

Training and Policy Development

National Survey of STOP Grantees

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Introduction

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed in 1994 as part of Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. The four subtitles within the Act are the Safe Streets Act, Safe Homes for Women, Civil Rights for Women and Equal Justice for Women in the Courts, and Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children. These subtitles target domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other violent crimes against women. Chapter 2 under Subtitle A of VAWA provides support for developing and implementing effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women and for developing and enhancing victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women. This resulted in the creation of the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program.

The STOP Program promotes a coordinated approach to improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women. The approach envisions a partnership among law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, victim advocates, and service providers. STOP provides formula grants to the states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Grantees must allocate their funds as follows:

- 25 percent to support law enforcement programs,
- 25 percent to prosecution,
- 25 percent to non-profit, non-governmental victim services, and
- 25 percent at the grantee's discretion within the parameters of the Act.

The Urban Institute (UI) was selected by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to conduct the overall evaluation of the Violence Against Women Act grants. There are four other grantees (discussed later) working in specialized areas under the direction of UI and NIJ. The UI evaluation design includes the following tasks:

- Review and summarize state grantees' plans and reports.
- Conduct case studies and site visits midway through the first full implementation year (FY 1996).
- Conduct a semi-structured telephone survey of all states following the first full implementation year.
- Prepare 1996 and 1997 reports to Congress.
- Develop impact evaluation plans and prepare summary report to NIJ.

In August 1996, NIJ announced a limited competition for funding to conduct impact evaluations under the four purpose areas of the STOP formula grants. The Institute for Law and Justice (ILJ) was selected to evaluate the Law Enforcement and Prosecution purpose area. The three other grantees are working in the following areas:

- National Center for State Courts: Data Systems and Communication
- American Bar Association: Victim Services

- The University of Arizona: Violence Against Indian Women

UI, NIJ, the four purpose area grantees, and a group of advisors have had two meetings to coordinate the evaluation. Since there is overlap in the purpose areas, the grantees are doing some work at common sites during the evaluation.

Four purposes will be targeted in the ILJ evaluation of law enforcement and prosecution grants:

- Training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors
- Specialized units of law enforcement officers and prosecutors
- Police and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services
- Programs addressing stalking.

ILJ's evaluation objectives are to (1) assess the impact of the STOP law enforcement and prosecution grants in addressing violent crimes against women in ten local sites; (2) conduct process evaluations of several local projects spread across the designated purpose areas and make evaluability assessments of these projects to identify the most appropriate candidates for impact evaluations; (3) conduct a state-by-state review of police and prosecutor training curricula on domestic violence and sexual assault; (4) ensure that evaluation results are interpreted in the correct legal context by conducting an analysis of relevant state laws; and (5) disseminate interim and final evaluation results to NIJ, UI, the field, and the sites.

Survey Preparation

In order to get more information about training and policy/protocol development for law enforcement and prosecution, ILJ decided to survey the 1995 subgrantees. The grants were awarded in late 1995 with grant periods of 18-24 months. These grants were chosen because they have either recently ended (1997) or have been extended.

UI provided ILJ with the initial database of 1995 subgrants in the two purpose areas of Training for Law Enforcement/Prosecution and Development of Policies/Protocols. Copies of the Subgrant Award Reports (SARs) for those subgrants were then obtained through a visit to UI. The SARs indicated a total of 277 subgrants in the two areas, with 217 subgrants in training and 119 in development of policies/protocols (59 subgrants had both areas marked).

The narrative sections (Question #17) of the SARs were reviewed and the subgrants were divided into seven main categories: provided/attended training, developed training, developed policies and/or protocols, hired personnel, purchased equipment, organized conferences, and miscellaneous. There is, of course, overlap in these categories; our classification is based on what appears to be the primary activity for each subgrant. Fifteen subgrants were not classified because they did not include narrative descriptions.

