



State of North Carolina
Governor's Crime Commission
STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
Implementation Plan
FFY 2022-2025

Photo Source: The Nature Conservancy in North Carolina

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North Carolina VAWA Implementation Plan 2022-2025

Approved by the State of North Carolina

June 10th, 2022

North Carolina Department of Public Safety Governor's Crime Commission

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I. Introduction

A. Implementation Plan Approval Date: June 10th, 2022

Edits made per OVW requirements and submitted on September 14th, 2022.

B. The period covered under this plan includes FFY 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The Governor's Crime Commission within the State of North Carolina's Department of Public Safety has served as the state administering agency for critical federal grant programs since its creation in 1968. These programs include the Violence Against Women Act funds, which were designed to comprehensively combat violence against women since 1994 when the legislation was passed in the US Congress. Since enacted, VAWA programs, that are administered federally by the US Department of Justice and Health and Human Services have "dramatically improved federal, tribal, state, and local responses" (Sacco, 2019) to crimes including domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and, stalking. As such, the legislation was reauthorized most recently in 2022 with the increased understanding of addressing the complex realities of survivors. The goals are further reflecting the priorities of the domestic and sexual assault community, to enhance access for underserved survivors, particularly LGBTQIA and tribal populations, as well as to be responsive to the emerging needs of survivors, accountability, and, treatment for offenders.

The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission serves as the chief advisory body to the governor and the secretary of the Department of Public Safety on crime and justice issues. In developing this implementation plan, the goal of the Governor's Crime Commission is to assist agencies seeking to apply for STOP formula and discretionary funding to effectively and holistically meet the needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, while working towards the prevention of future violence through effective offender treatment and improving the collaboration and response within all levels of the criminal justice system.

North Carolina 2022-2026 STOP Implementation Plan
Governor's Crime Commission

II. Needs and Context

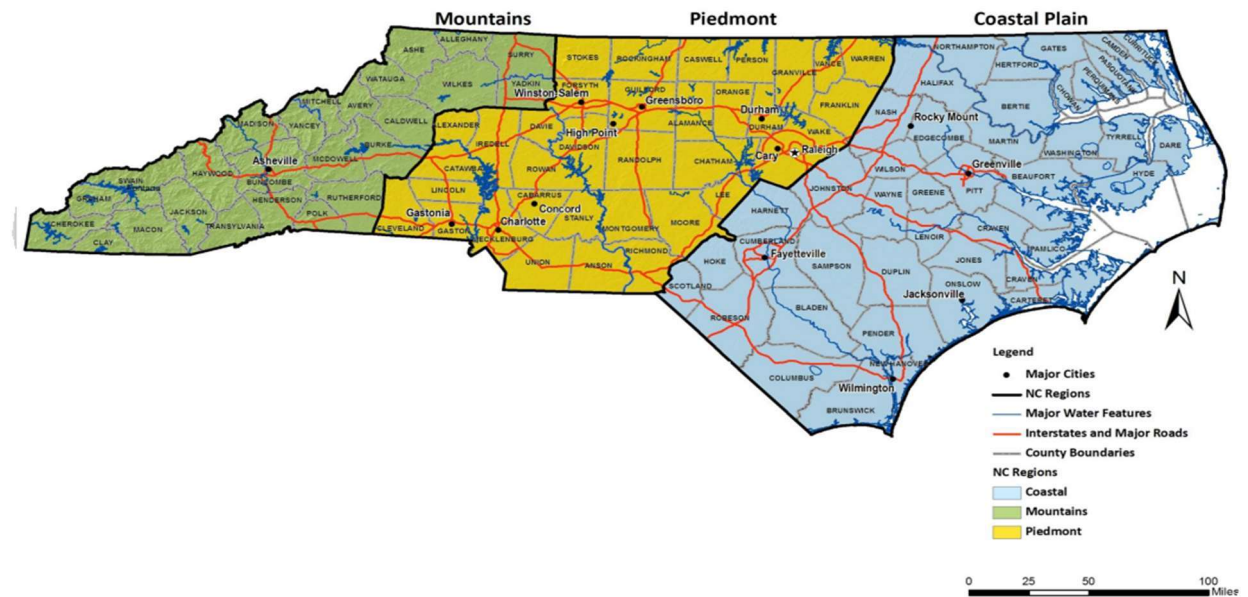
A. Demographic Information

1. Geography and Climate

North Carolina is a geographically large state in the Southern region of the United States, with multiple landforms including the coastal plains, Piedmont, and the Appalachian Mountains. These diverse regions affect not only the unique demographics of the people in each area but also the specific needs and challenges of service provision. Regarding climate, North Carolina is located in a relatively warm temperate zone of the country, however, with the differing landforms, each region can experience a variety of weather conditions. This can include flooding from rainfall including hurricanes, an average of 5 inches of snow a year, temperatures from the low 30s into the 90s, and more mild weather (NC Climate Science Report, 2020). There have been geographic and climate trends that have and will continue to impact North Carolinians, service providers, and survivors in need.

The last five years (2015-2019) have had the warmest overnight low temperatures on record in North Carolina, “with 2019 setting the record for the warmest lows in the recorded past. These warm nights affect public health and agriculture.” (NC Climate Science Report, 2020). 2018 was North Carolina’s wettest year on record in 125 years of record-keeping, partially as a result of Hurricane Florence, which produced the heaviest rainfall in North Carolina history. The 2015-2018 period saw an increase in the number of days with very heavy rain, defined as 3 inches or more in 24 hours. In 2016, western North Carolina experienced drought and wildfires. It is expected that severe drought impacts will become more frequent in warmer North Carolina.

