

Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

NEBRASKA'S 2010-2012 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**THE S.T.O.P.
(Services • Training • Officers • Prosecutors)
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT
(VAWA) GRANT FUNDS**

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**NEBRASKA'S 2010-2012
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Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	
	A. Community Description.....	3
	B. Problem Description	3
	C. Development of 2010-2012 VAWA State Implementation Plan.....	3-4
	D. Use of 2010-2012 VAWA Funds	4
II.	DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS	
	A. VAWA Advisory Committee.....	4
	B. Development of 2010-2012 VAWA State Plan.....	4-5
	C. Community Meetings and Focus Meetings.....	5-6
	D. Input From Statewide Meetings and VAWA State Plan Subcommittee	6
	E. Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault Identified Gaps and Needs	7-8
III.	2010-2012 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT PLAN PRIORITIES AND APPROACHES	
	A. Relation of 2010-2012 VAWA Plan to Prior Implementation Plans.....	9-10
	B. Major Shifts in Direction.....	9-10
	C. Use of 2010-2012 VAWA Funds and Identification of Priorities for Funding	10-11
	- <i>Federal Guidelines for Use of VAWA Funds</i>	11
	- <i>Requests for Continuation of VAWA Funding</i>	12
	- <i>How Communities Should Determine Requests for 2010-2012 VAWA Funding</i>	12
	- <i>Priorities for 2010-2012 VAWA Funding</i>	12-13
	- <i>Types of Programs to Be Supported with 2010-2012 VAWA Funds</i>	13-14
	D. Grant Award Process	14-15
	E. Monitoring and Evaluation	16
IV.	ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS	
	A. Underserved Populations.....	15
	B. Cultural Specific Community Based Set-aside.....	17
V.	CONCLUSION	16
	APPENDICES	
Attachment A	- Listing of Identified Accomplishments, Gaps and Solutions	
Attachment B	- Violence Against Women Act Advisory Group Listing 2009-2010 Listing	
Attachment C	- 2010-2012 Advisory State Plan Committee	
Attachment D	-Community Forum Sign In Sheets	
Attachment E	-On-line Survey Results	

NEBRASKA 2010-2012 STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Grant Funds

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Community Description

Nebraska is primarily an agricultural state with the largest portion of its population residing in the metropolitan areas located in the eastern part of the state. Nebraska consists of 77,355 square miles, 93 counties varying in size from 247 square miles to 6,009 square miles and has a population of 1.7 million. Many of the 93 counties are sparsely populated but large geographically. Agriculture and ranching are the primary industries, but in recent years there has been a significant increase in various types of industries located across the state, such as meat packing plants. There has also been a significant increase from 1990 to 2009 in minority populations residing in the state as shown below.

1990 TO 2000 U.S. CENSUS POPULATION CHANGES FOR NEBRASKA			
Nebraska	1990	2000	2008 (estimate)
White	1,495,071	1,533,261	1,630,057
African American	57,862	68,541	80,255
Asian and Pacific Islander	12,629	22,767	30,318
American Indian and Alaska Native	12,855	14,896	19,618
Other	----	47,845	---
2 or more races	----	23,953	23,185
Total Nebraska Population	1,578,417	1,711,263	1,783,432
Hispanic Origin, any race	36,969	94,425	140,891
Total Minority Population	120,315	272,427	-----

Source: Nebraska QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau

B. Problem Description

The problem VAWA funds will address is domestic violence and sexual assault. The identified problems will be addressed by improving the criminal justice system's response to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Law enforcement, prosecutors, probation, courts, other criminal justice representatives, and victim service providers statewide must work together to identify needs, gaps and solutions for their community to create comprehensive, positive changes in the way the criminal justice system responds to these victims.

C. Development of 2010-2012 VAWA State Implementation Plan

Section II explains how community meetings were held across the state to gather input for the VAWA State

Implementation Plan. The VAWA Advisory Subcommittee met to focus and enhance the information received during the community meetings. Following the meetings, a draft Plan was presented to the VAWA Advisory Committee for any additional feedback and was approved to be presented to the Crime Commission Committee for finalization. The State Plan was then presented to the Crime Commission Committee and was approved.

D. Use of 2010-2012 VAWA Funds

The gaps and needs identified statewide and reflected in this Plan represent the voice and ideas of the state. During the meetings positive feedback and ideas were generated. Communities applying for 2010-2012 funds will need to identify and prioritize their needs and request funds accordingly and within the “framework” of this Plan and the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Based on input received statewide, 2010-2012 VAWA funds will continue to be used for:

- √ **Coordinated Response Efforts and Coordinated State Response**
- √ **Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims**
- √ **Offender Accountability**
- √ **Victim Services and Safety**
- √ **Public Awareness and Education**
- √ **Training and Technical Assistance**

The priorities for 2010-2012 VAWA funding are improved services to unserved and under served victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; improved and a statewide coordinated response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to promote and ensure victim centered services/victim safety; and offender/system accountability.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

A. VAWA Advisory Committee

In 1995, Governor Nelson designated the Crime Commission as the state agency responsible for the administration of the federal Stop Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Formula Block Grant Program. A VAWA Advisory Committee was established later that year to develop Nebraska’s initial strategy for this program as well as an award process for the federal grant funds. The Strategy includes a plan of action to address issues (gaps/needs) relating to the criminal justice system’s response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as identifying the most effective and efficient use of VAWA grant funds. The VAWA Advisory Committee has continued to be involved with the development of the State Implementation Plan and grant review process. The VAWA Advisory Committee and Crime Commission Grant Review Committee review all the grant applications and makes funding recommendations to the Crime Commission Committee. The 24 member multi-disciplinary VAWA Advisory Committee, appointed by the Crime Commission Committee, includes representatives from state and local law enforcement, minority organizations, prosecution, courts, probation and victim service providers from rural and urban areas across the state. (See Attachment B for membership listing).

