



**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Funding Study
Work Group (HB 885)**

Preliminary SDVA Director Survey Findings

July 30, 2014

Overview



- Survey Methodology
- Preliminary SDVA Director Survey Findings
- Discussion

Survey Methodology



- The purpose of the survey was to:
 - Provide a mechanism where *all* SDVA agencies had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding grant funding processes in a confidential manner;
 - Identify what is working well; and,
 - Identify areas needing improvement.

Survey Methodology



- **96% (51 of 53) of SDVA directors responded.**
- All directors were asked to:
 - Complete an online survey;
 - Submit CY13 VAdata Report; and,
 - Submit FY13 Profit/Loss Statement.
 - To include itemized budget.

Agency Profile



- Agencies have been established anywhere from less than 5 years to over 100 years.
 - Over 75% have been established for over 20 years.
- Agencies serve an average of 5-6 localities.

Agency Profile



- Most agencies provide dual services:
 - 62% (33 of 53) are dual;
 - 25% (13 of 53) are DV only; and,
 - 13% (7 of 53) are SV only.*
- Most agencies are accredited:
 - 89% (47 of 53) are fully accredited;
 - 6% (3 of 53) are in process of becoming; and,
 - 6% (3 of 53) are not accredited.*

* Information provided by Action Alliance.

Agency Profile



- Current directors have served anywhere from less than a year to around 30 years in their positions.
 - They have anywhere from less than a year to over 30 years of experience in the domestic violence/sexual assault field.

Agency Profile



- Staffing levels vary greatly:
 - From 2 to 35 full-time employees.
 - From 0 to 40 part-time employees.
 - From 0 to 300 volunteers/interns.

DCJS Grant Programs



- DCJS administers 4 relevant grant programs that SDVAs receive:
 - V-STOP:
 - 53% (28 of 53) of SDVAs in CY14.
 - Victim Fund:
 - 38% (20 of 53) of SDVAs in CY14.
 - Sexual Assault Grant Program (SAGP):
 - 64% (34 of 53) of SDVAs in FY14.
 - Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP):
 - 57% (30 of 53) of SDVAs in CY14.

* Information provided by DCJS.

VDSS Grant Programs



- VDSS administers 2 relevant grant programs that SDVAs receive:
 - Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Grant:
 - 83% (44 of 53) of SDVAs in FY14.
 - Child Abuse/Neglect Treatment Grant:
 - 23% (12 of 53) of SDVAs in FY14.

* Information provided by VDSS.

VDH Grant Program



- VDH administers one relevant grant program that SDVAs receive:
 - Rape Prevention Education Grant (RPE):
 - 17% (9 of 53) of SDVAs.

* Information provided by VDH.

DHCD Grant Program



- DHCD administers one relevant grant program that SDVAs receive:
 - Homeless Solutions Grant:
 - 47% (25 of 53) of SDVAs in FY15.

* Information provided by DHCD.

Other Grant Sources



- The top 3 additional grants received by SDVAs include private foundations, private donations, and United Way.
 - Other sources include corporations, Combined Federal and Virginia Campaign, direct federal grants, trust funds, and local governments.

Grant Workload



- The total number of grants SDVAs manage varies:
 - 30% (16 of 53) manage 0-2 grants;
 - 32% (17 of 53) manage 3-4 grants;
 - 28% (15 of 53) manage 5-6 grants; and,
 - 9% (5 of 53) manage 7-8 grants.

* Numbers are approximate due to temporarily unavailable data.

Grant Workload



- The number of hours per year dedicated to managing grant programs varies enormously across SDVA agencies.
 - Anywhere from 20 hours to hundreds or thousands of hours per grant cycle depending on how many grants they manage and how they define “managing grants.”

Overall Satisfaction



- One of the main findings of the survey was that SDVAs, on average, are “somewhat to mostly satisfied” with the vast majority of grant funding processes and grant-related services being provided by *all* of the state agencies.

Positive Feedback



- SDVAs noted many things that they liked with how state agencies administer grant programs and grant-related services, such as:
 - Grant application and award process being facilitated in a timely manner;
 - Consistency of guidelines and grant application process;
 - Simple grant application process;
 - Clear, concise instructions;
 - Grant monitors are knowledgeable about SV/DV issues;

Positive Feedback



- Grant monitors are responsive to calls for assistance;
- Timely reimbursement/disbursement of funds;
- Reports are user-friendly;
- Electronic/online submission of materials;
- Electronic communication on grant correspondence at every step; and,
- Advocacy.

Overall Concerns



- There are a number of concerns that SDVA directors also mentioned, including:
 - Grant cycles;
 - Grant monitors;
 - Reimbursements/disbursement of funds;
 - Submission of materials;
 - Budget amendments;
 - Restrictive guidelines;

Overall Concerns



- Accreditation;
- VAdata;
- Hotline;
- Trainings/meetings;
- Funding formulas;
- Administrative changes in state agencies; and,
- Streamlining processes.