Figure 1: A Regional Perspective of North Carolina



It is necessary for the Governor's Crime Commission and the STOP Implementation Plan Advisory Group to track and assess how these issues will continue to impact the resources and needs of individual communities both rural, suburban, and urban. As there is a correlated relationship, particularly with economic stressors that contribute to increases in victimization and the need for services as well as either mitigating or extenuating funding and accessibility of those services (Renzetti et al., 2009).

Many of these geographic and climate-related challenges, including their impact on infrastructures such as transportation and high-speed reliable internet, are being addressed with federal and state funding through two main sources. In 2021, Governor Cooper signed multiple Executive Orders affirming North Carolina's commitment to addressing climate change as well as long-term economic, social, environmental, and health disparities within these priorities (EO No, 80, 143, 218). Then in January 2022, Governor Cooper signed Executive Order 245 which builds on 2021 signed House Bill 951. "These actions are making North Carolina less dependent on fossil fuels, bringing new high-paying jobs to the state, and helping remedy

disproportionate environmental, economic, and health impacts on communities of color, low-income communities, and tribal communities” (Monaghan, 2022). The second source of funding to address these issues which will directly impact communities in North Carolina and the need for services around violence against women is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which was signed into law by President Biden in November 2021. North Carolina will receive historic infrastructure investment, based on formula funding providing over 7 billion dollars within 5 years which will go to repairing and rebuilding roads, highways, and bridges within the state as well as additional competitive funding and apportioned funding for the improvement of healthy, sustainable public transportation options, provision of broadband internet across the state, weatherization investment to protect against events like wildfires and hurricanes (USDOT, 2022). Lastly, North Carolina will receive over a billion dollars to improve water infrastructure across the state and ensure ocean, safer drinking water.

In North Carolina, there are 1,460 bridges and over 3,116 miles of highway in poor condition which heavily impacts rural and coastal areas in the state that is also heavily impacted by extreme weather and environmental events. North Carolinians who take public transportation spend an extra 59.9 percent of their time commuting and non-White households are 3.4 times more likely to commute via public transportation. 14 percent of North Carolina households do not have an internet subscription, and 4 percent of North Carolinians live in areas where, under the FCC's benchmark, there is no broadband infrastructure (The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Report, 2022). These are basic needs of all North Carolinians but significantly detrimental to the prevention of crimes against women and children, effective service provision, and accessibility of those services to communities most in need. The Governor's Crime Commission and the STOP IP Advisory Group will monitor and evaluate how these funds can provide opportunities for collaboration and enhance the work of VAWA funding, along with alleviating critical barriers for the underserved communities that are prioritized within the implementation plan.

2. Population and Demographics (including race, ethnicity, age, disability, and Limited English Proficiency)

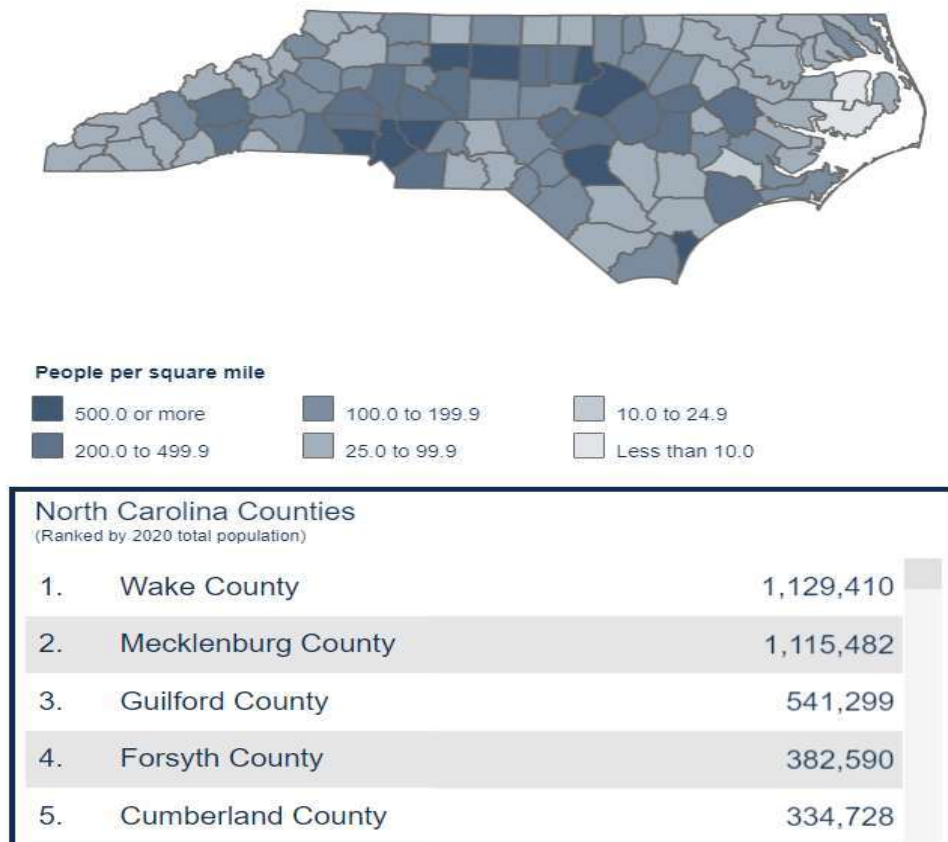
North Carolina is the 9th largest state in the nation and is supported by 2020 Census data as one of the fastest-growing states regarding population. In 6th place for growth, despite the continuing impacts of COVID-19, North Carolina's population increased from 9,535,483 people to 10,439,483, an increase of 903,905 or 9.5 percent. The two largest counties in the state according to population, Wake and Mecklenburg, accounted for nearly 40 percent of the overall population growth as net migration brought in new residents from out of the state (NC Office of State Budget and Management, 2021). It is expected that this growth will continue over the coming years, spurred by economic development and recovery. North Carolina ranks in the lower middle half of the US in terms of size but it more than makes up for those statistics with its population density. The total surface area is 53,819 square miles (139,390 square kilometers) and there is an average of 196 people for every square mile. This makes North Carolina the 15th most densely populated state in the US. Most urban counties form an "urban crescent" in the Piedmont (an area anchored by Wake, Forsyth, and Mecklenburg Counties). The most rural counties remain in the areas along the northern coast in the Outer Banks and the mountains in the far west.