B. Development of 2010-2012 VAWA State Plan

November/December, 2009 – Community meetings were held in various locations throughout the state to gather input on accomplishments, gaps/needs and solutions from community members. At the end of every community meeting the attendees were asked to prioritize the ideas that were discussed during the meeting. These areas were then specified on the toolkit for the VAWA Advisory subcommittee to use. **In addition, an on-line survey was distributed to those individuals who were not able to attend the community forums to ensure proper state-**

wide representation. (See Attachment E)

January, 2010 - VAWA Advisory subcommittee (see Attachment C) met to review and focus the feedback that was an outcome of the community meetings. The VAWA Advisory subcommittee received a toolkit prior to the meeting, which compiled all the feedback provided at the community meetings. The toolkit allowed for the subcommittee members to know which gaps/needs were viewed as a priority in the community meetings. The toolkit was used as a focus point during the VAWA Advisory subcommittee meeting to help develop the 2010-2012 State Plan. **The VAWA Advisory subcommittee focused primarily on the development of prioritized gaps/needs and detailed solutions that would be used in the State Plan.** Although the VAWA Advisory subcommittee was asked to identify priorities, only priority areas identified by individuals from the community are identified as priorities for 2010-2012. The following is a sample of the toolkit which, was used to breakdown the community feedback **and allow subcommittee members to expand on the identified priorities.**

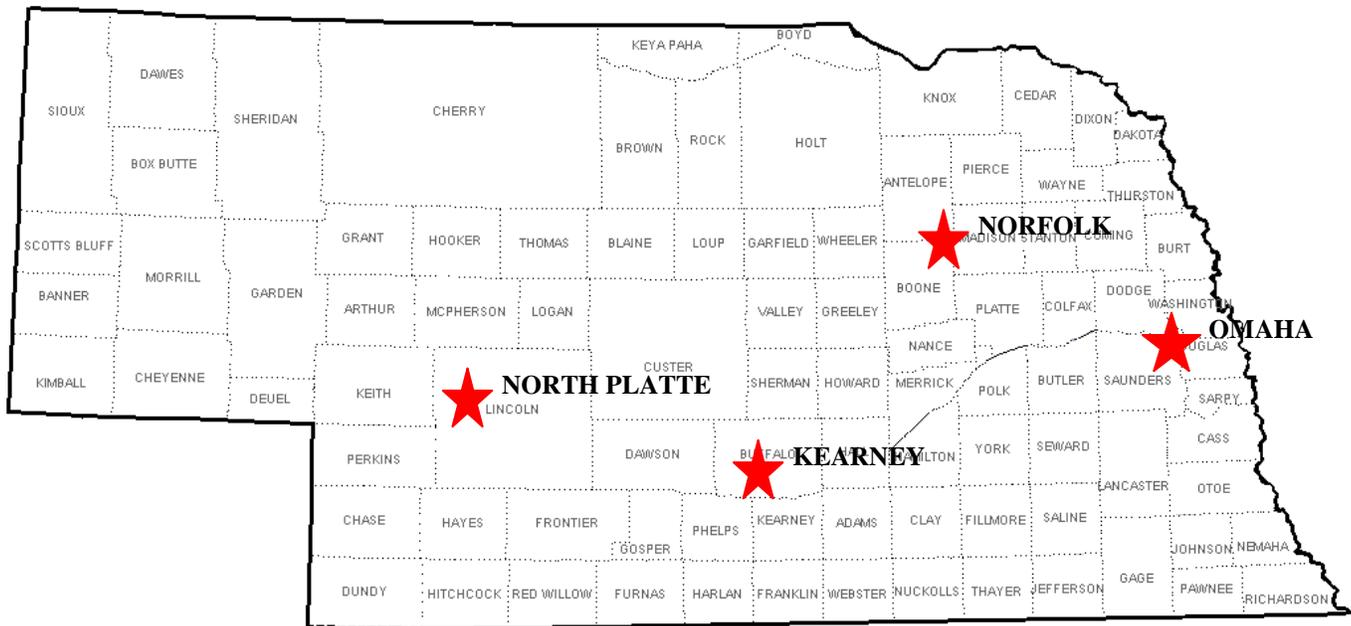
2007-2009 State Plan Development Toolkit					
<u>Accomplishments</u>	<u>Gaps/Needs</u>	<u>Solutions</u>	<u>Resources Available</u>	<u>What Does the Solution Involve?</u>	<u>Who is Responsible for the Solution?</u>
Consider the accomplishments since VAWA funds became available.	What gaps/needs remain to be addressed in relation to domestic violence and sexual assault in your community.	What are the solutions to the gaps?	What resources are already available? What resources can be utilized to help with the solution?	List what would be involved to implement the solution.	List who would be responsible for oversight, implementation, etc.?