Grant Cycles



- Lack of consistency.
- Impact on work load.
 - *“It would be great to have all grants on either the calendar or fiscal year.”*
 - *“It would be better to have all grants run on the same cycle, such as fiscal year, rather than calendar year.”*
 - *“For all...funding streams, it would be easier if all reporting timelines were consistent and the reports themselves as consistent as possible.”*

Grant Monitors



- Lack of accountability.
- Lack of responsiveness.
 - *“I believe one’s experience with [state agency] is greatly related to who your administrator is ... So, having competent staff all around would likely improve grant services.”*
 - *“Have grant monitors check-in more often with programs.”*
 - *“There is a lack of understanding of the issues of domestic violence.”*

Reimbursement/Disbursement of Funds



- Undesirable impact on agencies' budget and operations when not received in a timely manner.
 - *“Untimely reimbursements.”*
 - *“Reimbursements need to be received by the programs faster.”*

Submission of Materials



- Electronic is preferred.
 - *“There should be an online method to report and submit financial reports.”*
 - *“Would like the ability to send invoices electronically.”*
 - *“The ability to scan and submit documents [is] superior to mailing hard copies.”*
 - *“There needs to be electronic submission of progress reports and fiscal reports.”*
 - *“Make everything electronic...”*

Budget Amendments



- Fund position/service rather than specific individuals.
- Too restrictive.
 - *“The request and approval for budget amendments [is] very time consuming and cumbersome. There should be an easier process for approval and submission and making changes. There is not enough flexibility for routine changes such as staff turnover, extended leave such as maternity, an increase in salary, a change in compensation.”*
 - *“Not flexible in making budget amendments.”*
 - *“...it is very frustrating to try and budget down to the penny for [x] staff positions and only have two budget amendments per year, that can only be approved up until May. What are you supposed to do when you have a staff person that quits unexpectedly in June?”*
 - *“It would be great if the grants funded services rather than positions.”*
 - *“Overall, I wish the funds in general would fund “work” (outcomes, outputs, etc.) instead of “the person.”*

Guidelines



- Too restrictive
- Fund individual community/agency needs.
 - *“It would be great if [state agency] would give us the funding, do a specific needs assessment and work with our specific program to figure out how to use the grant based on our individual community needs and not the state as a whole.”*
 - *“Allow...programs to use the funding to our specific agency and community needs and not have so many restrictions on what we can do with our funding.”*
 - *“...would like for [state agency] to give us the funding and allow us to decide how to use this funding based on our individual community and agency needs. There are so many restrictions on the funding and it takes hours to figure out what and how we can spend the funding.”*

Accreditation



- Importance and justification of accreditation.
 - *“...Agencies that are accredited are known to be functioning at a higher standard of service delivery, and are striving hard to do so through meeting or exceeding accreditation requirements.”*
 - *“I believe there should be a baseline of services that each agency provides to members of their community. I feel that accreditation is a good measure for baseline services.”*
- Reevaluation of standards and oversight thereof.
 - *“The accreditation program is flawed.”*
 - *“Needs to have consistent guidelines...”*
 - *“There is no follow-through or enforcement of requirements, yet funding is tied to this status.”*
 - *“I think certified programs should receive preference, but there are programs that are certified that are not being held up to the standards...”*

VAdata



- Needs Upgrades/Improvement.
 - *“VAdata will always have challenges, but it really helps to have a data collection system...”*
 - *“VAdata needs funds for upgrades that would allow programs more ability to manipulate the data they spend agency resources inputting.”*
 - *“We like the system, but definitely inconsistent.”*
 - *“VAdata is dated and needs enhancements...Database query refinements could improve program management, reporting, staff management and staff evaluation.”*

VAdata



- Not fully capturing local agency needs.
 - *“We...use VAdata to comply with accreditation but would rather use a system better suited to our needs and local requirements.”*
 - *“Like that they have VAdata, but this database is not useful to its users so most programs have to enter data into another system. This wastes a lot of time at the local level and reduces participation in the state system so that state numbers are not inclusive of all jurisdictions.”*
 - *“I would like to see more advocacy around having a statewide data collection system for grant funded programs related to domestic violence and sexual assault. This will reduce some of the time spent on data entry.”*

Hotline



- Cost and consistent quality of service provided.
 - *“The only concern I have is with the cost of having access to the 24-hour crisis hotline. For us, it is a stretch to afford to have this access available...”*
 - *“Hotline constantly had errors in the service to our agency and the fee they charge is high.”*
 - *“The hotline is way too expensive and for many the only option in order to be accredited.”*
 - *“Reduce the cost of the hotline and keep it in-house.”*

Trainings/Meetings



- Consider/continue teleconferences and webinars to limit travel expenses and offer training consistently across the state.
 - *“Provide more free or low cost training for grantees in varied places in the state...”*
 - *“Provide the training and technical assistance needed in the local [agency] area...”*
 - *“Technology should be utilized to minimize commuting for trainings and meetings.”*
 - *“Lack of engagement with Western part of the state.”*
 - *“Hold more meetings/trainings in centralized locations.”*
 - *“Continue to have teleconferences and webinars and limit travel to meetings/trainings.”*