A report prepared by the State Demographer of North Carolina noted that the state still has a significant rural population, with 40 percent of the state's total population living in a rural county as of 2019. Most of North Carolina's recent growth has been in the urban and suburban areas of the state. For example, rural counties of Onslow and Johnston have shown enough growth to be re-classified as regional cities/suburban counties as of 2021. This growth could potentially strain already underserved communities and the development challenges around critical services like employment, housing affordability, and accessible healthcare. As acknowledged by the Office of State Budget and Management which advised; "the state will continue to be challenged by balancing the demand for transportation, education, health, and other services in growing urban counties while maintaining the needs of a diverse and extended rural population and areas". It also has the potential to mean further need for expansion of victim service providers to account for any increases in victimization. Both counties have one

nonprofit organization each dedicated to shelter and additional services for domestic violence and sexual assault.

Within that population growth, there have also been demographic changes and patterns of note to this body and implementation plan as we consider funding, priorities, and service needs for victims of violence. North Carolina’s elder adult population (65 years old +) continues to increase every year. The 2020 Census outlined a growth of 1.8 million with the State Demographer projecting another 2.1 million individuals who meet this threshold by 2025. Also showing growth in North Carolina, although not as rapid, is the college-age population (18 to 24 years old), with expectations of increases post 2020 likely for the next 10 years to be 10,000 people per year.

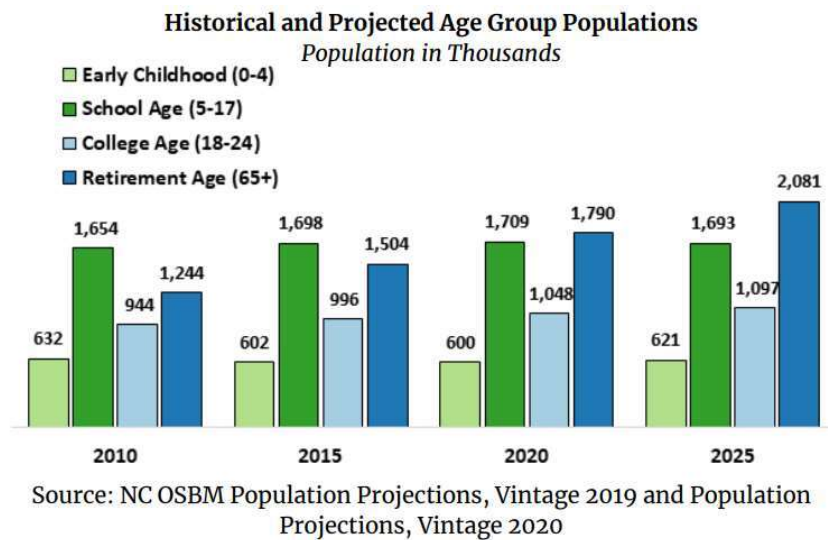
Figure 2: Population Density of NC Counties per Square Mile based on 2020 Census Data



These two particular populations traditionally have been a point of focus nationally through VAWA and as outlined in the 2017-2021 STOP Implementation Plan for North Carolina,

as victimization rates among elderly and college-aged people have been consistently, disproportionately high. Their risk for victimization is also high, especially when looking at the intersections of disability, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation. School-aged children populations remain steady and early childhood age populations grew at a lower rate. All indicate that overall, as the population of the United States, the population of North Carolina will continue to get older, with more older adults than children projected by 2031.

