

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

STOP Implementation Plan

FY 2014-2016



Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

3101 N Front Street

Harrisburg, PA 17110

March 30, 2014

Mr. Omar Mohammed
Grant Program Specialist
Office on Violence Against Women
U.S. Department of Justice
800 K Street N.W., Ste. 920
Washington, D.C. 20530

RE: STOP VAWA Implementation Plan for Pennsylvania, FY s 2014-2016

Dear Mr. Mohammed:

The 2014-2016 State Implementation Plan under the STOP Violence Against Women Program is being submitted by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) as the state's STOP Grant Program administrator. This document was approved by the PCCD's Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) on January 30, 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Buckley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Kathy Buckley
Manager
Victims' Services Program

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

2014-2016 STOP Implementation Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's STOP Implementation Plan (Plan) for the time period of Federal Fiscal Years 2014 through 2016. As such, it provides a blueprint for how Pennsylvania will use its STOP Violence Against Women Funding to promote a holistic, coordinated, and multidisciplinary response to violence against women. The overarching goals for the Plan include:

1. Reducing and eventually eliminating violence against women in Pennsylvania through a vigorous and effective coordinated response among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services that holds offenders accountable and prioritizes victim safety.
2. Increasing the understanding of the dynamics of sexual assault and domestic violence within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, among service providers and allied professionals within educational and healthcare institutions, and among community members.
3. Promoting a vigorous and effective response to violence against women among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services by providing appropriate training and technical assistance; mandating protocol development; and funding county and statewide initiatives, including lethality assessment programs that enhance service providers' capacity to respond effectively.
4. Enhancing the capacity of victim service agencies to provide expanded and culturally relevant services by encouraging grantees to gather and review demographic data for their service areas, identify culturally specific and/or underserved populations and develop services to meet the needs of such victims.

Due to a competitive three-year award period currently underway, the STOP Plan will continue to honor eight statutory purpose areas for current subgrantees (Please see Section IV-A

Identified Goals on page 23). These purpose areas, contracted through December 31, 2015, are documented in the *Plan Priorities and Approaches Section* of this report. New directions for implementing STOP will be considered with the next competitive STOP award beginning January 1, 2016 and are described in the Plan's *Priority Areas Section: Subsection 2*.

For ease of reading and delivery of information, Pennsylvania's Plan is organized into several sections:

- **Description of the Planning Process:** Describes the process used by Pennsylvania to establish its funding priorities under the STOP Violence Against Women Program.
- **Needs and Context:** Provides an overview of the geographical, demographic, political and economic parameters within the Commonwealth as well as statistical information on the prevalence of violence against women in Pennsylvania.
- **Priorities and Approaches:** Documents priority areas for implementing the STOP Formula Grant with specific reference to underserved populations; describes how these priorities relate to prior implementation plans; discusses perceived barriers to the implementation of STOP; and describes Pennsylvania's monitoring and evaluation efforts to ensure subgrantees' fiscal and programmatic compliance with STOP funds and their adherence with the VAWA certifications.

The Plan was approved by Pennsylvania's Statewide Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) on January 30, 2014.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

The Office of Victims' Services (OVS) at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) administers the STOP Formula Grant. The work of the OVS is accomplished through careful advisement by the Statewide Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC). Established in 1995 through an amendment to Pennsylvania's Crime Victims Act, the VSAC's membership consists of public officials who represent the state departments of Public Welfare, Aging and Corrections, the state's Office of Victim Advocate, the Pennsylvania State Police, the state's domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions as well as local prosecutors and victim service providers. The VSAC advises PCCD's OVS on functions related to the approval and disbursement of financial assistance. This includes the power and duty to review and comment on grant applications. Additionally, the VSAC advises PCCD's OVS on the definition, development and correlation of programs and projects and the establishment of priorities for direct victim services and compensation. In essence, VSAC serves as a check and balance on the work of the OVS, ensuring that OVS's final funding strategies, not only for STOP but for federal Victims of Crime Act and state victim service related funding streams, are coherent in focus and based upon a sound understanding of the social, demographic, criminological and economic forces affecting the state. VSAC must approve all STOP applications for funding. Please see the VSAC membership list - Attachment A.

In an effort to model collaboration and leverage funding at the state level, OVS conducts bimonthly staff meetings to assess emerging issues, funding strategies, and monitoring outcomes under STOP; the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA); the Rights and Services Act (RSA); and the Victims of Juvenile Offenders (VOJO) funding streams. Additionally, OVS continues to engage in focused discussions and strategic STOP planning with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), which administers programs under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA); the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR),

which administers programs under the Public Health Service Act (Rape Prevention Education); the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC); Pennsylvania's Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA); the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP); the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA). Moreover, OVS solicits feedback from the STOP Implementation Planning Team members, direct service providers during monitoring visits, through subgrantee's technical assistance requests, and by review of STOP annual progress reports. The assessments made through these coordinated and strategic planning avenues confirm that the priorities established with STOP's 2013-2015 competitive funding cycle through December 31, 2015 must be maintained. Strategic funding considerations for the subsequent funding cycle beginning January 1, 2016 (highlighted in the *Priority Section* of this report) will be subject to further review and discussions prior to the release of that solicitation to ensure the implementation of STOP remains economically viable, programmatically relevant, and cost effective. Pennsylvania also acknowledges the requirement of the VAWA 2013 reauthorization that the use of STOP funds be coordinated with the state plan for the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and section 393A of the Public Health Service Act (Rape Prevention Education). The structure of victims' services in Pennsylvania fosters collaboration at the statewide level. As mentioned previously, the VSAC includes representation from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, PCADV and PCAR. The Department of Public Welfare contracts with PCADV to administer the FVPSA funds across Pennsylvania's network of domestic violence programs and with PCAR to administer Rape Prevention Education funding across its network of sexual assault centers. The PCCD's OVS administers federal VOCA and STOP funds, the grant making strategies of which are subject to review by VSAC. For over a decade, the VSAC has had a policy of aligning its funding decisions with those of PCADV and PCAR. This approach

has helped to build a strong network of competent and resourced community-based, non-profit victim service agencies that meet the diverse needs of Pennsylvania's violence against women victims in a complimentary and cost-effective manner.

To begin the FY 2014-2016 STOP implementation planning process, OVS convened a STOP Implementation Planning Team (Team) comprised of representatives from the domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, victim services, law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, victim advocates, and representatives from underserved populations (Please see Appendix B for a roster of Planning Team Members and Appendix G confirming each Team Member's participation). An informational webinar was conducted on August 26, 2013 and repeated on August 27, 2013 to highlight the current STOP Plan, define the requirements under VAWA 2013, identify new funding priorities, and provide an opportunity for the Team to ask questions (Please see Appendix C for a copy of the Webinar's PowerPoint).

Next, as a baseline for developing a new Plan, the Team reviewed Pennsylvania's 2013-2015 Implementation Plan which was submitted to OVW in November 2012. The Team was asked to provide comments and recommendations on the Plan - including a review/reaffirmation of the purpose areas contracted under the current funding cycle and identification of new funding priority areas beginning with the 2016 competitive STOP grant cycle. In order to reach a consensus regarding strategic direction(s) for STOP's 2014-2016 Implementation Plan, OVS hosted an in-person meeting on October 29, 2013. A summary of the Team's specific recommendations is listed in Appendix D. In broad terms, the Team confirmed that STOP's priority areas need to:

- Support STOP's 2013-2015 Implementation Plan goals to ensure currently contracted services are maintained;

- Ensure justice is achieved and safety is prioritized in the civil/criminal/juvenile justice systems' response to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence;
- Support the creation and development of effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies that hold offenders accountable;
- Promote/enhance victim advocacy and core victim services through a trauma-informed perspective that supports and empowers victims and avoids re-traumatization;
- Implement statewide STOP initiatives that benefit all 67 Pennsylvania counties. These initiatives include a Virtual Law Enforcement Training Academy through PCPA; targeted technical assistance for the response to sexual assault through PCAR; targeted technical assistance for the response to domestic violence through PCADV; and expansion of a research-based Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) facilitated by PCADV.

