



**State of Florida**  
**Department of Children and Families**

**Rick Scott**  
*Governor*

**Mike Carroll**  
*Secretary*

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**STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN GRANT PROGRAM**

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**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**FFY 2017-2020**

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**Office of Child Welfare**  
**Domestic Violence Program**

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and  
Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

## Table of Contents

<b>Required Element</b>	<b>Page #</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b>	2
STOP Grant Purpose Areas	3
<b>II. Description Planning Process.</b>	8
Survey Results	7
Implementation Planning Meeting	12
Description of Consultation with Collaborative and Other Partners	14
<b>III. Needs and Context</b>	33
Florida's Demographic and Economic Landscape	36
Crime Statistics	38
The Intersection of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence	40
<b>IV. Plan Priorities and Approaches</b>	42
Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Victim Services and Courts Goals	43
Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Victim Services and Court Projects	47
Training and Technical Assistance	67
FVPSA	72
Prior Implementation Planning	72
Prioritizing Geographic Size and Need	74
Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims	76
Conclusion	92

## **I. Introduction**

The State of Florida first began receiving STOP (Services, Training, Officers and Prosecution) Violence Against Women formula grant funding in 1995. STOP funding is administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, Domestic Violence Program, (the “Department”). The funding supports Florida’s efforts to provide a collaborative and well-coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to enhance advocacy and improve the criminal justice system’s response to victims of violent crime. Each of the STOP components – Services, Training, Officers and Prosecutors – are given priority in addressing strategies which are used to hold batterers accountable, and provide much needed services to victims.

The overarching design of Florida’s STOP program is to increase victim safety through the development of a collaborative approach between law enforcement, prosecution agencies, the courts, and victim service providers. The final goal aims to increase appropriate arrest and prosecution rates for domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking perpetrators. Strong partnerships are established at the community and statewide levels between law enforcement, prosecution, victim services and the courts resulting in increased training, technical assistance, and services to survivors.

In keeping with the State’s longstanding efforts to develop and strengthen existing services and programs, and to address innovative and creative solutions to existing needs, Florida’s initial implementation planning process began with hosting the mandated statewide Implementation Planning meeting. In previous years the Department developed a new statewide Implementation Plan every three years. Recently, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) informed states

and territories that state plans may now cover a four-year period. Meeting participants are comprised of representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, corrections, victim services providers, the state's domestic violence coalition, and sexual violence council (aka coalition), VOCA, and Department of Health (DOH) representatives. DOH is the state's designated recipient and administrator of state and federal sexual violence funding. The Department advertised the September 2016 Implementation Planning meeting through the agency internet website at: [www.myflfamilies.com](http://www.myflfamilies.com), in the Florida Administrative Weekly (a statewide publication of all public business conducted in accordance with Florida's Sunshine law), and through agency email distribution directed to all potential meeting representatives. Executive leadership from Florida's Native American tribes were personally consulted and invited to participate. As in past years, the Native American tribal community declined to attend this meeting, and chose not to participate in the planning process.

Florida's topography is as demographically diverse as the multiplicity of its citizens. The Department's primary mission is to serve the State's most vulnerable populations, realizing the need to carefully plan projects that not only cover geographically diverse areas, but also to address projects that are economically feasible and sustainable in the event that state and federal funding would decrease or worse yet, cease to be available. Florida's Plan will discuss how STOP grant funds are currently utilized, and how the State's coalitions are planning and addressing the need to maintain current and future projects within the following purpose areas:

- a.** Training law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence;
- b.** Developing, training, or expanding units of law enforcement officers, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
- c.** Developing and implementing more effective police, court, and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
- d.** Developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communications systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;
- e.** Developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services programs, including sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services to underserved populations, providing specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are

granted, and increasing reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women, including crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;

- f.** Supporting formal and informal Statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of State law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other State agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence and dating violence;
- g.** Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault living with a disability and/or who are later in life, including recognizing, investigating and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling and other victim services to such individuals;
- h.** Providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in immigration matters;
- i.** Developing, implementing, or enhancing Sexual Assault Response Teams, or other similar coordinated community responses to sexual assault;

- j.** Developing and strengthening policies, protocols, and best practices, and training for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors relating to the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases and the appropriate treatment of victims;
- k.** Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing sexual assault against men, women, and youth in correctional and detention settings;
- l.** Developing, enlarging, or strengthening sexual assault victim services and legal assistance programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services to underserved populations, and increasing reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women, including crimes of sexual assault;
- m.** Supporting formal and informal statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of State law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other State agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including crimes of sexual violence;
- n.** Training of sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners in the collection and preservation of evidence, analysis, prevention, and providing expert testimony and treatment of trauma related to sexual assault;
- o.** Maintaining core victim services and criminal justice initiatives, while supporting complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families; and

- p.** Developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs and projects to provide services and responses targeting male and female victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity, as defined in section 249(c) of title 18, United States Code.



## **II. Description of Planning Process –**

Florida has a philosophy that promotes on-going implementation planning, believing that data collection and quality assessment (through surveys, monitoring sub grantees, and interviewing survivors through “listening sessions”) are undoubtedly the most accurate predictors for measuring positive versus negative outcomes. The programs supported from STOP federal funding are greatly enhanced through evidence-based training, victim, law enforcement, prosecution and court feedback, federal and state approved literature and products, and state-of –the-art investigative equipment. Lastly, and most importantly, community-wide collaborations are offered the opportunity, and encouraged to showcase and share progress outcomes.

For the past ten years, the Department has developed and issued similar Implementation Planning surveys to statewide domestic violence and sexual assault partners. We consider the survey a first step in the planning process. This tool has consistently proven to be a critical component in establishing a priority list of state and local needs for training, technical assistance, and service provision. Over the years, each set of surveys have consistently prioritized the same important issues year after year. Survey results enable the Department and our primary partners each year to systematically analyze and compare the essential needs of Florida’s law enforcement, prosecution, courts and victim services community-based agencies. Surveys are a method used to assist planners, and they also afford the grant administering agencies the ability to prioritize needs, develop appropriate training, and coordinate community projects. The State considers the survey option to be an essential element in the planning process, not only because surveys are considered a reliable means for capturing information and compiling data, but online surveys can also provide

a platform to provide input for a wide range of multi-disciplinary groups who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to voice and prioritize their agency needs and issues.

An online survey was developed and widely distributed during July 2016 in anticipation for the September Statewide Implementation Planning meeting.

Survey respondents comprised the following categories:

- Certified sexual assault rape crisis centers – 30 responses
- Certified domestic violence centers – 30 responses
- Certified dual domestic violence/rape crisis centers – 44 responses
- Prosecution – State Attorney’s Offices– 15 responses
- Law Enforcement – 69 responses
- Courts – 8 responses
- Legal Services Providers – 11 responses
- Batterer Intervention Programs – 1 response
- Other\* Responses – 48 responses

(\*Examples of “Other” responses include community-based care child welfare agencies, hospitals, health department, state coalition, and university/education)

The Department reviewed over two hundred completed surveys, however in an effort to maintain reliability many of the surveys were incomplete, and therefore excluded from the final data

analysis. We did include some incomplete surveys when responses were available directly related to “training needs”.

Below is a summary of survey results discussed during the Implementation Planning Meeting. No new areas of focus were noted in the 2016 survey results. Areas stated to have the greatest need continue to be consistently reported year after year, and also continue to be imperative for maintaining and developing supportive services, training and technical support.

Respondents indicated the **Underserved Communities with the lowest ability to be served** are Native American, Farm Workers, and Haitian.

Eighty-one percent of respondents from law enforcement agencies reported that they investigate sex crimes, 53 percent domestic violence crimes, 51 percent dating violence crimes, and 49 percent stalking crimes. One hundred percent of respondents from State Attorney Offices reported that they prosecute sex crime cases, and 87 percent reported that they prosecute domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking crime cases.

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**Domestic violence centers** prioritized in order the most critical **training needs** as: domestic violence and the dynamics of abuse, and also empowerment-based advocacy and safety planning. The most important training topics suggested by **law enforcement, prosecution, legal, and courts** was related to gathering physical and digital evidence, empowerment-based investigation and

prosecution, victim-centered interviewing skills, and high-risk indicators for domestic violence homicide.

Responders reported the highest need for **domestic violence resources** was having additional victim advocates, prosecutors, and domestic violence units. The greatest additional types of resources reported for survivors and their children were related to financial assistance, affordable housing, legal services, transportation, and childcare resources.

**Sexual assault service providers** responded that the most useful **training topics** are effective strategies for working with law enforcement/prosecutors, facilitators for sexual assault support groups, and effective strategies for working with system-based advocates. **Law enforcement, prosecution, and legal responders** all reported “Trauma Informed Interviewing” techniques as a most significant need. **Sexual assault advocates** responded the **greatest need** is for a better trained and committed overall trauma informed response by law enforcement and prosecution. Another priority response was a need for additional advocates to work with sexual assault victims.

Sexual assault responders indicated the **greatest impediments** to prosecuting sexual assault crimes are a lack of evidence, lack of and late reporting, victim bias, and challenges to victim participation. Most sexual assault center responders did report between 75-100 percent of survivors appearing in court are assisted by a center advocate.

Implementation Planning Meeting invitations were sent to 42 statewide community partners, however due to scheduling conflicts some steering committee members were unable to participate. Florida’s two Native American tribes and the Governor’s Native American Executive Leadership group were consulted, however declined participation. Historically, this is the case where the

Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, and Florida's two recognized state tribes decline participation in Florida's planning for VAWA and HHS grant related projects.

Two of Florida's most underserved and culturally specific populated regions were represented at this year's planning meeting. Executive Directors from both a certified domestic violence center and a dually certified domestic violence/sexual assault rape crisis center presented on the unique needs of the underserved rural and migrant populations that inhabit their respective communities. Planning committee members listened to heart wrenching stories describing the disadvantages so often encountered by domestic violence and sexual assault victims residing in rural isolated communities. Conversely, we also heard several amazing success stories. Although the Directors themselves refrained from taking personal credit for their community accomplishments, we know and understand that these positive outcomes are primarily attributed to the remarkable energy, enthusiasm, and persistence demonstrated by the program Directors and their staff. These two programs exemplify Florida's many rural, not-for-profit agencies that work tirelessly to promote strong and successful community collaborations with local law enforcement, prosecutors, Judges, faith-based organizations, schools, local health departments, and the local citizens who donate their time and personal funds to help domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims and their children. It is often the most economically disadvantaged communities that demonstrate the greatest support for those less fortunate.

The September 2016 STOP Implementation Plan meeting included the following participants:

- Kathleen Tailer, Office of Court Improvement, Office of the State Courts Administrator
- Andy Wentzell, Office of Court Improvement, Office of the State Courts Administrator

- Christina Ard, Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association
- John Hogenmuller, Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association
- David Brand, Florida Sheriff's Association
- Tabitha Krol, Florida Sheriff's Association
- Dean Register, Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Kristin Macias, Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Lorraine Elder, Florida Department of Health, Sexual Violence Prevention Program
- Cameo Bryant, Florida Department of Children and Families
- Elisa Cramer, Department of Children and Families
- Tammy Rodgers, Department of Children and Families
- Jessica Koburger, Department of Children and Families
- Audrey Ressler, Department of Children and Families
- Sandy Barnett, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Brandy Carlson, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Jodi Russell, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Chelsea Massey, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Bob Smedley, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Angie Pye, Domestic Abuse Council
- Meg Baldwin, Refuge House
- Jim Jolley, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
- Jennifer Dritt, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
- Grace Francis, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
- Sandy Hand, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence

- Kendra Prisk, Florida Department of Corrections
- Mary Marotta, Department of Children and Families

Florida regularly engages diverse members of statewide agencies, system partners and community-based and culturally specific organizations in workgroups that focus on STOP related tasks including, but not limited to, the law enforcement workgroup, the batterer intervention programs workgroup, and culturally-specific victim-service workgroups. FCADV participates on the Office of the State Court Administrator's (OSCA) advisory group. The needs identified and strategies proposed through these groups are integrated directly into STOP planning through developed purpose areas for requests for proposals, project goals created with the subgrantees, and in training and technical assistance conducted by FCADV, FCASV and committee members. In the last FY, FCADV and OSCA attended the Domestic Violence Mentor Court Open House hosted by the Ada County Domestic Violence Mentor Court in Boise, Idaho with the intention of evaluating the potential to replicate court practices through STOP funded projects in Florida. The Department of Children and Families, Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Florida Sexual Violence Council and Department of Health have regular communication about the goals of the STOP Implementation Plan and the strategies to serve target populations. FCADV has monthly calls with Voices for Immigrant Defense & Advocacy (VIDA) Legal Assistance, Inc. regarding the legal relief and safety needs of immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. VIDA and FCADV have partnered on projects, including the Access to Justice for Immigrant Survivors Project, providing culturally-informed, survivor focused training and technical assistance to communities on the unique safety and legal issues of survivors of domestic violence with immigration related legal needs and the Roaming Attorney Project, providing culturally and trauma-informed direct legal representation to immigrant survivors in need of legal

services. In addition, VIDA participates in FCADV review committees for new grant proposals. The Department of Children and Families reviews the content of new RFPS and is aware of any projects that are entering into a new funding cycle.

FCADV has conducted workgroups with Spanish and Haitian Creole advocates from certified domestic violence centers and allied partners to develop materials, intervention strategies and outreach practices that are most accessible for these specific communities. For example, Haitian Creole speaking advocates from FCADV, a certified domestic violence center and VIDA Legal Services collectively participated in establishing what Haitian-creole words; such as “domestic violence”, “advocacy” and “counseling” would be most clearly understood in writing and on the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline by diverse members of the Haitian community.