** NOTE: The toolkit was used for the input regarding domestic violence and sexual assault.*

C. November/December, 2009 Community Meetings

November/December 2009 Community Meetings -The Crime Commission staff invited representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, probation, courts and non-profit victim service agencies from across the state to attend a meeting in their area to assist in the development of the 2010-2012 VAWA State Plan (see map below). Agencies were asked to share the invitation with other appropriate community agencies such as medical and mental health providers and other interested individuals. Information was provided at these meetings on the purpose of the VAWA funds, how the funds are currently used, discussion of other funding sources used for the State’s VAWA effort and to highlight accomplishments of VAWA funding. However, the primary purpose of the meetings was to provide an opportunity for communities to provide input about what is working in their communities, what gaps and needs remain, and what are suggestions for solutions for improving the criminal justice system’s response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. At the end of each meeting the attendees were asked to pick three to five of the discussed gaps/needs to be marked as a priority. Concerned individuals were invited to provide written input if they could not attend a meeting and take part in an on-line survey. All of the feedback (prioritized and non-prioritized gaps/needs) generated in the community meetings was compiled and put into a toolkit for the VAWA Advisory subcommittee. The identified prioritized gaps/needs were marked on the toolkit so subcommittee members were aware of the main focus of the community meetings.

Community Meetings 2010-2012 State Plan



D. Input From Statewide Meetings and VAWA Advisory State Plan Subcommittee

At the community meetings held across the state, Crime Commission staff provided an opportunity for individuals to share accomplishments, identify gaps/needs and solutions that need to be part of the State Plan. While meetings were held in different areas of the state, similar messages were heard. A toolkit was prepared after the community meetings for the VAWA Advisory subcommittee. The toolkit was used as a resource for subcommittee members to utilize during the meeting to focus and prioritize the State Plan. The VAWA Advisory subcommittee members were asked to consider the gaps/needs identified and provide input on what the solutions would involve and who would be responsible for the oversight and implementation of the solution. The input received for accomplishments, gaps/needs and solutions fit primarily into the following seven categories:

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Victim Services and Safety

Although many accomplishments were identified during this process, it was agreed that most of the accomplishments continue to remain as gaps to varying degrees and a plan of action is needed for each gap. Following is a summary of the gaps and needs provided at the statewide meetings and by the VAWA Advisory Subcommittee. (See Attachment A for a detailed listing of accomplishments, gaps/needs and solutions, which are broken down by domestic violence and sexual assault).

E. Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault Identified Gaps and Needs

The following identified gaps and needs are listed according to the seven primary areas of need identified at the statewide meetings. Many could be listed in multiple categories.

Coordinated Response Efforts and State Response Efforts

- Lack of consistent training for CRT members
- Modification of best practices for CRT members
- Need for coordination on a state level
- Lack of Community Response Teams in rural regions throughout the state of Nebraska
- High staff turnover leads to a lack of direction and leadership for Community Response Teams
- Need for relationship building among Community Response Teams
- Increase efforts of victimless prosecution
- Lack of minority and tribal representation among CRTS
- There is an inconsistent response to sexual assault victims at the statewide and local levels
- There is a need to train law enforcement agencies on compliance issues relating to the payment of sexual assault forensic examinations and polygraph testing
- Law Enforcement in some communities are having a difficult time paying for the sexual assault forensic examination fee
- A need for the development of a statewide anonymous reporting system for Jane Doe rape kits
- A need for special/specific training for law enforcement on sexual assault
- Training is needed among CRTs in the area of sexual assault
- Lack of sexual assault service providers in Southeast Nebraska

Legislation Issues

- Victims continue to be arrested for Aiding and Abetting due to violation of protection order
- Lack of updates on legislative issues state-wide
- Harsher penalties are needed for violation of protection order charges
- Protection order renewal process is difficult for victims to obtain
- Most victim service providers are federally funded and are not allowed to lobby or testify due to Federal restrictions
- More funds are needed for CVR in order to compensate victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Among the legislative body it seems that DV/SA is not seen as “violence against women”. The perception is still out there among the legislative body that “these are just folks caught in incidents”
- Expansion of what constitutes the “Domestic” category on protection order

Offender Accountability

- Lack of training on Firearm legislation (including Probation Officers)
- Consistent statewide response for protection order violations
- Statewide concern that Child Protective Services holds victims more accountable than offenders
- More Victim specialists are needed within the Department of Probation
- Lack of mandatory judicial education
- Lack of approved Batterer Intervention Programs in rural regions of the state
- Sex offender registry makes offenders more mobile- law enforcement does not always have resources to follow up on sex offender status and lack of funding to maintain public awareness/education in regards to the sex offender registry
- Need to hold stalking offenders more accountable

Public Awareness / Education

- Lack of public awareness regarding sexual assault/stalking and technology among school age children
- Lack of public awareness and education among teens and college students regarding stalking, sexual assault and domestic violence
- Lack of public awareness of male domestic violence victims. Stigma is still attached to male domestic violence victims
- Stigma associated with domestic violence continues to exist
- Lack of education, awareness and services for elderly victims of domestic violence