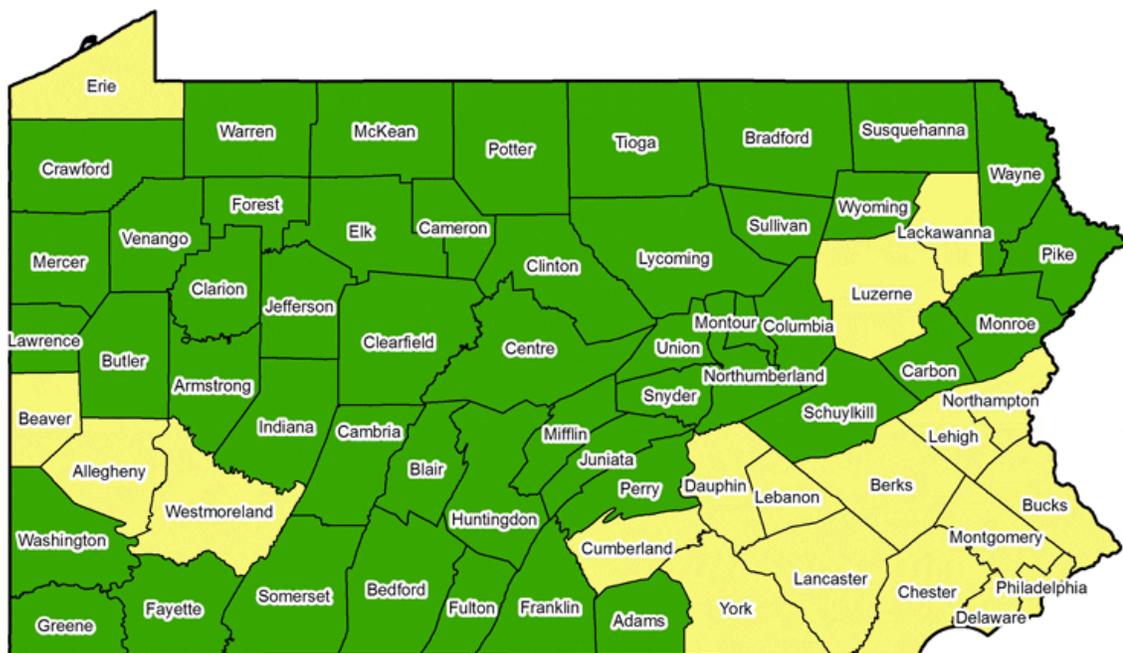
III. NEEDS AND CONTEXT

Geography

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania encompasses a land area of 46,055 square miles and includes a wide variation of terrain including mountains, river valleys, rich farmland and two major metropolitan areas at opposite ends of the state. The population is spread across 67 counties and ranges from the extreme of 11,000 people per square mile in the City of Philadelphia to 16 people per square mile in rural Potter County. According to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania has 48 rural counties and 19 urban counties.

In 2010, nearly 3.5 million residents, or 27% of the state's population lived in a rural county. It is important to note that, while 70% of Pennsylvania's counties are rural, the state's average population density of 274 people per square mile does not qualify it as a "rural" state under the Office on Violence Against Women's guidelines. However, Pennsylvania's large rural demographic impacts the implementation of STOP because victims living in rural areas of the state are often isolated, without access to public and/or private transportation, have limited economic opportunities and may even be without access to what are now common methods of communication - including cell phones and the internet. These challenges were confirmed by one member of the STOP Planning Team. She noted that due to lack of funds for advocates to staff satellite offices in her rural area, many victims, who have no method of transportation, now receive most of their services over the phone which compounds their experiences of isolation.

Rural Pennsylvania Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Urban Rural

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania borders six states: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and West Virginia. This multi state border has many implications for implementation of the STOP Program as investigations of crime often cover multiple jurisdictions when either offenders or victims flee to neighboring states. According to statistics tracked by PCADV as part of its statewide technical assistance efforts funded through STOP, Full Faith and Credit and Enforcement of foreign protection orders are currently two of the most frequently requested areas of technical assistance.

Inter-jurisdictional incidents are not limited to interstate issues. For example, Cambria County created a model sexual assault protocol which includes guidelines for anonymous reporting. The protocol received national attention when End Violence Against Women International (the national technical assistance provider for forensic exam compliance) published Cambria's protocol as a best practice on their website. Cambria County has since noted that victims may travel across county lines to receive the benefits of anonymous reporting or the provision of an exam by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). This inter-jurisdictional crossover underscores the varied options for reporting sexual assault throughout the Commonwealth and ultimately creates a legal tension between meeting criminal justice requirements and providing victims with their rights. This diversity of response will be further explained in the section on the political structure of Pennsylvania.

Political Structure

Pennsylvania is one of four states designated as a "Commonwealth." As such, it has a decentralized form of government in which most policy and financial decisions are made at the local or county level. There are 67 counties in Pennsylvania with 60 judicial districts - each of

which has its own court system, judges and magistrates and prosecutor's office. The same is true for law enforcement. In Pennsylvania there are over 1,180 police departments that run the gamut from small part time agencies to large metropolitan departments. When a local municipality is unable to provide police coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Pennsylvania State Police are called upon to fill in those gaps. This fragmented system of government poses numerous challenges to the implementation and institutionalization of uniform policies that would ensure consistent, high-level standards and services for violence against women victims. To counter this splintered structure, PCCD mandates that STOP projects create and maintain a formal collaboration among victim services, law enforcement and prosecution. These collaborative teams work to develop unified and consistent policies and procedures for responding to, investigating, and prosecuting domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence in their service areas. A critical byproduct of this collaboration is that consultation with victim services is woven throughout the team process.

Population

Background

The population demographics in this section primarily represent statistics for specific populations. OVS acknowledges that the following data does not adequately reflect compound issues many victims face (e.g., serving victims with disabilities who have limited English proficiency or who are trafficked; assisting elder LGBT victims; providing holistic services to victims with co-occurring drug/alcohol or mental health problems, etc.). OVS also notes that the 31 counties in Pennsylvania that currently receive STOP funding use their collaborative teams to identify the resources needed to serve/refer victims presenting complex needs. Additionally, the domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions work in concert with the OVS and local

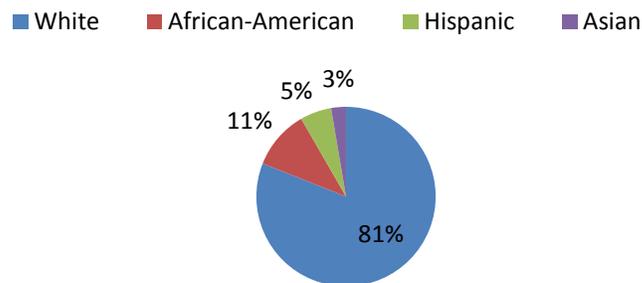
programs to further pinpoint resource referrals to help ensure the diverse needs of victims are culturally and linguistically relevant.

According to the 2012 Census Bureau estimates, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had a population of 12,763,536, making it the sixth most populous state in the union. Of its population, 51.3% (6.5 million) are female. The median age of Pennsylvania residents is 40, median household income stands at \$49,000 and the poverty rate is 13.4%. When compared to similarly populous states, Pennsylvania lags far behind in terms of overall population *growth*.

Demographic Trends

The chart below reflects Pennsylvania's population by race. While the state's largest racial group remains white (Pennsylvania Facts 2012), there are two significant demographic trends that are anticipated to have far ranging effects on the Commonwealth in terms of public policy, funding and service delivery. The first trend is an increase in the Latino population and the second is an increase in Pennsylvania's elder population.

Pennsylvania Population Percentages by Race or Ethnicity (2010 Census)



Racial/Ethnic Populations

The Latino population is the fastest-growing minority group in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania State Data Center, 2011). The population who fall into the Latino ethnic group

grew by 82.6% between 2000 and 2010. This is an increase of 325,572 people. While the growth of the Latino population is occurring across the Commonwealth, the largest population increases are concentrated in urban areas in the Eastern half of the state. This includes Philadelphia, the Allentown/Bethlehem metropolitan area and the city of Reading. Rural counties with seasonal agricultural production are also seeing substantial increases in their Latino population. Additionally, members of the STOP Implementation Planning Team noted that the Philadelphia metropolitan area has experienced significant growth in newly emigrating populations from countries in Asia and Africa. These and other demographic trends are already impacting service delivery which will be further explained in the *Addressing the Needs of Underserved Populations* section of this report.

