Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Firearms Technical Assistance Project Call for Proposals

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), invites proposals from communities to participate in the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Firearms Technical Assistance Project (FTAP). The overall objective of the FTAP is to help communities identify challenges limiting a more robust implementation of domestic violence firearms laws in their jurisdictions and assist them in establishing a localized response that is best suited to their communities’ unique needs and characteristics. NCJFCJ seeks proposals from communities reflective of the geographic diversity across the country, including rural, urban, suburban, and tribal settings, as well as sites with differing governing laws.

The FTAP is funded by OVW and is a collaborative project of OVW, NCJFCJ, and a consortium of national organizations, including AEquitas: The Prosecutors’ Resource on Violence Against Women; Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence; the Battered Women’s Justice Project; Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network; the Center for Court Innovation; the International Association of Chiefs of Police; the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center; Ujima, Inc.: The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence in the Black Community; and Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley, DVHP Team Project Director from Howard University. Staff from these organizations will provide strategic training and technical assistance (TA) to the project sites throughout the project period, drawing upon their specialized expertise where appropriate.

Selected sites will receive ongoing, intensive training, technical assistance, and support from expert staff, consultants, and mentor communities. In addition, it is anticipated that funding will be available for travel expenses for a team to participate in the all-sites meeting and for additional travel to obtain training, participate in site visits and/or peer mentoring activities, or for other purposes related to project activities.

Eligibility:
Eligible applicants include: States and U.S. Territories; Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, and tribal consortia; state, tribal, and local courts; units of local government; victim service providers; and non-profit community organizations.

Deadline for Proposals:
10 p.m. PT on October 15, 2018. Submit all application materials to pgotera@ncjfcj.org.

Letters of Intent:
To assist NCJFCJ in planning for the review process, letters of intent should be emailed to nhart@ncjfcj.org by September 12, 2018. Please note, however, that letters of intent are optional. Interested applicants who do not submit a letter of intent by the deadline can still apply.

Applicants will be notified of the selected Firearms Technical Assistance Project (FTAP) communities by March 1, 2019.
Background

Research demonstrates that when an abuser has access to a firearm, domestic violence is far more likely to be deadly; in fact, an abuser’s access to firearms is the single greatest risk factor for intimate partner homicide, with the risk increasing five-fold.\(^1\) Unfortunately, this risk is widespread. National data describe firearms as the overwhelming weapon of choice in intimate partner homicides. According to the FBI’s most recent Supplementary Homicide Report, more than half (55%) of intimate partner homicides were committed with a firearm in 2015. This figure has remained the same over the past decade; from 2001 to 2012, 55% of women killed by intimate partners were shot with a firearm.\(^2\) In addition to their lethality, firearms are used by abusers to inflict fear, intimidation, and coercive control over victims. Abusers often threaten to use the weapon should the victim not comply with the abuser’s demands, including threats to the victim’s children, friends, and relatives.

Congress and many state/tribal legislatures have long recognized these dangers: laws restricting abusers’ access to firearms have been in place for over two decades. Nonetheless, enforcement of these laws remains challenging, and abusers continue to use firearms to kill, seriously injure, and terrorize domestic violence victims, their children, and others, including law enforcement, to a staggering degree.

Not all communities experience equally the burden of intimate partner homicides, including those committed with a firearm. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that from 2003 to 2014 American Indian/Alaska Native women, non-Hispanic black women, and Latinas experienced the highest rates of intimate partner homicide (IPH) (2.38, 2.33, and 1.10 per 100,000 population, respectively; the rate for non-Hispanic white women was 0.85 per 100,000 population).\(^3\) The CDC data also show that firearms were used in 53.9% of all homicides of women (IPH and non-IPH), most commonly among non-Hispanic black women (57.7% of such murders involve firearms). Although Latinas are now the largest ethnic and racially diverse group in the United States, very little is known about Latinas and intimate partner homicide. The few studies that exist have found that Latinas have a disproportionately high risk of intimate partner violence and homicide,\(^4\) with 60% of Latina homicides in the U.S. attributable to intimate partner homicide (IPH).\(^5\)