Telephone surveys were created for the four largest categories comprising 224 of the 277 subgrants. The categories included:

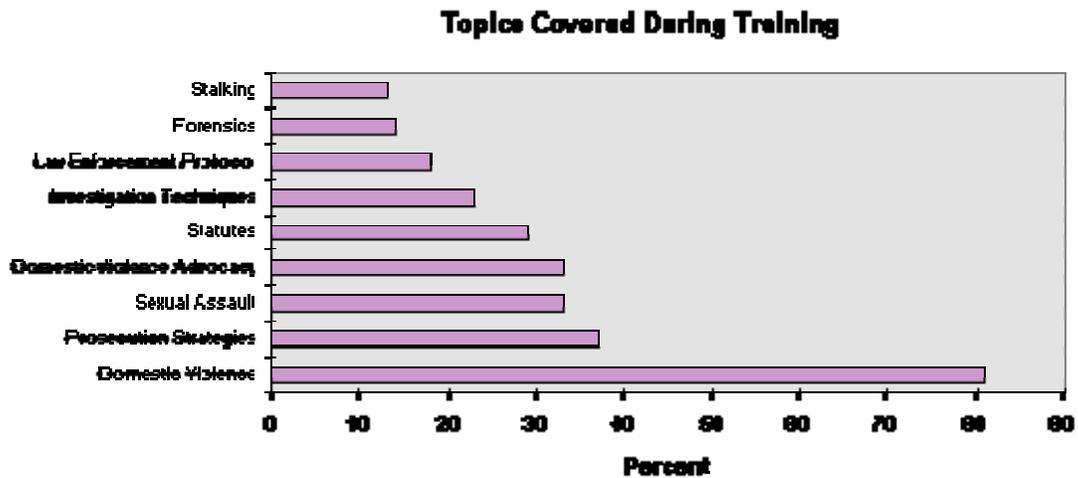
- Attended/Provided training (85)
- Developed training (55)
- Hired personnel (47)
- Developed policies and procedures (37)

During the survey process, some of the subgrantees were switched to another category after clarifying grant activities with the site contact. The total number of surveys completed was 179 out of 224 attempted contacts, for an 80 percent response rate. The sections that follow present survey results in the four categories.

Attended/Provided Training

Arranging for personnel to attend conferences, workshops, or training sessions given by a consultant was the main focus of this group. There were 69 surveys completed in this category. Law enforcement was the group most frequently trained (68 percent). However, the majority of subgrantees held multi-disciplinary training seminars. Prosecutors were trained by 55 percent of the subgrantees and were often trained simultaneously with police officers. Other disciplines trained include domestic violence advocates (45 percent), judges (15 percent), and probation/parole personnel (10 percent). Nine grantees trained health care providers, usually in the area of sexual assault.

The chart below shows the topics covered by the grantees during training.



Eighty-one percent of respondents covered domestic violence during training. One respondent said, "We wanted the officers to learn the dynamics of domestic violence, but more importantly, we wanted them to understand why the victim stays." (North Dakota) Most of the law enforcement personnel trained were officers who would be responding to the scene. Several sessions were usually offered so as many officers as possible could receive training.

The topic of prosecution strategies was covered by 37 percent of the respondents. Many had attended a conference on domestic violence sponsored by the National College of District Attorneys Association. Several gave this conference outstanding reviews. For example, one attorney at the Florida Prosecuting Attorney's Association said, "The conference was excellent and provided information in other domestic violence disciplines (victim services, investigation), not just prosecution." Other respondents stressed the importance of knowing how to prosecute a domestic violence case without the victim's cooperation; and one subgrantee in Nebraska felt this was "imperative to stopping domestic violence."

The topic of domestic violence advocacy was reported by 33 percent of the respondents. Police officers were often taught how to calm a victim at the scene and were made given information about referral services for victims. Prosecutors were also provided advocacy training at some sites. For example, a respondent in the City of Norfolk, Virginia, said, "Prosecutors are taught how to relate to victims; therefore, victims get a lot of personal attention from the prosecutors and are more likely to continue with the case."

Thirty-three percent of respondents also provided training on sexual assault. These subgrantees were usually shelters or crisis centers. Stalking was addressed by 9 of the subgrantees. Many of the others stated that they intended to cover stalking in the future.

Investigation techniques (23 percent), law enforcement protocol (18 percent), and forensic services (14 percent) were also training topics for grantees. Several training sessions included the use of cameras in evidence collection, which was considered especially important in cases where the victim will not cooperate. Interview techniques was another topic mentioned by several subgrantees.

The majority (54 percent) of subgrantees said the length of training was one to two days, 25 percent said less than eight hours, and 19 percent said three to five days. As stated earlier, most of the subgrantees held several training sessions to accommodate staff. The number of people trained varied.