Funding Formulas



- Directors were asked to what degree they favored or opposed a funding formula grant versus a competitive grant process.
- Very mixed findings.
 - *“Until there is a consistent, equitable way to distribute funds I would favor the use of formulas...”*
 - *“Formulas favor urban areas and are punitive to rural areas. They are restrictive and controlling based on data that is not applicable around the state and from program to program. This is a bad “solution” to a few issues...it takes into account quantity, not quality...”*
 - *“I feel that a formula grant would reduce funding due to our population and not adequately meeting the needs in our area.”*
 - *“My main concern is that my agency not lose any funding. If a funding formula can guarantee that, then it might be a good idea.”*

Funding Formulas



- *“It would depend on what drove the funding formula...”*
- *“I can see the pros and cons of both- not sure how I feel.”*
- *“We like the ease of formula based funding, but have concerns about the equity across programs because of size, location, service depth, and the like. If it could be structured in a way to adequately capture program strengths, it might just work. It would likely save time because of the ease of using a formula, which would mean more time to provide quality services to victims and the community.”*
- *“Not sure really how that would affect our current funding levels. Change, or fear of reduced funding, is scary.”*

Administrative Changes



- Can be a challenge for SDVAs.
 - *“Of course this is a huge concern. There should be some protections in place.”*
 - *“It is always a concern when administration changes because that means we have to spend time figuring out what new changes are going to happen...”*
 - *“...it is of grave concern to ponder a situation in which vital and critical funding is subjected to fluctuation as a result of politics. Funding needs to be protected to the extent possible to ensure consistent services.”*
 - *“The sifting sands of state funding can be challenging.”*
 - *“The political changes usually always have an effect on the grant administration- sometimes down to the words we are required to use to describe our services to fit state agency direction.”*
 - *“We lose consistency when administrations change.”*

Streamlining Processes



- SDVAs would benefit from better efficiency.
 - *“Streamlining is not just for ‘who’ manages, but also the process itself...to include applications, reports and requirements, monitoring, etc. Critical!”*
 - *“Streamline the application process so we don’t need to resubmit the same things over and over- organizational charts, overview of organization, MOUs, etc.”*
 - *“Less frequent reporting, possibly combining reports...into the same reporting format, requirement, methods, etc.”*
 - *“Fewer reports...”*
 - *“Make everything electronic...”*

Streamlining Funds



- Directors were asked to what degree they favored or opposed streamlining grant programs into one agency:
 - 15% (7 of 46) completely favor;
 - 24% (11 of 46) mostly favor;
 - 22% (10 of 46) somewhat favor;
 - 15% (7 of 46) somewhat oppose;
 - 9% (4 of 46) mostly oppose;
 - 9% (4 of 46) completely oppose; and,
 - 6% (3 of 46) are uncertain.

Streamlining Funds



- Mixed findings.
 - *“Conceptually, I love the idea of fewer reports, fewer proposals, more flexibility and less money spent on administration and more going to DV/SV agencies. But I’m skeptical of how possible this really is and do not want any agencies to be negatively affected if there are big changes to agencies’ award amount.”*
 - *“Making the funding process less cumbersome and formula based may reduce this need.”*
 - *“There is a great amount of uncertainty. I don’t want to go from the frying pan to the fire...”*
 - *“Depends on what the final plan would look like.”*
 - *“...Why [do] we now want to place all of our funds with one agency when not too long ago we thought keeping funds separated was in our best interest.”*

Streamlining Funds



- Directors were also asked who they would prefer to administer the grants if funds were streamlined into one state agency.
 - Mixed findings. Split support between VDSS, DCJS and maintaining status quo.
 - *“Don’t have a preference for one agency as long as whatever guidelines formulated are fair and equitable.”*
 - *“I have no idea how to answer this. My fear is that something new that is created will be worse than what we have now.”*
 - *I strongly feel it should be a state agency that has administered these funds before, knows the program and has systems in place...”*

Summary



- There are 8 grant streams administered by state agencies that are relevant to HB 885 discussions.
- Overall, SDVA agencies are at least “somewhat satisfied” with the vast majority of grant funding processes and grant-related services.
- There are many things about how grant programs and services are administered that SDVA agencies like.
- There are a number of concerns that SDVA agencies noted.
 - Main concerns included grant cycles, grant monitors, reimbursement/disbursement of funds, submission of materials, budget amendments, guidelines, accreditation, VAdata, hotline, and trainings/meetings.

Summary



- There were mixed findings as to whether SDVA directors favored or opposed a funding formula grant for the grant programs.
- 1/3 of responding agencies oppose streamlining grant programs into one agency.
- There was an equal distribution of support for where to administer grant programs if streamlined into one agency (VDSS, DCJS, status quo).
- Vast majority indicated support for overall *process* to be more efficient regardless of who administers the grant programs.
- Agencies support actions that would maintain or increase their funding levels; and, oppose actions that would decrease or make funding levels uncertain.



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Discussion