



Violence Against Women Act Court-Specific Funding: Listserv Survey Response

Knowledge & Information Services

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In 2001, 5 percent of the federal funds from the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program were to be designated for court-related projects. In an attempt to find out how states are spending this money, the National Center's Knowledge and Information Service office queried the Court2Court and COSCA listservs on May 31, 2002. The following is a summary of responses from various states. This list is not exhaustive. Please contact 800-616-6164 for more specific information or state contacts.

Alaska

Alaska plans to use the money to purchase contract security guard services for a metal detector checkpoint in a court facility, which currently has no security screening and has a documented history of security threats, primarily stemming from incidents in domestic violence cases.

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California

California plans to use the funds for education, including updating existing programs and materials, integrating domestic violence education into the related substantive legal areas, looking at ways to increase participation, developing new delivery methods, and focusing on regional and local programming. They hope they can also fund some related local or regional projects that will enhance communication/coordination in domestic violence cases.

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Connecticut

Connecticut is using the 5 percent set-aside funding for two programs. One program involves services to domestic violence offenders who have a range of sanctions available to them, including a 26-week batterer intervention program designed for facilitating behavior change in a monitored environment. The second program involves court-based victim advocates. These individuals offer victims an array of services, such as counseling and direct assistance, including crisis intervention, safety planning, medical care options, housing alternatives, and other concrete services pertinent to the issues raised by the impact of the violence.

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Delaware

Delaware is using their VAWA court funding for a new “domestic violence pre-trial services officer” position (DVPTSO) in family court. The DVPTSO will gather information from a variety of sources about perpetrators and their victims: for example, the Child Incorporated DV advocacy group, the attorney general’s and the public defender’s offices, the office of private counsel, and adult probation. This information will be provided to the court in a report so that hearing officers can make informed sentences in DV cases. The pre-trial services officer will also verify that alleged perpetrators are complying with services the court has ordered as a condition of bail. The goals and benefits of the program are to keep DV victims safe and to prevent future domestic violence.

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District of Columbia

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia plans to use VAWA funding to support a program coordinator position for their Supervised Visitation Center, which serves domestic violence cases. In the past, VAWA funds (discretionary category) were used to fund an attorney/negotiator position for the Domestic Superior Court’s Domestic Violence Project and to provide judicial training.

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Florida

The year 2000 STOP VAWA Grant was awarded to the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA), Florida Supreme Court. The funds are being used to assess and enhance the judicial system’s response to domestic violence court cases. This broadly focused project comprises three areas of activity/goals: providing domestic violence education; identifying effective court policies; and providing recording equipment for domestic violence hearings. Staff of the OSCA will be responsible for all work performed on this project.

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Hawaii

The First Judicial Circuit proposes to implement a project, “Victims and Children Exposed to Violence,” which intends “to provide expanded education/training to judges, probation and court officers, other court personnel, domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, others in the criminal justice system and selected representatives from the private and public sectors, that will promote the following: (1) victim and community safety; (2) protection of victims and family members; (3) offender accountability; (4) programs and policies that incorporate issues of victim and child safety and offender accountability; and (5) state and national legislative intent that domestic violence is a serious crime.”

A two-day conference, cosponsored by the judiciary and the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV), will be held on the topic of “Victims and Children Exposed to Batterers” and will be offered to judges, probation and court officers, domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, others in the criminal and civil justice systems, and other selected guests.

Seminars on the basic dynamics of domestic violence, victim issues, significant state and local legislation, impact on the workplace and the community, and other relevant information pertinent to their jobs will be presented to court support staff statewide and will also be made available to others in the criminal and civil

justice systems and the community, as resources and scheduling permit.

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Iowa

Iowa has used VAWA funding in the past to create a domestic abuse protective order registry. Clerks of court enter protective information into their computer system, and the information is sent real-time to the Department of Public Safety for dissemination to law enforcement in Iowa and to the federal NCIC system to facilitate full faith and credit. Iowa also has a project under way (which has been funded in part by VAWA funds) to collect detailed domestic abuse and sexual assault statistics. The statistics follow the National Center prototype for domestic violence statistics. They hope to complete this project with funds from a VAWA discretionary grant.

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Maryland

Maryland has used the federal FY01 funding received from the STOP program to implement a "Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project" (POARP) in Baltimore County. This is a partnership between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and two nonprofit domestic violence providers, the House of Ruth, Inc., and the Women's Law Center. The POARP staff is located in office space provided by the Circuit Court in Baltimore County (as a match) and is available to assist individuals seeking ex parte (temporary) and civil protective orders. Their assistance includes providing advocacy as well as legal representation for hearings.

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Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, it was decided that the first year's funds would be best used to do a statewide review and assessment of the current status of court services for victims of domestic violence. Interviews and a series of focus groups with police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim services programs, batterer intervention programs, victims, judges, and court personnel have been conducted over the last six months providing an opportunity for them to share their court-related experiences in domestic violence cases. A project coordinator and administrative assistance were hired with grant funds to design and implement this review. A project advisory committee was created to provide guidance throughout the project. Results of the study will be compiled, summarized, and analyzed by the fall in a final report, which will form the basis for developing recommendations for improving services in the following years with this available funding. An application is being prepared now for the second year's funding to address some of the recommendations.

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Michigan

Michigan's Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board has provided VAWA STOP "discretionary" funds for court projects and training regarding domestic violence, substance abuse, and stalking via the supreme court training office—the Michigan Judicial Institute—for several years.