Figure 3: Historical and Projected Age Group Populations



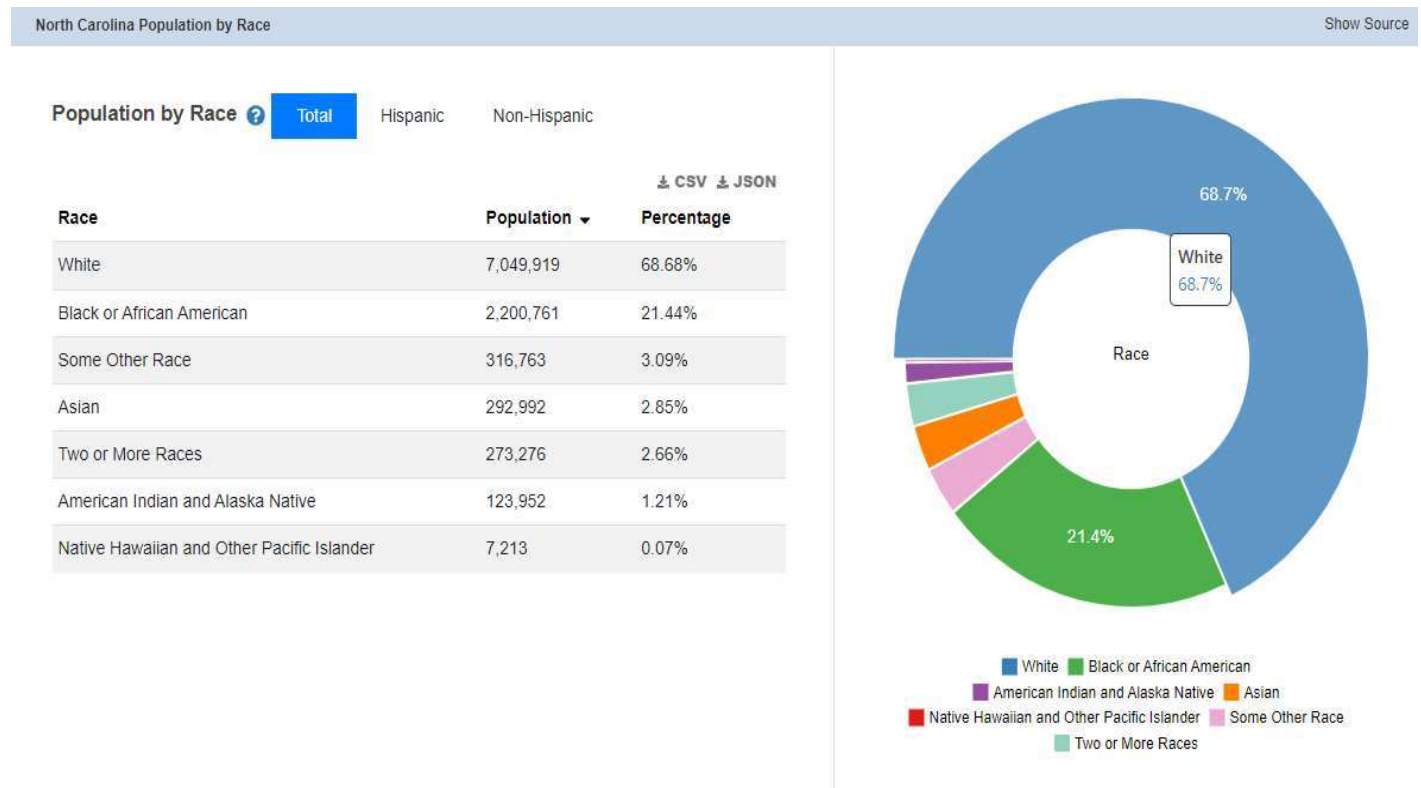
Based on additional data drawn from the 2020 Census and State Demographer’s Office, not only is North Carolina’s population mirroring the United States by becoming older, but it is also becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. North Carolina’s large growth in diversity has been mostly fueled by immigrants from India, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. There have also been high numbers of people moving from the Northeastern area of the US, Florida, and even as far away as California. North Carolina has a large Black or African American population that makes up almost a quarter of its total population. Since the 1970s, the number of middle-class black residents has increased, and most Black or African Americans live on the eastern Coastal Plain and in areas of the Piedmont Plateau.

In 2015, it was estimated that the population of North Carolina was 68.5 percent White, 21.5 percent Black or African American, 2.2 percent Asian, 1.3 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.2 percent of two or more races. The Hispanic/Latino population of any race

comprised 8.4 percent of the state’s population accounting for overlap with other races and those who (NC State Demographer’s Office, 2017). Of this population, 7.7 percent of North Carolinians were born outside of the U.S. (US Census Bureau Quick Facts, 2015). The 2020 Census showed every two of three persons added in the state between now and 2030 is non-white. In 2020, the racial makeup of the state reflects that 70 percent of the population is White, 23 percent Black or African American, 3.6 percent Asian, 2 percent American Indian and Alaska Native, 4.3 percent of Some Other race, and any race, 9.5 percent of North Carolinians identify as Hispanic or Latino. Another point of importance includes that in 2019, close to half of the under 18 population was identified as Black, Brown, or Indigenous and since 2010, they have accounted for nearly all the growth in the childhood population.

Figure 3: North Carolina Population by Race

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?tid=ACSST5Y2019.B03002&g=0400000US37>



This must play a particular significance in the provision of funding and services to ensure trauma-informed, racially, and culturally competent services to victims of violence, including

individuals whose victimization during childhood contributes to a higher risk of perpetrating violence and even more so being re-victimized as adults.

In North Carolina, as of 2020 Census estimates, there are just over 4 million total households in the state. Out of those households, nearly 12 percent speak a language other than English with Spanish being the most prevalent language, followed by Asian and Pacific languages, then Indo-European languages, and the rest marked more broadly as Other Languages. Within this 12 percent, approximately 87, 106 households have identified as Limited English-speaking households. Individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). According to the Migration Policy Institute, 43.7 percent of the civilian labor force ages 25 or over are labeled as having Limited English Proficiency. Fundamental service elements of accessibility for domestic violence and sexual assault victim service providers, outlined through the NC Council for Women and Youth Involvement and in the 2017-2021 STOP Implementation Plan, require that programs provide services to persons with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities.

