

# How Are Courts Using STOP Grants?

**C**ourt-based programs are entitled to 5 percent of the monies awarded to states as STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Grants under the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). These grants were intended to develop and strengthen the justice system's response to violence against women and enhance services for victims.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has conducted several projects to evaluate how courts are using the funds, provide courts with comparative information, and recommend enhancements to the STOP program. In May 2002 Madelynn Herman of NCSC's Knowledge and Information Services used NCSC's Court2Court listserv and the Conference of State Court Administrators' listserv to survey the courts about their use of STOP funds. The results can be found online at [http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Publications/KIS\\_VAWAcourt fundingPub.pdf](http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Publications/KIS_VAWAcourt fundingPub.pdf).

Brenda Uekert, chair of NCSC's Family Violence Community of Practice, surveyed state court administrators in June 2003. Respondents were asked to identify the most-promising STOP-funded projects in their states or territories. These projects included

- Judicial training programs in Alaska, California, New York, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia
- Training for support staff in Hawaii, Oregon, and Utah
- Automated protection order registries in Arizona, Missouri, and North Dakota
- Coordinated community responses in Georgia, Northern Mariana Islands, and Wisconsin

The majority of the responding offices indicated that they were receiving the 5 percent of their states' STOP funds earmarked for the courts, but seven offices noted that their courts were not receiving all of the funds to which they were entitled, and eight other offices were not sure.

Another NCSC evaluation conducted by Dawn Marie Rubio of NCSC's Court Consulting Services in Denver, under a grant from the National Institute of Justice in 2002, showed that many STOP grantees, which include courts, law enforcement agencies, and domestic violence organizations, used the funds to meet basic local needs for equipment, such as computer hardware and software and fax machines.

Respondents to this survey felt that STOP funding was critical to the development of data collection and commu-  
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## Some Programs that Have Benefited from STOP Grants

(Taken from "Evaluating Data Collection and Communication System Projects Funded Under the STOP Program," National Center for State Courts, August 30, 2002.)

*Sexual Assault Recovery and Prevention Center (San Luis Obispo County, CA):* Enabled the center for participate on the county-wide Sexual Assault Recovery Team.

*LaGrange Police Department (Troup County, GA):* Purchased computer hardware to improve access to data needed in domestic violence cases.

*Council Against Domestic Violence (Lansing, MI):* Supported staff and operations of the Personal Protection Orders Office of the 30th Judicial Circuit Court.

*Missouri Office of the State Courts' Administrator (Jefferson City, MO):* Provided funds to pilot Web-based electronic filing of personal protection orders.

## What's New in Pro Se?

**C**ourts everywhere are feeling the impact of the growing number of people wanting to represent themselves in legal matters. For the most up-to-date information on how your court can adapt to meet the needs of self-represented litigants, turn to NCSC's CourTopics at [www.ncsconline.org](http://www.ncsconline.org).

CourTopics is NCSC's virtual filing cabinet on the Web. Look for Pro Se in the alphabetical list of topics or go to the CourTopics Access and Fairness folder. In the Pro Se section you will find:

- Resource Guides—NCSC analysts have compiled a list of white papers, Web sites, books and other research resources, providing you with a guide to the universe of available information on the topic.

- NCSC Documents—Hyperlinks to all NCSC information available on the Web
- Frequently asked questions—Answers to questions NCSC knowledge analysts are asked by state courts.
- Overview—A summary of important issues in the area are addressed by an NCSC expert.

In addition, from the National Center's home page, you may access a new State Justice Institute project that has been developed to build a national resource center for pro se practitioners. You can find that SJI-funded Web site—[selfhelpsupport.org](http://selfhelpsupport.org)—on the NCSC's home page under Quick Links. 