FCADV recognizes the expertise of local certified domestic violence centers and community partners to identify populations that are underrepresented and/or underserved and the critical services needed within the identified communities. Certified domestic violence centers meet with their partners to assess meaningful outreach efforts and service delivery to cultural specific populations. The centers develop Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) with cultural specific organizations to conduct outreach services and engaging in activities such as community health events, swap/trade events, and development of cultural-specific materials such as fotonovelas, that provide information about domestic violence and available services. In addition, FCADV conducts onsite technical assistance visits, including meetings with the cultural specific organizations. Feedback from the partnerships includes strategies to meet the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the local community, survivor safety strategies and enhanced efforts for community education



and resource development. The information provided by these organizations informs the development of culturally and linguistically responsive requests for proposals, deliverables, and project evaluation. Cultural Specific organizations that participate in STOP implementation planning include, but are not limited to:

- Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA). RCMA has multiple outreach locations in central and south Florida. RCMA's mission includes increasing educational programs and support to low income and farm-working communities. Partnerships with certified domestic violence centers, include the Rural Statewide Initiative and Rural/Underserved Projects of Abuse and Counseling Treatment Center (ACT), Sunrise of Pasco, Inc., and HOPE Family Services (HOPE). RCMA regularly participates in community assessment and project development by providing information on the cultural and linguistic needs of the community, providing referral to services survivors of domestic violence and their children, engaging in community based trainings with centers on culturally responsive domestic violence services and informing centers about available resources RCMA provides to support survivors of domestic violence.
- East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP) has current MOUs with Safespace Inc. and HOPE Family Services. ECMHSP refers survivors of domestic violence to Safespace Rural Advocates and HOPE Farmworker Outreach Advocates. ECMHSP offers a safe and confidential space at their location to complete intakes, follow-ups, and advocacy services and participates in regular meetings with community partners to discuss and generate strategies to meet the needs of domestic violence survivors residing in farmworker and agricultural communities. ECMHSP participates in domestic violence training annually and discusses the dynamics of domestic violence with the families' receiving childcare services. The resources and partnership strategies

of ECMHSP have been shared through FCADV's learning exchange webinars and in person meetings as practices that other communities can replicate.

- The Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) has offices in Apopka, Homestead, Fellsmare, Immokalee and Pierson, Florida. FWAF's mission is to build empowerment among farm-working and rural low-income communities to respond to and gain control over the social, political, workplace, economic, health, and environmental justice issues that impact their lives. For example, in the partnership with The Shelter For Abused Women and Children (The Shelter) in Immokalee, Fl., FWAF acts as a referral source for adult survivors and their children in need of domestic violence services, provides follow up information on referrals sources for families in need and invites The Shelter staff to participate in training opportunities regarding the programs and services they offer. In Fellsmare, FWAF refers survivors of domestic violence to services offered by SafeSpace, shares resource materials and provides space for SafeSpace Rural Outreach Advocate to facilitate support groups and private meetings with survivors of domestic violence. Through this partnership Safespace has been able to expand the resources and services offered through their rural project to their tri-county service area.

The two Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in the state of Florida are the Miccosukee Tribe and the Seminole Tribe. FCADV understands and values the importance of offering culturally relevant information for survivors, created for and by survivors of underserved populations, including Miccosukee and Seminole women.

Four years ago, with the assistance of FVPSA Office staff, FCADV reached out to the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) to request technical assistance. NIWRC has provided technical assistance via phone and email which included offering contact information for

the Seminole Tribe's General Counsel as well as other valuable contacts. NIWRC shared ideas of how to build bridges with the Tribes and worked with FCADV to help open the lines of communication. NIWRC also offered vital information about current Violence Against Women Act policies that directly impact Seminole and Miccosukee women. NIWRC offered to attend conference calls with FCADV and the Seminole Tribe once initial contact had been made. NIWRC also provided FCADV staff with fact sheets and statistical information about violence against tribal women. FCADV program department staff have reviewed NIWRC materials and participated in multiple webinars to increase their knowledge and capacity. FCADV's program department leadership attended two of NIWRC's conferences during that same year. More recently, in 2016, FCADV attended the NICWA Statewide Conference April 3-6<sup>th</sup> in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 2017, FCADV staff are scheduled to attend the Understanding ICWA training November 7-9<sup>th</sup> in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Both of these trainings include development of cross cultural skills in Indian Child Welfare and in-depth understanding of the history and purpose of ICWA.

FCADV has interviewed leadership from DV centers with Seminole or Miccosukee reservations in their service area(s). FCADV spoke to the executive directors about their previous partnerships with tribal elders, events they had participated in with the tribes, and the dynamics of their current relationships. The Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Immokalee and Martha's House in Okeechobee had the most notable partnerships, both with the Seminole tribe. Representatives from the DV centers talked about their desire to increase partnerships with the tribe in order to enhance services for native survivors of domestic violence and their children and are committed to doing so in ways that are acceptable and mutually beneficial to the Seminole Tribe.

FCADV has met in person twice, and via conference call twice, with a representative from the Family Services Division of the Seminole Tribe to discuss domestic violence training and services in the Seminole Tribe and partnerships with local domestic violence centers. The FCADV and Seminole Tribe representatives met once at a conference and again on the Seminole Tribe's reservation in Hollywood, Florida. During the meeting, FCADV leadership and the Seminole Tribe's Family Services Division representatives discussed current trends related to domestic violence on the Seminole Tribe reservations, current services, and the Seminole Tribe's future plans to enhance such services. The Family Services Division currently houses the Tribe's child welfare services. The Division works with families experiencing domestic violence on a regular basis through these services. Therefore, the Tribe sees the need to offer specific domestic violence services to both survivors and perpetrators that either live on one of the reservations and/or are members of the Tribe. More specifically, they want to learn more about batterer intervention programs that have been utilized in Indian Country, curricula that has been used with survivors in Indian Country, community assessment models, and domestic violence prevention services/activities. FCADV discussed current services offered by the Coalition as well as services offered by Florida's certified domestic violence centers. FCADV is currently working to set another meeting and/or conference call with the Seminole Tribe representative in November or December 2017 to discuss their goals related to domestic violence programming as well as potential partnership opportunities related to primary prevention of domestic violence.

The Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes have been provided information about STOP funding opportunities and to date has not applied for such funding opportunities.

As FCASV's previous efforts to engage Native communities began and ended with letters or phone messages to which there were no responses, in early 2017 FCASV began to explore other avenues

for engaging Native communities to find out what their sexual assault-specific needs are, and how we might appropriately respond to such needs.

In January 2017, Eva Fiallos-Diaz had a discussion with Project HELP's director, Eileen Wesley, about her rape crisis center's efforts to serve tribal communities. Ms. Wesley noted that she had been working to establish a relationship with the Seminole tribe, and had just been invited to a tribal powwow. Mary Baer, the sexual assault program's director at Project HELP, said that they while they have provided forensic exams and advocacy for Native women, such services are only infrequently requested.

In March 2017, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz attended Resource Sharing Project's (RSP's) *Cultivating Possibilities* conference and attended the Facilitated Conversation: Supporting Native Survivors with Cinnamon Quale of Haseya. Following her attendance at the conference, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz began exploring the history of Florida's federally recognized tribes, and those not recognized by the federal government.

In April 2017, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz participated in RSP's post-conference call during which attendees' "next steps" were discussed and identified. Ms. Fiallos-Diaz set the following goals: 1) reach out to Haseya Advocacy Program – Red Wind Consulting to further discuss strategies for beginning conversations with tribes in Florida; 2) conduct more research on the tribes' histories; 3) contact those certified sexual assault programs serving counties that include tribal communities to find out what their current relationships with the tribes are; and 4) contact the tribes directly to begin establishing contact with tribal elders.

On April 19, 2017 Ms. Fiallos-Diaz contacted Cinnamon Quale from Haseya, a national tribal technical assistance provider, to brainstorm ways to start building relationships with tribal gatekeepers in Florida. As neither Haseya nor Red Wind Consulting has any Florida contacts for

the Seminole, Miccosukee, or non-federally recognized indigenous groups of Florida, Ms. Quale recommended FCASV staff call the tribes directly and ask whether the tribal elders meet regularly, or at all.

The same day, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz reached out to ACT, a certified sexual assault program in SW Florida, to find out which advocate is currently serving Hendry County, where the Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation is located. She was given Nancy Acevedo's contact information. She then reached out to Nancy Acevedo to set up a time to talk about services to underserved communities in Hendry and specifically about ways ACT is currently serving tribal population in their area.

Ms. Fiallos-Diaz spoke with Nancy Acevedo on April 24, 2017. Ms. Acevedo was able to provide some insight, noting that she had previously been employed as a housekeeper by the Seminole Tribe. While ACT regularly invites Seminole tribal law enforcement to participate in SART meeting and trainings, they do not attend. At this time, she doesn't know how to engage tribal law enforcement.

On May 22, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz participated in Casa de Esperanza's OVW-sponsored webinar, *Ensuring Meaningful Access for Survivors with Limited English Proficiency*.

On June 28, after reading *Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* by Sarah Deer, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz participated in the Resource Sharing Project's facilitated book discussion. On July 17, after serving on a panel with Ms. Theresa Friend, National Forensic Nurse Consultant with the Indian Health Service in the Division of Behavioral Health, working with the Tribal Forensic Healthcare Project, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz reached out to Ms. Friend to seek guidance on building relationships with tribal communities. They have had several conversations by email and are currently attempting to schedule a telephone consultation.

On July 18, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz communicated with RSP's Rural TA provider, Leah Green, regarding tribal work and ideas for collaborating with tribal populations. Ms. Green recommended that FCASV focus exclusively on working to build relationships with Florida's tribes, with no other end in mind. She and Ms. Fiallos-Diaz discussed that the least successful attempts to work with tribes were those in which projects were developed prior to rapport/relationship building. Ms. Green related numerous stories of tribes being approached with fully-developed MOUs in hand by programs and people with whom they had never met.

In late July, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz read RSP's *Building Meaningful Partnerships: Supporting Native Survivors in Rural Communities*, a publication co-authored by Leah Green.

On August 9, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz joined ALAS (Latina Alliance Against Sexual Aggression). Created in February 2004, ALAS is a national Latina advocate resource-sharing group that focuses on cultural competency, bilingual materials development, training, and policy issues specific to underserved Latina/o survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence. The ALAS listserv is a task-driven bilingual creative group united in a major goal: to help make risk reduction and victim service information more accessible to Spanish-speaking Latinas/os.

On October 2, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz and Ms. Grace Frances participated in conference call with Leah Green and Kris Bein of RSP to further discuss future rural outreach and effective ways to involve Florida's tribal communities. On October 9, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz was finally able to connect with Rose L. of the Miccosukee Tribe, who explained that the tribe has no consolidated service program (coordinated forensic exam and trauma-informed intervention services) for survivors of sexual assault. However, she offered to send information about FCASV, including the 2018 Biennial Training Summit call for proposals, to the social worker who responds to victims of sexual assault on the reservation.

On October 25-26, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz will participate in RSP's Communities of Color Roundtable in Washington, D.C.

Additionally, FCASV is consulting directly with Latinx advocates about their needs and the needs of the Spanish-speaking survivors they serve as we prepare to create a culturally-specific, Spanish-language version of our Advocacy Core Training (ACT), which must be completed by all staff providing direct services at certified rape crisis centers. Toward this end, Ms. Fiallos-Diaz and Ms. Grace Frances facilitated two focus groups with Latinx advocates, the first on August 24<sup>th</sup> and the second on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

FCASV is also translating the website ([www.fcasv.org](http://www.fcasv.org)) into Spanish and Haitian Creole, and will ensure the translations are culturally-specific.

FCASV's 2018 Biennial Training Summit will feature workshops presented in Spanish. The call for proposals was translated into Spanish and distributed widely. Special consideration will be given to workshop proposals that address underserved populations. The keynote speaker at this year's conference is Zoe Flowers, who is well-known for her work as a national technical assistance provider with the WOCN (Women of Color Network).

FCASV is working with George Friday to develop and hold an all-staff anti-racism training within the next few months. And, our January 2018 Leadership Summit will include anti-racism training presented by RSP and co-lead by staff of the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition. FCASV's OVW-funded Rural Grant is focused on meeting the needs of underserved communities. The project focuses on meeting the needs of sexual assault survivors in four rural counties in the Panhandle, and in DeSoto County, in central Florida. The DeSoto County project focuses on serving migrant farmworkers who are survivors of sexual assault. The project was developed in collaboration with the following MOU partners serving Hispanic farmworkers: Redlands Christian



Migrant Association, Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice, DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, and DeSoto Memorial Hospital. The project also allows FCASV to share insight gained from the community with other agencies serving rural areas. DeSoto County project staff, who themselves are from the DeSoto community, have presented workshops at FCASV's Biennial Training Summit and via webinars. In December, DeSoto County project staff and FCASV's staff attorney will present a webinar on civil remedies and immigration issues for migrant farmworkers, as requested by Florida sexual assault program advocates.

The two STOP-funded FCASV victim services projects focus on underserved populations, specifically incarcerated women in four North Florida jails, and Hispanic farmworkers and laborers in Homestead, Miami-Dade County. With Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) formula grant funds, FCASV supports seven projects chosen through a competitive solicitation. One project focuses on serving Hispanic and Haitian communities in Immokalee, Florida, a migrant farmworker community in Collier County. Staff members operating the project are from the communities and speak Spanish and/or Haitian Creole. Developing strong relationships in the community is a primary component of the project. SASP also funds projects to serve migrant farmworkers in Highlands and Hardy County, as well as in south Miami-Dade County (coordinated by MUJER, which also has a STOP victim services grant). A fourth SASP-funded project focuses on the Hispanic community in Osceola County, outside of Orlando. Still another SASP project is geared toward serving LGBTQ+ communities, and a specific impoverished, primarily African-American, community in Jacksonville, Florida.