As outlined in the 2015 Disability Status report for North Carolina completed by Cornell University, there is no single accepted definition of disability however in statistics pulled for this plan, the American Community Survey uses six questions to identify disabled persons including hearing disability, visual disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, and independent living disability. In 2019, 13.2 percent of North Carolinians reported having a disability. This percentage has been increasing steadily in comparison to the previous STOP Implementation plan which reported 12.4 percent in 2015 but is lower than the 16.5 percent of individuals who report being disabled across the entire country in the same year. It is important to note that this data from the US Census Bureau does not include institutionalized individuals; incarcerated or in a mental health facility. Disability Rights North Carolina reports that approximately 19 percent of the prison population is identified as needing mental health treatment and the Bureau of Justice statistics advised that incarcerated individuals are four times more likely to report having a disability than the general population (DRC, 2020).

As the population of North Carolina continues to grow and continues to age, so will the number of individuals who are disabled. Therefore, expansion of services for disabled victims

of crime as well as access to those services to accommodate the needs of disabled victims will be critical. The impact of COVID is also contributing to the prevalence and severity of disabilities. The Department of Health and Human Services published guidance in July of 2021 advising that COVID-19 symptoms known as “Long-haul” that continue to last months after being first infected, or may have new or recurring symptoms at a later time, can be a disability under Title II (state and local government) and III (public accommodations) of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as Section 504 and Section 1557 if it substantially inhibits one or more major life activities. A study (Cox, 2021) by the Penn State College of Medicine researchers reported more than half of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since December 2019 will experience post-COVID symptoms. As of Jan 2022, approximately 1.9 million North Carolinians have been diagnosed with COVID; therefore, an additional 950,000 people could potentially be disabled and experience an increased risk of being a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking as a result. A report produced by the Vera Institute (2014) advised that individuals with disabilities have higher rates of victimization as they often must rely on perpetrators for housing, care, and survival.

3. Economic Health

Even before the COVID-19 Pandemic, as noted in the 2017-2020 STOP Implementation Plan, North Carolina's poverty rates were above the national average, sitting at 13.6 percent compared to the US rate of 10.5 percent as of 2019. That is 1.4 million North Carolinians living in poverty, with the rates of poverty being significantly higher for Native American, Black, and, Latinx North Carolinians, approximately 26 percent, 22 percent, and 22 percent respectively. The poverty rate for women in North Carolina was also higher than for men, sitting at 14.9 percent compared to 12.2 percent. In North Carolina, young children continue to have the highest poverty rates of any age group, sitting at 22 percent. These rates have improved in the past 5 years however still show a significant area of concern within the state.

Regarding the economic health of the state and the people of North Carolina, it is important to highlight that poverty rates alone will not paint the full picture of the issue and in many ways, like data around victimization, can sorely underestimate the problem. Nationally, the poverty rate does not always clearly capture whether people can meet their basic needs

and the federal poverty guideline has long been stated to be deficient in that it does not consider major geographic variations in costs of housing and other goods. It is also less than half of a Living Income Standard which considers costs of basic needs, as of 2019 sitting at \$25,750 for a family of four. If this was adjusted to the average Living Standard which is \$52,946 for a family of four, approximately 2 million more North Carolinians would meet the definition of experiencing poverty.

Additionally, data including poverty rates typically lags one or two years behind. Other measures like the liquid asset poverty rate, food insecurity, housing instability, wage levels, and utilization of safety net programs further illustrate the extent of the needs of North Carolinians as well as provide further evidence of significant disparities according to gender, race, and age group. Improved research tools including the new Household Pulse Survey conducted by the Census Bureau, were begun to fill the gaps in data and the time lapses for current reflections of economic issues. COVID-19 changed the economy drastically in a short period and the Pulse Survey exists to adapt to show the level of hardship. It has reflected the reality that nearly 1 in 3 adults in North Carolina reported having trouble paying for usual household expenses in 2020. Nearly 2 in 5 adults with children reported having difficulty covering household expenses (Household Pulse Survey, 2020).

According to the 2020 Poverty Report, published by the North Carolina Justice Center, the pandemic created an “unprecedented economic crisis with the widespread job and income losses that magnified the already extreme racial, gender, and income inequalities in our economy.” Quantitative data as noted above reflects this statement to be true as does the qualitative data that members of the Advisory group have reported on. “Domestic abuse is more likely when a potential perpetrator is unemployed, experiences isolation from other people, participates in heavy alcohol or drug use, or is depressed — all of which have increased” during and throughout the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Critchfield, 2021). With most courts and providers of services closing in-person services, going to virtual or over the phone, many agencies had increased challenges ensuring no or few disruptions of services and more clients needed internet access, access to phones, access to transportation, and technical support around utilizing technology for services. Rural areas, areas with geographic barriers like

mountains or particularly coastal sections, and small agencies felt this acutely as well with lack of access to consistent internet/wi-fi options. Additionally, Advisory Group members stressed the increased emphasis on housing options and other emergency financial assistance, particularly for sexual assault survivors as feedback from service providers across the state advised housing assistance becoming the second most requested service outside of therapy, with additional requests for childcare and assisting in obtaining employment.