Aging Population

According to statistics provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Pennsylvania is the fourth “oldest” state in the nation. This means that 21.2% of its population or approximately 2.7 million individuals are aged 60 or older and 2.4%, and approximately 306,000 individuals are 85 years or older. Pennsylvanians between the ages of 45 and 60 currently comprise 22.1% of the state’s population, or approximately 2.8 million people. It is clear that in the coming years, with little population growth, Pennsylvania will experience a significant rise in its aging population which will have a significant impact on the delivery of services. As many domestic and sexual violence service providers in Pennsylvania will attest, the elderly victims with whom they work have often experienced a lifetime of abuse and trauma at the hands of intimate partners and family members. For some, the first time that someone has intervened to break this intergenerational cycle of violence is when their plight comes to the attention of Adult Protective Services. OVS and the Consumer Protection Division of the

Pennsylvania Department of Aging work together to identify opportunities to bring victim services and adult protective services together to work for the benefit of elder victims. One way that this collaboration occurs is through the encouragement of Adult Protective Service staff to participate on STOP Collaborative Teams. When this happens, elder victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking receive services that promote victim safety, preserve elders' independence and meet their needs for justice in both the criminal and civil system.

Economy

Historically, Pennsylvania has been known for its abundance of natural resources such as coal, oil and timber. These natural resources played a vital role in its ascendancy to a position as an industrial powerhouse in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the last quarter of the 20th Century saw a major decline in Pennsylvania's coal, steel and manufacturing base. Pennsylvania, like other states heavily reliant on industrial production, still struggles to adjust to the economic environment of the 21st Century. Currently, natural resources (shale gas drilling in particular), agricultural enterprises, the healthcare industry, financial services, and the scientific and technical research sectors drive Pennsylvania's economy.

Like many states, Pennsylvania continues to emerge from the long-term impacts of the national recession that began in 2007. While economists generally agree that the collapse of state revenues "bottomed out" in 2010, revenues have started to grow but are not robust enough to indicate a full recovery (Elizabeth McNichol, 2012). When revenues fall short, states are forced to make difficult decisions about publicly funded programs. While many state-funded programs received cuts, the reductions to state allocations for domestic violence and sexual assault services as well as programs under the broad umbrella of "human services" have created a difficult environment to adequately serve violence against women victims.

So far, the economic discussion has centered on Pennsylvania's statewide landscape. It is equally important to drill down to the level of how the recession has impacted the average Pennsylvanian. According to the American Community Survey, released on September 22, 2011, poverty in urban areas of Pennsylvania rose from 12.7% in pre-recession 2007 to an estimated 15.9 % in 2011. In rural areas of Pennsylvania, the poverty levels rose from 8.1% in 2007 to 9.5% in 2011. While the economy is slowly improving, many Pennsylvania families are still struggling to make ends meet. This impact translates to a growing demand for basic human needs including nutrition, healthcare and housing --- all of which many victims of violence against women crimes must obtain as a fundamental step on their road to safety and economic security.

Meeting the basic needs of victims becomes even more daunting when one considers the state of public services facing victims and service providers in Pennsylvania. According to a report, *State of Hunger: Pennsylvania 2013*, prepared by the Coalition Against Hunger, nearly 1.6 million Pennsylvanians, or 1 in 8 residents, struggle to put food on the table every year (2). The expiration of the increased benefit amounts under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act compounds this problem. It is estimated that this results in a \$36 per month reduction for a family of four. While this might not seem like much, it results in 21 lost meals per month for a family of four (Lubrano). The reductions to SNAP are only part of the challenge. Several years ago, Pennsylvania imposed an asset test for recipients of SNAP as a way to counteract instances of "welfare fraud". This action has had the unfortunate effect of disqualifying thousands of seniors and families with modest savings from the program. The current Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare has pledged to review the asset test in light of these findings.

A final challenge that victims face is a "Three Strikes Rule" under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. One of the requirements under TANF is that recipients participate in the Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency Through Employment and Training (RESET) Program, which is intended to assist recipients in finding gainful employment by providing training to increase job readiness and consultation to assist recipients on their job search. If a caseworker reports a TANF recipient for non-compliance with RESET, she is given two opportunities to comply. If she is reported for a third incident, she and her children are permanently banned from receiving cash benefits through TANF. It is one thing when a TANF recipient simply refuses to adhere to program guidelines; however, for a TANF recipient who is trying to liberate herself from reliance on an abusive partner, these rules are counterproductive. There are many opportunities for an abuser to sabotage a TANF recipient's participation in RESET, from promising but failing to provide childcare to threatening the victim because of participation. PCADV has been a strong advocate for TANF recipients in these circumstances, and has worked extensively with the Department of Public Welfare to educate them on this particular issue.

Finally, no discussion of the economy of Pennsylvania and its relationship to violence against women would be complete without a discussion of the current economic climate's effect on those providing services to victims. Pennsylvania's economic challenges have severely affected Pennsylvania's network of community- and system-based victim service providers.

In addition to STOP funds, PCCD administers federal VOCA funding as well as two state funding streams that support procedural services in the criminal and juvenile justice systems for victims of crime. These three sources of funding have experienced fluctuations in the amounts available over the last several years. The allocation for the state Victims of Juvenile Offenders (VOJO) Program has experienced the greatest fluctuation because it is a line item in

Pennsylvania's budget. From 2009 through 2012, Pennsylvania utilized a combination of federal stimulus funding and state compensation funds to keep services to victims of juvenile offenders available despite a 50% reduction in funds. While VOJO funding was restored in Pennsylvania's 2012-2013 budget, the allocation amount remained at 50% of what it had been in prior years. The other state funding stream, Rights and Services Act (RASA), is funded through a penalty assessment on convicted criminals which goes into a state Crime Victims Fund. However, the amount of penalties being paid into Pennsylvania's Crime Victims Fund is not at the rate needed to keep RASA solvent over an extended period of time. Even the federal VOCA allocation to Pennsylvania has been affected as programs experienced a 12% decrease in funding for FY 2012/13 and had 11.3% of that cut restored in the next year due to the raising of the cap on the Crime Victims Fund from \$705 Million to \$730 Million. While the restoration was a positive event, the funds came too late for programs that had already cut staffing or reduced programming.

At the state level, funding for domestic violence services has steadily decreased over the last five years. The state's 2013-2014 budget provided a modest increase to line items for domestic violence and sexual assault services, but these increases were not enough to undo losses and cost of living impacts over the last decade. Consecutive years of fiscal uncertainty have taken a toll on victim service providers. According to results of a needs assessment undertaken by PCCD's OVS in 2013, victim service agencies have an average staff turnover rate of 42%. The reasons for this turnover are no surprise. They include, but are not limited to: need for higher pay and better benefits, desire for career advancement, lack of enjoyment of work and burnout. Other effects of the economic climate on victim service providers include:

- Waiting lists for services - especially shelters;

- Termination of specialized programs such as programs focusing on elder victims and persons with disabilities;
- Reductions in hours that programs are open for services; and
- Forced triaging of cases which has caused some victims to not receive services which could benefit their recovery.

Crime Statistics

It is challenging to obtain accurate statistics on the incidence of violence against women crimes in Pennsylvania. Despite the progress made during the past three decades in dispelling the myths around sexual assault and domestic violence, there are still powerful social barriers that help to keep these crimes hidden. As a result, there may be a large discrepancy between the number of violence against women crimes reported to law enforcement in comparison to the number of victims seeking services at victim service programs. Additionally, crime statistics for domestic violence are difficult to obtain because Pennsylvania does not have a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence and, as illustrated below, the UCR captures all offenses against family and children and includes a range of criminal activity including, but not limited to domestic violence. Further, the criminal [statutes](#) relating to intimate partner violence may be camouflaged within a range of crimes including: homicide; simple or aggravated assault; threats (or menacing); endangerment; criminal coercion; kidnapping; unlawful imprisonment; sexual offenses; trespassing; or harassment. Finally, Pennsylvania statistics regarding the incidence of dating violence are difficult to obtain because there is no statewide effort to reporting such crimes and the public has very little knowledge of the issue.

With that said, the following chart depicting Pennsylvania's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data merely provides a sketch regarding the extent of domestic violence and sexual

assault in the Commonwealth. The following UCR chart does not capture incidents without police reports and the chart does not adequately capture the domestic-related crimes delineated above.

Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Related Incidents:

Offense	Total	> 18	< 18	White	Black	Indian	Asian	Minority*
Forcible Rape	3,140	1,303	1,837	2,237	877	3	23	900
Sexual Offenses**	5,899	4,018	1,881	4,574	1,260	10	55	1,315
Offenses Against Family and Children	2,252	1,415	837	1,841	393	0	18	411

Source: Uniformed Crime Report 2011

* Minority is a total of Black, Indian, and Asian

**excluding Rape and Prostitution

To shore-up Pennsylvania's imprecise domestic violence statistics and emphasize the short and long term service impact of intimate partner violence in the Commonwealth, PCADV reported that their member programs served a total of 90,969 unduplicated victims in 2011 (78,105 adult victims, 5,663 adult significant other victims, and 7,201 child victims).

Additionally, PCAR reported that their member programs served a total of 30,083 unduplicated victims in 2011 (11,578 adult victims, 10,570 adult significant others and 7,935 child victims) during the same year. While imperfect, this additional information offers a somewhat fuller picture of the breadth and depth of violence against women crimes in Pennsylvania- regardless of whether victims report to law enforcement or when the crime occurred.

Moreover, what the above UCR chart does not capture is the number of domestic violence-related homicides. To counter this, PCADV scans Pennsylvania media outlets in order to identify and track domestic violence- fatalities. In 2011, PCADV reported that there were 166 total fatalities and, more recently, PCADV reports in their 2012 [Fatality Review Report](#) that there were 105 separate fatalities.

In addition to the criminal justice response to domestic violence, incidents of domestic violence can also include civil legal remedies via requests for Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders. According to AOPC, in 2011 there were 41,064 new PFA requests filed. Of those requests, 41,038 (99.9%) of those filed were requesting temporary orders. The data reveals that 4,648 (11.3%) were denied, and 36,390 (88.7%) were granted. As a comparison, according to the 2011 STOP Annual Reports in 31 of 67 counties, 739 temporary PFA orders were requested and only 515 temporary orders were granted (70%).

Stalking

In Pennsylvania, statistics on stalking are very difficult to acquire. Pennsylvania's [stalking statute](#) (18 Pa.C.S. §2709.1) is cross referenced and reported by law enforcement as "Other Assaults-Not Aggravated" or "Disorderly Conduct." Additionally, stalking behaviors could also be reported as harassment or other types of crimes depending on the facts of the case. As noted by a prosecutor serving on the STOP Planning Team, "Stalking and human trafficking are often subsumed under other charges which limit remedies to victims. For example, reporting 'stalking' as 'harassment' is inaccurate and makes the acts perpetrated appear less serious and impactful on the victim than they actually are." These charging decisions seem to be substantiated in the annual progress reports received under STOP. Out of the 12,045

unduplicated domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims served with STOP funding in 2012 , subgrantees only identified a mere 176 stalking victims served (1.5%).

Teen Dating Violence

Reliable teen dating violence statistics for Pennsylvania are also problematic to acquire. However, in April 2009, Liz Claiborne Inc. and the Family Violence Prevention Fund commissioned an online survey to poll teens and parents of teens about levels of teen dating violence and parental engagement around this topic. With a 95% confidence level, this report found that nearly 1 in 3 teen respondents reported actual physical or sexual abuse or threats of physical abuse; and, nearly half of teens in relationships reported being controlled, threatened and pressured to do things they did not want to do. Furthermore, 80% of respondents reported knowing someone their age that has been a victim of controlling behaviors from a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Anecdotally, information from PCAR, PCADV, and Pennsylvania's STOP funded programs indicates that the findings on dating violence at the national level are mirrored at the state level. It is important to note, however, some STOP-funded counties report that, "many high school aged teens do not *define* controlling or threatening behaviors as *dating violence*" yet the consequences of dating violence can be fatal. PCADV's Domestic Violence Fatality Reports for 2008 through 2010 identify eight victims of dating violence. Four victims were between the ages of 13 - 18, and four victims were 19 years old.

IV. PRIORITIES AND APPROACHES

This section outlines the specific priorities of Pennsylvania's STOP Violence Against Women Grant Program and describes the approaches that the Commonwealth will take to address them.

1. Identified Goals

Since the inception of the STOP Violence Against Women Program in Pennsylvania during the mid 1990's, VSAC has maintained four over-arching goals to guide its funding decisions regarding STOP. While these goals have sustained minor adjustments over the years, the 2013 Reauthorization of STOP provides an opportunity to address domestic violence homicide reduction as an initiative. These goals, and specific objectives for the 2013-2015 competitive funding cycle are as follows:

A. Reducing and eventually eliminating violence against women in Pennsylvania through a vigorous and effective coordinated response among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services that holds offenders accountable and prioritizes victim safety.

Objective: To fund up to 30 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties to institute a STOP Coordinating Team responsible for creating, implementing and maintaining a coordinated response to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

B. Increasing the understanding of the dynamics of sexual assault and domestic violence within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, among service providers and allied professionals within educational and healthcare institutions, and among community members.

Objective: To fund a minimum of three projects, statewide in scope, that utilize the expertise of the state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions and other subject matter experts

to design and deliver a range of training and technical assistance to judges, law enforcement, victim advocates, prosecutors and allied professionals.

- C. Promoting a vigorous and effective response to violence against women among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services by providing appropriate training and technical assistance; mandating protocol development; and funding county and statewide initiatives, including lethality assessment programs that enhance service providers' capacity to respond effectively.

Objective 1: To fund a minimum of 20 local STOP Projects that contain a goal of training law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocates and allied professionals on violence against women issues.

Objective 2: To mandate protocol development for response to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in all currently funded STOP counties.

Objective 3: To provide training and technical assistance to enable at least 30 Pennsylvania Counties to fully implement the Maryland Model of Lethality Assessment.

- D. Enhancing the capacity of victim service agencies to provide expanded and culturally relevant services by encouraging grantees to gather and review demographic data for their service areas, identify culturally specific and/or underserved populations and develop services to meet the needs of such victims.

Objective: To fund a minimum of 15 STOP Projects having a component that meaningfully addresses the needs of Pennsylvania's growing Latino and Elderly populations.

The goals and objectives discussed above can be related to the following statutory purpose areas. As mentioned previously, these purpose areas will remain intact until January 1, 2016 when the next competitive STOP award becomes effective:

1. Training law enforcement officers, judges and other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence;
2. Developing, training or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
3. Developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
4. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services programs, including sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services to underserved populations, providing specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are granted, and increasing reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women, including crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
5. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing stalking;
6. Training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault;
7. Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, including recognizing, investigating, and

prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled individuals; and

8. Providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in immigration matters.

To ensure transparency and accountability, Pennsylvania will continue to strengthen its administration of STOP funding by maintaining collaborative relationships with PCADV, PCAR, OVA, the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association (PDAA), the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA). Each of these partners brings special knowledge and expertise needed for effective discussion of policy, practice, program implementation and funding issues within the context of stopping violence against women in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania will also continue to meaningfully engage representatives from underserved populations to ensure 10% of the victim services' 30% allocation is invested in culturally relevant programming and is equitably distributed across the state. The Pennsylvania competitive solicitation states, "Prospective STOP applicants are strongly encouraged to review current census data for their county at www.census.gov. PCCD recognizes that there are few organizations in the Commonwealth that possess the skills and experience to provide both victim services and services to underserved populations. It is expected that partnerships will be formed between established victim service agencies and programs providing services to underserved populations. In review of the competitive STOP applications, reviewers will give priority to applications received from organizations that demonstrate a history of working effectively together to serve an underserved population. **Applications proposing to serve underserved**

populations must have meaningful representation of the underserved population on the STOP Grant Coordinating Team.”

Lastly, in the following *Priority Areas: Section (C)*, the Plan will address (1) STOP Priorities for 2013-2015 - honoring the goals/objectives for current subgrantees and (2) New Initiatives for STOP 2014-2016 - effective with the forthcoming STOP 2016-2018 competitive award starting on January 1, 2016.

2. Relation to Prior Implementation Plans

Pennsylvania's Plan for 2014-2016 builds upon and strengthens prior Plans submitted to the federal Office on Violence Against Women. Due to the severe and prolonged economic challenges within the Commonwealth, the 2014-2016 STOP Plan is focused on sustaining core victim services by supporting victim advocacy positions, specialized criminal justice units, training initiatives, enhanced collaborative partnerships and statewide initiatives.