- 26 percent trained 200 or more people
- 8 percent trained 151-200 people
- 9 percent trained 101-150
- 18 percent trained 51-100
- 17 percent trained 26-60
- 20 percent trained fewer than 25 people

Forty-eight percent of the training sessions were given in a team teaching manner. This was usually explained as a collaborative effort among the trainers, where they (trainers) assess the needs of the audience, then decide what issues to address and how to present the material.

Trainers represented a variety of disciplines. Half of the training sessions were delivered by a district attorney's office and/or a domestic violence advocate. The domestic violence advocate was usually from a women's shelter or was employed by a victim/witness program. Forty-eight percent of the subgrantees used law enforcement trainers and 9 percent used university faculty. Seven percent of the respondents attended state sponsored conferences.

Most of the subgrantees used evaluation forms to assess the quality of training. About half of the respondents said the training was excellent and half considered it good. Many agreed with the Virginia respondent who said, "The training was extremely valuable and we hope to do more." However, another subgrantee from Nevada said, "The training was useful, but the veteran officers found the training too basic."

Respondents were also asked what changes they expected to occur as a result of the training. Many subgrantees reported they have already seen changes. One of the most common changes noted was improved incident handling by the police (23 percent). A few respondents said they saw immediate changes in officers attitudes. One comment on this subject was that "officers have learned to respond to an incident without making the victim feel violated all over again." (West Virginia)

Another commonly cited change was improved inter-agency coordination, which was considered especially important in domestic violence cases. Several sites have created multi-disciplined response teams. In Indiana, the LaPorte County Prosecutor's Office developed a domestic violence task force with the courts, victim advocates, and probation. In Nebraska and Wisconsin, Coordinated Community Response Teams were set-up which involved police, prosecutors, domestic violence advocates, probation, and judges. However, in Wisconsin, the respondent stated, "The sheriff's department was apprehensive about the training. It was difficult to get anything accomplished with them."

Twenty percent of the respondents expected conviction rates to increase as a result of training. This response was not only given by subgrantees who provided prosecutor training, but also by those who conducted training for law enforcement. Comments on the relationship between law enforcement response/investigation and improved conviction rates were as follows:

By teaching officers better evidence collecting, prosecution can prepare stronger cases and improve disposition rates in domestic violence cases. (Virginia)

As first responders, police have the responsibility of controlling the scene and collecting evidence. Ultimately, through better evidence collection and proper documentation, we will have higher conviction rates for the prosecutors. (Wyoming)

Fewer than 10 percent of subgrantees believed training would result in better case management, improved victim satisfaction, improved forensic services, or an increase in arrest rates. In contrast, many believed there was a significant increase in awareness on the part of police officers. Comments on improved services and attitudes included these:

Officers are now aware that domestic violence is a serious problem. Veteran officers have learned new approaches for dealing with the problem. (Massachusetts)

We want to dispel the myths about domestic violence and the victim. Hopefully, through this training we can change some attitudes. (Alabama)

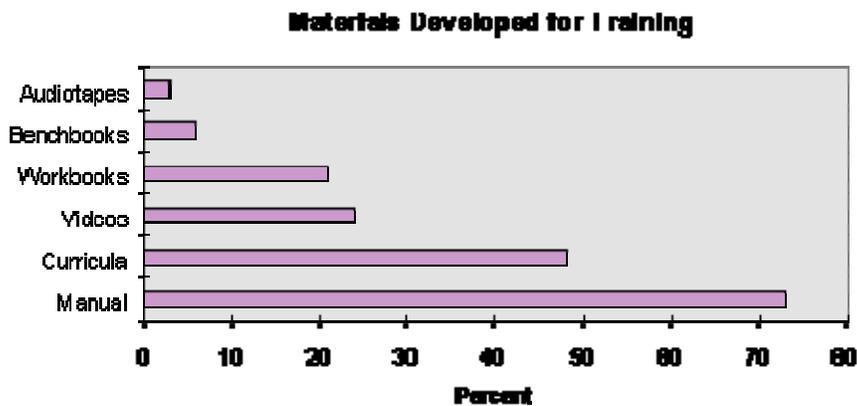
Our goal was to give the South Asian community a new awareness about domestic violence. We developed materials about domestic violence and sexual assault in several South Asian languages. (New Jersey)

I was a child victim of domestic violence and training officers is very healing for me. The man involved no longer just gets a slap on the wrist by the officers. Instead, they (officers) acknowledge the victim and don't treat the battering lightly. We also teach them how to deal with children who witness the violence. (West Virginia)

There were a handful of sites that had problems getting training started. One site has not held training yet because of appropriation problems with the state agency. However, 74 percent of subgrantees have plans for future training, with 38 percent of the funding to be provided by the Violence Against Women grant. The state was designated as the funding source for 10 percent of upcoming training. Many agencies were in the process of applying for funding from several sources.

