

# Crafting Narratives: Telling the Stories Behind Your Data

VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN ACT

MEASURING  
EFFECTIVENESS  
INITIATIVE

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Effectiveness  
Initiative

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-TA-AX-K059 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

# Missions

## **OVW's Mission:**

Provide federal leadership in developing national capacity to reduce violence against women and administer justice for and strengthen services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking

## **VAWA MEI's Mission:**

Help grantees report accurate data about their work so that effectiveness reports provide a compelling illustration of the scope and burden of violence, as well as the complex multi-system interventions that OVW funds to address it

# Today's Training Agenda

- Review how OVW uses grantee narrative data
- Describe best practices for documenting activities and writing compelling narratives
- Look at “real life” examples
- Discuss what narrative information to prioritize and what to write about it you are a new grantee
- Provide guidance on using the narrative to detail the impact of the pandemic on your grant activities

# Your Turn...

- Have you attended a prior training hosted by OVW and VAWA MEI on using narrative data?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I can't remember

# Why Does Data Matter?

*“Data are just summaries of thousands of stories – tell a few of those stories to help make the data meaningful.”*

*– Chip and Dan Heath*

# How does OVW use Grantee Data?

- Grantee **monitoring**
- Fulfilling reporting **requirements**
  - Biennial Reports to Congress
- Identifying **trends, promising practices, and unmet needs**
- Performance **measurement**
- Special **data requests**

# Data Provides Answers to Questions...

What are grantees doing to address sex trafficking in their communities?

How many law enforcement officers are funded through OVW grants?

How many grantees are using funds to support family justice centers?

What has been the impact of changes to the LAV program on types of services provided and volume of services?

To what extent are OVW grantees using funds to staff Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs?

# As You Write, Consider Context

## Context

- What do the numbers you reported on your progress report actually mean on the ground?

# As You Write, Consider Context

“The intentional relationship building and shared training opportunities, required as part of the LAV program, have truly resulted in enhanced collaborations between our partner agencies. We work well together and respond to the needs of each individual client. Our coordination provides a strong safety net and wrap-around approach. Our strong collaboration allows people to access services through multiple doors. For example, one individual may feel more comfortable calling an attorney directly and so may contact the Law Project before advocacy services, whereas another individual may work with advocacy services before feeling comfortable meeting with an attorney. These relationships have resulted in increased collaboration and opportunities to work together beyond the provision of civil legal services.”

# As You Write, Consider Impact

## Impact

- How does your work impact your communities?

# As You Write, Consider Impact #1

“This funding has allowed us to establish a presence in the community. Prior to receiving this funding, we had a very limited staff, all living and working in Sevier County. We responded to four other counties in our coverage area using volunteers and staff during the day. Attendance at meetings and interaction with victims was very limited due to such a small staff and having to travel long distances. We now have outreach offices open in three other counties. We have hired advocates in each of these counties who live locally and are able to be more in touch with community needs... Simply having the ability to continually educate these communities on available resources and services will improve the number of victims who are aware of and will access services.”

# As You Write, Consider Impact #2

“First and foremost, State Coalitions Program (SCP) funding supports our efforts to create and maintain quality victim services in Nebraska. The Domestic Violence Program Coordinator, whose position is supported entirely by SCP funds, conducts regular peer reviews of all network programs to ensure that they are operating in accordance with state program standards. Peer reviews are time-intensive, involving coordination of a peer review team, in-depth review of program policies, program site visits, and the creation and distribution of written recommendations. In addition, the peer review site visit often involves travel and an overnight stay. SCP funding supports this process, allowing the Coalition to monitor programs and ensure that victims are receiving the best services possible.”

# Impact: Outputs vs. Outcomes

## Outputs vs. Outcomes

- How does your work impact your communities?

# Impact: Outputs vs. Outcomes #1

## ➤ Outputs

Reported on Underserved progress report: 2.5 FTEs, 10 victims served, and 925 people trained.

## ➤ Outcomes

"This funding has allowed us to hire two FTE positions to focus on the issue of LGBTQ sexual violence. It has allowed both agencies in this partnership to exchange expertise, skills, and referrals that would have never happened if not for this formalized partnership. WOAR - Philadelphia Against Sexual Violence now has all of their staff trained in LGBTQ-affirming care... this funding has enabled Mazzoni Center to train all of their staff on how to receive disclosures of sexual violence, proper reporting methods, and bystander intervention for sexual harassment. Together our agencies have formed a strong alliance that we can model for other providers when advocating for the care of LGBTQ victims and survivors of sexual violence."