Furthermore, lack of language access continues to be a significant barrier at multiple points in the criminal justice system response to domestic violence, from on-scene response by law enforcement, to seeking, obtaining, and enforcing related civil and criminal orders.\(^6\) Lack of

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\(^1\) J. Campbell et al., Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multi-Site Case Control Study, 93 AM. J. PUB. HEALTH 1089 (2003).


access to culturally appropriate victim services or services in the victim’s native language has been associated with a greater risk of domestic violence-related homicide.\textsuperscript{7}

Since 2006, the Office on Violence Against Women has held several meetings with subject matter experts and relevant practitioners from communities around the country on the intersection of domestic violence and firearms to help inform its work and that of national technical assistance providers. These and other conversations have helped identify numerous challenges, as well as opportunities for improvement, in the civil justice system (civil protection order cases and other family court matters) and the criminal justice system regarding implementation of the relevant state, tribal, and federal laws designed to prevent prohibited abusers’ access to firearms. The meetings also revealed the importance of maximizing victim autonomy and ensuring due process for defendants/respondents in designing and implementing strategies to disarm abusers.

The primary goal of the FTAP is to help communities assess and improve their implementation of domestic violence firearms laws to prevent the deaths and injuries that are caused by abusers’ access to firearms. The project will support five to seven selected communities with community-specific training and technical assistance from national and multidisciplinary experts to enhance safety by addressing the nexus of firearms and domestic violence. Each community will receive training and technical assistance specific to its characteristics and identified challenges, to be complemented by a common framework for system change developed in collaboration with all participating FTAP communities, NCJFCJ, and project partners.

The graphic below depicts a general timeframe of the project:

Communities selected as FTAP sites will learn effective approaches to the challenge of keeping firearms out of the hands of domestic violence perpetrators who are prohibited from possessing

\textsuperscript{7} Id.
or purchasing firearms by state, tribal, and/or federal law. The following list provides brief
descriptions of potential focus areas for project activities for which training and technical
assistance will be available:8

1. Designing and implementing new firearm surrender and seizure processes, or improving
existing processes, in civil and/or criminal domestic violence proceedings in accordance
with federal, state/tribal, and local law, including compliance monitoring.
2. Establishing and implementing best practices for the storage and/or disposal of firearms
seized from or surrendered by prohibited domestic violence offenders in accordance with
federal, state/tribal, and local law.
3. Establishing and implementing best practices for third-party transfer of firearms
possessed by prohibited domestic violence offenders in accordance with federal,
state/tribal, and local law.
4. Establishing and implementing best practices for the return of firearms upon expiration of
a protection order that both a) respect victims’ safety and autonomy and b) uphold the
rights of individuals previously subject to a domestic violence protection order that
required the surrender of firearms to law enforcement’s protective custody.
5. Improving local, state, and/or tribal collaboration with federal counterparts (e.g., U.S.
Attorney’s Office, FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Bureau of
Indian Affairs) to disarm prohibited domestic violence offenders and hold them
accountable under federal, state/tribal, and/or local law.
6. Developing protocols to effectively monitor surrender, storage, and safe return of
weapons possessed by convicted domestic violence offenders or individuals subject to a
domestic violence protection order barring their access to or use of firearms, in
compliance with existing federal, state/tribal, and local law.
7. Strengthening victim advocacy and law enforcement response to the use of firearms to
threaten, intimidate, and control, as well as implementing best practices for safety
planning when firearms are present. This effort includes training and technical
assistance for law enforcement and other stakeholders as well as collaboration with, and
training and technical assistance for, advocates representing culturally-specific
programs, whose primary service population is less likely to report to law enforcement
for assistance based on language, culture, and other factors.
8. Establishing safety protocols within law enforcement agencies regarding the
management of firearms possessed by law enforcement officers who are subject to a
domestic violence protection order or have been convicted of a misdemeanor domestic
violence crime and are prohibited by existing federal, state/tribal, or local law from
possessing firearms.
9. Filling jurisdictional gaps in victim safety and offender accountability (including
jurisdiction over respondents and enforcement of orders/violations in Indian Country, as
well as other inter-jurisdictional enforcement challenges).
10. Enhancing the effectiveness of the response to firearms and domestic violence in civil
legal processes through targeted training and technical assistance and strengthened
coordination with community stakeholders to address challenges related to:
   o Pre-petition advocacy and information gathering: educating victims about the
     relief available regarding firearms in the civil protection order process and how to
     obtain it