### **Non-profit/Non-governmental Victim Service Participation**

Florida included non-profit, non-governmental victim service providers in the planning process by asking them to serve on the STOP Implementation Plan Steering Committee. Both the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) and the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) participated in the planning meeting held in September, 2016. FCADV is the statewide, non-profit, non-governmental, professional organization for Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers. FCASV is Florida's federally recognized, non-profit, non-governmental, sexual assault coalition responsible for certifying and representing Florida's 31 certified rape crisis centers. FCASV's consistent engagement with the Statewide SART Advisory Committee (quarterly meetings); Rural Project and Legal Assistance for Victims Project partners (monthly meetings); the Excellence in Sexual Assault Response Project planning team (quarterly meetings); the Certification Advisory Workgroup (quarterly meetings); the Community Consultant Panel (reviews SASP subgrant applications and the progress of funded projects, and provides direction regarding funding priorities); the Sexual Battery Benchbook Revision Advisory Committee; and the Latinx Focus Group (two meetings since August 2017) allows us to solicit input from certified rape crisis centers; seasoned, new, rural, and Latinx advocates; LGBTQ+ rape crisis center staff; representatives from faith communities; judges; prosecutors; victims' rights attorneys and law professors; and law enforcement personnel from agencies across the state in assessing Florida's efforts to respond to sexual violence.

FCADV receives feedback on the RFP process from agencies throughout Florida. The certified domestic violence centers maintain current information about culturally specific organizations that serve and/or represent the underserved and underrepresented populations in their service area(s). In addition, FCADV maintains a comprehensive list of agencies who have established projects that serve underrepresented populations, even if not directly related to domestic violence. FCADV has

collaborated with many of the organizations that are included in the invitation for grant proposals, such as Jewish Family & Community Services, a social service based organization that provides resources and services to individuals throughout Florida; the Zebra Coalition, a program for LGBTQ+ youth in need of housing and support services; Survivors' Pathway, serving LGBTQ+ and Latino survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner abuse, sexual abuse, and human trafficking; Men and Women United in Justice, Education and Reform (M.U.J.E.R), a counseling and advocacy program that works with Latino families in Southern most Florida; and the Rural Women's Health Project, a community-based program that develops health-education projects for rural families. The list was last updated in 2016 and includes over 100 organizations across Florida. When releasing a new RFP the executive director of each certified domestic violence center, as well the community programs on the aforementioned list, are emailed the request for proposals, informing them of the opportunity for funding. As an example of feedback FCADV received from culturally specific organizations on the most recent Culturally Specific Services RFP that was released, a program that primarily serves LGBT youth stated that they were interested in partnering with the local certified domestic violence center on training and technical assistance, however they were concerned that a project focused on domestic violence would create mission drift from their primary purpose serving homeless youth. Another agency that provides counseling services for primarily Spanish speaking victims of domestic and sexual violence had previously received funding, but who did not apply in the last RFP, identified concerns about the ability to meet the requirements for fiscal reporting and monitoring.

FCADV invites and actively seeks cultural specific organizations and representatives of underserved communities to participate in the review of new grant proposals in order to appraise

the scope of the identified project, the proposed strategies to address barriers, and culturally appropriate project development. During the review, committee members evaluate each proposal on their development of the project goals, their ability to complete the goals, and the definition of the stated need. RFP committee members make recommendations for technical assistance that local communities can benefit from to enhance the development and implementation of meaningful cultural and linguistic programs. The proposals are scored, with those receiving a percentage typically 85% or higher receiving award.

In addition, FCADV regularly seeks information and feedback from partners such as VIDA Legal Assistance, on the best way to engage and deliver services to survivors of domestic and dating violence, sexual violence and human trafficking who have immigration related legal needs and barriers. This partnership has included the development and recent expansion of the Roaming Attorney Project, a STOP funded program, which provides rural certified domestic violence centers working within farm-working and agricultural communities, access to a Spanish speaking attorney who specializes in legal relief, training and ongoing technical assistance. FCADV has monthly and quarterly calls with domestic violence advocates and VIDA to ensure that the project is addressing the needs of the population. FCADV and VIDA additionally meet annually to evaluate the training tools utilized in the *Access to Justice for Immigrant Survivors Program* and *Roaming Attorney Project* to ensure that the projects' efforts meet the needs of the identified populations. The Access to Justice training series includes an eight-hour training curriculum, a service provider handbook, radio public service announcements (PSAs), an educational video developed in collaboration with survivors who are immigrants, and two online trainings.

## **Diverse Populations**

Both FCADV and FCASV embody a unique set of diverse community populations. It is through their participation in the planning process that Florida was able to include “voices from underserved populations.” FCADV has a demonstrated history of creating and supporting culturally and linguistically specific service initiatives designed to reach members of diverse and underserved populations with programming developed to meet the unique needs of survivors within their community. In keeping with its existing efforts to help its 42 member programs, FCADV conducted a statewide needs assessment to determine gaps in the provision of culturally and linguistically specific services. Additionally, FCADV utilized the needs assessment to assist advocates and programs across the state improve services to traditionally underserved survivors of domestic violence. The needs assessment included findings and recommendations<sup>1</sup> in four categories: cultural accessibility, language accessibility, race and ethnicity, and community outreach and engagement.

FCASV works to ensure culturally competent responses to victims/survivors located in marginalized, under-served communities are appropriate and effective. Those responses are guided by a Community Consultant Panel comprised of individuals representing communities of color, faith communities, the homeless, prostituted women, the Armed Forces, rural communities, and LGBTQ+ communities. The Community Consultant Panel advises FCASV as to the inclusion and cultural competencies in the areas of curriculum development, service and governance standards implementation, and funding distribution. In addition, the Panel advises on SASP implementation,

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<sup>1</sup> The report is available at:

<http://www.fcadv.org/sites/default/files/CL%20DIVERSE%20COMM%20REPORTweb-1.pdf>.

and reviews projects funded with SASP. All Panel members specifically serve to provide outreach technical assistance for unique underserved populations.

FCADV regularly attends trainings sponsored by the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and the Native Indigenous Women's Resource Center. In addition, to ensure strategies for comprehensive cultural and linguistic service delivery, FCADV staff attend nationally led trainings that provide current information and strategies to working with underserved and underrepresented populations. For example, FCADV staff are currently registered to attend the Batterer Women's Justice Project conference "Bridging Differences: Advocating for Survivors in Underserved Communities" in Savannah, Georgia on November 1-3, 2017 and the "Symposium on Reaching Underserved Victims of Crime" sponsored by the National Resource Center on Reaching Underserved Victims of Crime in Portland, Oregon on December 5-7, 2017. In addition, FCADV and OSCA will attend the "Enhancing Cultural Responsiveness in the Courts Training" conducted by Casa de Esperanza, in Portland, Oregon on January 10-11, 2018. FCADV has historically participated in the Women of Color Network (WOCN) Conferences to receive additional information on supporting African American/black survivors and advocates. FCADV has regularly engaged culturally specific organizations such as WOCN and Casa de Esperanza in regional and statewide Florida trainings and will continue to provide such resources to Florida communities. In addition, FCADV has a diverse staff demographic with Hispanic, Haitian, African American/black, LGBTQ+, Islander and immigrant leaders that initiate the development of new programs and resources for underserved communities.

### **Participation on Statewide Committees**

The Department's Office of Child Welfare, Domestic Violence Program, continues to participate on a variety of statewide steering committees such as: the CDC sponsored DELTA Prevention Leadership Team; Department of Juvenile Justice Trauma Informed Care Statewide Steering Committee, and the Attorney General's Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. These forums provide opportunities for individuals representing statewide and local level perspectives to join together in discussions regarding resources and needs of community partners. Throughout the year, critical information is gathered from these forums and incorporated into the overall planning process. In addition to statewide steering committee memberships, the Department is a regular participant on the domestic violence coalition's RFP review committee for STOP funded competitive projects.

### **Continued Planning**

The Department remains the State designated STOP Grant Administrator, and is still responsible to report on state and federal financial and programmatic requirements. The Department maintains a close working relationship with their primary partners; FCADV, FCASV and DOH. The four agencies work closely together by means of state mandated contracts. The Department and DOH are required to adhere to state and federal monitoring guidelines, and prior to implementing new projects the sub grantees must first discuss project proposals with the Administering agencies. Planning is a continuous process. Sub grantees closely monitor projects throughout the cycle. Often, the sub grantee will propose new projects, or depending on a particular current project's outcome, the sub-grantee may discuss and suggest new and innovative ways to improve on the

existing program. These are the types of issues discussed during on-going meetings between the STOP program and the providers. On-going communication is paramount to a successful partnership, and not only does it afford the STOP Administrator the opportunity to answer grant related questions, but it also allows the administering agency the opportunity to provide programmatic guidance to the partner agencies. We firmly believe that this type of collaboration is integral to the planning process. A strong partnership represents a means to comply with grant guidelines, but most importantly it encourages the type of continuous dialogue necessary to promote trusting relationships between the grant administering agency and the sub grantee program experts. We firmly believe this method works best by giving the partners greater flexibility to make sound independent decisions as they develop uniquely targeted programs. In return, the Department benefits from stellar developed projects that are equally supported by the sub grantee's unparalleled qualifications related to targeted program research, field experience, community-based collaborations, and access to supportive national networks.

Florida will continue to support projects which:

- a.** Prioritize support for programs that address domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, including the development and implementation of protocols; training for judges, other court personnel, prosecutors and law enforcement, and that continue to strengthen a coordinated community response to violence against victims.
- b.** Enhance and strengthen statewide collaboration efforts among law enforcement, prosecution, nonprofit, nongovernmental victim advocacy and service providers and the courts in addressing violence against women.



- c. Implement community-driven initiatives to address the needs of underserved populations including people with disabilities and elder victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

### **III. Needs and Context**

#### **Population**

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Florida Quick Facts reports that Florida is the third most populous state in the nation. According to the July 2016 U.S. Quick Facts, estimates now indicate Florida's population to be 20,612,439, an increase of 1,811,129 over the 2010 census count of 18,801,310. This represents a 9.6 percent growth in population since the 2010 census count.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service 2015 data reflects that 706,051 (4%) reside in rural areas while 19,565,221 (96%) reside in urban. The same research reports the latest model-based (2010-2014) estimates for Florida's poverty rates are 22.7% for rural and 16.5% for urban areas of the state. Although Florida is not designated a rural state, it does embody a varied demographic landscape. The lower half of the state primarily represents a densely populated and economically advantaged sector. In stark contrast, the northern part of the state, which includes the Panhandle, and has the highest proportion of sparsely populated rural areas, also represents the state's highest percent of economically disadvantaged residents. As of April 2015 several of Florida's rural counties have lost population: Putnam, Madison, Holmes, Bradford, Calhoun, Dixie, Gadsden, Hamilton, Lafayette, and Jefferson, totaling a 32.3 percent loss in population. Those counties are all located in the northern portion of the state, and considered economically challenged due to their rural locations, lacking employment opportunities, and not having a solid community network of supportive services. Several counties whose populations are rapidly increasing are St. John's (19.3%), Sumter (27.3%) and Osceola (20.6%). Those counties are situated in the central portion of the state; two of those areas are considered to be part of, or

connected to large urban populations, and one is located along the preferred coastal area of the state.

## **Economy**

One economic measure used for *comparing states* is the year-to-year change in the **State Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** that is, all goods and services produced or exchanged within a state. Using this measure, a recent June 2016 Wall Street economic study<sup>2</sup> reported that Florida has the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing economy in the country. “Florida is one of just seven states where the GDP grew by at least 3% in 2015”. The report further states that Florida has the fourth largest GDP in the country, increasing to approximately \$790 billion. Given the states robust economy, experts are able to accurately predict a continued population growth.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports Florida’s unemployment rate in December 2016 was 4.9 percent, which ranks 31 out of 51 states, and equals to New York, Ohio and Tennessee. Historically, the unemployment rate has been as low as 3.3 percent from January through August 2006 (the lowest unemployment rate in more than thirty years), before peaking at 11.4 percent from December 2009 through March 2010. Following the trend of the past several months, Florida’s December unemployment rate is slightly higher than the current national rate of 4.7 percent.

Together these two promising factors of GDP and high employment portray an image that Florida is thriving in areas of economic opportunity. This is true for some, however, experts in the field

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<sup>2</sup> The 247wallst. Economic Study may be found at:  
<http://247wallst.com/special-report/2016/06/16/states-with-the-fastest-and-slowest-growing-economies-2/>

of domestic violence and sexual assault know all too well, given the representative population of women and children served through domestic violence and sexual assault state resources and federal grant dollars, that all too often it is this very sector that continues to be underrepresented in monetary service allocations.

There is strong evidence based data, available both nationally and through state information systems, that continue to support leaders in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault by recognizing that victims of intimate partner violence and sexual assault are the most vulnerable for either descending into poverty, or conversely they become blocked in their ability to rise out of an existing poverty level, when and if they decide to leave, or are ultimately forced to depart from an abusive relationship. Most often this segment of the population is already economically disadvantaged or soon to become impoverished due to a general lack of available resources, such as affordable childcare and accessible transportation, which are all necessary in order for most women to become eligible for gainful employment.

The medium household income in Florida is \$47,507. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of persons living in poverty in Florida is 15.7%. In 2012, Florida reported a total of 1,084,885 men-owned business establishments, opposed to 807,817 women-owned firms. In 2015, fifty-one percent of Florida's population was recorded as women. The medium rent for housing in Florida is \$1,002 per month. The percent of persons without health insurance under 65 is 16.2%. Currently, women make up nearly 59 percent of Florida's civilian workforce. We know that most women work for lower wages than their male counterparts. Another important factor is when women do not have a spousal-partner household member contributing to the total household

income there is a strong likelihood that the family will experience a level of economic desperateness. Similarly, in many cases when an abused victim departs from the relationship the spouse or significant other's contributing household income ceases. So often women and the courts are at a disadvantage in attempts to collect child support, either because the woman lacks the resources necessary to pursue the court action, or the spouse – partner become unavailable to be held responsible.