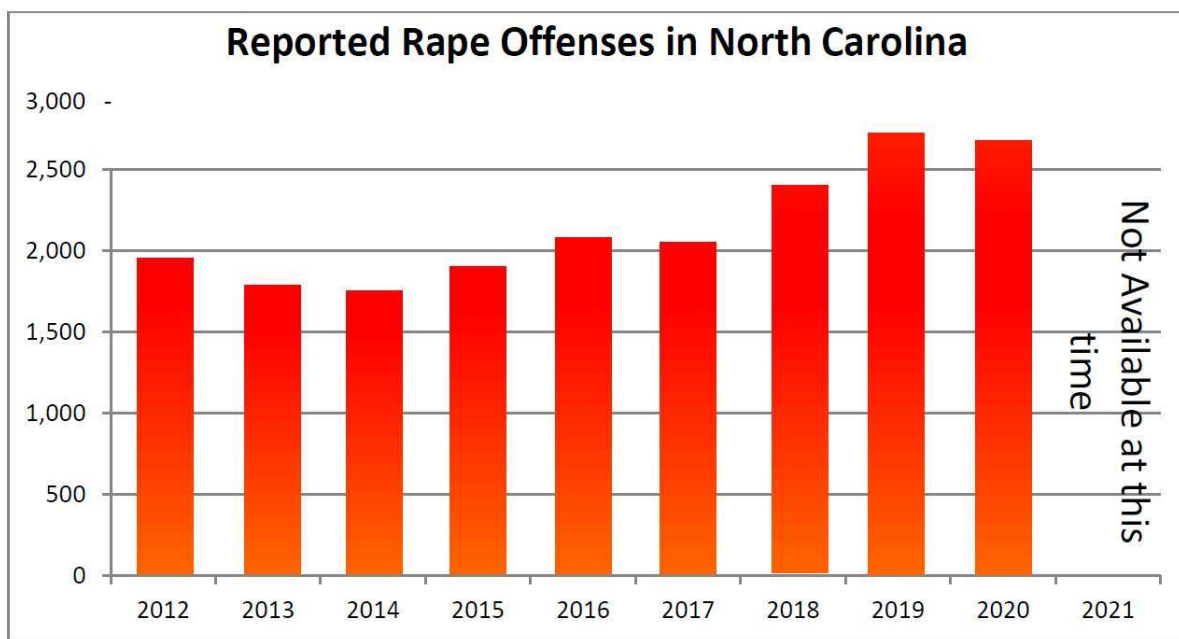
The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence completed a Needs Assessment for 2019-2020 across providers of domestic violence services in the state. The assessment noted the second-highest response regarding training and technical assistance needed for providers was to address survivors experiencing economic barriers including transportation, housing, food, and other forms of insecurity. The assessment also showed the second-highest response rate for the need to increase outreach to communities experiencing high rates of socioeconomic barriers. The assessment requested that service providers identify the top 5 priority outcomes for long-term survivors, and they were economically based including increasing emergency housing, transitional housing, transportation access, employment security, and access to childcare. There was a specified need for additional funding that would prioritize transportation access, especially regarding rural areas or purchasing vehicles for agencies to assist, relocation assistance was also a priority. Lastly, the assessment included a critical acknowledgment that staff also experience these economic issues in conjunction with the compounded impact of national racial trauma and the global pandemic.

4. Prevalence of Rape, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking

North Carolina's State Bureau of Investigations has traditionally utilized the Uniform Crime Report Data with the Federal Bureau of Investigations regarding tracking the overall rate of violent crime from year to year, which includes murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as reported by law enforcement agencies in the United States. The most recent data published in 2020 shows that the overall rate (per 100,000) of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies decreased 4.5 percent when compared to 2019 (SBI, 2020). With COVID lockdowns prevalent in highly populated, urban areas throughout 2020 as well as rent and eviction moratoriums in place federally, statewide, and municipally, the effect on crime rates is

being studied closer to determine the extent of the correlations. The violent crime rate shows an increase of 11.0 percent statewide, spiked by an increase in the murder rate and aggravated assault. The data shows a decrease in the rate of rape, 13.3 percent from 2019 (Annual Summary Report, 2014, NC State Bureau of Investigation).

Figure 5: Reported Rape Offenses in North Carolina (2012-2020)



As has been recognized broadly by researchers, data experts, public leaders, subject matter experts, and others who have studied the quality of UCR data collection, there are noted deficits that must be considered, particularly in the data for the prevalence of rape. In the 2017 STOP Implementation Plan, it was outlined that UCR data, like many sources that draw from law enforcement reports, is not an accurate count because only approximately 40 percent of victims of rape report their victimization to law enforcement officials. The data does not consider the broader definitions of rape across gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as the definitions that are perceived through cultural and religious lenses. The data also does not consider the understanding of rape on the part of the first responders and the

documentation of the assault. Uniform Crime data records only record the highest level of offense committed per any reported incident, which can undercount rape or any other offense that may not be seen by the reporting officer as more violent or serious as murder or aggravated assault. Efforts are being made to close some of these gaps in reporting and ensure a higher quality of data, including the transition of the Uniform Crime Report data to NIBRS or the National Incident-Based Reporting System. This transition was officially completed on January 1, 2021.

Results of the National Crime Victimization survey partially align with the information reported by the UCR. The 2020 Criminal Victimization Survey saw an overall decrease in violent victimization of 22 percent, 21.0 to 16.4 victimizations per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older which includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. The difference in the reports is that where the UCR saw a noted increase in aggravated assault reports made to the police, the Victimization survey saw a decline in assault as reported by victims. Violent victimization saw a decrease among both male and female victims, Hispanic victims, and the largest decline during this period, among 12- to 17-year-olds. **However, it is imperative to understand that while traditionally only 40 percent of violent victimizations including rape or sexual assault are reported to law enforcement, many of those avenues for reporting and the accessibility of reporting to law enforcement and resource agencies were reduced or cut off altogether during COVID.**

Information reported by rape crisis centers and other victim service providers in North Carolina confirms that survivors handling the economic impact of COVID as well as the shutdown of jobs, childcare, and opportunities outside of the home had fewer opportunities to safely report including healthcare facilities that were overwhelmed with COVID 19. Within the annual statistical report obtained from North Carolina Council for Women (NCCFWYI), the 102 state sexual assault programs answered 22,516 calls and helped 10,713 victims of sexual assault through rape crisis lines across the state in 2019-2020. Among the total number of assaults reported:

- 4,364 were adult rape offenses
- 2,077 were child sexual offenses
- Of those, 402 were date rape offenses

This further highlights the contrast between reports made to law enforcement versus the incidents of rape in North Carolina. Despite the increased barriers to accessing sexual assault agencies, there is still a difference of 3,672 sexual assaults/rapes. This continues the trend outlined in the 2017-2020 North Carolina STOP IP, which utilized 2014-2015 data from NC CFW. The agencies that collect and report victim data in North Carolina reported that victims who identified as female accounted for 80 percent of all rape crisis calls.