Training / Technical Assistance

- Lack of funding and time for quality training
- Lack of training among Child Protective Service workers and HHS regarding domestic violence
- Lack of domestic violence and sexual assault training among State and Welfare Departments.
- Lack of training in rural areas on victim confidentiality and the importance of confidentiality within these rural regions.
- Lack of training for Community Response Team members
- Lack of training for medical personnel in the area of sexual assault
- Lack of training among school personnel in relation to dating violence, what they should be looking for and how to report/respond

Underserved/Non-served Victims

- Lack of sexual assault services in rural areas of Nebraska- lack of SANE nurses in rural areas, which leads to a lower quality of sexual assault forensic examinations
- Lack of services for the GLBT community in relation to domestic violence and sexual assault
- Lack of overall services for sexual assault victims
- Lack of transportation and services for rural victims
- Lack of outreach and services to tribes
- Lack of trained court certified interpreters for domestic violence and sexual assault victims- including interpreters for the hearing impaired
- Law Enforcement training on cultural issues is needed
- Lack of services for victims with mental health issues
- Lack of services for teen victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Lack of domestic violence support groups for male victims
- Lack of shelter for male domestic violence victims
- Lack of services available for non-documented immigrants

Victim Safety / Services

- More assistance for the family members of sexual assault victims
- Lack of counseling options and services for victims of sexual assault
- Lack of security at Tribal court
- Limited funding for medications needed after a sexual assault
- Limited number of sexual assault advocates at college campuses
- Lack of free or reduced legal services for domestic violence victims
- Visitation/exchange assistance is needed with custody and visitation issues
- Lack of transitional housing for victims of domestic violence
- Limited number of support groups for women whose abusers are in Batterer Intervention Programs
- Limited shelter space for victims of domestic violence
- Limited number of on-call advocates
- More victim education is needed on self-petition
- More culturally specific programs are needed across the state

It is evident from the extensive list of gaps/needs there remains much to accomplish with the VAWA funds along with other resources. In addition, there are ongoing systemic issues such as budget issues affecting jail sentencing and turnover in personnel. It was also noted the criminal justice system, overall, is an adversarial system but it is the system we must work within.

Nebraska continues to show the need when looking at state statistics regarding domestic violence and sexual assault victims. **In 2008, 553 Forcible Rapes were reported and this is an increase of 7% from 2007 (Crime in Nebraska preliminary report 2008).** This is only one form of sexual assault and those numbers represent the population that chooses to report the incident to the police.

Domestic violence is another issue that affects every community throughout the state. **In Nebraska there were 4,507 simple domestic assaults and 572 aggravated domestic assaults (Nebraska Crime Commission, Uniform Crime Reports).** Advocacy for victims is a key piece to victim services. In Nebraska, a focus of VAWA funding is Enhanced Advocacy. This advocate is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week that can be called by law enforcement. When law enforcement encounters a domestic violence or sexual assault incident they are able to call the enhanced advocate. At that time the advocate can come to the scene, meet the victim at a secured location or set up a meeting with the victim to meet within the next 24 hours. 20,134 individuals received direct services (shelter, crisis support, medical advocacy, etc.) from the network of 22 programs in 2009. This includes 11,266 adult women, 1,181 adult men and 7,687 children and youth. Domestic violence continues to be an issue that needs to be addressed. VAWA funds will continue to be utilized to make the criminal justice system's response immediate to victims and support their needs.

Applications for 2010-2012 VAWA funds will provide the flexibility for new and innovative programs. Applicants will be asked to consider the gaps and needs voiced statewide and request funds accordingly. These gaps and needs will be listed in the RFP along with any priorities for funding. Attachment A provides the solutions identified at the statewide meetings to address the gaps and needs.

III. 2010-2012 VAWA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PRIORITIES AND APPROACHES

A. Relation of 2010-2012 VAWA Plan to Prior Implementation Plans

The goal of Nebraska's 2010-2012 State Plan remains the same as in prior years and states:

The criminal justice system in Nebraska in collaboration with victim services and other community agencies and individuals will respond to all victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in a consistent, coordinated and positive way that will make victims safer, hold offenders accountable and work to STOP the violence.

Nebraska will continue to build on previous years' efforts and successes in the 2010-2012 State Plan. Since the VAWA funds became available, they were used primarily to establish, maintain and enhance Coordinated Response Teams/Efforts (CRT). A CRT is defined as a local group of representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, probation, victim services and other agencies who work together in a coordinated manner to improve the criminal justice system's response to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Nebraska communities applying for continued 2010-2012 VAWA funds for CRTs are expected to show how they have expanded from implementing and maintaining CRTs to enhancing the effort in their community. Many communities have moved from the discussion mode to the action mode where positive results are both measurable and recognizable. Law enforcement, prosecution and other agencies are working directly with each other to resolve problems, i.e., prosecutor contacts law enforcement for more information in order to prosecute. This direct communication enables the overall response to victims and offenders to improve. This direct communication between agencies is expected to become a routine way of doing business in communities with established coordinated response efforts.

Coordinated efforts have also expanded statewide. A VAWA grant to the Nebraska State Patrol provides for the training of new State Patrol recruits and in-service training for State Patrol veterans. The grant funded position also developed training for local law enforcement agencies, particularly rural agencies. Because 83 percent of Nebraska's local prosecutors are part-time, the Nebraska Attorney General's office received VAWA funds for a dedicated prosecutor to provide prosecutorial assistance for domestic violence and sexual assault cases in rural communities. In addition, Probation has 15 districts and 950 probationers who are on probation due to domestic violence or related domestic violence issues. Probation receives VAWA funds for a Domestic Violence Specialist who is dedicated to developing the system to hold offenders accountable and assist with getting domestic violence specialized officers put in various districts. All three of these positions and their respective agencies are involved in statewide training efforts.