3. Priority Areas

PCCD is honoring the priority objectives outlined in Pennsylvania's 2013-2015 STOP Plan because we have funded 31 projects through December 31, 2015. Pennsylvania will continue to meet the mandated allocation percentages of 25% for law enforcement, 25% for prosecution, 30% for victim services with 10% of that funding for underserved populations, 15% for discretionary and 5% to the judiciary. Pennsylvania is aware that beginning in March 2015, it will have to utilize 20% of its STOP funding to support projects that meaningfully address sexual assault across two or more purpose areas. It is our belief that the current structure of Pennsylvania's STOP grants lends itself to meeting or exceeding the 20% allocation for sexual assault services. Specifically, most of our STOP awards support dedicated sexual assault prosecutors, county detectives and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners. Additionally, PCAR

receives STOP funding and has used it to create judicial bench books, educate Pennsylvania counties on responding to human trafficking, facilitate multidisciplinary trainings on compliance with STOP's forensic exam certifications, and educate criminal justice system personnel on the use of expert testimony in sexual assault cases. In coming years, PCCD will require subgrantees to document the amount of funds expended for sexual assault services, per discipline, as a component of their annual progress reports.

With a goal of reducing incidents of violence against women, including domestic violence homicides, Pennsylvania's major focus over the next three years will be accomplished through 31 local projects and four statewide initiatives. Local projects include support for (1) core victim services; (2) specialized criminal justice units for law enforcement and prosecution; (3) regional training opportunities for both community-based and governmental-based responders to violence against women incidents and (4) enhanced collaborative partnerships to reinforce holistic responses to victims' emotional, mental, physical, economic, spiritual, practical and social needs.

Additionally, PCCD will provide dedicated funding for statewide initiatives to support the response to violence against women incidents throughout the Commonwealth's 67 counties. The statewide projects include funding for a (1) Virtual Law Enforcement Network, (2) Training and Technical Assistance for the Response to Sexual Assault, (3) Training and Technical Assistance for the Response to Domestic Violence and (4) Domestic Violence Homicide Reduction Initiatives.

1. Priority Areas for 2013-2015

Local Initiatives

▪ Core Victims' Services

Over the last five years, OVS has made significant efforts to gather information about the organizational and service delivery capacity of the programs it funds. We have learned that 65% of the programs have experienced significant funding cuts, 14% have had to lay off staff, and 45% of them have five or less full time equivalents in their employ. In such an environment, even the most dedicated victim service professionals will struggle to provide services in an effective manner. Additionally, the potential risk of professionals suffering from compassion fatigue/burnout could increase exponentially when there is not enough staff and not enough time for staff to respond to the best of their ability. The STOP Plan intends to support sufficient victim services' positions to enable them to adequately meet the following service areas regardless of the complexity of victims' needs:

- Crisis Intervention;
- Supportive counseling through either individual sessions or groups;
- Victim advocacy and accompaniment within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, healthcare, immigration, financial and/or educational institutions, etc.;
- Legal advocacy;
- Emergency housing;
- Safety planning;
- Sexual Assault Response Teams;
- Crime Victims' Compensation assistance;
- Language services (i.e. provision of interpretation and/or translation); and
- Transportation assistance.

- Specialized Criminal Justice Units

As OVS staff monitor programs and obtain feedback from those working in the field, staff is continually reminded of the critical nature of cultivating expertise in investigation and prosecution of violence against women cases. Such crimes are highly complex. They involve dynamics of power and control, discussion of issues that often remain difficult to talk about from a social and/or cultural perspective, and involve a significant degree of violence or threat of violence that makes it challenging for victims to come forward or cooperate with the justice system. Additionally, the general public often engages in practices that put the blame on the victim for the violence perpetrated against her/him instead of focusing attention on the activities of the offender.

As STOP subgrantees explain, this dynamic plays out in county courtrooms across Pennsylvania, particularly in sexual assault cases. Having a dedicated detective(s) or law enforcement officer(s) who understands the complexity of violence against women crimes, who can interview a victim in a sensitive yet effective manner, and who can collect evidence that can help convict an offender is invaluable to maintaining an effective STOP Program. Similarly, maintaining a dedicated, well-trained prosecutor(s) in a District Attorney's Office who understands evidence-based prosecution (to offset compelling victims to testify) is critical to victim safety and holding offenders accountable.

Specialized units under STOP create an atmosphere in which both the investigatory and prosecutorial disciplines develop an understanding of victim behavior within the context of sexual and domestic violence. They use that understanding to cultivate victims' trust and safety and to further support victims' participation in the criminal or juvenile justice systems. They also understand the reasons why a victim may not want to participate in the criminal or juvenile

justice systems. In these situations, law enforcement and prosecution draw upon their training and experience to effectively collect and preserve evidence, document injuries, record witness statements, identify dominant aggressors, and document prior violence and intimidation by the suspect so that prosecution can proceed with or without a victim's testimony.

C. Training

Training is an important educational activity that contributes to the provision of quality services to victims, improved investigative techniques for law enforcement and enhanced prosecutorial skills in the response to violence against women incidents. The STOP Implementation Plan for the current award period includes educational opportunities for targeted audiences such as judges, municipal law enforcement and state police; campus police; probation officers; prosecuting attorneys; victim services' staff; emergency medical services' staff; emergency room personnel; behavioral health and social services' providers; sexual assault nurse examiners; magisterial district judges; park rangers; prothonotaries; dispatchers; student nurses; student resident advisors; student government groups; Homeland Security; FBI; and representatives from Children and Youth, Office on Aging, faith-based institutions, and Juvenile Detention personnel.

Through input from the Implementation Planning Team, STOP-funded projects, and statewide collaborative partners, the following training topics are prioritized for local and/or regional STOP-funded projects during FY 2014-2016:

- Trauma-informed responses including counterintuitive victim behavior, delayed reporting, and the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence;

- Domestic violence homicide reduction through the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) facilitated by PCADV;
- Criminal Justice training including evidence-based prosecution, identifying dominant aggressors, human trafficking, sex offender profiles, homicide investigations, and digital stalking and other technology threats; and
- Civil legal training including U-Visa and VAWA self petitions, immigration issues, and Protection From Abuse orders including Full Faith and Credit.

A noteworthy example of how training can make a positive difference in the response to violence against women is through Cambria County's STOP-funded law enforcement scholarship program. When the Alliance of Local Service Organizations (ALSO), the national technical assistance provider for STOP, heard about the success of Cambria County's scholarship training program, ALSO collaborated with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to offer a full scholarship for five Cambria County police chiefs to attend IACP's *Law Enforcement Supervisor's Training* in Savannah, Georgia in November 2013. Following the conference, the Chiefs selected five action items including (1) Developing a county-wide report writing protocol, (2) Developing and implementing a protocol to conduct a threat/lethality assessment with every domestic violence case (3) Identifying and targeting strangulation cases for prosecution (4) Lessening the incidence of dropped charges or increasing the likelihood of prosecution and (5) Building a library of training videos and materials for officers to access. These action items have greatly augmented Cambria County's law enforcement's response to violence against women and will be institutionalized through a revision of their domestic violence and sexual assault protocols.

D. Collaborative Partnerships

The STOP Formula Grant was created to ensure multidisciplinary collaboration among victim services, law enforcement and prosecution. Because collaboration is a foundational requirement, all Pennsylvania counties receiving STOP funds are required to have active Coordinating Teams. The purpose of the Coordinating Team is to provide leadership and direction to the STOP Project through ongoing collaboration among representatives from the required membership list as well as relevant representation from the suggested membership list as follows:

Required Membership:

Required membership for STOP Coordinating Teams includes the following positions or their designees: director of the domestic violence program(s); director of the sexual assault program(s); district attorney ; chief adult probation officer; chief juvenile probation officer; Pennsylvania State Police station commander; and chief of police of the major police department(s) in the county.

Suggested Membership:

Suggested membership can include the following positions or their designees: county/municipal officials; magisterial district judges; common pleas judges; adult/child protective services' staff; victim/witness coordinators; civil legal attorneys; county prison release notification staff; state parole agents; healthcare professionals; and sex offender/batterer treatment program representatives.