8 We encourage communities to apply for the FTAP regardless of whether they currently implement any
of the processes and protocols described herein. The project is intended to assist project sites with
varying degrees of prior efforts to address firearms and domestic violence. Selection will be based upon
other criteria described in this call for proposals, including readiness to participate in the project and a
genuine commitment to making improvements in the area of firearms and domestic violence.
- Petitions for civil protection orders: facilitating petitioners’ ability to request and provide evidentiary support for the issuance of clear, specific firearms-related relief in civil protection orders
- Issuance of civil protection orders with firearm-related provisions: ensuring that courts use all available legal authority to issue effective and enforceable firearm-related relief; enhancing advocacy and legal representation in cases involving firearms
- Service of orders: supporting law enforcement agencies’ ability to use the service process to learn about respondents’ access to firearms and take steps to obtain firearms
- Challenges in civil cases other than civil protection order cases: ensuring that victims can obtain firearms-related relief as part of orders in domestic relations cases (e.g., paternity and divorce proceedings)

11. Enhancing the effectiveness of the response to firearms and domestic violence in criminal cases through targeted training and technical assistance and strengthened coordination with community stakeholders to address challenges related to:
   - 911 call response and initial response by law enforcement at the scene: ensuring that officers learn about and use all available legal authority to seize or obtain surrender of firearms when responding to domestic violence incidents
   - Pre-trial hearings: enhancing the court’s ability to learn about offenders’ access to firearms and to issue pre-trial orders (bail, conditions of release, etc.) that effectively prevent such access
   - Pre-trial negotiations and pleas: ensuring that all relevant stakeholders avoid limiting or eliminating conviction-based firearm prohibitions as part of the plea negotiation process
   - Trial, conviction, and sentencing: implementing strategies, including meeting requirements for specific court records, to facilitate enforcement of state, tribal, and federal prohibitions that result from a domestic violence conviction
   - Post-conviction probation/parole: ensuring issuance of probation and other post-conviction orders that include clear and enforceable provisions regarding firearms, as well as post-conviction compliance monitoring

12. Implementing best practices regarding language access for every process or protocol put in place by a community to address firearms and domestic violence.

13. Establishing and enhancing community engagement in efforts to better address firearms and domestic violence, including efforts by racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities.

14. Other areas to be identified by participating communities and TA experts.

Selected communities, under the guidance of NCJFCJ, OVW, and project partners, will conduct an initial site assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement, using a system mapping exercise and an assessment tool developed for the project. Small teams of key participants from each community will next participate in an “all-sites” meeting in Washington, D.C. in summer 2019 with OVW and project partners for training, networking, and other activities to equip them with ideas and tools to engage effectively in the project. A planning phase follows, which begins with each site convening an intensive, multi-stakeholder planning meeting to further identify and examine the issues and challenges, and to develop an overall project plan, including project objectives and activities.

Project sites will use the rest of the planning phase to finalize the objectives for the project, including all challenges they plan to address, the activities they intend to undertake, how they will use technical assistance, mentoring, and peer-to-peer consultation, and other aspects of
During the remainder of the project, communities will begin to implement their plan with support from OVW, NCJFCJ, project partners, and expert consultants.

