



Legislative Report for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Grant Program

Laws of Minnesota 2019, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 9, article 11, section 108

FEBRUARY 2020

Legislative Report for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Grant Program

Minnesota Department of Health
Sexual Violence Prevention Program / Violence Prevention Programs Unit / Injury Violence Prevention Section
PO Box 64882
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
651-201-5400
health.injuryprevention@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

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Protecting, Maintaining and Improving the Health of All Minnesotans

February 28, 2020

The Honorable Michelle Benson, Chair
Health and Human Services Finance and Policy
Committee
Minnesota Senate
3109 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable John Marty, Ranking Member
Health and Human Services Finance and Policy
Committee
Minnesota Senate
2401 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable Rena Moran, Chair
Health and Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
575 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable Debra Kiel, Ranking Member
Health and Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
255 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable Tina Liebling, Chair
Health and Human Services Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
477 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

The Honorable Joe Schomacker, Ranking Member
Health and Human Services Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
209 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

Dear Senators Benson and Marty, and Representatives Moran, Kiel, Liebling, and Schomacker:

Domestic and Sexual Violence are significant public health and human rights issues in Minnesota. In 2019, the Minnesota State Legislature took a vital step to support prevention initiatives by directing the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to implement a Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program. Pursuant to the Laws of Minnesota 2019, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 9, article 11, section 108, the legislature appropriated \$750,000 over the biennium to fund grants to nonprofit organizations to incorporate community-driven and culturally relevant practices to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault in Minnesota communities. The legislature allocated fifteen percent of the total program funding to MDH to promote and administer the program as well as to provide technical assistance to program grantees.

Pursuant to the legislation, MDH submits the enclosed report to describe initial implementation efforts as well as the expenditure of funds for the newly established Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program. With this legislative funding, MDH has identified six grantees to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault in historically underserved communities in Minnesota using community-driven and culturally relevant practices. This report is the first of two required under the legislation.

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Beatriz Menanteau, JD, violence prevention programs unit supervisor, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health (651.201.4154).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan K. Malcolm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jan K. Malcolm
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Health
P.O. Box 64975
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0975

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Executive Summary

Sexual violence and domestic violence are major public health problems in Minnesota. In their lifetimes, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men are victims of domestic violence.¹ For sexual violence, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men report being victims.² Students of all backgrounds reported experiencing sexual and domestic violence on the Minnesota Student Survey, with some students experiencing violence at higher rates than others. Based on this data, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) found disparities in sexual and domestic violence victimization by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, students with disabilities, and students facing economic hardships.^{3,4}

In 2019, the Minnesota State Legislature appropriated \$750,000 over the biennium for a new Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program.⁵ The legislature allocated fifteen percent of the total program funding to MDH to promote and administer the program as well as to provide technical assistance to program grantees. The remaining funds were allocated for grants to be awarded to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of funding programs that incorporate community-driven and culturally relevant practices to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault. This new program recognizes that domestic violence and sexual assault impact different communities in different ways, and, in turn, prevention efforts must be community-driven and culturally relevant to be effective. Grant goals include reaching communities that have historically been underserved by mainstream domestic violence and sexual assault prevention efforts and creating best practice recommendations for community-driven and culturally specific domestic violence and sexual assault prevention.

MDH Sexual Violence Prevention Program collected input from community stakeholders through in person meetings and an online survey to inform the request for proposals (RFP) and review process. RFP was published on September 30, 2019 and closed on November 15, 2019. Twenty-nine organizations submitted applications. A committee of 32 reviewers, consisting of content experts and community members, scored applications and participated in review meetings. After considering the final scores, comments from reviewers, target populations, and geographic areas served, MDH selected six applicants for funding. See Table 1 for a brief description of all grant awards.

Pursuant to the legislative language, MDH submits this report detailing initial implementation efforts and the expenditure of funds. This initial report includes a description of all organizations receiving grant funds under this new program, as well as a description of the practices they will implement over the next two years. A

¹ National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). (2017). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

² *ibid.*

³ Wiens T, Raguette M, Roesler J. Report: Students Reporting Sexual Violence Victimization on the Minnesota Student Survey, 1992-2016. September 2019. Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health.

⁴ Minnesota Student Survey, 2019.

⁵ 2019 Minn. Laws Chap.9, Art. 11, § 108, 1st Special Session.

second report will be submitted in February 2022 and will include additional information in keeping with the legislation.