Coordinating Teams:

Additionally, Coordinating Teams must meet a minimum of at least four times each year throughout the life of the project. The Coordinating Teams are responsible for evaluating

systemic responses; identifying risk factors and trends in violence against women cases; addressing policy issues; recommending proposals for funding; ensuring continuing compliance with STOP grant certifications; and reviewing/revising domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking protocols.

Collaborative Initiatives

Through expanding STOP Team memberships and/or conducting cross-systems training at the local level, STOP Projects can position themselves to bolster victims' safety, healing, economic security/independence. The following case from Mifflin County is a poignant example of efforts to collaborate at the local level.

Amy (not her real name) and her five children fled abuse after many years of living in fear and violence. Amy had contacted the local domestic violence hotline multiple times over several years and had employed a safety plan for herself and her children developed during the hotline calls. Pregnant with her sixth child, Amy was being threatened with a baseball bat by her abuser as her children waited by the door; all were prepared to exit when Amy gave them the code word created as part of her safety plan. At the right moment they all made their way to the van where they were able to make a hasty escape to the domestic violence shelter.

Her abuser filed for visitation and was quickly granted it. After initially being granted Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Amy's benefits were abruptly stopped. This happened because her TANF caseworker had seen her with her abuser during her exchange for visitation and presumed that she was living with him again. Rather than checking the facts, the caseworker told Amy that she was filing welfare fraud charges against her. Not only did the caseworker not believe Amy's explanation for being seen with her abuser, but she also subjected Amy to demeaning treatment. Next, Amy discovered that her applications with the local housing agencies were being held up because her credit had

been badly damaged by her abuser. The list of deterrents continued for Amy, prompting her to give serious consideration to returning to her violent relationship. Amy felt that the semi-predictability of her abusive relationship might be more palatable than the obstacles she was encountering.

Recognizing that this may be the only opportunity that Amy may have to start anew, the staff of the domestic violence shelter went to work to quickly to employ personal and systems advocacy to assist this beleaguered survivor. The staff was able to provide some substantial credit repair by educating some of Amy's creditors about the financial implications that go hand in hand with domestic violence and by using community donations to offset some of the debts she could not meet. Further, the staff contacted the executive director of the county's welfare office to make a plea for Amy's situation. Upon hearing of the incident with the TANF caseworker, Amy's benefits were restored. The caseworker was later reprimanded for her failure to fully explore the circumstances behind seeing Amy with her abuser.

With resources restored and the added benefit of relocation funds provided, Amy pressed on and was eventually able to move to her own place. After having her baby, she was able to find employment with the help of the local Career Link and Adult Education Services Center. She is now living violence-free with her six happy and healthy children for the first time in many, many years.

Moreover, STOP Projects currently report the following multidisciplinary initiatives to enhance the response to victims' medical, legal, emotional and financial needs for the Project period 2013-2015:

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Committees to assess the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and make recommendations to address SANE turnover, project costs, and the expansion of the SANE model.

- County Crime Victims with Disabilities Multidisciplinary Response Team to ensure appropriate expertise guides the response to victims;
- Human Trafficking Response Teams to ensure victim-centered civil/criminal justice systems' responses to human trafficking victims;
- Multidisciplinary victim surveys to assess cross-system outcomes in order to evaluate outcomes via victim feedback.;
- Court initiatives to ensure safety and security procedures in the courthouse for victims filing protection from abuse orders;
- Partnerships with educational institutions, Latina/migrant worker communities and federal agencies such as the FBI and Department of Homeland Security to ensure victims' needs are customized based on their circumstances;
- Business partnerships to help identify/assist human trafficking victims;
- Partnerships with the Adult Protective Services and allied organizations. (i.e., working with volunteers from Meals on Wheels) to assess victim safety and provide customized outreach; and
- Campus partnerships to train pre-professional students on the dynamics of violence against women incidents in their course of study including Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, Criminology, and Art Therapy to bolster community-based resources for victims.

Statewide Initiatives

A. Virtual Training Network

In 2010, PCCD began to fund an innovative project with PCPA. This project, "Virtual Training Under STOP" supported a collaboration between PCPA, PCADV and PCAR to develop

web-based training modules for Pennsylvania municipal law enforcement officers. PCPA currently has five courses dealing with violence against women issues on the Pennsylvania Virtual Training Network. Topics covered include *Responding to Domestic Violence Calls*, *Investigating Sexual Assault*, *Investigating Strangulation*, *Investigating Stalking*, and *The Protection From Abuse Database*. A sixth course on Human Trafficking will be completed and launched by the first quarter of 2014.. Courses to be developed and added for 2014 include an overview of Pennsylvania's Protection from Abuse Act with an emphasis on state and federal firearms prohibitions and identification of dominant aggressors in heterosexual and homosexual domestic violence situations.

These forthcoming modules will enable local law enforcement in Pennsylvania to receive critical training without the expense of registration fees, travel, overtime and/or the diversion of officers from their primary duty of public safety. Building on the strength of this program, it is important to note that since the launch of the first violence against women module, 2,460 officers have been trained with a total of 2,122 training hours as follows:

Training Topic	Total # of Participants	Total # of Training Hours
Responding to Domestic Violence	809	971
Investigating Sexual Assault	342	317
Strangulation	715	536
Stalking	342	171
Protection From Abuse Database	252	127
Total	2,460	2,122

B. Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) Training and Technical Assistance

PCAR provides training; technical assistance and resource development to better enhance the criminal justice system's identification and response to victims of sexual violence. Training is targeted to law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges and victim advocates and includes the following topics:

- Cultural Considerations for Latina Victims of Sexual Violence;
- Creating and Managing Multi-County Human Trafficking Response Teams;
- Technology and the Normalization of Sexually Abusive Behaviors;
- Recently Enacted Legislation on the Use of Expert Witness Testimony for Sexual Violence;
- Updates to a Sexual Violence Bench Book for common pleas and magisterial district judges; and
- A Guide for Juvenile Court Judges on Identifying Adolescent Girls Victimized through Sex Trafficking.

C. *Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) Training and Technical Assistance*

The STOP Plan will continue to support PCADV's statewide training and technical assistance initiatives that include:

- Educational webinars for judges;
- Quarterly publications of the STOP Newsletter (done in partnership with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape), the Jurist Newsletter and Court Access Newsletter;
- Revision and automation of a Pennsylvania Domestic Violence Bench Book for Judges and creation of a bench book for Pennsylvania's Magisterial District Judges;
- Site visits to county STOP Coordinating Teams and Judges to provide focused technical assistance on compliance with federal certifications under STOP;
- Technical assistance with county domestic violence protocol revisions;

- Training and technical assistance on many topics including Full Faith and Credit enforcement of protection orders; responding to domestic violence victims who have immigration issues; the dynamics of and responses to dating violence; the Protection From Abuse Database (PFAD); incorporating the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) into STOP initiatives; conducting effective STOP Team meetings; and practical resources for the response to stalking and campus dating violence.

D. Domestic Violence Homicide Reduction

PCADV is taking the lead on introduction of Maryland's evidence-based LAP model in Pennsylvania. Maryland's nationally lauded LAP <http://mnadv.org/lethality/what-is-lap/>, developed by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence in conjunction with Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell, is an evidence-based, innovative approach that applies Dr. Campbell's research on lethality and danger assessment to forge critical connections between the risks that abuse victims face and the policies and procedures that ensure effective and safe responses by law enforcement and domestic violence programs.

Maryland's LAP is the direct outgrowth of years of extensive research by Dr. Campbell that produced the following three key findings:

- In 50% of domestic violence-related homicides, police officers had previously responded to a call involving the same victim;
- The re-assault rate of domestic violence victims in high danger was reduced by more than 60% if they went into shelter; and
- Only 4% of domestic violence murder victims nationwide had ever availed themselves of the services of a domestic violence program.

These key findings inform communities that, in addition to the challenge of identifying victims at high risk of being killed, there is the corollary challenge of connecting victims to the services of a domestic violence program and services that demonstrably save lives.

Currently, LAP is being implemented in 22 domestic violence programs and 49 police departments in 17 counties across Pennsylvania. Data collected since the initial implementation of LAP in October 2012 demonstrates impressive results. As of December 2013, 948 high-risk screens had been completed by law enforcement; 72% of those victims were identified as being at high risk of lethality. Of those high-risk victims, 77% agreed to speak with a hotline advocate while the police officer was still on the scene. Of those who spoke to an advocate, 61% came to the program to receive further services.