**Expectations of Selected Sites**

In addition to active participation in the processes and objectives described above, selected FTAP sites are expected to do the following throughout the duration of the FTAP:

1. Form management and collaborative teams and conduct community assessment activities ahead of the All-Sites Meeting (late Spring/early Summer 2019);
2. Work with NCJFCJ and project partners to develop a project plan (Spring 2019);
3. Attend the All-Sites Meeting in Washington, DC (Summer 2019); and
4. Host two on-site visits for NCJFCJ, project partners, and OVW (Fall 2019-Spring 2021).

**Pre-Application Webinar**

NCJFCJ will host an informational webinar before the application deadline to review the FTAP objectives and the call for proposals and allow for a brief question and answer session about the application process. Participation in the webinar is optional.

The webinar is scheduled for **August 14, 2018 from 12 – 1:30 p.m. PT / 1 – 2:30 p.m. MT / 2 – 3:30 p.m. CT / 3 – 4:30 p.m. ET**

Anyone interested in submitting a proposal for the FTAP may register to participate in the pre-application webinar. To register, please click here [https://ta2ta.org/webinars/registration/pre-application-webinar-domestic-violence-and-fire.html](https://ta2ta.org/webinars/registration/pre-application-webinar-domestic-violence-and-fire.html) Your registration must be received at least 24 hours prior to the start of the call. If you have accessibility requests, please register by August 7. For questions about registration, send an email to nhart@ncjfcj.org and write “webinar registration” in the subject line of the email.

**Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should be submitted by **10 p.m. PT on October 15, 2018**. Submit all application materials to [pgotera@ncjfcj.org](mailto:pgotera@ncjfcj.org). Late proposals and proposals missing critical information may not be considered for selection.

Proposals will be scored on the following:

**COVER SHEET (5 points)**
The Cover Sheet should be one page and does not count toward the 12-page limit for the Project Narrative. Please provide the following information:

- Name, title, address, phone number, and e-mail address for the point-of-contact.
- Name of eligible entity applying to participate in the Firearms Technical Assistance Project. Eligible applicants include: States and U.S. Territories; Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, and tribal consortia; state, tribal, and local courts; units of local government; victim service providers;
and non-profit community organizations.

- The geographical area (city, town, tribal area, county, parish) covered by the proposed project.
- Summary of current and recent OVW-funded projects and/or existing collaborations in the community(ies) where this project will be implemented (if applicable).

PROJECT NARRATIVE (85 points)
The project narrative must clearly demonstrate the applicant’s capacity and commitment to fully participate in the FTAP with the goal of improving its system for serving domestic violence victims and their children.

The Project Narrative should be double spaced, use a 12-point sans-serif font and 1-inch margins, and may not exceed 12 pages in length. Please number the pages of your narrative and include the following:

Community Characteristics (15 points)
1. Describe the structure of your civil and criminal court systems that hear domestic violence cases; include information about any specialized docket or courts (e.g., dedicated domestic violence docket, Unified Family Court, Integrated Domestic Violence Court, etc.).
2. Describe the service area and demographics of your jurisdiction (e.g., location/geography, population, racial and ethnic composition, languages spoken, immigrant population, socio-economic factors).
3. Respond to the following questions regarding your community:
   - Does the community have a history of previous collaborative efforts to address domestic violence (DV) and firearms? Please describe.
   - Have those collaborations included culturally-specific organizations and organizations/groups serving racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities? If so, please describe the role of those organizations in the collaboration (e.g., Were they full partners who participated equitably in the partnership? Were they compensated for their time and expertise?)
   - Does the community have in place a Family Justice Center/co-located services model?
   - Does the community have an integrated DV court or analogous system?
   - What existing data collection efforts related to domestic violence exist in the community? Does the community have readily available current data, including numbers of civil protection orders entered, firearms seized, arrests and prosecutions for gun possession, etc.?
   - Describe the community’s willingness to collect and share data in conjunction with firearms work. Are there any legal or policy impediments to doing so?
   - What collaborative relationships exist with any federal entities involved in this work (e.g., US Attorney’s Office, ATF, etc.)?

