - c. Federal agencies other than Justice
20. Have you needed some technical assistance that you could not get? Please describe.
21. What do you think of the required split of federal funds across law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services (25 percent each)? How is your state using the 25 percent discretionary funds? How does your state define "victim services" (not-for-profits only, victim/witness advocacy programs) for purposes of this requirement?

Ask Lead Agency, Prosecutor/Court Administrator, and Victim Service Agencies:

22. What has been done to ensure that sexual assault victims do not pay any expenses for medical examinations? When were policy changes in this area made? Were they made in anticipation of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act? What remains to be done?
23. What has been done to ensure that domestic violence victims don't pay fees for civil or criminal charges? When were policy changes in this area made? Were they made in anticipation of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act? What remains to be done?
24. What steps have been taken to recognize protection orders issued in other jurisdictions (both within your state and across other states)? What else needs to be done in this area?
25. Has your state undertaken special projects or initiatives to combat stalking of victims? Please describe.

III. SUBGRANTS

The Analytic Issues:

How are states administering their STOP grant funds?

Are states developing procedures for monitoring subgrantee performance?

What effect is the federal funding having on which agencies are providing victim services?

Ask Lead Agency:

26. How are/were subgrantees selected (formula basis, competitive bids, etc.)?
27. What kinds of services/projects/activities were mentioned by your agency in requesting subgrantee applications? How was this determined? Were funding levels for activities in various areas specified in advance?
28. What is/was the schedule for making awards in year 1? In year 2?
29. Who is eligible to apply for subgrants?
30. If not formula basis, what factors are rated in selecting subgrantees? Probe for consideration of underserved populations, area of the state, as well as technical ratings, experience, etc. How strongly do you rate past experience in working in the field of domestic violence or sexual assault?
31. How will the state track/monitor subgrantee activities? What self-reports will subgrantees submit, how often, and what information will they provide (e.g., number of personnel trained or clients served, arrest or prosecution rates, case processing time)? How will this

information be obtained and how will its accuracy be verified? What monitoring activities will the state perform (e.g., site visits), how often, and for what purposes?

32. Will the 25 percent split across law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services be achieved by funding different projects in each area or by funding projects that involve and support multiple kinds of agencies and activities?

Ask All Agencies:

33. What changes has the availability of federal funding had on the kinds of agencies working to combat violence against women and the kinds of new initiatives starting around the state?

Ask Subgrantees:

34. Please describe your project goals and planned activities.
35. What factors led to the decision to fund your project? Why was it given top priority?
36. How does this project fit into the overall goals and mission of your agency? How does it fit into or expand ongoing projects/activities?
37. Does the project involve coordination with other agencies? Which agencies? How and how often will you/do you interact with them?

IV. EVALUATION

The Analytic Issues:

What data resources are available to service providers and evaluators?

What evaluation of STOP projects is planned by the states or subgrantees?

What issues do states and subgrantees want studied in an evaluation?

Ask All Agencies:

38. What databases are currently available on law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, and/or court services in domestic violence and sexual assault cases? (Make a list.) Which do you use? Who maintains the database? What data is included?
39. How and by whom are the data reported and used? How often are reports issued?
40. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the available set of databases in terms of coverage of kinds of offenses, areas of the state, access to all who need information, and ability of the systems to be linked?

41. What information do you need that you cannot get?
42. Can victims or perpetrators be tracked over time?

Ask Lead Agency and Any Subgrantees Interviewed:

43. Does state monitoring of subgrantees include quantitative performance monitoring? Were the indicators selected by the state or by the subgrantee? Does it include impact evaluation? Does the state require assessment of specific impact objectives?
44. Do you plan a state evaluation of the impact of STOP activities (e.g., changes in attitudes, professional practices, clients' welfare and satisfaction)? How will the appropriate goals to be measured be determined? Who will conduct the impact assessment, using what methods? How will it be reported, and how will the findings be used?
45. What do you think are the most important issues/activities for evaluation? Why are these the critical issues? What would you want to learn from an evaluation of these activities?

V. GAPS AND BARRIERS

The Analytic Issues:

What are the major needs/gaps in training? In victim services? In the law? In policy development? In population coverage?

What barriers to interagency coordination exist (1) within and across law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, and health or social service agencies and (2) between criminal justice agencies and agencies providing victim services, health care, child welfare, or other social services?

Ask All Agencies:

46. In your view, are any changes in state law needed in the violence against women area?
47. How developed are the policies and practices of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors' offices, given opportunities allowed and restrictions imposed by the law? Do they tend to take full advantage of the opportunities allowed by law, or does practice lag behind legislative provisions? How does this vary across the state?
48. How and how well do law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim services agencies work together?
49. What, if any, are the statewide standards for law enforcement and prosecutorial practice?
50. How could services to victims be improved in your area?
51. How could law enforcement and prosecution practices be improved in your area?