### **Age**

According to the 2016 Quick Facts Census data report, Florida's population aged 18 to 64 represented 54.9 percent of the total population. The younger population of youth between ages 6 and 17 was 20.3 percent. In 2015, 19.4 percent of Florida's population was aged 65 and older, representing a 2.1 percent increase from the 2010 census count. This age group is forecast to represent 24.1 percent of Florida's population in 2030. Over the next two decades, Florida's older population (age 60 and older) will account for the highest rate of Florida's population growth, representing 55.2 percent of the gains. (Econographic News – 2013, Volume I).

### **Race and Ethnicity**

The Office of Economic and Demographic Research notes that Florida is unique because of its large Cuban population, particularly in the southern part of the state. However beginning with Census 2000 respondents were given the option of selecting more than one racial category. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race. The percentage of Floridians that were of Hispanic origin increased from 12.2 percent in 1990, 16.8 percent in 2000, 22.5 percent in 2010, to 24.5 percent in 2015.

According to the PewResearchCenter 2014 Demographic profile of *Hispanics in Florida* report<sup>3</sup>, the total population of Hispanics in 2014 was 4,790,000, representing, as noted above, 24 percent of the state's population. Hispanics medium age is stated to be 34. Annual earnings average a mean income of only \$22,200, which equals a 53 percent reduced income level compared to the State average income of \$47,507. Nineteen percent of Hispanics in Florida between the ages of 18 and 64 are stated to live in poverty. Twenty-six percent of Florida's Hispanics age 18 and older are uninsured.

Given Florida's broad populated range of needs, projects are carefully designed and developed to provide support and services that will have far reaching impacts on those communities. Due to Florida's large geographic area and the unique rural and urban landscape, service providers remain vigorous in their efforts to provide outreach to highly remote and underserved areas. Programs struggle to continually devise creative and innovative ways that may ensure victims are given every available opportunity to receive appropriate services.

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<sup>3</sup> The report can be found at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/states/state/fl/>

## **Crime in Florida**

Overall, crime in Florida started to decrease in 2004, even though the population has continued to increase each year. One exception was a slight decrease in the State's population in 2009 following the national economic crisis from the preceding year. In 2015, overall crime continued to decrease by 1.6 percent. Disturbingly, domestic violence and sexual assault crimes continue to rise. Florida saw a 0.5 percent increase in domestic violence crimes in 2015 compared to 2014, with a total of 107,666 documented domestic violence offenses reported to law enforcement. There were 199 domestic violence related homicides in 2015 compared to 205 in 2014. And yes, the murder rate was slightly down, however the manslaughter rate increased by 25 percent. Reported aggravated stalking offenses increased by 12.5 percent and simple stalking offenses rose by 11.2 percent in 2015. An increase in these crimes raises concerns as stalking is a known precursor to domestic violence homicide. Rape within the context of domestic violence increased 7.1 percent with 1,517 incidences reported in 2015 compared to 1,417 in 2014. Fondling increased by 9.2 percent with 692 incidences reported in 2014 compared to 756 in 2015.

Reported domestic violence crimes in 2015 totaled 107,666, compared to 107,096 in 2014. While the overall increase is small, experts know that, unlike many general crimes, domestic violence is still substantially underreported. Some anecdotal research suggests only one-third or less of domestic crime is reported, and an even smaller percent, possibly less than 20 percent report sexual assaults. Given these alarming statistics and looking at the actual numbers allows each and every one of us to realize the need for services specifically aimed at protecting victims from these outrageous crimes.

In 2015, there were 1,040 murders in Florida, up 5.7 percent from the previous reporting period. Of those murders, 199 were domestic violence related. Over the past several years domestic violence homicide continues to account for nearly 20 percent (19.1) percent of the state's murders. (FDLE, Uniform Crime Report; January – December 2015).

#### **2015 Annual Domestic Violence by Offense Type**

<b>Primary Offense</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Murder	193	184	-4.7
Manslaughter	12	15	25.0
Rape	1,417	1,517	7.1
Fondling	692	756	9.2
Aggravated Assault	17,039	17,354	1.8
Aggravated Stalking	136	153	12.5
Simple Assault	85,202	85,608	0.5
Threat Intimidation	2,011	1,641	-18.4
Simple Stalking	394	438	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,096</b>	<b>107,666</b>	<b>0.5</b>

#### **2015 Annual Sexual Assault by Offense Type**

<b>Primary Offense</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Rape	7,102	7,537	6.1
Fondling	3,132	3,195	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>10,732</b>	<b>4.96</b>

Separate from Florida's annual Domestic Violence Crime statistics, the Florida Department of Law enforcement (FDLE) also reports a total of 10,732 sex offenses in 2015.<sup>4</sup> Sexual assault offenses include both rape and fondling with reported rape offenses increasing more than 6 percent

<sup>4</sup> Crime in Florida: January – December 2015, Florida Department of Law Enforcement



from the previous year. Unfortunately, 2016 is again proving to show a disturbing climb in rape offenses, highlighting a nearly 2 percent increase in reported rape during the first six months of 2016 compared to that same time period in 2015.

In addition to domestic violence we know sexual assault is most often underreported. According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2016 Fact Sheet<sup>5</sup> nearly 1 in 5 women in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape some time in their lives. One in 71 men have experienced rape or attempted rape. An estimated 32.3% of multiracial women, 27.5% of American Indian/Alaska Native women, 21.2% of non-Hispanic black women, 20.5% of non-Hispanic white women, and 13.6% of Hispanic women were raped during their lifetimes. Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lifetime. These alarming statistics promote and support FCASV's newly developed research-based training program that aims to address the continued increase in sexual violent crimes in Florida.

Children who are exposed to domestic violence in the home are also victims. The highest reported child maltreatment categories in Florida each year alternate between domestic violence and substance abuse. Child welfare experts reported 83,730 allegations of family violence occurring in Florida homes during the state fiscal year (SFY) 2015-2016. The Domestic Violence Program strives to ensure that STOP funding provides technical assistance and support to law enforcement, prosecution and judges on the complexities encountered within coordinated networks of

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<sup>5</sup> The National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2016 Fact Sheet can be found at [http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam\\_2016\\_what-is-sexual-violence\\_0.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam_2016_what-is-sexual-violence_0.pdf)

professionals working with families experiencing domestic violence. Most importantly, Florida recognizes the need to continue to develop and implement new projects that support victims experiencing the co-occurrence of substance abuse and domestic violence. Currently, FCADV manages and provides technical assistance to eight statewide substance abuse community collaborative projects. Each project is geographically located in areas that serve all populations, including underserved and impoverished. One of those projects is located in Collier County, noted to be the largest demographic county in Florida, and also known to have one of the wealthiest populations in the country. Conversely, Collier County once received the unique distinction as having one of the most economically disadvantaged and underserved migrant populations in the United States. Another project is located in Broward County, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most populous county in Florida. Community Collaborative projects also serve domestic violence victims located in several densely populated areas of coastal North Florida, and in the central Orlando Region.

## **IV. Plan Priorities and Approaches**

### **Identified Goals**

Florida's primary program goal is to increase partnership and coordinated community response efforts within law enforcement, prosecution agencies, the courts, and victim service providers. The intent is aimed at achieving sound relationships in order to increase appropriate arrest and prosecution of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking perpetrators that ultimately results in victim safety and justice. Several years ago state legislation was passed directing the Department to contract with FCADV for the delivery and management of services for the state's domestic violence program. The Department continues to remain the State's designated "administering office" for the Department of Justice (DOJ) STOP grant, however Florida now sub-contracts all federal and state domestic violence funding to the coalition. Florida has fully embraced this initiative recognizing how advantageous this unique 'inter-changing of roles' has benefitted the state's thousands of domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Collaboratively, we firmly believe this is an exemplary model that promotes and fosters the true meaning of coordinating a community-based response to crimes against our most vulnerable populations. Most importantly, this model is shown to have dramatic benefits for identifying appropriate target populations, and responding to the critical needs of our most underserved, underreported, and disadvantaged survivors. In Florida domestic violence is defined in statute as "any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member". Both the Department and FCADV agree that DOH and FCASV should be the

designated agencies managing the STOP sexual assault services. To ensure a seamless service delivery model the Department contracts with the Department of Health to pass through the STOP Grant mandated (20 percent sexual assault set aside) to the state's sexual assault coalition. The Department continues to collaborate with both state coalitions on day-to-day grant activities such as collecting and analyzing data, reviewing and approving all STOP grant related project goals and outcomes, providing technical assistance to sub-grantees, reviewing competitive grant solicitations, and submitting required reports and applications to OVW. The following programmatic goals have been developed and enhanced over time to reflect Florida's continued commitment to serving all victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

### **Prosecution Goals**

1. Increase offender accountability through the prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking cases with use of victim statements and investigative evidence.
2. Increase coordination among members of the criminal and civil justice system and the social service system to increase services and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking and to hold batterers accountable.

## **Law Enforcement Goals**

1. Continue to increase domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking arrests.
2. Increase coordination among members of the criminal and civil justice system and the social service system to increase services and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking and to hold batterers accountable.
3. Develop, install, or expand data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violence crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault.
4. Develop and expand victim-centered interviewing and trauma-informed practices for responding officers, investigators and victim advocates.
5. Develop, implement and update effective police, court and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault; including but not limited to increased risk of homicide awareness and screening conducted on-scene.

## **Victim Service Goals**

- 1.** Increase access to services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault living in Florida's most isolated, rural and underserved communities.
- 2.** Conduct training and technical assistance to increase the capacity of certified domestic violence and rape crisis center staff on trauma-informed, survivor-focused services and advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault.
- 3.** Conduct training and technical assistance to develop and maintain innovative advocacy programs to assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault.
- 4.** Increase access to legal advocacy, information, and resources for survivors of domestic violence through the legal hotline and certified domestic violence centers.
- 5.** Increase the ability of sexual violence service providers and allied professionals to respond to the needs of survivors of sexual violence.
- 6.** Increase the knowledge and capacity of providers and allied professionals through the provision of educational training opportunities.
- 7.** Increase the capacity of certified domestic violence and rape crisis centers to provide leadership regarding domestic and sexual violence to coordinate statewide responses.

8. Conduct training and technical assistance to increase the capacity of certified domestic violence and rape crisis center staff on how to provide linguistically, culturally, and community relevant trauma-informed services for traditionally underserved communities.
9. Increase coordination among members of the criminal and civil justice system and the social service system to increase services, advocacy and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence and stalking and to hold batterers accountable.

### **Court Goals**

1. Increase the number and quality of domestic violence education opportunities for judges, court administration staff, attorneys, clerks of court, and others involved in the family court system.
2. Increase the dissemination of information and technical assistance to be provided to Domestic Violence Case Coordinators, court administration staff, public agencies, the public, and others.

### **Training Goals**

1. Increase the amount of specialized training available to members of the criminal justice and social services systems.
2. Increase service management training on linguistically, culturally, and community relevant services for traditionally underserved communities.

## **Projects**

### **1. Prosecution Services**

Florida is divided into 20 court districts referred to as “circuits”, with each designated area having an elected State Attorney whose primary role is to oversee all policy and procedure issues, record keeping, prosecution of cases, and judicial collaboration for law enforcements criminal case referral system. Since 2001 each State Attorney’s office has been offered STOP funding, and that process is not slated to change. Awards in this category are not competitive. Funding is based on a formula that represents factors associated with Florida’s population, age, and legislatively mandated fees collected. That formula is updated every ten years to reflect current state census data.

Funded state attorney offices report on specific performance measures related to the prosecution of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault. STOP supported specialized prosecution units are encouraged to conduct victim-centered interviews and to participate in a comprehensive approach to supporting victims with a primary goal of holding offenders accountable. Prosecutors, victim advocates, and specialized state attorney investigators all work in concert to achieve this end. State Attorneys lead in the resolution of cases either through litigation, plea agreements, or diversion services. Prosecutors work with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking to determine individual preferences for negotiated outcomes, and assist them in preparation for deposition, and the courtroom experience. Victim advocates provide support to victims through community referrals, case information, safety planning, crisis counseling and support. Investigators prepare evidence for trial. STOP funding will continue to provide support for each of these vital prosecution roles.



There is no plan to change the current method for distributing the prosecution funds; however, each year the number of prosecution offices that elect to receive STOP funding may or may not change.

**a. Domestic Violence Services:** Currently, State Attorneys representing 15 of the 20 Florida judicial circuits receive STOP funding utilized specifically for providing victim advocates, specialized prosecution units and prosecution investigations. The following circuits received funding for the current 2016-2017 fiscal year: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners. Of those, nine utilize STOP funding for prosecutors, 10 for victim advocates, and three for investigators.

**b. Sexual Assault Services:** FCASV is partnering with twelve State Attorneys for the STOP 20 percent sexual assault set-aside. The funding is distributed through a formula similar to the one used by FCADV. Currently, the following circuits receive STOP funds aimed at prosecuting sexual assault crimes, and training law enforcement on a newly designed specialized training program: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **2. Law Enforcement Services**

Specialized domestic violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault law enforcement units will continue to receive STOP funding. A law enforcement unit may be comprised of one or more staff that is dedicated to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault crimes. Staff may include but are not limited to detectives, patrol officers, investigators, victim

liaisons, civilian case coordinators, data entry staff, and other support staff, as needed. In addition to the law enforcement goals previously mentioned, community education and officer training on domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault issues will continue to be conducted. According to the last documented U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2008) census report, Florida had 387 law enforcement agencies with 46,105 employees. The most recent data collection period was in 2014, but those updated numbers are not currently available. At the very least we are certain the number of law enforcement officers has increased since 2008, and undoubtedly will continue to expand.

**a. Domestic Violence Services:** In keeping with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) protocol for encouraging federally funded states/territories to “invest” and engage in programs designed to prevent domestic violence and dating violence homicide, Florida systemically examines familial homicides to prevent further homicides from occurring. As a direct result of homicide review, the *Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team* (InVEST) model was developed. InVEST is a unique program designed to provide intensive service management and assistance to individuals whose abusive partners have been identified as potentially homicidal.