Statement of Problem and Challenges to be addressed (25 points)
1. Describe the barriers that prevent your community from effectively implementing existing laws regarding firearms and domestic violence.
2. Describe the particular challenges you intend to address. Refer to the list of potential challenges provided on pages 3 and 4; please note that the described list of potential
challenges is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive, and you are encouraged to identify different or additional challenges appropriate to your community. For each identified challenge, briefly describe factors that contribute to the challenge which you intend to address during the project.

3. Describe any community resources and strengths that will support your efforts to overcome the identified challenges.

4. Describe any existing or expected data collection efforts that can document the current challenges and could be used to evaluate the impact of the project in your community.

5. Describe why you are interested in this initiative and what you anticipate the desired outcomes of the project will yield.

Who Will Implement the Project (25 points)

1. Identify who will serve on your management team. This interdisciplinary team should be made up of key stakeholders who will guide the project, committing time and leadership to understand and change practice in the community. The management team will make decisions about the direction of the project as representatives of the broader collaborative team, and as individuals with unique and deep experience with firearms and domestic violence issues.

2. Describe the individual(s) who will lead the management team and oversee all project activities, including their leadership strengths.

3. Identify whom you anticipate to be a part of your broader collaborative team. These are the individuals and organizations that have critical roles in addressing firearms and domestic violence, including the core disciplines (courts--civil and/or criminal; law enforcement; prosecution; community-based victim advocacy, including those serving racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities; members of the defense bar), and others.

4. Identify and describe the roles of all community-based culturally-specific organizations and organizations serving racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities anticipated to participate in the project. If you cannot identify any such organizations at the time of application, please describe a plan to identify and partner with such organizations during the initial stages of the project, which will be a priority activity.

5. Describe the anticipated relationship between the FTAP and existing projects in the community, including existing local multi-agency collaborative efforts and any collaboration among local, state, tribal, and/or federal agencies (where applicable).

Commitment to Participate (20 points)

1. Describe the ability and willingness of the collaborative team to thoroughly map and assess the relevant civil and criminal court systems, looking specifically for strengths and barriers in addressing firearms in domestic violence cases and in responding to the safety needs of victims, their children, and the broader community.

2. Anticipate and describe barriers your community may have in participating in the project.

3. Discuss why you would like to be considered for selection to participate in the FTAP.

LETTERS OF INTENT TO COLLABORATE (10 Points)
The application must include letters of intent to collaborate (LOC) from at least two partner agencies or organizations (additional letters are welcome). The LOCs do not count toward the 12-page limit for the Project Narrative. Applicants are strongly encouraged to obtain LOCs from
community-based, culturally-specific organizations and organizations serving racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities. For purposes of this call for proposals, a LOC is a document that clearly demonstrates the partner agency/organization’s commitment to fully participate and contribute to the project and its capacity to do so. The LOC should be submitted on agency letterhead, and signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of each proposed partner organization during the development of the application.

If you cannot secure two letters of intent to collaborate, please provide an explanation of why this is the case and how the proposed project would help to overcome the barriers to participation.

**Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be assessed based on the requirements described above and the level of detail provided. The highest scoring proposals may receive an on-site visit from NCJFCJ, project partners, and/or OVW staff as part of the selection process.

In selecting the five to seven sites to participate in this project, the following additional elements will be considered:

1. The capacity of the jurisdiction to coordinate an effective management team and fully participate in the project.
2. Whether the community demonstrates strong leadership and history of coordinated community response around domestic violence.
3. Strength and effectiveness of systems advocacy efforts in the community.
4. Whether the community would enhance the diversity of project sites in terms of geography, demography, legal framework, challenges to be addressed, and other factors.
5. Willingness and capacity of the community to evaluate project activities, quantitatively (through data collection) and qualitatively.
6. Meaningful inclusion of culturally-specific organizations and organizations/groups serving racially and ethnically diverse and/or other historically marginalized communities in the project, and commitment by such organizations to participate.

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