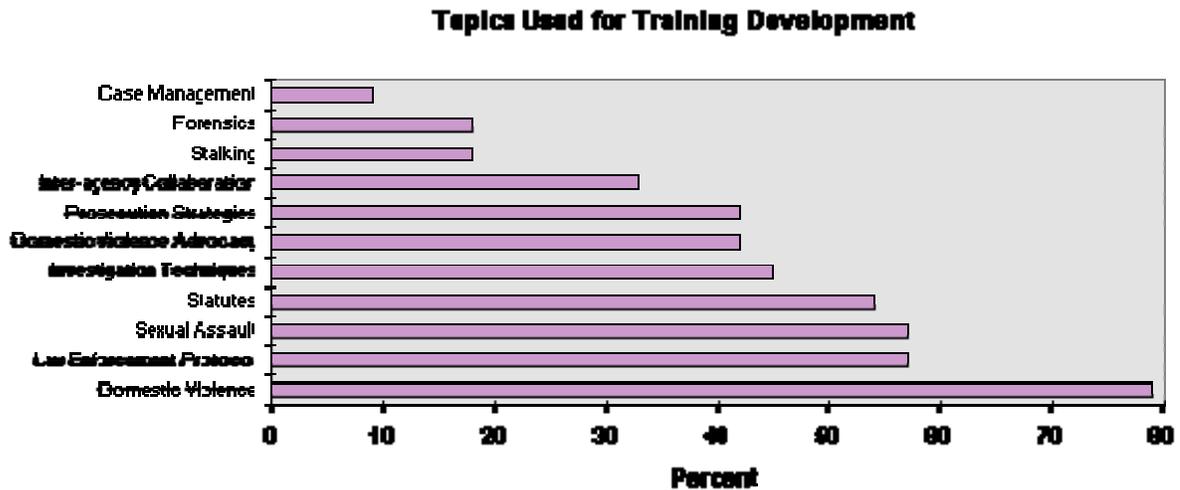
Developed and Delivered Training

Grant activities in this group involved developing manuals, bench books, training videos, curricula, and training seminars. Over 90 percent of respondents developed training materials. The chart below illustrates the types of materials used and the percentage of grantees that developed them. Thirty-five surveys were completed in this category.



A variety of disciplines participated in developing training. Victim service organizations and prosecutor offices were each responsible for 42 percent. The police, which includes police departments as well as police organizations, developed 30 percent of the training. Advisory boards and POST agencies (12 percent each) also contributed to training development. The advisory boards were usually multi-disciplinary teams convened to assess training needs. A small number of grantees relied on university faculty, health care providers, or probation personnel.

The following chart illustrates how frequently various topics were included in the training developed.



Comparable to the "attended/provided" training group discussed earlier, domestic violence was covered by 78 percent of the developed training group. Comments related to police understanding of this topic are:

Officers are more knowledgeable about the law, and their attitudes have changed about domestic violence. (Arizona)

There has been an increase in officer's understanding of domestic violence and statutes are clearer. (Virginia)

Two topics, prosecution strategies and domestic violence advocacy, were each discussed by 42 percent of the group. Fifty-four percent developed training that covered statutes. Remarks about training in these areas included the following:

Prosecutors take more of an active role now. They have learned to be sensitive to the victim's needs. (New Jersey)

We did needs assessments for service providers because they had a fragmented service for victims. Victims get much better services. (Hawaii)

In contrast to the group that attended/provided training, twice as many training developers covered investigation techniques (45 percent) and protocol for law enforcement (58 percent). Typical comments included these:

Officers have become more detailed oriented. (New York)

Officers are able to respond to a domestic violence scene with confidence. Evidence collection has greatly improved. (Idaho)

Also, sexual assault was covered by significantly more grantees in the training development group (58 percent). A respondent in New York explained that "prosecutors are being trained how to handle marital rape cases and how to use expert witnesses in these cases." Training on inter-agency collaboration skills was developed by 33 percent of the group. However, case management, forensics, and stalking were covered by fewer than 20 percent.

