

Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice 2009 VAWA ARRA Implementation Plan	Grant #2009-EF-S6-0040
	Project Period: 5/1/2009 – 4/30/2011
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In accordance with the requirements of the 2009 VAWA ARRA funds, the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission) submits the following Implementation Plan.

Plan Development Process

The Nebraska Crime Commission has an existing VAWA Advisory voluntary group that meets to make recommendations for formula VAWA STOP funds. The members of this committee represent law enforcement, prosecution, probation, courts, Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, non-profit victim services agencies, victim witness units and representatives for unserved/underserved populations. Upon notice of the receipt of VAWA ARRA funding, members of the committee volunteered to participate in a focus group to develop the VAWA ARRA implementation plan. These members represented law enforcement, prosecution, probation, courts, Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, and non-profit victim services agencies statewide. Additional volunteers from law enforcement agencies, non-profit victim services agencies, rural communities and underserved populations were called upon for their participation to ensure complete representation of the State of Nebraska.

Nebraska Crime Commission staff convened the focus group on May 4th, 2009. The primary purpose of the meeting was to gain insight and gather information regarding the gaps and needs that remain across the state, and suggestions for solutions in improving the criminal justice system’s response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Subsequently, how will the VAWA ARRA funds best be spent to address identified issues across the state.

Crime Commission staff assessed the seven priorities outlined in the 2007-2009 VAWA State Implementation Plan. These priorities are: Coordinated Response Efforts and Coordinated State Efforts, Legislation Issues, Offender Accountability, Public Awareness and Education, Training and Technical Assistance, Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims, and Victim Services and Safety. Upon review of the ARRA requirements and assessment of the Nebraska VAWA plan, staff identified five (5) priority topics they wanted the focus group to consider which included: Coordinated Response Efforts and Coordinated State Efforts, Offender Accountability, Training and Technical Assistance, Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims and Victim Services and Safety.

The focus group convened and discussed the five priorities listed above. Throughout the planning session, members were reminded of the VAWA ARRA priorities and

Recovery Act performance Objectives. After much discussion, the members of the focus group determined that four (4) of the five (5) priority items should be considered for the ARRA VAWA Implementation Plan: Unserved and Underserved Victims, Victim Safety and Services, Community Response Teams and Training and Technical Assistance.

Nebraska Crime Commission staff drafted the implementation plan and disbursed it to focus group members for comment. Revisions were made and the final implementation plan was approved by the Nebraska Crime Commission Board at their July 24, 2009 meeting.

Program Focus

Under each priority identified for the ARRA VAWA Implementation plan, Crime Commission staff and focus group members identified specific potential programmatic activities for funding. These specific activities have been identified as gaps/needs in the 2007-2009 VAWA state plan and through interaction with current sub-grantee's statewide.

Underserved and Unserved Victims

1. Recruitment and retention of bilingual advocates statewide.

While Nebraska has been making progress in hiring bilingual advocates, the progress has been slow. Funding cuts have made it difficult to hire and/or retain qualified applicants. ARRA funds will be beneficial in continuing efforts to hire bilingual staff as well as provide pay increases or differentials for these staff.

2. Expanded outreach to underserved and non-English speaking communities by enhancing community partnerships.

There are many barriers that exist in reaching out to unserved and underserved populations. Adding bilingual staff will not only assist in breaking down communication barriers, but will assist in building relationships and crossing cultural barriers that often hamper victims efforts to reach out and access services. We will continue to research evidence based models for building these relationships.

3. Expand staff and transportation opportunities in rural and highly isolated communities.

Due to funding cuts, many existing programs in rural areas have not been able to expand services due to limited staff. ARRA funds will assist in rebuilding capacity to provide services to isolated areas.

Training and Technical Assistance

1. Increase training on Firearms legislation and enforcement of the law.

The Nebraska Legislature passed new firearms legislation in the 2009 session. Retraining of judges, probation and law enforcement will need to be conducted utilizing ARRA funds.