InVEST was implemented in 2006 in the five counties with the highest domestic homicide/dating violence rates as indicated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Because victims in lethally dangerous situations rarely seek services, so often they are not in receipt of safety planning or comprehensive risk assessments. InVEST requires close partnership between law enforcement and domestic violence centers to review police

reports where high-risk for homicide indicators are present. Domestic violence center advocates and specialized law enforcement agents proactively engage the victim to provide information on services, safety planning, ongoing advocacy and support. Law enforcement manages the investigation in these cases with acute awareness of the potential danger, engaging prosecution appropriately with related evidence. The InVEST model is an example of successful local community organizing, established in Jacksonville, FL, and modified for statewide implementation. There are currently six InVEST law enforcement STOP funded sites selected through a competitive bid process: Broward County Sheriff's Office, Orlando Police Department, Fort Pierce Police Department, Seminole County Sheriff's Office, Pasco County Sheriff's Office and Bay County Sheriff's Office. In addition, several new law enforcement entities have replicated this model and are seeking additional funding. FCADV will continue to utilize STOP funding to support training for the InVEST project partners. Training provided to InVEST teams and to individual agencies, including law enforcement, criminal justice partners, certified domestic violence centers, and other social service providers, covers a diverse number of topics related to victim-centered interviewing, offender accountability, monitoring and tracking perpetrators, safety planning, and access to resources.

Based on a community coordinated response (CCR) model of high risk teams, InVEST includes local domestic violence center advocates, officers, and detectives working in tandem to create a comprehensive system of victim safety through batterer intervention and safety planning with the survivor. Teams consult with each victim to determine the best way to address their specific situation. Law Enforcement maintains batterer

accountability, through the enforcement of civil injunctions and criminal no-contact orders, review of jailhouse calls and continuous communication with the survivor, while the domestic violence center advocates partner with the survivor to provide support, up to the minute safety planning and offer other reliefs, such as relocation assistance. InVEST partners implement batterer accountability measures and provide enhanced advocacy and safety to more than 3,000 survivors per year who are identified as high risk for being murdered by their abusive partner.

Other law enforcement projects that were competitively bid during FY 2016 participate in an enhanced response to domestic violence, dating violence sexual assault, and stalking. This Law Enforcement Enhanced Response Program is designed to provide survivors and their children with protection and services while improving a community's capacity to hold batterers accountable. Agencies currently receiving STOP funds for the program include the Hernando County Sheriff's Office, Homestead Police Department, Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Polk County Sheriff's Office, and Putnam County Sheriff's Office. FCADV assists the law enforcement grantees with revising the agencies' policies and procedures specifically to increase survivor safety and offender accountability. These changes include: the creation of policies that require frontline patrol officers to perform risk assessments and screening for indicators that suggest the presence of a highly lethal domestic violence situation, implementation of checklists that ensure officers responding to domestic violence calls are collecting appropriate evidence, creation of a separate, standalone domestic violence unit, and strengthening relationships with local certified domestic violence centers.

During the past fiscal year, law enforcement agencies participating in the InVEST and Law Enforcement Enhanced Response programs arrested 7,030 domestic violence perpetrators, while law enforcement agencies filed 7,131 arrests for prosecution with the local State Attorney Offices.

Of the eleven law enforcement agencies receiving STOP funds, 6 of those counties are primarily urban, and five are considered rural. Polk, Pasco and Putnam Counties, along with the greater Miami-Dade (Homestead) area have a higher than average concentration of underserved Hispanic migrant workers, based in part on Florida's expansive agrarian seasonal produce industry.

- b.** FCASV's primary law enforcement goal is to train every law enforcement agency in Florida. FCASV is currently using their STOP sexual assault funds to provide a highly specialized training to law enforcement agencies. FCASV's newly developed law enforcement training project titled *Excellence in Sexual Assault Response* Project, better known and referred to as ESAR, has its roots in Michigan, and is currently modeled in several other states. Unique to Florida is the newly developed curriculum that accompanies this training. The past year was solely dedicated to developing the program through collaboration between FCASV and the criminal justice community. In 2016, FCASV first offered a statewide solicitation to law enforcement agencies interested in becoming pilot training partners. This STOP funded model offers *free* training, policy development consultation and technical assistance to law enforcement organizations and state attorneys'

offices on responding to sex crimes against victims 11 years old (youth) and above. The ESAR Project is unique in several respects, including its focus on a victim-centered, offender-focused response to sexual assault. Over the last year, the Project has drawn on subject matter experts from across Florida and the nation to create an intensive curriculum designed to strengthen the criminal justice response to sexual assault and incorporate the most up-to-date knowledge and practices. The Project differs in many ways from traditional training, chiefly because of the educational focus on responding in a trauma-informed manner, which is shown to improve investigations, case progression, prosecutions and victim healing. A law enforcement agency is the primary applicant with the circuit's state attorney's office, certified rape sexual assault program, and dispatch agency participating as co-applicants. Most training and consultation is provided on-site at the selected jurisdictions, and provided in a manner that is suitable and convenient for the dispatch locations, law enforcement agencies, and state attorney's office. The curriculum is specifically designed to be a comprehensive approach addressing all levels of the law enforcement response, beginning with dispatch, and including patrol officers, detectives/investigators, and command staff. The training encourages partnering with prosecutors to facilitate effective, trauma informed practice throughout the system. Training experts collaborate with the law enforcement agency to review the agency's current response, including developing a process map unique to the participating jurisdiction. The process map aids in identifying current practices and opportunities for improvement. This allows the project director to tailor the training to the particular needs of the participating jurisdiction. Most training events are presented in-house, on a schedule created with the site, to increase the agencies participation rate. The last important goal is

to focus on leading a “train-the-trainer” series that will prepare the law enforcement agency’s trainers to continue the excellence in sexual assault response instruction after the project is completed. Data collection will be on-going as FCASV continues to improve the training protocol based on critical feedback provided by trainers and trainees.

### **3. Victim Services**

In Florida there are currently 42 certified domestic violence centers, and 31 certified sexual assault rape crisis centers. Currently, 12 of the 42 (28.6%) certified domestic violence centers are ‘dual’ centers, serving both domestic violence and sexual assault victims. 38.7% of the 31 certified sexual assault/rape crisis centers are “dual” centers.

**a. Domestic Violence Services:** FCADV, the statewide, non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence service provider, will continue to receive funding to support statewide efforts to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and serve victims in underserved rural, geographically compromised communities primarily through four STOP funded programs: Community Collaborative Response to Increase Access to Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking, Rural Statewide Initiative, Rural/Underserved Project and the Statewide Legal Initiative.

FCADV’s Community Collaborative is a competitively bid program that creates the opportunity for communities to increase resources, services, and advocacy available to survivors. Collaborative efforts between nonprofit community-based organizations,

government agencies and mental health organizations ensure that survivors identified are referred to appropriate services and receive the assistance they request. Project partners establish and strengthen multidisciplinary collaborative relationships; increase organizational capacity to provide safe, accessible, and responsive services to survivors; and, develop and implement plans to address survivor's specific needs. Support is provided to certified domestic violence centers, and licensed mental health centers through a cadre of technical assistance, and enhanced service delivery. Currently, FCADV provides funding to five community collaborative projects serving north, central and south Florida communities, including St. John's, Palm Beach, Seminole, Collier, and Broward Counties.

The Rural Statewide Initiative and Rural/Underserved Project utilize a community organizing model designed to respond to the unique needs and challenges experienced by survivors residing in the most geographically isolated rural areas of Florida. Direct services to victims will be provided for those residing in rural communities. In 2016, under the Rural Statewide Initiative, FCADV continued to fund three projects with STOP grant funds intended to enhance rural and remote/underserved services to survivors of domestic violence and their children located in Manatee, Putnam and Pasco counties. In addition, through the Rural/Underserved Project, four certified domestic violence centers were competitively funded. These particular projects were specifically designed to increase and enhance service provision to traditionally underserved populations located within exclusively rural areas of the state. Those rural areas include: Pasco, Collier, Bradford, Union, Hendry and Glades Counties.



Survivors of domestic violence continue to identify legal assistance as a priority need. Therefore, to increase the legal advocacy provided in Florida, FCADV offers legal representation in injunction and other civil hearings, as well as civil legal advice through the legal hotline. Through the Statewide Legal Initiative's "Clearinghouse Project," both private attorneys and legal aid providers represent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking survivors. There are 17 legal clearinghouse vendors offering legal services throughout Florida. During Fiscal Year 2015-2016, Clearinghouse Project attorneys provided 2,819 consultations and represented 923 survivors to secure injunctions for protection. Of those, 857 were specific to domestic violence, 27 were specific to sexual violence, 25 specific to dating violence, and 14 specific to stalking. FCADV, in partnership with Florida Legal Services, Inc., administers the Domestic Violence Legal Hotline, which provides comprehensive legal advice, information, and referrals to survivors of domestic violence. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, 3,652 calls were handled by the legal hotline.

FCADV's STOP funded agencies will continue to address a combination of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or mental health, elder abuse, legal services, and LBGTQI services. FCADV continues to increase victim services by reducing administration costs; thus, increasing the number of victim service providers receiving STOP funding.

- b. Sexual Assault Services:** In previous years, FCASV received minimal STOP funding which was dedicated to training and technical assistance projects. Based on Florida's new practice model FCASV is now able to dedicate forty-five percent of the STOP 20 percent

set-aside to facilitate additional training opportunities, and to develop several direct service projects aimed at supporting certified rape crisis centers. Currently, there are two certified programs that offer sexual assault services to an underserved, culturally specific population. Projects are procured competitively through a two-year solicitation and selection process. Specifically, sexual assault projects aim to: 1) increase the ability of sexual violence service providers and allied professionals to respond to the needs of victims of sexual violence; 2) increase the knowledge of providers and allied professionals through the provision of educational training opportunities; 3) increase the capacity of member programs to provide leadership regarding sexual violence, disseminating best practices to providers, and coordinating statewide responses.

- c. Culturally Specific Services:** FCADV's competitively bid culturally and linguistically specific projects were awarded to rural, migrant farm worker communities located in northeast and southwest Florida. The Palatka (Putnam County) and Immokalee (Collier County) projects provide direct culturally specific domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking victim services to Hispanic migrant women who are victims of domestic violence, and who are also involved in child protective services. FCADV will continue this highly successful program that has brought unique community partnerships to some of the most economically challenged rural areas of the state. Cross-training initiatives have, and will continue to be implemented in both the local domestic violence centers and the Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigation Units. Weekly case staffing and referrals have created collaborative relationships, and enhanced

appropriate services to victims of domestic violence who are economically deprived and do not speak fluent English.

FCASV has dedicated two positions to coordinate work activities associated with immigration matters. The director of advocacy and the statewide victim advocacy coordinator are both considered experts in immigration cases, handling all sexual assault related immigration case referrals. In addition, FCASV has a full-time staff attorney providing sexual assault legal assistance.

**Domestic Violence Homicide/Fatality Projects:** In 2009, the Florida Attorney General's Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team was formed after the rise in domestic violence homicides in Florida. Currently, there are also 25 local teams that review domestic violence homicides and near homicides in rural and urban communities throughout Florida. Florida's approach of one statewide team in addition to local teams is a model utilized in only nine other states. The teams follow a solution oriented "no blame, no shame" philosophy that focuses on communities working together to prevent domestic violence homicides. All teams comply with statutory mandates to maintain the confidentiality and public records exemptions when reviewing fatality related information. During the past eight years, the teams have reviewed 328 domestic violence fatalities and introduced interventions and recommendations that strengthen systemic responses to domestic violence while increasing public awareness of domestic violence. These recommendations consider the immediate and ongoing safety needs of survivors and their children while striving to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence utilizing a coordinated community response approach. The team convenes four times each year to conduct a comprehensive review of domestic violence homicides that occurred in Florida, with the goal of

enhancing Florida systems that contribute to the prevention of such fatalities. Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) co-chair the statewide team. Members of the team represent state and local entities that interact with survivors, their children, and perpetrators including representatives from the court system, law enforcement, probation, parole, faith-based organizations, educators, certified domestic violence centers, legal providers, healthcare providers and the defense bar.

The *Faces of Fatality* annual report contains descriptive statistics of domestic violence homicides based on data collected by Florida's local fatality review teams. Local fatality review teams utilize a uniform data collection tool to gather and report information about the characteristics of perpetrators, characteristics of decedents and their relationships with perpetrators, known domestic violence histories, criminal records, and a range of observable evidence-based risk factors. The data in this report is generated from both qualitative and quantitative sources. The teams gather information from public records, media reports, and conversations with proxy informants such as family or friends of the deceased. Aggregated data analysis helps to identify patterns and trends related to domestic violence homicides and emphasizes critical areas of focus related to improving policy and intervention strategies. The information provides a contextual view of the perpetrators' behaviors and the survivors' experiences prior to and leading up to the homicides. The *Faces of Fatality* report also presents a case study and findings based on the fatality review conducted by the statewide team. The Faces of Fatality annual report seeks to honor the victim's memory through the development of recommendations that provide hope for those experiencing domestic violence in the future.