Input gathered statewide supports continued need for Coordinated Response Teams/Efforts (CRTs) to work toward addressing the gaps and needs identified in this plan which are relevant to their communities. Additionally, the Coordinated Response Teams/ Efforts show the need for systems accountability within the Coordinated Response Teams. The gaps and needs identified for this aspect again are relevant statewide and have solutions that are accessible by the communities to implement.

It should also be noted there are some communities that have never received VAWA funds. However, the community's leaders recognized the need to come together to address issues and make changes. Such efforts show that changes may not always require funds, but rather the commitment from key leadership and the community. The model for ALL communities in Nebraska should be a coordinated response effort and VAWA funds will continue to be used to support these efforts. However, communities in Nebraska are unique and one size does not necessarily fit all. The challenge is to maintain or increase the momentum of the established coordinated response efforts in years to come. Along the way of establishing the Coordinated Response Teams/Efforts statewide 'best practices' for areas to use as a building block will be identified, which supports CRT's to enhance in all areas. Sharing 'best practices' will assist many CRTs throughout the state and the flexibility of the 'best practice' will be a key piece for communities with unique features.

The Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition receives direct funding from the Office of Violence Against Women and, continues to coordinate, provide training, technical assistance and support to the communities receiving VAWA funding. They also work closely with the Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office and the Nebraska Supreme Court on VAWA funded education and training projects. Since the loss of the GTEAP funding, the Nebraska State Patrol has taken the lead to continue to work on statewide training issues; along with the Nebraska Domestic Violence Coalition, Nebraska Supreme Court, Nebraska Attorney General's Office and the Crime Commission. This group is not only looking at the need for statewide policies; but the need to establish a state-wide CRT Coordinator who would conduct outreach to communities who do not have a CRT in their area and provide support to those CRTs that are in need of technical assistance. All of these key pieces will continue to be enhanced by the working relationship of all the entities involved in VAWA funded programs.

B. Major Shifts in Direction

Input from across the state does not support a need to make any major shifts in direction. The priorities of previous plans were:

- √ Coordinated Response Efforts
- √ Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims
- √ Offender Accountability
- √ Public Awareness and Education
- √ Training and Technical Assistance
- √ Victim Services and Safety

There was an addition to one of the priorities, which increases the focus on the Coordinated Response Efforts to enhance into the statewide level. This enhancement is to include Coordinated State Response, which supports the need for systems' accountability. This additional aspect will strive for an enhancement of support provided to victims and

response to victims, while providing services to victims in a positive, empowering manner.

Each of these priorities was identified at the VAWA meetings held across the state and there is a continued support for VAWA funds to be utilized for the identified purposes. Although a major shift in direction is not warranted, the primary concerns voiced at the meetings was the limited efforts to address State Coordinated Response, systems' accountability along with the underserved and unserved victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Unserved and underserved efforts have been a priority of previous State Plans, but efforts will continue throughout the state to meet the needs in this area. A task force will also be put together to identify and build relationships with culturally specific organizations. Input from the VAWA Advisory Committee and the statewide meetings document the need to ensure these areas to be a funding priority. Identified gaps and needs include:

- √ Creating 'best practice' models for Coordinated Response Efforts for rural and urban areas
- √ Increase Community Response Teams in rural areas of the state
- √ Increase minority and tribal representation among Community Response Teams
- √ Increase Batterer Intervention Programs in rural areas
- √ Increase public awareness and education among teens and college students
- √ Train Child Protective Service workers and Health and Human Services personnel on best practices for domestic violence cases
- √ Continuous training statewide on priority issues and updated information
- √ Leadership for Statewide Response Efforts
- √ Improvement of services, support and response to victims by promoting system accountability
- √ Underserved victim populations, i.e., non-English speaking, rural, immigrants, minority, undocumented women, Native American women, women with disabilities need link to service organizations
- √ Interpreters needed statewide for various languages
- √ Lack of bilingual personnel in all areas of system
- √ Training on issues or problems encountered by unserved and underserved victims
- √ Increase services to rural victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- √ Increase free legal services for victims of domestic violence
- √ Increase identified culturally specific organizations
- √ Development of a state-wide anonymous reporting system for sexual assault forensic examinations
- √ Increase sexual assault services in rural areas of Nebraska due to lack of SANE nurses in rural areas

C. Use of 2010-2012 VAWA Funds and Identification of Priorities for Funding

❖ *Federal Guidelines for Use of VAWA Funds*

2010-2012 VAWA STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution, Courts) Program subgrantees will meet one or more of the statutory program purpose areas as identified in the Violence Against Women Act of 2005. The emphasis of the VAWA STOP Program, as stated in federal guidelines, continues to be the implementation of comprehensive strategies addressing violence against women that are sensitive to the needs and safety of victims and hold offenders accountable for their crimes. Projects should include implementing community-driven cultural specific initiatives to address the needs of underserved populations as defined by the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, including people with disabilities and elder victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and address sexual assault through service expansion; development and implementation of protocols; training for judges, other court personnel, prosecutors, and law enforcement; and development of coordinated community responses to sexual assault.