The data from North Carolina Council for Women for 2019-2020 showed that across the state's 102 domestic violence programs, 104,299 calls were completed and a total of 59,239 clients were served. This was a slight decrease from the July 2018- June 2019 data which reported 112,860 crisis calls and a total of 60,301 clients served. Shelter was provided to 9,341 individuals significantly down from the 2018-2019 reporting period which reported 11,138 victims receiving shelter which also includes a local safe home or hotel. Due to lack of space at their local shelter in 2019-2020, 5,760 of the total calls received were referred to other shelters or services to meet their needs as best as possible including counseling, advocacy, transportation, court, and legal issues which were roughly the same as those in the previous reporting period (5,752). From 2020 to 2021, overall data reflects approximately 24 percent of domestic Violence clients served were classified as Two or more races, Some other race, or Unknown. However, in tribal communities, this increased to approximately 30 percent of clients served. From 2020 to 2021, overall data reflects approximately 30 percent of sexual assault clients served were classified as Two or more races, Some other race, Unknown. However, in tribal communities, this increased to approximately 41 percent of clients served. As reported from the Advisory Group and feedback received from domestic violence agencies, having enough room in shelter was an ongoing issue, in particular in the latter half of this reporting period due to the number of callers seeking shelter, increased lethality of calls that necessitated immediate safety planning, as well as extended lengths of stay as a result of barriers from COVID shutdown including being able to get critical identification documents, securing employment or childcare, and finding affordable housing options.

The majority of domestic violence victims served through NC domestic violence agencies who reported data, identified as women, making up 78 percent of the clients served from 2019

to 2020 with those identifying as men, making up nearly 20 percent. Nearly 2 percent of those served identified as not a man or woman, or their gender was not identified. Shelter data from the NC Council for Women also reported children made up 41 percent of clients that received shelter services. Noted trends from sexual assault and domestic violence agencies show that since 2016, there has been an increase in the percentage of men seeking domestic violence and sexual assault services; since 2011, there has been an increase in the percentage of African American domestic violence clients; since 2019, there has been an increase in the percentage of shelter services provided to children; and the majority of DV and SA clients are between the ages of 25 and 59 years old.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services tracks data for violent deaths in North Carolina including intimate partner violence. NCDHHA uses death certificates, medical examiner reports, and law enforcement reports for their data, and in the most recent report, there were 109 identified intimate partner violence-related deaths and, 101 were identified as homicides. This report also advised that approximately 40 percent of female homicides were IPV-related while less than 10 percent of all male homicides were IPV-related, however, there is a margin of error related to how gender/sex is documented impacting gender identity of victims as well as what gets labeled as IPV between the sources of data particularly around unidentified causes and non-heterosexual relationships. In 2019 the 25-34 age group made up the highest number of IPV-related homicides followed by the 45-54 age group for both males and females. Of the IPV-related homicides, nearly 60 percent were never married and nearly 20 percent were divorced or separated. Homicide female victims who are non-Hispanic white women make up the highest percentage of IPV-related homicides at 41.1 percent with non-Hispanic Black women following closely behind at 38.7 percent and Hispanic women making up 36 percent in North Carolina. A report by the American Journal of Public Health (Smith et al., 2014) on the prevalence of victims of intimate partner homicide showed that 80 percent of intimate partner homicides are the intimate partner and the majority female while 20 percent of those deaths are corollary victims, family members, new intimate partners, friends, acquaintances, police officers or strangers. This is supported by data from the NC

NHHS.

According to the Centers for Disease Control's report from 2017, an estimated 9.7 percent of women and 2.3 percent of men have been stalked by an intimate partner during their lifetime. A 2019 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics through the National Crime Victimization Survey highlighted the prevalence of stalking across the United States, looking at "traditional stalking" and "stalking with technology". About 1.3 percent of persons aged 16 or older were victims of stalking in 2019, approximately 3.4 million people. Less than a third of stalking victims, approximately 29 percent advised they had reported their victimization to police despite the survey showing that an estimated 67 percent of victims of both traditional stalking and stalking with technology were fearful of being killed or physically harmed. Victims of both types of stalking in 2019 were more likely to be stalked by an intimate partner, 35 percent, than victims of only traditional stalking (11 percent) or only stalking with technology (18 percent). Victims of both stalking types were more than twice as likely to have applied for a restraining, protection, or no-contact order as victims of traditional or technology stalking only. From the previous report in 2016, the percentage of persons who experienced stalking declined from 1.5 percent in 2016 to 1.3 percent in 2019, however, this is still a significant issue in correlation to lethality for victims of domestic violence and other gender-based offenses.