Through fatality review recommendations, both state systems and local communities have the opportunity to develop policies and intervention strategies that enhance services and reduce the likelihood of homicide. Recommendations for systemic change are considered one of the most important aspects of domestic violence fatality review and serve as a blueprint for enhancements to survivor safety and perpetrator accountability. Thoughtfully crafted recommendations based on the data analysis from team reviews can help shape policy changes and interventions in the coordinated response to domestic violence. The work of the Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team demonstrates the powerful effect such recommendations can have in enhancing statewide and local community domestic violence services and response. Fatality review recommendations focus on a wide range of short and long term goals, including training to meet the specific needs of community partners such as screening for domestic violence in medical communities, safety planning considerations for domestic violence advocates, law enforcement trainings related to the use of risk assessments, evidence collection and victim interviewing, training for prosecutors on enforcing and enhancing offender accountability, and training on effective batterers' intervention programs for judges and courts. In addition to training, statewide team recommendations have included proposed changes to Florida Statutes, implementation of statewide policies regarding domestic violence services, and public campaigns that raise awareness about domestic violence in an effort to increase the responses of bystanders witnessing or having knowledge of the occurrence of domestic violence in their families and communities. Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team recommendations have resulted in some of the following specific accomplishments:

- Senator David Simmons and Representative Holly Raschein introduced and successfully passed SB 342 during the 2015 Florida Legislative Session that amended s. 903.047, Florida Statutes, Conditions of Pretrial Release. Governor Scott signed the bill into law on May 14, 2015. The amended statute provides that an order of no contact is effective immediately, and authorizes the court to prohibit the following acts: communicating orally or in written form, either in person, telephonically, electronically, or in any other manner, either directly or indirectly through a third person, with the victim or any other person named in the order, unless the order specifically allows indirect contact through a third party; having physical or violent contact with the victim or other named person's residence, even if the defendant and the victim or other named person share the residence; and being within 500 feet of the victim's or other named person's vehicle, place of employment, or a specified place frequented by such person. Importantly, this change in legislation permits law enforcement and prosecutors to increase charges on perpetrators of domestic violence who make contact with victims through jail house calls after the order of no contact was issued. Perpetrators often use intimidation and threats to coerce victims into dropping charges while they are in jail.
- FCADV funded certified domestic violence center, Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Inc. and the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County to implement a collaborative anti-stalking project in 2013. The project allowed community stakeholders to increase resources, services, and advocacy available to survivors of stalking. The collaborative partners enhanced survivor safety through cooperative

efforts to develop materials, training, and capacity building in Palm Beach County. This project serves as a model for other communities.

- FCADV applied for and received a three-year grant, awarded to the Department of Children and Families by the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women to provide training on high risk indicators, risk assessment protocols, conducting safety checks and making appropriate charging decisions to more than 700 participants from law enforcement, emergency response and victim advocates prior to ending in June 2017. The need to expand training to these community partners was identified in the 2014 Faces of Fatality Report recommendations. In addition to the trainings, FCADV's Fatality Review Coordinator provides ongoing technical assistance to local fatality review teams on risk indicators and the use of risk assessments by certified domestic violence centers and other allied partners.
- FCADV collaborates with the Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association and Florida Department of Law Enforcement to identify ways to enhance law enforcement collaboration and training opportunities. In addition to conducting statewide domestic violence training for law enforcement officers, FCADV created a comprehensive video training series related to the following topics: collecting photographic evidence, the use of risk assessments, excited utterances, the use of body cameras and school resource officers' role in addressing teen dating violence. These training tools are made available to all law enforcement agencies through the FCADV website.

- In collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, FCADV conducts Advocacy, Technology, and Safety trainings that focus heavily on safety planning and evidence collection in cyberstalking cases throughout the state of Florida. The increased use of technology and the ever-growing access to phone and computer applications that can be used to cause harm require that all service providers possess an in-depth understanding of the way perpetrators use technology to stalk, harass, intimidate and isolate victims. Increasing survivors' knowledge regarding the ability of perpetrators to stalk them through various forms of technology increases their knowledge regarding implementing safety measures to protect themselves and their children.
- FCADV annually conducts trainings for medical professionals related to screening for and responding to domestic violence. FCADV trains doctors, nurses and other medical responders on the importance of providing information to survivors, often serving as a safe and trusted confidant for their disclosures of abuse. A medical advocacy workgroup continues to convene quarterly to develop recommendations for state level training and to promote prevention strategies within primary care medical settings.
- In 2014, the Florida Legislature passed resolutions designating January as Stalking Awareness Month in Florida. According to the Stalking Resource Center, 76% of intimate partner femicide victims were stalked prior to the homicide.<sup>6</sup> The Legislative resolutions brought needed attention to the crime of stalking and increases the opportunity for successful public awareness campaigns. FCADV

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<sup>6</sup> Stalking Resource Center Fact Sheet, [http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/src/stalking-fact-sheet-2015\\_eng.pdf?status=Temp&sfvrsn=0.994206007104367](http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/src/stalking-fact-sheet-2015_eng.pdf?status=Temp&sfvrsn=0.994206007104367)



utilizes this month to highlight stalking crimes and provide training regarding stalking and cyberstalking throughout the state.

- The statewide team convened a victim-blaming workgroup to increase public education on the adverse impact of victim blaming. The workgroup will continue to focus on educating the media through the development of a guide that assists journalists, reporters and bloggers with identifying and utilizing language that recognizes intimidation and coercion in domestic violence and focuses on perpetrators' responsibility for their crimes.
- In 2016, FCADV applied for and was awarded Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding to implement a statewide Injunction for Protection Project to provide attorneys to assist survivors of domestic, dating and sexual violence and stalking with completing and filing Injunction for Protection petitions, and to represent survivors at final injunction and violation of injunction hearings.

These accomplishments highlight the collaborative nature of Florida's state and local fatality review teams, as well as the successful outcomes of the collaborative process. Effective interventions increase safety and promote justice for survivors and their children. The Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team and the 25 local teams are committed to seeking ongoing solutions that disrupt the patterns and reduce the risk of homicide for all domestic violence survivors and their children. The success of the state and local FRTs on implementing the recommendations is due to the support and determination of the various stakeholders, whose dedication and commitment to survivors helps to save lives every day in Florida.

**d. Statewide Sexual Assault Response Team Advisory Committee:** One of FCASV's ongoing STOP-funded projects, The SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) Advisory Committee, established in 2006 and coordinated by FCASV, is a statewide body comprised of representatives from a broad range of disciplines whose work brings them into contact with rape victims. The committee works to assess and improve Florida's response to victims of sexual violence at the state and local level to ensure Florida's compliance with new and continuing provisions of the Violence Against Women Act, including provisions such as the non-reporting victims' access to forensic exams. In developing its annual recommendations, and creating guidelines for policy implementation, the members work diligently to balance the needs of victims with the complex requirements of the criminal justice system.

#### **4. Statewide Courts**

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) was created to assist the courts in developing a uniform case reporting system that provides the judiciary information involving the budgetary and operational activities of the courts. The State Courts Administrator serves as the liaison between the court system and the legislative branch, the executive branch, the auxiliary agencies of the Court and national court research and planning agencies.

##### **a. Domestic Violence**

To build upon the momentum of projects implemented through previous STOP grants, OSCA will continue to focus on the enhancement of Florida's court system's civil domestic violence injunction case process in each of the 20 judicial circuits in the state. The ultimate

consumers of the court system's services are those individuals and families affected by domestic violence and who are seeking redress through the courts. Currently, OSCA provides direct services to approximately 160 circuit and county court judges, as well as court administration staff, clerks of the court, certified mediators, and other key stakeholders in the justice system. It should be noted that according to the Florida Office of the State Courts Administrator, for fiscal year 2014 – 2015, 83,961 circuit family court filings were received for the following case types in Florida: Domestic Violence: 51,613, Stalking: 11,838, Dating Violence: 3,569, Sexual Violence: 1,136, and Repeat Violence: 15,805. STOP funding will continue to provide the following:

- A continuing evaluation of the current needs and training gaps that exist for Florida's judges involved in the domestic violence injunction process.
- Increase the number and quality of domestic violence education opportunities for judges, court administration staff, attorneys, clerks of court, and others involved in the family court system.
- Increase levels of information and technical assistance to be provided to domestic violence case coordinators, court administration staff, public agencies, and the general public.

#### **b. Sexual Assault**

In 2015-2016, OSCA received sexual assault set-aside funding and, in collaboration with FCASV, began implementing sexual assault-specific training for judges and other court personnel for the first time. OSCA also assisted FCASV in identifying the members of,

and convening a workgroup to advise FCASV on a revision of Florida's Criminal Sexual Battery Benchbook. In 2017-2018, OSCA will receive \$68,913.00.00 in STOP funding to:

- Increase the number and quality of sexual violence education opportunities for judges, court administration staff, attorneys, clerks of court, and others involved in both the family court and criminal court systems.
  - Increase levels of sexual assault information and technical assistance to be provided to case coordinators, court administration staff, public agencies, the public, and others.
- c. The collaboration between the state courts and both FCADV and FCASV will continue in the coming years. The courts have always been eager to assist both coalitions and the Department in taking the lead to develop and provide appropriate training, technical assistance and resources to Florida's judicial system.

## **5. Statewide Law Enforcement Training**

### **a. Domestic Violence**

To increase perpetrator accountability in domestic violence cases, FCADV will continue to provide training to law enforcement officers and related civilian counterparts who work with victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. FCADV works with highly specialized law enforcement and criminal justice consultants to conduct law enforcement training and technical assistance, and on-site monitoring of STOP funded law enforcement programs. Training encompasses innovative law enforcement approaches to offender accountability for violent crimes against women and victim safety. Examples of training include, but are not limited to: coordinated community response, enhanced evidence collection related to evidence-based prosecution of crimes against women,

victim-centered interviewing, risk assessment screening on scene, offender accountability, approaches to support victim safety, the use of social media and technology in crimes, and cultural competency when working with victims. Additionally, trainings also include establishing appropriate protocols for responding to domestic violence calls, maintaining the confidentiality of survivor information, and effectively assessing the risk for potential domestic violence homicide. During Fiscal Year 2015-2016, FCADV conducted eight advanced law enforcement trainings to more than 29 law enforcement agencies statewide, including personnel from the U. S. Department of Defense.

**b. Sexual Assault**

FCASV's primary law enforcement goal is to train every law enforcement agency in Florida in trauma-informed responses to and investigations of sexual assault. FCASV is currently using their STOP sexual assault funds to provide a highly specialized training to law enforcement agencies. FCASV's newly developed law enforcement training project titled Excellence in Sexual Assault Response Project (ESAR), better known and referred to as ESAR, has its roots in Michigan, and is currently modeled in several other states. Unique to Florida is the newly developed curriculum that accompanies this training. The past year was solely dedicated to developing the program through collaboration between FCASV and the criminal justice community. In 2016, FCASV first offered a statewide solicitation to law enforcement agencies interested in becoming pilot training partners. This STOP funded model offers free training, policy development consultation and technical assistance to law enforcement organizations and state attorneys' offices on responding to sex crimes against victims 11 years old (youth) and above. The ESAR Project is unique in several respects, including its focus on a victim-centered, offender-focused response to sexual assault. Over the last year, the Project

has drawn on subject matter experts from across Florida and the nation to create an intensive curriculum designed to strengthen the criminal justice response to sexual assault and incorporate the most up-to-date knowledge and practices. The Project differs in many ways from traditional training, chiefly because of the educational focus on responding in a trauma-informed manner, which is shown to improve investigations, case progression, prosecutions and victim healing. A law enforcement agency is the primary applicant with the circuit's state attorney's office, certified rape sexual assault program, and dispatch agency participating as co-applicants. Most training and consultation is provided on-site at the selected jurisdictions, and provided in a manner that is suitable and convenient for the dispatch locations, law enforcement agencies, and state attorney's office. The curriculum is specifically designed to be a comprehensive approach addressing all levels of the law enforcement response, beginning with dispatch, and including patrol officers, detectives/investigators, and command staff. The training encourages partnering with prosecutors to facilitate effective, trauma informed practice throughout the system. Training experts collaborate with the law enforcement agency to review the agency's current response, including developing a process map unique to the participating jurisdiction. The process map aids in identifying current practices and opportunities for improvement. This allows the project director to tailor the training to the particular needs of the participating jurisdiction. Most training events are presented in-house, on a schedule created with the site, to increase the agencies participation rate. The last important goal is to focus on leading a "train-the-trainer" series that will prepare the law enforcement agency's trainers to continue the excellence in sexual assault response instruction after the project is completed. Data collection will be on-going as FCASV continues to improve the training protocol based on critical feedback provided by trainers and trainees.

In the first full year of implementation, FCASV's ESAR project conducted 17 trainings in 4 participating jurisdictions: 4 for dispatch, 5 for patrol officers, 4 for detectives/investigators, and 4 for leadership/command staff. Once each jurisdiction had completed the initial round of training, 4 Train-the-Trainer events were held for personnel from each jurisdiction who had been identified willing and able to train other law enforcement personnel using the curricula. Two additional, regional training events were also conducted. In all, FCASV conducted 23 in-depth trainings ranging from 4 hours to two-days for law enforcement/consolidated dispatch personnel, patrol officers, detectives/investigators, and leadership/command staff. 53 Assistant State Attorneys also received two days of training developed specifically for them.

## **6. Statewide Prosecution Training**

The Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association (FPAA) will provide training to prosecutors and related civilian counterparts who work with victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. Training will encompass current prosecutorial approaches to combating violent crimes against women and promoting safety. Examples include, but are not limited to, coordinated community response, evidence-based prosecution of crimes against women, offender accountability, approaches to maintaining victim safety and cultural competency when working with victims.

## **7. Technical Assistance**

FCADV provides technical assistance to its sub-grantees in the following manner:

- a.** All sub-grantees (new and returning) are required to attend a grant implementation workshop. The workshop consists of all aspects of successful grant management

including, but not limited to: program components, reporting, invoices, and project monitoring. Workshops are held either face to face or via webinar.

- b.** Periodic conference calls and electronic updates to ensure that everything is going well for the grantee and to update them regarding any changes.
- c.** One-on-one telephone calls to train new grant staff, as needed.
- d.** Site visits and community trainings that are tailored to each communities' self-identified and individualized needs.
- e.** Review of deliverables and feedback on identified issues that impact survivor safety and/or program accountability.
- f.** On-going contract management and on-site contract monitoring that also includes technical assistance when needed.