Training was most frequently developed for law enforcement (82 percent). Prosecutors were targeted by almost 70 percent of the grantees, domestic violence advocates by 33 percent, and health care providers by 21 percent. All other groups (probation, judges, parole) were targeted by fewer than 15 percent. Comments about training audiences included these:

Judges need to be ordered to take training. (Idaho)

We really want to continuing our training with probation officers. Arizona)

Law enforcement in rural areas really need to be targeted for training also. (Nebraska)

Most of the grantees in this category also provided multiple sessions to accommodate different shifts for law enforcement. Training length was generally between one to two days (70 percent), and 22 percent delivered fewer than eight hours of training. Respondents reported attendance at the training sessions as follows:

- 50 percent of the grantees trained more than 200 people.
- 15 percent had more than 100 people attend.
- 22 percent had 51-100 people attend.
- 13 percent trained fewer than 50 people.

The training was deemed a success by the majority of subgrantees. Representative comments about the training were:

VAWA money was very helpful. It was a catalyst to get started on helping victims better. (Massachusetts)

Training is ongoing. It's been wonderful. (Georgia)

This training has helped our officers a great deal. We hope to do more next year. (New Jersey)

This group experienced the same changes resulting from training development as the previous "attended/provided" training group. Improved incident handling and inter-agency collaboration were both mentioned by almost 60 percent of the respondents. Thirty-six percent of the group expected conviction rates to improve, 33 percent believed referrals would improve, and 27 percent of subgrantees thought arrest rates would increase. About 20 percent of the respondents stated that victim satisfaction, case management, and forensic analysis were enhanced. Only two respondents cited an increase in filing domestic violence and sex assault charges.

Over 60 percent of respondents considered the training developed to be excellent, and the rest reported it was good. The majority (90 percent) of the group planned to do more training. Comments about future plans were very positive and specific.

We would like to expand the police crisis team. (New Jersey)

This year, we are planning to develop a tracking system and forms for protocol to law enforcement and prosecutors. (Washington)

Doing more training in rural areas is definitely on our list of things to accomplish. (New York)

We are planning to do training on date rape drugs and distribute a manual on sex assault and domestic violence. (Hawaii)

We are looking to do training on stalking and are planning to include women with disabilities. (Connecticut)

This year our training will include stalking. (Utah)

The primary funding source for future training for this group is also VAWA (78 percent). State and local governments will fund 15 percent; and 7 percent of grantees either did not know how they would fund future training or were getting money from multiple sources.

Hire Personnel

The total number of completed surveys in this category was 48. The number of positions filled ranged from one to nine employees. Fifty-five percent hired only one person, 25 percent hired two, 10 percent hired three, and the others hired five or more. The total number of new hires was 91.

The types of positions filled and the number of grantees who hired them were:

- Victim service providers (33 percent). Titles in this field included victim/witness assistant, victim advocate, and rape crisis worker.
- Prosecutors and domestic violence coordinators were both hired by 21 percent of subgrantees.
- Court advocates were hired by 15 percent of the subgrantees. Only a few hired an investigator or a sexual assault coordinator.
- Other positions filled include training specialist, public awareness director, and juvenile advocate.

Since victim service positions were filled at the highest rate, it is not surprising that many new hires (46 percent) worked in community based organizations (e.g., Gulf Coast Women's Shelter, Women Helping Battered Women). However, a slightly larger number of new hires worked in the prosecutor's office (48 percent). The remaining new employees worked for the police (6 percent) or another agency.

Seventy-seven percent of the grantees hired were full-time employees. Out of these positions, 69 percent were permanent, 8 percent were temporary, and 23 percent were contingent upon the continuation of the grant. Half of the subgrantees also filled part-time positions. Most of these positions were permanent and about 13 percent were contingent on the grant.