Table 1: Brief description of all grant awards

Organization	Target Population	Counties Served	Grant Award
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota	Lao, Vietnamese, Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese and Cambodian communities	Hennepin and Ramsey	\$118,250
SEWA-AIFW, Inc.	South Asian communities	7-County Metro	\$82,250
Somali Community Resettlement Services	Somali communities	Rice and Steele	\$118,250
Upstream Arts	Adolescents with disabilities	Hennepin	\$82,250
Women’s Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE)	Adolescent immigrants and refugees	Ramsey	\$118,250
Women of Nations	Native American communities	7-County Metro	\$118,250
Total			\$637,500

Grant Awards

Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota

Target Population: Lao, Vietnamese, Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese and Cambodian communities

Counties Served: Hennepin and Ramsey

Grant Award: \$118,250

The Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota was created to respond to the urgent resettlement needs of thousands of fellow Lao refugees in Minnesota and beyond in 1983. The project will leverage collaborative partnerships already established in the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Women’s Health Coalition with Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota leading the work. Other members of the API Women’s Health Coalition include Vietnamese Social Services, United Cambodian Association of Minnesota, and Bhutanese Community Organization of Minnesota. Partners in the project will address domestic violence and sexual assault through culturally relevant victim services, outreach and education, a media campaign, and conversation circles in the community.

SEWA-AIFW, Inc.

Target Population: South Asian communities

Counties Served: 7-County Metro

Grant Award: \$82,250

SEWA-AIFW, Inc. is a nonprofit organization committed to serving, supporting, and enhancing family wellness for the South Asian community. With this funding opportunity, SEWA-AIFW, Inc. will implement multi-generational educational workshops focused on understanding and maintaining healthy relationships and changing social norms within the South Asian community. As part of the evaluation, workshop participants will be encouraged to share their stories about how having healthy relationships created change in their lives and their families' lives.

Somali Community Resettlement Services

Target Population: Somali communities

Counties Served: Rice and Steele

Grant Award: \$118,250

Somali Community Resettlement Services was formed in 1999 by a volunteer network of Somali refugees to directly respond to the needs of Somali refugees and immigrants. To prevent and respond to sexual and domestic violence in the Somali communities of Rice and Steele counties, Somali Community Resettlement Services will collaborate with Healing Outreach Prevention Education (HOPE) Center, a sexual and domestic violence organization, to hire a new Somali Services Advocate.

Upstream Arts

Target Population: Adolescents with disabilities

Counties Served: Hennepin

Grant Award: \$82,250

The mission of Upstream Arts is to use the creative arts to activate and amplify the voice and choice of individuals with disabilities. With this funding opportunity, Upstream Arts will bring *The Art of Relationships* to the students receiving special education services in the Minneapolis Public School District. *The Art of Relationships* is a unique arts-based program that educates individuals with disabilities on sexual health, safe relationships, and abuse prevention, while cultivating a culture of prevention within disability organizations, schools, and families.

Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE)

Target Population: Adolescent immigrants and refugees

Counties Served: Ramsey

Grant Award: \$118,250

Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE) was founded in 1995 by a group of multicultural, first generation immigrant women as a vehicle for educational, leadership, social, and economic empowerment for

immigrant and refugee women and girls. WISE will implement a new sexual violence prevention program and social media campaign with immigrant and refugee high school student groups in Saint Paul.

Women of Nations

Target Population: Native American communities

Counties Served: 7-County Metro

Grant Award: \$118,250

Women of Nations was founded in 1982 as a community advocacy program serving Native American women who were victimized by domestic violence. In 1992, Women of Nations opened the Eagle's Nest Shelter in Saint Paul, Minnesota. With this funding opportunity, Women of Nations will provide sexual health education to individuals and families receiving services at Eagle's Nest Shelter, as well as to youth served through Native American youth-serving organizations. Women of Nations will also do outreach with Native American communities and host roundtable discussion to develop new strategies to prevent violence.

Conclusion

MDH is grateful for the opportunity to work with the six aforementioned organizations to learn and support new community-driven and culturally relevant domestic violence and sexual assault prevention efforts. MDH will continue to work with each grantee to meet the legislatively required evaluation components of this grant program, as well as to support continuous quality improvement throughout the two-year grant period. Pursuant to the legislation, MDH will submit a second report to the legislature on the findings from this grant program, including best practice recommendations, in February 2022.