## **Family Violence Prevention Services Award Program (FVPSA)**

Florida remains a longtime recipient of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) states-territories formula grant. The Department administers the formula grant and passes the funding through to FCADV. Each year the funds are allocated through a formula to 41 certified domestic violence centers. Funding is earmarked to provide shelter and direct outreach services to victims and their children. Additionally, FVPSA funding enables FCADV to establish within the state's certified domestic violence centers appropriate information systems that collect the required service data. FVPSA funds provide FCADV with the necessary resources to support ongoing training and technical assistance to the shelters and centers. The Department reports to HHS on FVPSA grant requirements by closely coordinating all grant related activities with our primary partner, FCADV. The Department utilizes the same process with FVPSA as we do with STOP funding by jointly developing the state plan, submitting the annual application, and preparing the annual data report for HHS.

## **Prior Implementation Plans**

There are two noted differences between prior and current implementation planning. Prior planning only included the Department's primary focus on FCADV's extensive STOP funded network of projects and providers. Due to the small portion of STOP funding that FCASV received, there was only minimal interaction between agencies. Based on Florida's newly designed practice model FCASV is now the primary recipient of STOP sexual violence funding. The second significant change is the development of a new monitoring system for sub-grantees. The Department no longer monitors the sub-grantee STOP projects. The Department continues to monitor FCADV, and receives the DOH monitoring reports for FCASV. Both Coalitions now

have the contractual responsibility to monitor their sub-grantees, and ensure that the participating STOP-funded programs adhere to state and federal monitoring procedures. FCADV requires all STOP-funded projects to be monitored onsite. FCASV rotates their sub-grantees bi-annually to complete onsite and desk reviews. When necessary each coalition is available to provide oversight and technical assistance throughout the monitoring process.

Keeping in line with past implementation planning, Florida continues the goal of supporting strong collaborative working partnerships between local domestic violence and sexual assault rape crisis centers. This includes maintaining relationships with local community service providers such as law enforcement, prosecution services, courts, child welfare agencies, mental health and substance abuse providers, hospitals, probation, and batterer intervention programs. As is the case with most larger states, cultural diversity and geography play a pivotal role in how services impact communities. Florida strives to address the complexities associated with rich and diverse ethnicities, races and cultures, as well as addressing the demographics that often impose unique obstacles when attempting to assure victim safety in rural populated areas. Florida's population continues to grow, and for the most part when dealing with this type of forecast, we can generally predict an increase in social, economic, and legal problems. Primarily those issues will be related to related to the health, legal obstacles, and economic burdens placed upon most women, men and children exposed to crimes associated with domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The issues are complex, but our law enforcement and prosecution services have fully embraced this dynamic, and remain fully committed to addressing these crimes. Florida is not unique to other states and territories when it comes to finding ways that ensure our community partners remain

equipped with the training, support, tools, and funding necessary to maintain community wide safety nets for the populations we serve.

## **Prioritizing Geographic Size and Need for Services**

Florida has been very fortunate in its ability to distribute funding equitably to most areas of the state based on demographics and need. As previously discussed, FCADV and FCASV currently provide funding to 16 victim services projects, with eleven of those projects providing culturally specific outreach services to rural populations. The projects themselves are located in every geographic section of the state, ranging from remote areas located in Florida's Panhandle (Liberty, Madison Gadsden, Jefferson, Taylor, Wakulla and Franklin Counties), to both densely and sparsely populated areas in Miami-Dade County. Likewise, there are 17 legal clearinghouse vendors located in counties that cover every geographic area of Florida. The Florida Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24 hours per day, serving all geographic areas of the state. There are four (4) additional Rural Underserved projects disbursed through-out the state covering some of the most rural and indigent areas of Florida. Fifteen of the 20 state prosecution offices elect to receive STOP funds, ultimately providing additional support to victims of crime in most areas of the state. Currently, FCADV has 11 law enforcement projects covering diverse urban and rural populated areas. One such project is located in Broward County, having the distinction as the Nation's largest fully accredited Sheriff's department. In addition, STOP funded law enforcement projects are situated in four of Florida's most rural populated areas which include Citrus and Hernando Counties, both located in central Florida, Putnam County, located in the northeast, and Bay County located in the northwest Panhandle.

An excellent example of how Florida's STOP funding is geared to reach underserved populations located in specific rural geographic areas of the state is clearly identified in FCADV's two culturally specific projects. One project is located in the northeast, and the other is in the southwest section of the state. Florida specifically identified these and several other areas as having some of the poorest migrant farm-worker communities in the U.S. As part of a competitive bid process, the communities selected exemplify how we attempt to address the complexities associated with parity of need based on available resources.

Local law enforcement and victim service funds are procured through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. FCADV currently has contracts with local service providers which are in effect until June 30, 2017. Those contracts will be renewed for another year upon successful compliance with grant requirements.

STOP prosecution funding is offered to all 20 State Attorneys. Funds are allocated to each of the judicial circuits requesting funding based on a formula which takes into account: 1) whether the area is rural or urban; 2) the percentage of children under age 18; 3) the percentage of women aged 18-44; 4) the area's population; 5) the crime rate related to violence against women; and 6) the amount of marriages and divorces in the area. Currently, FCADV funds 15 state attorneys electing to receive STOP funding. Prosecution services are funded the same as law enforcement and victim services contracts, which are in effect until June 30, 2017. Those contracts will be renewed annually at the request of the state attorney and contingent upon successful compliance with grant requirements. FCASV currently funds 12 state attorneys. They too distribute funding based on a similar funding methodology that takes into account state sexual assault crime statistics.

## **STOP Grant Cycle Timeline**

Currently, Florida is expending the 2015 STOP grant funding. Those STOP sub-grantee contracts are scheduled to expire on June 30, 2017. The 2016 STOP grant will start on or around July 1, 2017. We anticipate those funds to end by June 30, 2018 or shortly thereafter. The Department's federal financial management plan and goal is to successfully align Florida's yearly STOP grant cycle to be obligated and expended concurrently within the 2 year grant spending cycle. We hope to accomplish this by 2019.

## **Underserved Victims**

The Department and both coalitions continue to address the needs of underserved and underrepresented populations in Florida, through funds allocated to FCADV and FCASV for Rural and underserved projects. Underserved populations that will be served with STOP funding are identified through comprehensive data collection methods. This information is discussed during STOP Implementation meetings to design programs that best serve the needs of survivors within Florida's local communities.

As the professional membership association for Florida's certified domestic violence centers and legislatively appointed administrator of state and federal domestic violence funding in Florida, FCADV is statutorily required to implement, evaluate, and fund the state's domestic violence services. In this role, FCADV identifies and responds to the needs of underserved and underrepresented survivors, as well as barriers in services within the local communities through extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A few of these methods include:

- Certified domestic violence centers complete a FCADV monthly services report that includes demographic information about participants of their programs including; race, gender identity, age, and ethnicity. Centers have the discretion to collect sexual orientation. The information provided to FCADV in these reports is evaluated both monthly and annually to ensure that domestic violence services are available and accessible to survivors from the populations identified in the US Census and through community needs assessments such as migrant farm-working populations and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) populations. This information helps identify specific populations and service areas that will benefit from STOP funding.
- FCADV receives, reviews and approves all subgrantees monthly reports for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and provides technical assistance based on the issues identified in such reports. In 2009, the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) entered into a settlement agreement with HHS to resolve three discrimination complaints made against the State of Florida for failure to provide sign language interpreter services. The term for the agreement was five years, which was satisfied. Since completion of the settlement, FCADV continues to evaluate these reports to ensure agencies are providing accessibility accommodations. The HHS reports identify the number of accessibility accommodations provided within specific communities, including, but not limited to, accommodations for survivors who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and limited English proficiency (LEP) such as language interpretation services. FCADV's oversight of these reports allows data to be compiled and collected to identify trends in the local communities for services with survivors who require service accommodations.

- FCADV contracts with Optimal Phone Interpreters (OPI) to provide telephonic language interpreters services for all 42 certified domestic violence centers, the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline, the Legal Hotline and the Roaming Attorney Project. FCADV receives a monthly report from OPI on languages utilized by each agency. This interpreter service ensures that survivors have access to their preferred spoken language with immediacy on the hotline and in all other situations where it is required when an interpreter or advocate who speaks in a survivor's preferred language is not immediately available. The information on the reports includes the language spoken and the number of times interpreters were requested in each language, which allows FCADV to track the trends of LEP needs in local communities and aids in identifying underserved LEP populations. The report helps to inform FCADV of individuals and communities that may be reaching out for services for the first time. While Spanish and Haitian Creole tend to be the most common languages after English, spoken in Florida, an increase of eastern European, Portuguese and Arabic languages within specific geographies of Florida presents future opportunities for outreach in these communities. These increases were identified during the previous year through the OPI language line data collected by the Coalition.
- FCADV operates the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline, a statewide resource for survivors of domestic violence, their friends, and family members in which live advocates conduct safety planning, provide supportive counseling, and offer information and referral services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Statewide hotline advocates are required to collect data on the barriers that survivors experience when attempting to access resources or services within Florida. Barriers frequently identified include the need for legal services, affordable housing and financial resources. Information regarding survivors

experiences are used in the development of trainings for certified domestic violence center staff and their allied partners and inform how FCADV can use STOP funding to enhance domestic violence services and response. For example, during the last FY, FCADV created and distributed a Cultural Competency Workbook and a Rural Resource Guide to assist advocates and local communities working with survivors to address barriers. The Rural Resource Guide shares information and solutions collected from rural communities who have established practices to address the barriers and risks survivors encounter each day. The Cultural Competency Workbook accompanies a previously developed *Advanced Cultural Considerations Training Curriculum*, which is used to assist advocates in learning about their personal cultural identity, cultural humility and working with others without cultural bias.

- FCADV contracts with the Florida Legal Services (FLS) to operate the Florida Domestic Violence Legal Hotline for survivors of domestic violence in immediate need of free legal advice and referrals to pro bono attorneys in the caller's service area as available. FLS submits a quarterly report to FCADV on barriers and unmet legal needs identified by callers. The information regarding needed legal services has been critical in the development of legal programs such as the STOP funded Legal Clearinghouse Project and the Statewide Injunction for Protection Project that provides attorneys employed by FCADV and Florida's certified domestic violence centers to represent survivors in injunction hearings.
- FCADV coordinates and facilitates two multidisciplinary workgroups that provide feedback on emerging issues within communities from a service provider perspective. The law enforcement workgroup includes the Florida Sheriff's Association, STOP funded



detectives, an Office of the Attorney General Bureau Chief, a survivor and representatives from the Department of Corrections. This group evaluates the needs of law enforcement to best respond to and investigate domestic violence cases in Florida and makes recommendations to FCADV on the training and technical assistance that law enforcement can benefit from. One major need identified by law enforcement is additional dedicated domestic violence officers who can conduct enhanced investigation and training for foot patrol officers. This feedback prompted FCADV to develop additional law enforcement requests for proposals (RFPs) in the last two years. These proposals increase the number of detectives responding to domestic violence in local municipalities and create professional law enforcement trainers in the field. The RFPs give specific preference to and focus on rural and underserved populations and communities. In addition, the batterer intervention program (BIP) workgroup was initially developed to address changing legislation that deregulated the certification and monitoring of BIPs in Florida. This workgroup has met for several years to discuss best practices in local community coordinated efforts to conduct evaluation of the local BIPs and make statewide recommendations regarding programs that meet the established criteria. The outcome of these groups has included the implementation of STOP funded training on effective batterer intervention programs as a means to perpetrator accountability. Examples of these trainings include, but are not limited to; *Creating a Process of Change for Men Who Batter* with Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs; *Understanding the Mind of the Batterer* with David Garvin; and trainings on the differences between batterers' intervention programs and anger management during FCADV conference and webinars.

- In 2013 FCADV contracted with Olga Trujillo, Olga Trujillo Consulting, to complete a comprehensive needs assessment with Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers to ascertain whether Florida's domestic violence centers are providing cultural and linguistic specific services that appropriately reflect each communities' needs and demographics. The assessment included the voice of survivors through survivor focus groups and staff surveys completed at each of the 42 certified domestic violence centers. Data from the staff surveys and survivor focus groups was analyzed and used to create statewide recommendations to enhance culturally and linguistically responsive domestic violence services. FCADV published the *Survivors of Domestic Violence from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Communities Needs Assessment Report* and continues to refer to these recommendations when developing training and materials for advocates and allied partners. For example, the report recommended the development of a resource guide that enhanced advocates' understanding of spiritual and religious accommodations, such as access to cultural foods, food preparation areas, and space for spiritual practice. As a result, in 2015, FCADV developed the *Faith and Intimate Partner Violence Handbook for Advocates*, a collaborative publication produced by FCADV and the Faith-Trust Institute that provides guidance to advocates on working with survivors from diverse faith communities. FCADV regularly partners with the Faith-Trust Institute to conduct workshops to advocates and community partners. For example, FCADV hosts an annual Rural Statewide Institute in collaboration with a local centered domestic violence center and Sheriff's Office, both of whom receive STOP funding. During the 2017 Rural Statewide Institute, the Faith-Trust Institute conducted two workshops on understanding survivors' experiences with faith as a support strategy and occasional barrier to services

to continue this work. In addition, the Rural Institute was begun offering workshops in Spanish for advocates working within Spanish speaking communities in order to enhance the linguistic access of nuanced and culturally relevant information about service needs.