The responsibilities of new hires varied and included the following:

- Assisting victims (among the duties of 69 percent of the new hires)
- Coordinating collaborations (45 percent)
- Training staff (29 percent)
- Prosecuting cases (21 percent)
- Gathering information (15 percent)

Only a few of the new hires developed training or established policies or procedures. Other duties included serving as a liaison, processing protection orders, and conducting outreach activities in the community.

Most respondents believed that hiring new personnel had resulted in valuable outcomes. A frequently reported outcome was a great increase in awareness about domestic violence among law enforcement, prosecutors, and the general public. Comments from respondents about increased awareness include:

Law enforcement and other agencies became more aware of resources available to help domestic violence victims, and so services to victims improved. (North Carolina)

As a result of more public awareness of domestic violence and of the importance of having domestic violence programs, we are able to get other grants. (Texas)

Respondents also commonly mentioned that because of hiring the new personnel, victims became more likely to cooperate and prosecute. Victim also became more aware of resources available to them and avoided revictimization. Therefore, an increase in victim satisfaction was reported by 60 percent of the subgrantees. Some remarks regarding victim satisfaction are:

These (domestic violence) investigators are really helpful in keeping in contact with the victims and encouraging them to work with the prosecutors—results in better prosecution. (Missouri)

Because of hiring a prosecutor and domestic violence investigator, we were able to contact victims quickly while they were still in the crisis period and more likely to take action against the abuser. We get the abuser into court more quickly while he is still somewhat remorseful and make a point that such action will be punished. (Georgia)

Improved inter-agency coordination can also contribute to a higher rate of victim satisfaction, according to survey respondents. Thirty-five percent of respondents said agency coordination had improved. Enhanced quality of victim services and victim empowerment were also reported. Many of the subgrantees who reported improvements in this area also said case management had improved (20 percent).

When you work as a team with other agencies on cases, the victim gets a wide range of services. Also, each member of the team is held accountable for his or her part. Communication is key. If we work together we can have more success with domestic violence cases. (West Virginia)

Many subgrantees hired a special prosecutor or court advocates just for domestic violence cases. About 23 percent of respondents said conviction rates had improved. Two grantees commented on these improvements.

I am glad that we are able to have someone concentrate just in domestic violence cases. With that expertise, we can follow through with more cases. (North Dakota)

The part-time court advocate we hired gathered information for prosecution and this resulted in improvements in data collection and ultimately in prosecution. (Nebraska)

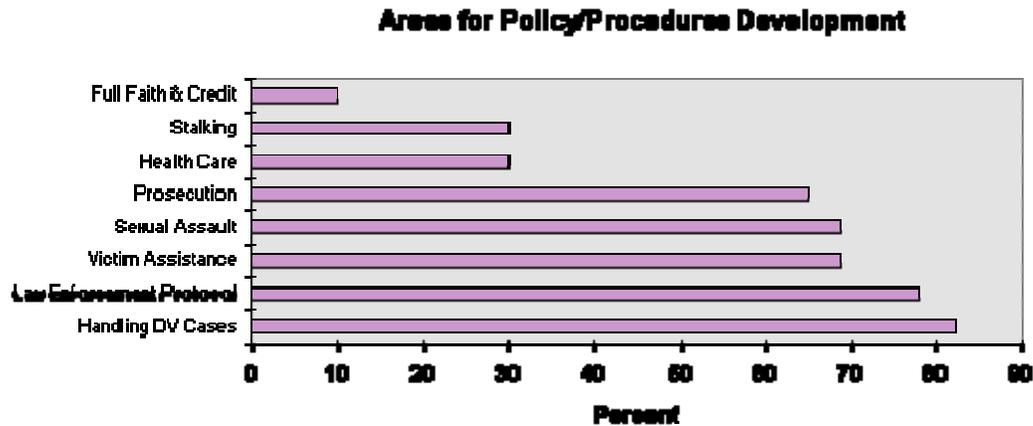
Fewer than 20 percent of respondents reported improvements in referrals and incident handling. Only two respondents did not report any substantial outcomes. One subgrantee in New Mexico started using the money late, and is still laying the foundation. Another, in Wisconsin, said "Success was spotty; it is not where we wanted it to be yet."

About half of the positions will continue to be funded, and most of them will be funded under the Violence Against Women grant (65 percent). Another 15 percent will be funded by the state and 4 percent by the local government. The other grantees either were not going to continue funding the positions or were seeking a funding source.