❖ *Requests for Continuation of VAWA Funding*

Each VAWA funded community requesting continuation funds must collaboratively determine their needs, prioritize their needs and request VAWA funds accordingly and within the guidelines of the VAWA funds and the needs identified statewide. Given the limited amount of funds available and given the application process is competitive across the state; there may not be sufficient funds for full funding of previous projects. This plan does not serve to preclude any efforts previously funded; however, the VAWA State Plan Subcommittee identified the need for VAWA funds to be used for enhance services to unserved and under served victims and to build Coordinated Response Efforts to be part of a Statewide Coordinated Response.

Coordinator positions were funded in previous years to implement and oversee CRTs. In the beginning, the Coordinator's role was largely administrative and responsible for bringing agencies together, organizing meetings, gathering statistics, working with agencies to develop and implement policies and procedures, defining agency roles, developing a criminal justice response plan, tracking cases and organizing training. Many of these activities should now be completed or require considerably less time. Many activities should now be the responsibility of individual agencies. Communities must evaluate their CRT to determine if a paid coordinator position is vital to the CRT's continued improvement and success or if there are greater needs in the community, i.e., paralegal, a probation liaison to work with the victims of domestic violence probationers, a prosecutor, a law enforcement officer, someone to work with the victim and offender to follow up on protection orders, clerical help for criminal justice agencies or advocates to provide immediate response to victims. CRT programs requesting continuation funds are expected to clearly state how their CRT will improve because of the VAWA funds. In addition, CRT's must show they have active participation from the key stakeholders within the community or area.

❖ ***How Communities Should Determine Requests for 2010-2012 VAWA Funding***

Communities must answer the question of how their community can BEST utilize the VAWA funds and work together to determine what is needed to do a better job. Specifically, law enforcement, prosecution, probation, and victim service providers, at minimum, should work in a coordinated way to identify needs, gaps and solutions for their community and including the needs of unserved and under served victims. Those coordinated response teams that have been established for some time need to evaluate and start involving other needed agencies and representatives (**Health and Human Services, Medical Personnel, School Personnel, Culturally Specific Organizations, and Child Protective Services etc...**). Communities will then need to prioritize their identified needs and ask for funds accordingly. Communities should also consider if there are changes to be made that would require only the time and commitment of leadership in the community.

Applicants requesting funding for a CRT are required to have a written a criminal justice domestic violence improvement plan. The plan should identify gaps, needs and solutions in the local criminal justice system when addressing domestic violence cases. The plan should clearly state the role of each agency to insure domestic violence victims are provided coordinated assistance at each stage of the criminal justice system. Established CRTs should be developing a similar plan to address sexual assault.

Regardless of the funding requested, **there must be community involvement** in the development of applications for VAWA funds. **Involved agencies must have the opportunity to provide input on the application and review it prior to submitting it to the Crime Commission. It is important for all agencies in a community to take ownership in the VAWA program regardless of which agency applies for the funds. Ownership includes, but is not limited to, ensuring procedures are followed, ensuring everyone receives training, ensuring complete law enforcement reports are provided for prosecution and providing information and statistics needed by the Crime Commission in a way that is not a burden to any one person or agency.**

❖ **Priorities for 2010-2012 VAWA Funding**

2010-2012 VAWA funds will be distributed as per the guidelines of the Violence Against Women Act which requires 25% be provided to law enforcement, 25% to prosecution, 30% to victim services (10% of victim services will go to culturally specific community based organizations) and 5% to the courts. The distribution of the 15% discretionary funds will be as needed among the four categories and will be determined when funding decisions are made.

Based on input received statewide, VAWA funds and coordinated efforts must continue to meet the following needs:

- √ Coordinated Response Efforts and Statewide Coordinated Efforts
- √ Offender Accountability
- √ Public Awareness and Education
- √ Training and Technical Assistance
- √ Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims
- √ Victim Services and Safety

These remain the same needs identified in previous Plans. However, the VAWA Advisory Subcommittee identified coordinated response efforts locally and statewide, and services for unserved and underserved victims as a priority of 2010-2012 funding which, was supported statewide. It should be noted services to unserved and underserved victims was a priority need in previous State Plans. However, the requests for funding to address this need have been minimal. **The request for proposals for 2010-2012 VAWA funds will identify coordinated response efforts and, underserved victims as a priority for funding.** Funding requests to improve and increase services to underserved victims must be made through the CRT making an application. Services to minority victims could be provided by replicating successful programs, developing materials that are culturally appropriate and in the appropriate language, hiring of bilingual staff, developing a pool of interpreters for use statewide, funds set aside for interpreters, or a new and innovative program could be proposed. Services for the cultural specific set-aside must show the program will focus on domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking victims; focuses on the underserved population's unique needs; provide tailored services to meet the unique needs; has the expertise to work with these victims; and has to demonstrate the capacity to work effectively with these victims in the underserved populations. In order to successfully identify and recruit culturally specific organizations a state-wide task force will be formed in order to address this particular issues. **Applications for 2010-2012 VAWA funds will be asked to identify underserved victims in their community, what services are currently provided, what services are needed, the number of victims served, the coordination with the local Coordinated Response Team and expertise of working with the population in any proposal submitted.**