# Impact: Outputs vs. Outcomes #2

## ➤ Outputs

Reported on Tribal Governments progress report: 1.00 Law Enforcement Officer FTE, 19 incident reports, and 32 cases/incidents investigated.

## ➤ Outcomes

"This funding opportunity has allowed us to build a dedicated team of professionals who work together on a daily basis to achieve a common goal of protecting victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and strangulation. This team consists of an investigator, a prosecutor, and a victim advocate. In addition, we have built a strong working relationship with our federal partner, which did not previously exist. The Investigator and the FBI agent have worked many cases in conjunction with one another and this has led to what we believe is an increase in reporting, especially with respect to sexual assault cases. The FBI is on the reservation every week working cases with the Investigator, sometimes multiple times a week. In addition, over the next two months we will be working in conjunction with Women Spirit Coalition on implementation of our standard operating procedures for law enforcement to use when responding to crimes involving intimate partner abuse and sexual assault."

# As You Write, Ask Yourself...

- Am I being specific and detailed?
- Am I providing concrete examples?
- Am I providing evidence to support my conclusions?
- Am I offering a “before and after” lens?

# Provide Concrete Examples

“Much of Tulare County is rural and has limited access to community resources. Grant funding has given older adults access to free, confidential services close to home, education about elder abuse, as well as information on how to protect themselves from becoming victims of abuse. The Abuse in Later Life Victim Advocate spends much of her time in small rural towns within our county and has office hours at several senior centers. In addition to hosting discussions on specific topics, she invites other agencies in the community to join her and assist her in bringing resources to the area. These discussions are held in both English and Spanish in an effort to engage populations that may otherwise feel unable to participate in the discussion.”

# Evidence to Support Your Conclusions

“The staffing of an on-site Court Clerk at A Safe Place Family Justice Center (ASP-FJC) has been a game changer when it comes to closing critical gaps in our video court program. The clerk is able to communicate directly with her peers and judges to minimize anything that would affect a victim's due process and access in the court system. Before having the court clerk on-site through this project, the victim's protection order often would not go through as a result of the lack of staff knowledge of the process and technical items, such as a missed petitioner signature or other flaws in the paperwork. We now have a 96% granted rate on our protection orders filed on-site at the ASP-FJC video-court program. Prior to this grant-funded Court Clerk position, we ranged from 88%-92% of orders granted on-site.”



# Before and After

“Prior to having this funding, we could only offer emergency, short-term shelter stays to program participants... [and] it was often not possible for clients to permanently move on from the situation that brought them to shelter initially. As a result, survivors sought multiple stays in shelter before gaining independence. This increased the amount of transitions and trauma that survivors and their families had to experience as part of their journey. With a Transitional Housing Program, clients now have the option to extend their relationship with advocates for up to two years. While living in Transitional Housing, clients are supported in accessing all of our agency services as well as community resources. Because of a strong collaboration with Sanford Housing Authority, virtually all of our Transitional Housing participants are able to leave the program with a long-term housing voucher. This continuity of care and support provides the secure footing that survivors need in order to truly make a new start. When asked about the impact of participating in the Transitional Housing program, a resident recently told us: ‘More peace. More support. More options. More hope.’”

# When Narrative Data “Misses the Mark”

- Grandiose claims of effectiveness with no evidence to back it up
- Narrative states what was already reported and does not further detail the efforts of the grant
  - For example, stating “we provided services to 78 victims” but not expanding on if those were comprehensive or how the services impact the community
- Writing about activities that were not supported by the OVW grant or that are not allowable with OVW program funds

# If You're Just Getting Started, Write About...

- The gaps in your community that the grant will help you fill
- Project planning efforts
- Existing resources and tools in your community that you will leverage under the grant

“There are few services for youth survivors of dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in our county. For those that do exist, there is little communication about those resources. CY funding allowed us to conduct a thorough needs assessment and develop a plan to address issues while still including many of our community partners. We are excited to use that information in the implementation phase of our program moving forward.”

# What Information to Prioritize

- There is a character limit on each narrative question. How do you prioritize what to include?
  - Challenges and accomplishments that cannot be conveyed through numbers alone
  - Numbers that illustrate challenges and accomplishments, but which aren't captured elsewhere in the form

# Data Reporting Request from OVW

- OVW is looking to gather more information on what grantees find helpful or unhelpful in the training and technical assistance that is offered to them.
- OVW is encouraging grantees to use the additional information narrative question (second to last question on the form) to discuss the OVW-sponsored training and technical assistance they have received.