Developed Policies and Procedures

This category includes subgrantees who stated they would develop and implement new policies, procedures, or protocols for handling domestic violence cases in court and in the field. The majority of these subgrantees also said they were providing training on the new policies and protocols. Twenty-three subgrantees could be reached in this category. Almost all said they developed new policies (95 percent), while the others revised old policies as well as created new ones.

The chart that follows shows the areas of policy development reported by grantees.



The most popular areas for policy development were related to handling domestic violence cases (82 percent) and law enforcement protocol (78 percent).

The process (of developing protocols) revolves around the means to improve inter-agency coordination. There are many challenging steps to get over, but having a protocol should help. (Minnesota)

Police officers did not like to go on domestic violence calls. After training, officers are more willing, write good reports, and collect better evidence. (Oregon)

In South Carolina, a grantee used interactive theater to train police officers and prosecutors. Staff worked with a local college professor, college actors, and a professional make-up artist. The respondent said, "The police officers and prosecutors loved it, and the seminars were a huge hit."

Prosecution procedures were developed by 65 percent of the grantees. As a result of new protocols and training by a grantee in Alabama, prosecutors have set up a specialized docket, reallocated staff, and implemented other innovative strategies. In North Carolina, where judges were also trained, a respondent said:

Cooperation of prosecutors enabled us to put a formal process in place. Judges are now more aware of what is going on, but we need to find a way to address gaps in judges' understanding.

Sexual assault and victim assistance procedures were both addressed by 69 percent of the policy development group; and 30 percent of these subgrantees developed both health care and stalking policies. Full faith and credit was addressed by fewer than 10 percent of the group. Other areas of policy development included schools, batterer's treatment, 911 protocol, protective orders, and probation and parole.

Most of the policy development was done by a multi-disciplinary team (70 percent). A grantee in North Carolina noted:

The victim is the center of the wheel. The spokes are law enforcement, prosecution, victim services, health care, social workers, and others.

A state committee, the prosecutor's office, and a domestic violence coordinator were individually responsible for policy development at two sites. Two other agencies mentioned were the sheriff's office and the corrections department.

Almost 80 percent of the training sessions on new procedures were attended by law enforcement. Prosecutors and victim service providers attended over 40 percent of the training. Representatives from social work (39 percent), health care (22 percent), and the courts (26 percent) also attended. In contrast, 17 percent offered no training at all on the new policies.

Manuals for new policies and procedures were created by the majority of subgrantees (70 percent). Copies of the manuals were distributed during several of the training sessions.

Improved inter-agency coordination was the biggest change attributed to the develop of new policies (78 percent). Almost half of the group believed that referrals would improve or had improved already. Victim satisfaction and case management improvements were reported by 39 percent of the agencies responding. At least 30 percent of the subgrantees expected an increase in arrest rates and incident handling.

However, some grantees encountered problems in developing policies. In North Carolina, there were a variety of problems, including miscommunication. Two agencies hired consultants to help establish new policies, but were not satisfied with the results:

FY95 contractor did not produce. We had to start from scratch. (West Virginia)

A consultant was paid \$25,000 and did a terrible job. We had to start over. (South Carolina)

Conclusion

As a whole, the 1995 subgrantees believed VAWA funds were important to the continuation of their domestic violence programs. For some grantees, the funds were vital to the creation of new domestic violence programs. The grantees who were addressing the topic of domestic violence for the first time did not think they could have gotten started without receiving the STOP grant. The fact that most of the grantees are planning to do more training suggests that the STOP grants program has served as an impetus for recognizing domestic violence as a serious problem.

Grantees also realize that the victim is not the only one in need of help. Treatment for batterers and the children involved was offered by many of the programs surveyed. Preserving the family unit is attempted whenever possible.

In summary, the common themes reported by respondents in reference to the STOP grants were:

- There are more collaborative efforts between law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services.
- Grant-sponsored activities have increased the awareness of the law enforcement and prosecutors about domestic violence.
- Having an established protocol for handling domestic violence cases is important because it holds someone (police, victim services, prosecution) accountable.
- Victims are getting better services because of increased awareness and inter-agency collaboration.

- More personnel (prosecution, victim services) is still needed to work specifically in the area of domestic violence.
 - Coordinated community response teams have improved the way domestic violence cases are handled.
-