❖ **Types of Programs to Be Supported with 2010-2012 VAWA Funds**

2010-2012 VAWA funds will continue to be used to build and enhance coordinated response efforts and to address the issues identified statewide including:

- √ Coordinated Response Efforts and Statewide Coordinated Efforts
- √ Offender Accountability
- √ Public Awareness and Education
- √ Training and Technical Assistance
- √ Needs of Unserved and Underserved Victims
- √ Victim Services and Safety

However, priority funding will be considered for unserved and under served victims as defined by VAWA. Possible solutions for these priority funding areas identified by the VAWA Advisory subcommittee and at the statewide

meetings include:

- √ Programs to ensure a consistent, fair response by all agencies
- √ Technical assistance provided by a team approach in rural areas
- √ Assistance through cultural community centers
- √ Use television, newspaper advertisements
- √ Partner with Cooperative Extension and other appropriate community agencies
- √ Working with schools
- √ Interpreters for non-English speaking victims
- √ Developing a pool of bilingual interpreters to be used statewide
- √ Increasing bilingual law enforcement officers
- √ Statewide bilingual hotline with access to multiple languages

Many of the solutions could be supported with the VAWA funds but, many require primarily the commitment of leadership both locally and statewide. The RFP will serve to define programs that can be VAWA funded.

Only one application from a community will be accepted for 2010-2012 funds for a Coordinated Response Team/Effort (CRT). Consideration will also be given to providing assistance to sparsely populated rural communities who may never have a complete Coordinated Response Team but need some help to improve investigations and prosecutions of domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Law enforcement and prosecution agencies in these small communities may apply directly for funds for an identified need that will directly improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence and sexual assault, and particularly unserved and under served victims. Funding could be requested to meet an identified need to serve unserved and underserved victims, for overtime for officers to address domestic violence/sexual assault offenses, for the prosecutor to improve prosecution of domestic violence cases, for training, etc. Small communities could also coordinate with an existing Coordinated Response Team/Effort in their region, if there is one.

Communities can contact the Crime Commission to discuss how the funds could be used in their community within the purposes of VAWA and how they can access technical assistance and training to improve their response to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Overall, 2010-2012 VAWA funds may be used for personnel and related expenses, training and technical assistance to improve the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence and sexual assault, **programs to increase outreach to unserved and underserved women who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault**, increasing public awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault and its issues, enhancing local or statewide coordinated response efforts, improving systems' accountability, enhancing victim services and holding offenders accountable.

Starting in May 2010, a task force will be formed to identify culturally specific organizations to apply for VAWA funding, as part of a CRT. The Nebraska Crime Commission will take the lead in this task force and partner with the Nebraska Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Coalition, various community members and CRT leaders to identify and develop a working group to ensure sufficient culturally specific representation throughout the state of Nebraska. This task force will work to identify appropriate culturally specific organizations to join Community Response Teams in areas that do not have culturally specific representation. The task force will evaluate progress at the end of a 12 month period. In addition, all CRTs have been instructed to have a culturally specific organization as part of their CRT.

D. Grant Award Process

Crime Commission Operating Instructions provide guidelines for awarding grant funds administered by the Crime Commission. Applications for 2010-2012 VAWA funds are to include:

- √ A thorough description of the problem

- √ Relevant statistical documentation of the problem
- √ Relevant solutions to address the problem
- √ Goals, measurable objectives, performance indicators
- √ Activities and timetable relevant to addressing the problem
- √ Budget and budget narratives supporting the request of funds
- √ Statistics and supporting documentation showing underserved populations in the community needing services.

When considering applications for award, the following are considered:

- √ Ability of the proposed program to address identified problem
- √ Other resources available to address the problem including an explanation of how the grant applicant's proposal will work with and/or coordinate with existing resources
- √ Cost effectiveness of the proposed project
- √ Amount of funds available
- √ If previously funded, the performance and ability of the applicant to manage a grant program, including the timely submission of required reports to the Crime Commission

A key element in making funding determinations will be evidence of criminal justice agencies and victim service agencies, at a minimum, working together to be effective in filling the gap for which funds are requested. Applicants will be requested to show the commitment of funds other than VAWA to the project to show support and to help insure success and sustainability.

Following is the timeline for awarding 2010 VAWA funds.

- **November, 2010** - Grant Announcement mailed to more than 1,300 law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, victim service providers and other appropriate agencies. The announcement provides information about the VAWA funds and how to apply for funds.
- **January, 2011** - Grant Applications due in Crime Commission Office
- **March, 2011** - Staff Review Committee meets to review and critique submitted grant applications and make funding recommendations.
- **April, 2011** - The VAWA Advisory Committee meets to make funding recommendations on 2010 applications. Funding determinations and recommendations made by the Staff Review Committee and the VAWA Advisory Committee are based on, but not limited to:
 - (1) The focus of the project and how well it addressed the goal of the state plan.
 - (2) The geographic area of the state requesting funds based on need. Consideration given to population size and diversity of the area to be served; resources available within the area to be served; how the proposed project compliments or enhances existing resources; how well the proposed project was planned and supported by law enforcement, prosecution, probation and victim services; and, the number of domestic violence victims and/or sexual assault victims benefited as well as how they would benefit.
 - (3) The cost and sustainability of the proposed project.
- **May, 2011** - Nebraska Crime Commission makes final funding determinations
- **June, 2011** - Grant Management Training provided to representatives from the awarded projects. Information

includes how to complete required forms, when the forms are due, how to maintain financial records, data gathering, etc. Program representatives have the opportunity to discuss their program, how it operates and what they are trying to accomplish.