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Missouri

The Missouri courts have used the VAWA grant funding to automate the transfer of ex parte adult protection orders from the statewide court automation software in local courts to the Missouri State Highway Patrol. This provides law enforcement with early notice of adult protection orders. They contracted to provide multidisciplinary training on full faith and credit. The training targets law enforcement, the judiciary, domestic violence advocates, prosecutors, and other professionals impacted by full-faith-and-credit implementation.

2003 Update: Missouri used the VAWA grant funds to pay for foreign language interpreters needed by female victims of domestic abuse filing for orders of protections subsequent hearings. Funds were also used to develop and distribute a public service announcement about domestic abuse and advising the public that interpreters are provided by the courts.

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Montana

Montana used the VAWA/OCJS funding to create a new position: "stalking civil protection order program coordinator." The coordinator position is intended to ease the impact that the 500 percent increase in stalking civil protection orders (SCPO) has had on the court. The coordinator will assist the petitioner in completing all paperwork necessary to obtain an SCPO. The coordinator will also collaborate with law firms and legal agencies to establish a pro bono program for representation of pro se SCPO petitioners. With the coordinator in place and pro bono representation established, they hope this will make the process flow more smoothly for all parties involved. Once the SCPO order is granted, the coordinator will track and make sure proper issuance has occurred. They also hope for the coordinator to hold community education forums and establish relationships with the local law enforcement agencies.

2003 Update: Montana is using their 5% for judicial education. This includes educating Clerks.

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Nevada

In the state of Nevada, it is the attorney general's office that receives the funding and determines what projects to support. One of their recent projects funded through VAWA funds was for a Consortium of State and Tribal Judges for the purpose of communication and collaboration between state and tribal representatives on domestic violence issues, including full faith and credit. The consortium was a success and will continue. The attorney general's office gave the AOC approximately half the court-related funds to continue the consortium by conducting State/Tribal Regional Focus Groups. This is to bring together representatives from specific jurisdictions to discuss their pertinent issues and problems in an effort to resolve some of the issues relating to domestic violence. The remaining court-related funds have been promised to the judicial education department to develop domestic violence training for court staff and judges.

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New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, part of the VAWA grant funds allocated to the court went to local coordinating council projects, with sub grants for each award. These council sub grants were used to fund a variety of local coordinating council projects, ranging from community resource guides to forums on domestic violence and teen-dating violence. In 2001 the remainder of the funds supported the revision of district court

domestic violence protocols, a part-time domestic violence specialist for the district court, and travel to conferences.

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North Dakota

In North Dakota, some of the money will go to develop a benchbook on domestic violence. They also will modify their Web site to deliver full-text protection order information.

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Rhode Island

The Rhode Island courts will continue to use their VAWA award to support activities related to the collection of data about all incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child molestation that are investigated by state and local law enforcement agencies.

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Utah

Utah will use these funds for training for judges and staff.

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Washington

Washington State is using part of its STOP Grant funding (1) to develop new quick-access resources for municipal court judges to consult while making decisions on domestic violence while sitting on the bench and (2) to conduct training for the DV community (judges, court personnel, advocates, treatment providers, law enforcements, prosecutors, and attorneys) with an emphasis on the judicial decision-making process in two regions of the state.

May 2003 Update: The Gender and Justice Commission under the auspices of the Board for Judicial Administration (BJA), is administering the Federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) STOP (Services-Training-Officers-Prosecutors) Formula Grant to the Courts.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2001, the Office of Crime Victims' Advocacy, Washington State's administrative office for VAWA grants, allocated \$126,827 for court projects related to domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking. The Commission used a Request for Proposal process to allocate the majority of the funding to local courts. Five courts received contracts for a twelve month period, January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002. Later those contracts were extended to March 31, 2002. Projects ranged from conducting domestic violence training for pro-tem judges to producing court informational brochures in eleven languages.

The administrative allocation of \$20,000 provided some program management costs; scholarships to send ten judicial officers to advanced domestic violence training; and purchase of educational materials for future training and safety kits for victims who seek protection orders. The chart on the next page shows project summaries and budgets.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2002, the Office of Crime Victims' Advocacy allocated \$125,067 for the STOP

Grant to the Courts. The Commission, again, dedicated \$100,000 for local court projects to be awarded based on a Request for Proposal process. The Commission's Grant Evaluation Committee included Justice Barbara Madsen, Judge Marlin Appelwick, Judge Ann Schindler, Judge Linda Tompkins, Helen Donigan, Sandra Matheson, Mary Pontarolo, and Gloria Hemmen. The Commission received sixteen proposals and selected five projects for funding.

The Gender and Justice Commission reserved some FY02 funds for judicial education and related projects on domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Commission will be presenting *Understanding Sexual Violence: The Judge's Role in Sexual Assault and Stranger and Non-stranger Rape Cases,* during the Fall Judicial Conference. The 3-hour program is scheduled for September 23, 2003 at the Tacoma Sheraton. Following the program, a copy of the self-guided video version of the curriculum will be provided to each county law library.

In addition, the Commission used some funding from their own budget to implement projects proposed by the courts: (1) Brought Casey Gwinn to speak at the Superior Court Judges Spring Education Program in April 2003 and (2) continued the supervised visitation program in Island County (an FY 01 funded project) for three additional months.

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Wyoming

Wyoming has submitted their third application to do judicial training. Their proposal for 2003 is to do a training session for judges and law enforcement on full faith and credit and federal firearms. A court watch program also submitted an application for some of the court-designated funds.

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Contact the **Knowledge & Information Service Office** with inquiries or requests for copies of any resources regarding

VAWA Funding
knowledge@ncsc.dni.us

1-800-616-6164

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