- FCADV's Rural Statewide Initiative and Rural/Underserved Projects, Community Collaborative Projects and Cultural and Linguistic Program subgrantees conduct survivor focus groups within their local communities. Focus groups occur in the first year of the projects and continue throughout the remaining years of the projects. FCADV and its contracted evaluation team provide comprehensive technical assistance on the development of focus group questions/guides and receives a completed report of the outcomes of the focus groups. Each center engages their community partners to identify survivors who may be interested in participating in the focus groups, often including survivors who have not utilized certified centers' domestic violence services. Additionally, the rural projects complete an unmet needs report that identifies barriers within non-urban areas, and specifically with migrant and immigrant communities in their respective service areas. All of this information is utilized to direct project activities and deliverables, determine necessary project partners, and enhance service delivery.
- Centers also conduct needs assessments and community exchanges that increase the participation of local service providers and the community at large to identify underserved populations and the services in greatest need amongst those populations. The community exchanges are "talk out" sessions that invite the verbal feedback of agencies and individuals interfacing with domestic violence survivors and/or underserved populations in the centers' service areas. The exchanges are also an opportunity for survivors who feel it is safe to speak at public events to provide information to the center and community

about the help they received and barriers that existed for them when attempting to access safety. The information from local focus groups, community assessments and community exchanges are used to develop action plans that identify how the agencies will dismantle barriers and gaps within the community. The action plan then informs the goals of the project throughout the funded period and steers the identification of the populations and services that are implemented through STOP funding.

- FCADV conducts the Survivor Listening Project annually. In FY 2016-2017, FCADV heard the voices of 195 survivors from 24 of the 42 certified domestic violence centers in Florida. Nine of these centers serve primarily rural populations. Since the inception of the project, the Coalition has heard the voices of over 500 survivors regarding system barriers to accessing safety, strengths and weaknesses in domestic violence services, and the greatest unmet needs of survivors. In FY 16-17, 64 survivor participants who received services from centers serving primarily rural populations and 131 survivor participants from centers serving primarily non-rural populations. One respondent identified as male, and the remaining participants indicated their gender as female. Approximately one third of the respondents were 30 to 39 years old. Another one third identified as younger than 30 years, and one third were 40 years or older. Just over half of the respondents identified as White (54%), 40% identified as Black or African American, and 6% identified as another race or combination of races. One fifth of survivors identified with Hispanic ethnicity. The information collected from this diverse group of survivors directly influences the use of STOP funds in Florida (further detail on the Survivor Listening Project identified below).

The Survivor Listening Project ensures that the voices of domestic violence survivors continue to inform the work of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. FCADV is statutorily required to implement, evaluate, and fund the state's domestic violence services. The Survivor Listening Project collects information regarding survivors' experiences interfacing with Florida's domestic violence system. In fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, FCADV solicited feedback from 195 survivors receiving services from 24 different centers. The Listening Project explores survivor experiences with nine sectors of the domestic violence system in which survivors often engage as they seek safety from an abusive partner. The nine sectors are as follows: shelter intake, hotline calls, law enforcement, shelter residence, outreach and educational programs, legal system, child protective services, transitional and long-term housing, and additional resources.

The data extracted from the survey represents a racially and age-diverse purposive sample of domestic violence survivors representing individuals receiving services from 24 of the 42 certified domestic violence centers in Florida. Trained facilitators from FCADV conducted onsite visits with participating centers during January through April 2016 and January through April 2017. Survivors residing in emergency shelter and/or participating in outreach services during that time period were invited to participate in the Domestic Violence Listening Project. FCADV provided host centers with a flyer to notify residents and participants of the opportunity to attend and provide input regarding challenges experienced interfacing with the various sectors of Florida's domestic violence response system.

The recruiting flyer and consent form stated that there would be no adverse consequences for not participating in the Listening Project to ensure respondents were aware of the voluntary nature of

this effort. The survey was administered in private locations to create an environment that ensured confidentiality of the discussions and ability to generate honest responses. Center staff were available if needed, but were not in the room during the administration of the survey. Interpreters were available for respondents as requested and required. FCADV personnel remained available to respondents throughout the process to provide support and assistance with the survey.

Prior to each session, the FCADV facilitator expended ample time to discuss the informed consent process. The facilitator reviewed the informed consent document in detail with each survivor, ensuring that survivors understood the purpose of the listening project and that respondents could choose to avoid answering any or all questions as desired and without negative consequences. Survivors were informed that the questions would focus on their experiences with domestic violence services and such topics may generate significant emotion. It is common for questions regarding domestic violence to remind survivors of their own experiences and thus may be difficult to process. For this reason, survivors were notified of supports in place (advocates at the host center) if they requested assistance as a result of an emotional trigger to any of the questions. In addition, FCADV staff were available to survivors as before, during and after their survey completion to process difficult emotions and triggers. The informed consent discussion was conducted in a language the survivor could understand.

One of the greatest strengths evident in survivor experiences lies in core services provided by the Florida domestic violence centers. Center staff should take great pride in the quality of services in Florida. Overall, survivors reported being treated with respect, compassion and concern when accessing hotline, shelter and outreach services. They also reported that their immediate needs

were met when accessing these services and that they felt welcomed and cared for during the intake process. Survivors reported that advocates spoke to them in a supportive manner and that translation services were routinely available when needed. Specifically, in regard to outreach programming, survivors reported that they were appreciative of the relevant content they learned that would help keep themselves and their children safe. In regard to system partners, the majority of survivors said that lawyers treated them with respect and that law enforcement met their immediate needs for safety.

While the overall comments on the survey were positive, survivors articulated substantial challenges as it relates to the responses of Florida's domestic violence system across the breadth of different sectors. Many of the challenges were a result of limited resources and were related to "other systems/sectors" that are outside the scope of domestic violence centers' services. Specific examples of domestic violence system challenges beyond the control of the local domestic violence center include, but are not limited to, availability of affordable housing in their communities, employment opportunities, the legal system, law enforcement, transportation, and immigration assistance. The two prominent challenges pertaining to center services related primarily to limited physical resources: privacy in emergency shelters and the need for additional space for adult and child residents. Florida will continue to address these challenges by engaging STOP implementation in both statewide and local advocacy initiatives, aimed to improve Florida's domestic violence resources and responses.

The Department continues to address the needs of underserved victims through the funding allocated for statewide law enforcement and prosecution training. Cultural competency training

encompasses working with traditionally disenfranchised groups, such as individuals from ethnic, racial, deaf, and LGBTQ cultures, as well as dealing with worker-client cultural differences. Both coalitions prioritize the need for on-going cultural competency training and conversation by ensuring that cultural diversity considerations be required when planning any statewide training or event.

To qualify as a “domestic violence advocate” an individual must be employed or volunteer at a certified domestic violence center and have successfully completed 30 hours of core competency (CORE) training. FCADV manages the curriculum used for completion of the 24 classroom hours of the CORE training, in which advocates learn foundational information about gender-based violence, anti-oppression, addressing racism, survivor-focused advocacy, mental health and substance abuse complexities for survivors of domestic violence, cultural competency practices working within specific populations and personal privilege. This training is an introduction to the themes incorporated and modeled in FCADV’s Program Standards. In addition, FCADV maintains an *Advanced Cultural Competence* series that includes onsite and regional trainings that are provided in 2, 4, 6 or 8 hour segments. The *Cultural Competency Workbook* was developed in the last FY, as an addition to this training series.

As previously mentioned there are 42 certified domestic violence centers and 31 certified rape crisis centers in Florida. Of the 42 certified domestic violence centers, 12 of those are certified “dual” centers (meaning the center is both a certified domestic violence center and a certified rape crisis center), serving both domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Three additional certified domestic violence centers provide a vast array of sexual violence services however those three centers are not dually certified. The 31 certified rape crisis centers offer sexual assault services



in 65 counties. The 42 certified domestic violence centers offer domestic violence services in all 67 Florida counties.

FCADV now implements culturally specific funding to provide services to underserved Hispanic migrant women in rural Immokalee and Palatka, Florida. Prior to 2009, this population had never received services specifically addressing domestic violence, poverty, language barriers and child protection services. These two geographic areas of the state have historically experienced several significant barriers, one in particular indicating a higher than average rate of child removal from the non-offending parent when working with child welfare professionals. Historically, STOP funding paved the way for partnerships to develop between the local domestic violence advocacy agencies, and the Department of Children and Families Child Protection Units. State funding now allows FCADV to continue providing specialized training for child welfare professionals working with families experiencing domestic violence.

FCASV allocates STOP funds to support two competitively bid victim services projects that primarily serve sexual assault victims residing in remote communities known to have limited sexual assault resources. The project located in the Panhandle offers services to inmates located in rural correctional institutions who otherwise would not have access to needed resources. They serve women incarcerated in four jails, and their families, the majority of whom are low income. The project located in South Florida addresses the predominately Hispanic migrant farm worker community by offering sexual assault resources and referrals. This agency, M.U.J.E.R., is a culturally specific organization serving the predominantly Hispanic, low income residents of south Miami-Dade County, and receives 24.03% of FCASV's victim services allocation.

## **Offender Accountability**

Accountability of domestic violence offenders is a central tenet of all STOP funded projects. FCADV supports the 42 certified domestic violence centers to provide leadership in a coordinated community response model which addresses both victim safety and perpetrator accountability.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to 2011, the State certified and monitored batterer intervention programs (BIP). The state certification of BIP was terminated due to local communities expressing an interest in establishing their own local coordinated community BIP collaborations. During that period of time, many of Florida's local communities theoretically designed a mission and goals aimed at supporting a more 'customized' community practice model, claiming that local communities were in a better position to assess, support and manage local community needs. In keeping with a coordinated community practice model, the State felt it was important to support local communities with this endeavor. Over the past five years, most communities have stumbled on major programmatic obstacles prohibiting the development of community certification boards. FCADV is currently researching ways to assist Florida's local communities in their efforts to implement an acceptable over-site process for BIP. Currently, there is no means to assure that programs are in compliance with approved state and national standards, and no method to guarantee that the BIP psycho-educational practice model, which is still considered the national standard protocol, is currently offered. FCADV continues to provide technical assistance to communities who are actively engaged in the development and maintenance of a local BIP monitoring program.

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<sup>7</sup> More information about FCADV projects may be located at the following link:  
<http://fcadv.org/sites/default/files/2015-16%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

In 2004, FCADV was statutorily designated by the Legislature as the administrator of state and federal funding earmarked for domestic violence services. As the administrator of these funds, FCADV subcontracts with Florida's 42 certified domestic violence centers, a multitude of law enforcement agencies, state prosecutors' offices, statewide associations, and community-based organizations dedicated to providing services and resources to survivors and their children while holding perpetrators accountable for their violence. FCADV ensures compliance with administrative, programmatic, and fiscal accountability requirements of each provider by engaging in a stringent monitoring process. This statewide role leads to efficient and effective coordination among agencies responding to domestic violence throughout Florida.

To increase perpetrator accountability in domestic violence cases, FCADV provides training and technical assistance on best practices in evidence collection and prosecution of domestic violence perpetrators to law enforcement, advocates, and prosecutors. Trainings also include establishing appropriate protocols for responding to domestic violence calls, maintaining the confidentiality of survivor information, and effectively assessing the risk for potential domestic violence homicides. In the last FY, FCADV conducted 16 trainings related to the safety needs of survivors for approximately 630 participants from law enforcement agencies and allied partners. As a result:

- 100% of individuals who participated in the training related to reducing intimate partner homicide reported increasing their knowledge regarding the safety needs of survivors.
- 98% of the participants attending the law enforcement training reported increasing their knowledge regarding the safety needs of survivors.

- 95% of individuals participating in the training related to reducing intimate partner homicide reported increasing their knowledge regarding strategies to employ for holding perpetrators accountable.

In addition, FCADV has developed a training series that is available to all law enforcement agencies in Florida. The purpose of this series is to provide law enforcement officers with practical and current information regarding appropriate investigative practices that aid in the prosecution of perpetrators in domestic violence cases. The series includes eight law enforcement training videos and online courses:

- *Photographing Domestic Violence Evidence and Photographing Domestic Violence Evidence Guidelines;*
- *Risk Assessment Training for Law Enforcement;*
- *Excited Utterances: Law Enforcement Training;*
- *Use of Body-Worn Cameras for Law Enforcement;*
- *911 Operators: Handling a Domestic Violence Call for Service;*
- *School Resource Officers: Recognizing Teen Dating Violence; and,*
- *School Resource Officers: Responding to Teen Dating Violence.*

FCADV promotes the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) efforts of local communities to develop systemic networks that establish safety and access to justice for survivors of domestic violence and their children. FCADV has partnered with national providers to assist local communities conducting community assessments and *Safety and Accountability Audits*. For example, Praxis International has conducted webinars on the use of their *Safety and Accountability Audit* toolkits and Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs (DAIP) has conducted regional trainings

in Florida on the *Duluth Model* method(s) of organizing for perpetrator accountability, including but not limited to developing protocols and procedures that track perpetrators of violence and support survivor safety throughout the civil and criminal justice process. FCADV participates in local community CCR meetings such as domestic violence taskforces, councils and leadership meetings, to assist certified domestic violence centers, law enforcement, State Attorneys, child welfare investigators and other allied partners with the creation and enhancement of strategies that enable community-wide practices to hold perpetrators responsible for their violence. This often includes sharing practices that have worked in other Florida communities and may be adapted in a local CCRs, such as the use of lethality/risk assessments, law enforcement information text lines, monitoring repeat offenders, child welfare case plans focused on the perpetrators of domestic violence, compliance hearings and removal of the domestic violence offending parent from the home.

## **Conclusion**

Florida intends to implement the programs and trainings set forth in this document. Florida's vision remains consistent for increasing appropriate arrest and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking perpetrators. The Department of Children and Families Domestic Violence Program, along with the Florida Coalition against Domestic Violence, the Department of Health's Sexual Violence Prevention Program, and the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, will continue to be creative and innovative, as we maintain our current working partner relationships, assist communities in their efforts to establish for themselves approved sustainable projects, and embark on new emerging opportunities to reach Florida's underserved and underrepresented communities. Although Florida has historically supported utilizing STOP

funding to develop programs within the coordinated community response model, we recognize that we can always do more to enhance existing programs and support new ideas designed to better reach the victims served through STOP funding. Florida's goal is to effectively support as many victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking as possible, always remembering that each contribution is significant and powerful to the population we serve.