Ten of Pennsylvania's 31 counties with STOP teams are using Lethality Assessment (Please see Appendix E for a map documenting STOP funded counties and LAP's pilot project counties). Over the next two years, PCADV will work with the remaining 21 STOP funded counties to introduce the LAP model of response. One of the most ambitious aspects of this is working with Allegheny County, which includes the city of Pittsburgh where implementation of LAP began in December 2013 in all 6 police zones, involving over 800 police officers who have been trained in the model protocol. It is anticipated that the lessons learned through implementation of LAP in Pennsylvania's second largest city will be invaluable as PCADV works to encourage other metropolitan areas in the state to embrace LAP.

It is Pennsylvania's goal to implement LAP statewide as a proven means of reducing domestic violence homicides. In addition, PCADV will explore the Jeanne Geiger High Risk Team Model to determine how it may serve to enhance the work currently underway to reduce domestic violence fatalities in Pennsylvania by incorporating a model that will focus on offender accountability as a means to reduce domestic violence fatalities.

1. Priority Recommendations for STOP Awards 2016-2018

Some of the recommendations received during STOP's 2014-2016 Implementation planning period went beyond the currently funded goals/objectives for STOP's competitive award period ending December 31, 2015. Overall, the STOP Implementation Planning team recommended that, for the next planning cycle, the purpose areas under VAWA 2013 be reviewed and that the purpose areas be expanded based on Pennsylvania's crime trends and emerging issues. OVS will further assess the following recommendations for inclusion into STOP's 2016-2018 competitive application process. Final approval of the following recommendations will be made by the Victims' Services Advisory Committee which reviews and approves all STOP policy and priorities for victim services:

Recommendations for Expanded Collaboration

- Partner with probation and parole to develop judicial education topics.
- Expand STOP Team membership to include healthcare and behavioral health systems.
- Expand collaborative partnerships with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and educators.
- Expand collaborative partnerships to include representation from the Office of Developmental Disabilities, mental health, Bureau of Autism Services and other underserved groups to ensure needed expertise on responding to persons with disabilities is included in the implementation of STOP.
- Bolster collaboration between juvenile, civil and criminal justice systems to strengthen cross-system coordination.
- Expand regional and interstate partnerships to address inter-jurisdictional issues.

Recommendations for Judiciary

- Convert PCAR's Bench Book on Sexual Violence into a webinar format.
- Create easier access to the links for translated PFA materials on the AOPC's website.
- Consider bail decisions in domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking cases based on lethality assessments - and deny bail where appropriate.

Recommendations for Law Enforcement

- Broaden statewide funding to include technology-assisted resources (such as Smart Phone apps) that could help promote more consistent victim referrals for appropriate services.

Recommendations for Underserved Populations

- Prioritize training on the needs of and services for victims with complex communication, cognitive impairment, etc.
- Expand and customize services for elder victims of domestic and sexual abuse.
- Prioritize translation/interpreter services.

Recommendations for Prosecution

- Collaborate with the PDAA to incorporate violence against women training for all new assistant district attorneys.

Recommendations for Victim Services

- Require trauma-informed responses.

- Prioritize holistic victim responses - including economic security.
- Prioritize stalking initiatives.

2. Grant-making Strategy

PCCD initiated a competitive grant making process open to all 67 counties in Pennsylvania for calendar years 2013-2015 in order to prioritize areas of varying geographic size and support counties showing the greatest need. Additionally, as mentioned in the Priority Section under *Collaborative Partnerships*, all successful applicants must have STOP Coordinating Teams comprised of victim services, law enforcement, prosecution and probation/parole. Victim services organizations, as required members of STOP Teams, fully participate in the development of STOP applications before they are submitted to PCCD to ensure proposed activities promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims.

PCCD completed the following steps for Pennsylvania's most recent competitive award:

1. The funding announcement was released to the field on August 23, 2012 with applications due by October 1, 2012 (Attachment F).
2. A "STOP Resource Account" was established on August 22, 2012 on PCCD's website to coincide with the release of the STOP Funding Announcement. The purpose of the resource account was to take questions from prospective grantees. The resource account was checked on a daily basis, with questions forwarded to OVS staff for research and response. Responses were posted to the PCCD website as questions were answered so that they were available for all applicants to see.
3. Three WebEx informational sessions for prospective grantees were held on August 30, 2012, September 5, 2012 and September 7, 2012.

4. Staff from OVS recruited independent reviewers to read and score the applications received.

Tasks associated with this included:

- Identify potential reviewers - completed *mid September 2012*.
- Assess potential reviewer interest and commitment to the review process - completed *late September 2012*.
- Reviewer training - *completed October 4, 2012*
- Collection of Scores and Identification of successful applications - *completed November 2, 2012*.
- Approval of Applications by the Statewide Victims' Services Advisory Committee - *completed November 13, 2012*.
- Full approval by the Commission - *completed December 11, 2012*
- Start date of funding for successful STOP applications: *January 1, 2013 for the initial year of funding. The second year continuation awards were approved by the Commission on December 11, 2013 with an effective date beginning January 1, 2012.*

OVS engaged in numerous efforts to make the field aware of the availability of STOP 2013-2015 funding. This included notices in the OVS's biweekly newsletter, which has a mailing list of over 800 individuals throughout Pennsylvania. An email was sent to all currently funded victim service agencies, letting them know that STOP funding was available. PCCD's website features a prominent "What's New at PCCD?" section on its landing page, and information about the availability of STOP Funding was featured there during the entire time the solicitation was open.

PCCD's Egrants System also automatically generates notices of funding announcements to all subscribers; so potential applicants on the Egrants registration list were informed of the

availability of STOP funding. We also worked with our collaborative partners such as PCADV, PCAR, PCPA and VSAC members to “get the word out” about the availability of the STOP funding.

PCCD utilizes an electronic grants management system, Egrants, for all of its applications. All the competitive STOP applications had to be submitted via the Egrants System by midnight October 1, 2012. Pennsylvania does not require a match for STOP Projects because it was granted permission from OVW to use the state's budgetary allocations to domestic violence and sexual assault services to meet the match requirement at the state level.

As noted above, OVS recruited a team of independent reviewers for the competitive STOP applications. These reviewers are drawn from national organizations, state coalitions, state and local law enforcement, state agencies, VSAC members and OVS staff. As per PCCD policy, all reviewers were required to read the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy and sign a reviewer responsibility form. Additionally, all reviewers participated in a training conducted by PCCD staff to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the merits of the STOP applications as well as ability to use PCCD's Egrants System. Review Team members had the month of October to review the STOP applications. All scores from review team members were required to be submitted in PCCD's Egrants system by midnight October 31, 2012.

Staff assessed the scoring of the competitive STOP applications. This included holding a score reconciliation call to discuss applications for which there were divergent scores. Every effort was made to ensure equitable distribution on a geographic basis and that the 10% requirement for services to underserved populations was met.

Currently funded STOP projects were mailed an invitation to apply for their second year of funding on August 29, 2013. STOP subgrantees were required to complete a continuation application in Egrants by September 16, 2013 for an award period January 1, 2014 through

December 31, 2014. VSAC approved the continuation awards on October 30, 2013 and the Commission made the final approval on December 11, 2013.

3. Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims

PCCD is committed to cultural competency in the delivery of services by funding projects that improve meaningful access to services for communities of color and other underserved populations. In order to meet the set-aside for culturally specific services, STOP applicants are strongly encouraged to review current census data for their counties; form partnerships with programs providing services to underserved populations; and have meaningful representation of the underserved population on the STOP Coordinating Team. Furthermore, competitive applicants are advised that reviewers will give priority to applications received from organizations that demonstrate a history of working effectively together to serve an underserved population. The Team and VSAC identified the following groups as being “underserved populations” in Pennsylvania:

- Latino victims;
- Dating Violence victims;
- Elder victims;
- Victims of Human Trafficking;
- Non-English speaking victims;
- Victims with disabilities; and
- Rural victims.