# COVID-19 Reporting Guidance for Narrative Questions

- **Include words like “COVID-19” and “pandemic” when describing COVID-19 related adjustments to programing or when explaining incomplete or missing data**
  - Use to explain how the pandemic has impacted the status of your grant goals and objectives
  - Speak to any no cost-extensions or other delayed or revised activities that have been approved by your program specialist

# COVID-19 Reporting Guidance (Continued)

- **If you are unable to collect data for the report**
  - Use narrative fields to explain missing data or activities you are unable to quantify right now
  - Do not estimate
    - Any numbers reported should have adequate source documentation

# COVID-19 Resources

- **Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) guidance for grantees**

<https://www.justice.gov/ovw/resources-and-faqs-grantees#covid>

- **VAWA MEI COVID-19 FAQs and Contact Us Form**

- <https://www.vawamei.org/tools-resources/faqs/category/covid-19-faqs/>
- <https://www.vawamei.org/contact-us/>

- **Reporting in a Pandemic “Office Hours” recording**

- <https://www.vawamei.org/tools-resource/reporting-in-a-pandemic-training-video/>

# Key Narrative Questions

## ➤ Program Status

- Grant Goals and Objectives

## ➤ Funding Allowed

- What has funding allowed you to do that you could not prior to receiving funding?

## ➤ Additional information about the effectiveness of your grant

# Key Narrative Questions

**All grantees must answer question 61.**

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE SPACE PROVIDED.

**61. Report on the status of your Arrest Program grant goals and objectives as of the end of the current reporting period.**

*(Report on the status of the goals and objectives for your grant as of the end of the current reporting period, as they were identified in your grant proposal or as they have been added or revised. Indicate whether the activities related to your objectives for the current reporting period have been completed, are in progress, are delayed, or have been revised. Comment on your successes and challenges, and provide any additional explanation you feel is necessary for us to understand what you have or have not accomplished relative to your goals and objectives. If you have not accomplished objectives that should have been accomplished during the current reporting period, you must provide an explanation.)*

[Click here to answer](#)

# Key Narrative Questions

**Questions 64 and 65 are optional.**

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE SPACE PROVIDED (8,000 CHARACTERS).

**64. Provide additional information regarding the effectiveness of your grant-funded program.**

*(If you have any other data or information that you have not already reported in answer to previous questions on this form that demonstrate the effectiveness of your Arrest Program-funded program, please provide it below. Feel free to discuss any of the following: reduction of domestic homicides; institutionalization of staff positions, policies, and/or protocols; systems-level changes; community collaboration; the removal or reduction of barriers and challenges for victims/survivors; promising practices; and positive or negative unintended consequences. Refer to separate instructions for a fuller explanation and examples.)* [Click here to answer](#)

**65. Provide any additional information that you would like us to know about the data submitted.**

*(If you have any information that could be helpful in understanding the data you have submitted in this report, please answer this question. For example, if you submitted two different progress reports for the same reporting period, you may explain how the data was apportioned to each report; or if you reported staff—e.g., victim advocates, law enforcement officers, etc.—but you did not report any corresponding victim services or law enforcement activities, you may explain why; or if you did not use program funds to support either staff or activities during the reporting period, please explain how program funds were used, if you have not already done so.)*

[Click here to answer](#)

# Key Narrative Questions

**All grantees must answer questions 62 and 63 on an annual basis. Submit this information on the January to June reporting form only.**

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE SPACE PROVIDED (8,000 CHARACTERS).

- 62. What do you see as the most significant areas of remaining need, with regard to improving services to victims/survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, increasing victims/survivor safety, and enhancing community response (including offender accountability for both batterers and sex offenders)?**

*(Consider geographic regions, underserved populations, service delivery systems, types of victims/survivors, and challenges and barriers unique to your state or service area.)* [Click here to answer](#)

- 63. What has Arrest Program funding allowed you to do that you could not do prior to receiving this funding?**

*(e.g., expand coordination and cross-referrals with victim/survivor services, or track data on arrests and prosecutions)* [Click here to answer](#)

# Visit VAWA MEI's Website!



[www.vawamei.org](http://www.vawamei.org)

# Your Turn! Any Questions?





# Thank you!

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