- **July, 2011** - Date tentative. Crime Commission staff provides project planning and grant writing training. Grants are awarded using the standardized grant process as stated in the Crime Commission's Operating Instructions. Grants recommended for denial have the opportunity to appeal the denial but only on the basis stated in the Operating Instructions.

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Crime Commission works with subgrantees to ensure information needed for good funding decisions is gathered. Applications for 2010-2012 VAWA funds will again request statistics specific to each coordinated response to enable better funding decisions and to help determine what has changed because of the VAWA funded coordinated response effort. Statistics requested in 2010-2012 applications will include the following for a three year period, if available.

- **Law Enforcement** - Number of domestic violence related calls to law enforcement, number of related domestic violence and sexual assault arrests / custodial arrests, number of children present during domestic violence incident.
- **Protection Orders** - Number of protection orders filed, number granted and number violated.
- **Prosecution** - Number of domestic violence and sexual assault cases reviewed, number charged, number found guilty, number of cases where charges dismissed, number of cases found not guilty and type of sentence.
- **Victim Services** - Number of victims referred by law enforcement to victim services and provided direct advocacy within 24 hours and after 24 hours.
- **Underserved Persons** – Number of victims seeking services that could not be served.
- **Batterer Program** - Number of offenders enrolled in batterer's program, number completing the program, number terminated from the program, and number returned to program after termination.
- **Coordinated Response Team** – Number of developed, revised and implemented policies and procedures and what type of agency was involved.

These statistics are currently required, along with others, on a quarterly basis from all funded Coordinated Response Teams/Efforts.

The Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition coordinates quarterly consortium meetings for VAWA funded coordinated response efforts and other pertinent issues statewide. These meetings provide updates of what is going on in the different communities, an opportunity to share resource information and an opportunity to provide training. The meetings have been very beneficial to new and continuation subgrantees.

Financial monitors of VAWA funded programs are conducted annually to ensure funds are used appropriately, there is satisfactory documentation of awarded and matching funds and agencies have an acceptable method of accounting for federal and matching funds.

Crime Commission staff does programmatic monitors of subgrantees by conducting site visits and reviewing activity and statistical reports sent into to the Crime Commission. Activity reports are provided quarterly. Part one of the activity report provides the activities and successes that have occurred during the quarter, any problems encountered

and how problems were addressed. Part two reports on the measurable objectives that were stated in the grant application.

IV. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

A. Underserved Populations

The populations identified from input across the state provided various populations that were underserved because of their geographical location, race and/or ethnicity, or special needs (i.e. language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, age, etc...). The prioritized populations will be the main focus for the cultural specific plan in Nebraska. The populations identified were:

- ✓ Non-English Speaking
 - Spanish/Hispanic*
 - Sudanese*
 - Asian
 - Arabic
- ✓ Native American*
- ✓ Rural Women*
- ✓ Mental Health Disabilities*
- ✓ Non-documented Immigrants*
- ✓ Substance Abuse Issues*
- ✓ African American*
- ✓ Elderly
- ✓ Deaf/Hearing Impaired
- ✓ Children/Teens

* Populations identified as a priority.

In addition, a number of victims who are deemed as difficult to reach out to and provide comprehensive services to that do not fit directly into the federal definition were identified. The types of victims identified were: male victims; GLBTQ victims; stalking victims; sexual assault victims; victims with a criminal background; victims who are repeatedly victimized; and, victims who come from families that have passed violence down from generation to generation.

B. Cultural Specific Community Based Set-aside

Nebraska continues to work on the growth of Community Response Teams (CRTs) across the state and work toward the enhancement of these CRTs. Since the VAWA funds became available, they are used primarily to establish, maintain and enhance CRTs. A CRT is defined as a local group of representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, probation, victim services and other agencies who work together in the coordinated manner to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

Input gathered statewide supports the partnership of cultural specific organizations, such as a cultural center, with a domestic violence sexual assault program that has a CRT in place and fully functioning. The cultural center will be an active member of the CRT. This partnership will promote the enhancement of CRT's across the state. This partnership will look at combining the expertise of those who work with domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence victims with those who have the expertise on a specific underserved population that has been identified as a priority. This will allow victims to have the expertise services that will assist with the specific victim issues and specific cultural needs.

Applications for 2010-2012 funds will provide the guidelines and requirements for this partnership. Applicants will

be asked to consider the gaps and needs voiced statewide and request funds accordingly. These gaps and needs will be listed in the RFP along with prioritized underserved populations. Attachment A provides the solutions identified at the statewide meetings to address the gaps and needs for underserved populations.

V. CONCLUSION

Each community in Nebraska is unique. VAWA funds will help to ensure the positive changes in how the criminal justice system in Nebraska responds to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault will continue even if the VAWA funding ends. Changes will be sustained because of policy and procedure changes, changes in agencies' daily operations, training, technical assistance and established ongoing working relationships.

Funding from the Violence Against Women Act will not always be available but it can be used now, along with other funding, to help stop the violence against women by creating permanent changes in Nebraska's criminal justice system. These changes will provide fair and consistent responses to domestic violence, sexual assault and all violence against women in our state.