Currently, 25 of the 31 STOP-funded Projects at the local level have aspects of their programs that focus on marginalized or underserved populations. (For a list of current subgrantees serving underserved populations, please see Appendix I) One of the strengths of

STOP in Pennsylvania is that it encourages partnerships at the local level that might not develop on their own. For example, in Armstrong County, the Project works with multidisciplinary professionals to create support systems for individuals with disabilities. Additionally the Project hosts innovative "Meet and Greet" gatherings for individuals with disabilities and their caretakers. These meetings provide an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their caretakers to meet with first responders including law enforcement, prosecution, and EMTs in a non-crisis setting to help ensure victims with disabilities will feel more comfortable and safe when reporting domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and/or dating violence.

In Berks County, Berks Women In Crisis (BWIC) works in tandem with Centro Hispano, a community-based center serving the Latino population, and the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network to support initiatives that address violence against women victims. Through cross-referrals, victims receive assistance in filing self-petitions for U-visas and can receive assistance with immigration matters. The case manager at Centro Hispano facilitates case management for victims receiving services at both BWIC and Centro Hispano. Additionally Centro Hispano and BWIC cross-train staff in order to address barriers and issues confronting domestic violence and sexual assault victims in the Latino community.

In Cumberland County, the STOP Project conducts outreach to suspected high human trafficking areas of the county in order to identify and assist victims. The Project meets with business owners and distributes outreach materials such as posters and brochures. Additionally, with the assistance of the Pennsylvania State Police, posters were placed at rest stops on Interstate 81 in the county. The Project is also developing an interdisciplinary team protocol for responding to trafficking victims. The protocol includes guidelines for providing emergency housing, assistance with immigration matters, counseling and advocacy services.

Another example of garnering multidisciplinary support to address the needs of

underserved populations includes an elder outreach initiative in Beaver County. The STOP-funded Legal Advocacy Coordinator has collaborated with the Beaver County Community Action Network to train professionals on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Training participants include representatives from Beaver County Adult Probation, Beaver County Behavioral Health, Beaver County Rehabilitation Center, Beaver County Office on Aging, Center Township Senior Apartment Staff, Cornerstone Recovery & Support, Friendship Ridge Nursing Facility Staff, Housing Authority of Beaver County, Neighborhood Legal Services, Older Adult Protective Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Primary Health Network Foundation, Staunton Clinic, and Three Rivers Independent Living.

F. Barriers to Implementation

Pennsylvania continues to administer the STOP Violence Against Women Program despite a number of challenges. First, there is not enough funding in the state's STOP allocation to fund all 67 counties. The \$375,000 maximum amount of STOP funding over three years might still not be sufficient for some of Pennsylvania's urban and suburban counties. Resources vary across Pennsylvania, and it is an ongoing challenge for OVS to provide the money, technical assistance and training required to ensure that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking have access to core services.

Second, knowledge of the dynamics of violence against women crimes is not uniform among professionals working in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. This results in things like protection from abuse orders being denied because the victim doesn't have "broken bones," prosecutors issuing bench warrants for victims who are reluctant to participate in the justice system, judges losing patience with victims on the stand who have mental health problems or

intellectual disabilities, and law enforcement officers arresting both victims and perpetrators rather than determining dominant aggressors. Of course, this ignorance of trauma and victimization is not unique to the justice system. The general public is often just as misinformed about violence against women crimes. This can have tragic consequences for victims as juries focus on the actions of the victim rather than the culpability of the perpetrator.

Third, budget cuts at the state level have resulted in significant erosion of the safety net for some of the most vulnerable of Pennsylvania's citizens. Victims of violence against women crimes have multiple needs arising from their victimization. The victim service providers in their community can meet some of these needs, but certainly not all. In fact, some needs such as treatment for mental health problems or drug and alcohol addiction should not be handled by victim services. Yet, when mental health and substance abuse services are cut back or eliminated, individuals who need these services continue to look for ways to get their needs met.

Fourth, Pennsylvania is challenged with continuing barriers such as victims obtaining affordable, safe housing, especially in regions where shale gas drilling is present; limited employment opportunities, making the achievement of economic self-sufficiency very difficult; and cuts to food stamps and other programs designed to temporarily help people through difficult transition periods in their lives.

Fifth, those who do the collaborative work of STOP are at great risk for burnout. Local governments continue to be strapped for cash and specialized positions like those found under STOP are seen as a luxury, more than a necessity. Those working in victim services must deal with the uncertainties of the state and federal budget processes. Cuts sustained over the last decade and subsequent attempts to restore these cuts have had little effect on the field. Programs are still engaging in strategies of retrenchment rather than innovation. And the victims keep coming, and many keep serving them with less staff than the year before.

Sixth, the federal certifications under STOP, particularly relating to firearms prohibitions and forensic rape exams, continue to be problematic in certain parts of the state. There are many Pennsylvanians who are avid hunters and outdoors-people. Guns are a part of their everyday lives. The vast majority will never use a firearm to terrorize their spouses, children or extended families. However, there is a small minority who will. Under federal law and Pennsylvania's Protection from Abuse legislation, individuals who are arrested for intimate partner violence must relinquish their firearms. This continues to be a point of contention despite the fact that it is the law of the land and firearms are not always confiscated consistent with state and federal law.

The provision in the forensic rape exam certification that stipulates that individuals do not have to report their sexual assault to law enforcement as a condition for receiving a forensic rape exam has provoked the ire of a few prosecutors. In these instances, it is evident that such individuals would benefit from additional education on trauma informed responses to victimization. There is also an additional concern about the transportation and storage of sexual assault forensic evidence when it is not connected with an active sexual assault investigation. OVS encourages STOP funded initiatives to address this issue at the local level, but it is clear that a statewide policy is needed.

Finally, it is difficult to reach out to underserved and marginalized populations when STOP funded offices and programs are operating at the survival level. Providing reasonable increases in Pennsylvania's STOP allocation could enable our state to undertake some targeted efforts in better serving victims with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, Latino victims, and elder victims. In retrospect, Pennsylvania has invited representatives of culturally specific and underserved populations to the table for planning on a number of our funding streams. OVS feels confident that we could build upon existing collaborations to move us beyond tokenism and

allow us to fund focused initiatives that would meaningfully serve the most underserved of victims.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

Over the next two years, the OVS staff will conduct an on-site monitoring visit to each of the counties funded through the competitive solicitation process. Monitoring consists of meeting with the team as well as meeting with each component of the project to ensure compliance with grant requirements and fidelity to the goals and objectives in the county's STOP application. In between onsite monitoring visits, OVS staff will conduct telephone interviews with STOP Coordinating Team Leaders to assess progress, offer technical assistance or help problem solve. Annual Reports will be reviewed, as will quarterly fiscal reports. Additionally, OVS will meet on a quarterly basis with PCADV and PCAR to assess progress on implementation of STOP in Pennsylvania and identify any trends in technical assistance needs. Both PCADV and PCAR are valued partners as they distribute FVPSA, RPE and state funding for domestic violence and rape crisis services and have their own monitoring requirements. They are well-positioned to assist PCCD with identifying and assisting struggling STOP grantees.

V. CONCLUSION

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appreciates the resources it receives from the federal government through the STOP Violence Against Women Program. As one advocate eloquently stated, "STOP is one of the few venues left that encourages, supports and enables innovation in a field that has been crippled by funding cuts at a time of increasing service demands. Because the STOP Grant is a long-term investment of three years, programs and

counties are able to do more than restore what was lost. STOP Grants create opportunities for optimism, vision, and sustainability that may not be found with other funding streams.”

Over the past 15 years, STOP funds have made it possible for Pennsylvania to foster systemic collaboration at the state and local levels, develop policies and protocols that have institutionalized a victim-centered response to violence against women crimes in communities across the Commonwealth, and provided a variety of trainings and resources to law enforcement, prosecutors, court personnel, judges and victim service providers across the Commonwealth.

During this plan cycle, we will continue to honor the goals and objectives subgrantees submitted for STOP's 2013-2015 awards. Prior to the next competitive award period, PCCD will continue to gather data on:

- Culturally specific and underserved populations;
- Victims' needs;
- Trends in crimes of violence against women;
- The overall funding structure for victim services in Pennsylvania; and
- Newly enacted legislation relevant to violence against women.

The information gathered from these endeavors will become part of our continuous assessment and planning process for STOP funding and will strengthen our efforts to promote holistic, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant services that hold offenders accountable.

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