2. Increase technical training.

Many programs have requested training for their staff on basic and advanced computer applications such as Word, Powerpoint, Excel, etc. as well as on developing databases, working with statistics, etc. Providing funding for such training will allow programs to operate more efficiently and effectively.

3. Purchase new computers for non-profit victim service agencies.

In early 2001/02 the Crime Commission received a grant that provided new computer equipment to the VAWA programs statewide. Many programs have not had funds to update or purchase new equipment for new staff, etc. ARRA funds will help update needed equipment and software to ensure programs have compatible and reliable resources.

Community Response Teams:

1. Training on evidence based collection and evidenced based prosecution.

It has been identified that there have been problems with prosecution of cases due to inexperienced and/or poor evidence and prosecution. Statewide training will assist in educating criminal justice professionals statewide.

2. Implementation of new CRT's.

Several communities applied for FY VAWA funds to begin a new CRT in their area. There was not enough funding available, therefore, ARRA funds will be crucial in getting new CRT's started across the state. This will be a significant step in addressing the Recovery Act requirement of job creation and retention.

3. Create and distribute a statewide attorney pro bono list
4. Public relation campaign to increase free/reduced legal services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Victim Safety and Services:

1. Training of new SANE nurses.

This training effort will build capacity within hospitals statewide for specialized nurses to serve victims coming into hospitals and clinics. These positions will need to be a partner of the local SANE taskforce.

2. Purchase of new SANE equipment.

Many rural hospitals and clinics do not have the funding to have the equipment necessary for the SANE nurses after they are trained. Funding will provide the nurses with the best possible resources to do their job.

Activity Evaluation

The Nebraska Crime Commission has an established quarterly activity reporting requirement for all sub-grantee's. VAWA ARRA sub-grantee's will be required to adhere to this quarterly reporting requirement. Sub-grantee's will be required to report on all federally required performance measures as well as specific goals and objectives developed for their projects.

Grant Distribution

The Nebraska Crime Commission has an established process for the announcement and distribution of grants. A competitive announcement will be made notifying all eligible applicants statewide through a mailing and posting the announcement on the Crime Commission website. Applicants go through a three (3) tiered review process: Crime Commission staff review; VAWA Advisory Committee grant review; and final approval at the NE Crime Commission meeting. Formal critique sheets and discussion are used to evaluate the merits of the grant as well as consider responsivity factors such as urban, rural and underserved and unserved populations. The Crime Commission will adhere to the Act requirement of 10% distribution to culturally specific community based organizations.

Allocation of Funds

The Nebraska Crime Commission will ensure that of the total award:

- At least five percent will be allocated for state and local courts including juvenile courts.
- At least 25 percent will be allocated for law enforcement.
- At least 25 percent will be allocated for prosecutors; and,

- At least 30 percent will be allocated for nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services, of which at least 10 percent is to be distributed to culturally specific community based organizations.
- The remaining 15 percent will be used for discretionary projects.

Distribution of Administrative Funds

- Administrative funds will be utilized to pay our current VOCA/VAWA grants administrator position (.10 FTE) for two years. Then we have our Grants Division Chief (.10 FTE) for two years, two clerical staff (.10 FTE each) for two years, three budget and accounting staff (.05 FTE each) for two years and two information technology staff (.10 FTE each) for two years. Total personnel is estimated to be \$88,000.
- We intend to pay 20% of the costs of the online grants application project from these funds ... total cost is estimated to be \$54,600.
- Financial monitors \$5,000 per year for two years = \$10,000.
- Audit costs ... \$5,000 per year for two years = \$10,000.
- Travel Costs...\$1,500 per year for two years = \$3,000
- Total identified costs = \$165,600. With these estimates, we will over-spend our budgeted funds by \$43,882. We will adjust these allocations as needed to remain within the budgeted funds.

Summary

The State of Nebraska has developed a VAWA ARRA Implementation plan that enhances the current VAWA state plan. Funds will be instrumental in preserving and enhancing existing programs and staff as well as building capacity and creating new programs and services. Key stakeholders will remain involved in all aspects of the funds and the Nebraska Crime Commission will continue to apply to all current grant policies and procedures to these funds.