Ask Law Enforcement Agency:

52. What do you think of the content, quality, and availability of current training of law enforcement officers in domestic violence? How about sexual assault? How much and what kind of training is required of recruits? How about in-service training?
53. Do you think more training is needed? If yes, please describe who needs more training and what kind of training they need. How does this vary across the state?
54. What proportion of law enforcement officers in the state have *not* been trained and are *not likely to be* trained in the near future?
55. What law enforcement agencies are there in your state (e.g., state police, municipal police, county sheriffs)? Briefly, what are the basic duties of each type? How are they coordinated across the state or in regional areas? Are there any means of central control or does each agency operate independently? What happens when cases span jurisdictions?
56. How many law enforcement agencies have internal units which specialize in domestic violence and/or sexual assault? How do these units work? What other special approaches to sexual assault and domestic violence are used within law enforcement?

Ask Prosecution Agency:

57. What prosecution agencies are there in your state (e.g., city attorney's office, district attorney's office, general attorney's office)? Please briefly describe the kinds of domestic violence cases and sexual assault cases handled by each.
58. How many prosecution agencies have internal units which specialize in domestic violence and/or sexual assault? How do these units work? What other special approaches to sexual assault and domestic violence are used within prosecution agencies?
59. What do you think of the content, quality, and availability of current training of prosecutors in domestic violence? How about sexual assault? How much and what kind of training is required of new prosecutors? How about in-service training?
60. Do you think more training is needed? If yes, please describe who needs more training and what kind of training they need. How does this vary across the state?
61. What proportion of prosecutors in the state have *not* been trained and are *not likely to be* trained in the near future?
62. What are the different levels of courts in which domestic violence cases are prosecuted in this state? Which courts handle sexual assault cases? How are they coordinated within an area? How about across jurisdictions?
63. How many prosecution agencies have internal units which specialize in domestic violence and/or sexual assault? How do these units work? What other special approaches, such as vertical prosecution, are used?

Ask Victim Service Agencies:

64. Are victims served mainly by publicly funded agencies or by private or nonprofit agencies? Do the private-sector and public-sector victim service agencies serve different populations or provide different kinds of services? Do they coordinate their activities? Please describe how.
65. What gaps do you see in the kinds or level of services available to victims? How well are victims in rural areas served? How about immigrants? Women of color? Other special populations?
66. What effect has the STOP grant program had on the availability of services, who is providing services, and the population served? Have STOP grant activities changed the relationship between victim service providers and the police and courts?
67. Has there been a shift from nonprofit to government in providing victim services? Have there been shifts in the background or qualifications of those engaged in victim services?

Notes

1. One state had not awarded any subgrants by the end of December 1996. Most of the 15 states that did not report all of their funds reported two-thirds or more, but 2 reported as little as 30 percent. Some states chose to award their remaining FY 1995 funds in conjunction with their FY 1996 funds, in some cases because they did not receive acceptable subgrant applications.
2. To make a protection or restraining order issued in one jurisdiction or state valid in another, so the officials of the second jurisdiction will enforce it, the second jurisdiction must accord the order the "full faith and credit" that it would give to one of its own orders.
3. See Chapter 1 for a description of constructing this database.
4. Assignment to a category is not the same as which type of agency received the subgrant. For instance, a victim service agency could receive a subgrant to train prosecutors, and the subgrant would be assigned to the prosecution category. Or, a state statistical agency could receive a subgrant to develop a uniform statewide incident reporting form for law enforcement, and the subgrant would be assigned to the law enforcement category.
5. The vast majority of grants (91 percent) were funded from a single category, but when multiple categories were used the amount was prorated for this analysis by the number of categories.
6. For subgrants that addressed more than one purpose area (30 percent of all subgrants), we allocated the funding across purpose areas as indicated on the Subgrant Award Report.
7. When subgrants focused on more than one type of violence, the funding was prorated for the number of focus areas or the relative emphasis on each (when available).
8. This analysis only includes 528 of the 765 subgrants (69 percent), since information on underserved populations was not systematically available for the rest.
9. Only 528 of the 765 subgrants (69 percent) had this information available.
10. Several states explained that they have a fairly well-developed court-based data system, but little STOP grant-related analysis was being done with the data. In one community, a court monitoring program had extensive data on perpetrator treatment program attendance and recidivism, but again these were not being used for analytical purposes.