Teen/adolescent dating violence is shown to be very common, with the CDC advising that 1 in 3 teenagers experience either physical, sexual, or emotional violence before the age of 18. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey completed by the CDC in 2019 and published in 2020. This report is a nationally representative sample of public and private school students in grades 9-12 in the 50 states as well as D.C. Among US high school students, 1 in 8 experienced dating violence with females, and sexual minority students experienced higher rates of violence. This would include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning female students across both physical dating violence and sexual dating violence. Proportionally, this would identify approximately 179,000 9th thru 12th-grade students in North Carolina and approximately 477,000 teenage students experiencing either type of dating violence per year.

Based on 2020 Census Data and projections outlining population growth through 2025,

North Carolina's population which boasted the 6th largest population growth in the country will continue to see consistent population increase fueled significantly by net migration from out of state. As data continues to come available regarding victimization during the peak of COVID and as vaccinations have become available along with measurable periods post-state lockdowns, the barriers that decreased reporting across the board to both law enforcement and community resources will lessen. However, these factors would indicate, along with long-term concerns for economic hardships, that the level of victims and the extent of their needs will increase concurrently, raising the level of pressure on local victims' services and support agencies to meet those needs.

B. Methods Used to Identify Underserved Populations

As reflected in earlier sections of this Implementation Plan, North Carolina is a diverse state both in population and geography. As the state consistently grows and develops, there continue to be historically underserved populations that need prioritization for services and barriers to services, in addition to a more expansive understanding of those needs and how to more effectively and creatively close gaps. An identified strategy in the 2017-2020 Implementation Plan centered around specific outreach regarding notification of available funds and to better allow for underserved populations across the state. These methods included the following:

1. Public Access Channel notification
2. State Fair Booth
3. Twitter posting (DPS, Governor)
4. NC Center for Nonprofits site
5. Town meetings of NC rural communities

The approaches outlined were not utilized due in part to Governor's Crime Commission staffing turnover as well as the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic which prevented in particular the face-to-face, on-site outreach and identification methods including town meetings with rural communities and the state fair booth. However, in adapting to an increased reliance on digital communications that was forced through COVID-19, it has both highlighted additional

modes of outreach that are possible and the extent of the digital gap that exists in rural and impoverished communities where victims of crime have been heavily impacted. The GCC planning staff has been able to accept invitations and attend virtual conferences and task force meetings with previously identified underserved communities including the North Carolina American Indian Unity Annual Conference and the North Carolina Latino Resource Network monthly meetings. In addition, small outreach meetings have spawned from those presentations to have in-depth discussions regarding how to reduce barriers for less traditionally structured (as defined within the OVW eligibility requirements) agencies and organizations that are doing direct service to underserved populations but who normally wouldn't have the capacity or specific training to seek funding through VAWA STOP solicitations. The Governor's Crime Commission is also working with the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill on a statewide needs assessment survey specifically for victims of crime that is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022.

However, many of these are newly utilized outreach and identification endeavors and will require consistency and long-term commitment from GCC to continue relationship building and develop trust for the identification of underserved populations. Over the life of this plan and beyond, these methods can be re-evaluated and adjusted in response to changing service needs and barriers, which can be addressed through collaboration and strategic plans. A calendar of events for these efforts and the addition of more is also being documented and outlined in standard operating procedures for GCC VAWA Administration.

The VAWA Administration team during the life of the previous Implementation Plan and in further efforts has also relied heavily on several other mechanisms that are not primarily outreach or notification based. GCC receives consistent feedback and input from state coalitions for underserved populations and service reports through both service providers and communities that receive VAWA funding and VOCA funding. The current STOP Implementation Advisory Group includes representatives of all identified underserved populations and GCC staff continues to draw from member input regarding other voices that need to be included, particularly victims of crime themselves who can speak directly through personal experience about barriers and service needs.

The identified underserved populations for this STOP Implementation Plan include the following*:

- ❖ Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian communities
- ❖ Latino, and Hispanic communities
- ❖ Immigrant and Limited English proficiency individuals and families
- ❖ American Indians/tribal communities
- ❖ Black/African American communities
- ❖ Military and military families
- ❖ LGBTQIA+ individuals
- ❖ Deaf or hard of hearing individuals
- ❖ Individuals with mental health issues
- ❖ Individuals with disabilities
- ❖ Individuals with substance use issues
- ❖ Rural communities
- ❖ College Students

*With the understanding and acknowledgment that many of these identities/communities intersect and can dramatically increase the risk of victimization as well as barriers to service.

North Carolina's Latino population is now greater than one million people, with 1,026,000 residents in 2019. The US Census shows the growth at 28.3 percent which is faster than the nationwide growth of Latino individuals which is at 19.6 percent. As a result, Latino communities in the state makeup 18.6 percent of the population and will continue to grow. This has been shown to not just be the case in urban and suburban areas of the state but also in rural areas. Wake County and Mecklenburg County, the two most populous counties in the state, also see the Hispanic/Latinx communities making up over half of the state's Latino population statewide. Less populated, rural counties including Duplin, Sampson, Lee, Greene, and Montgomery Counties have Latino residents that make up 15-23 percent of the population respectively.

Statewide, Asian and Pacific Islanders make up 3.3 percent of North Carolina's population, and individuals identifying as Some Other Race or Multiracial, make up the fastest-

growing racial/ethnic group in North Carolina with an increase of 65 percent in the 2020 Census. There is representation across counties however, the growth and concentration of Asian and Pacific Islander individuals exist in the counties with the largest populations as well as around large college communities including Wake County, Durham County, Mecklenburg County, and Cabarrus County. Orange County in Central North Carolina sees 10.1 percent of their total population growth in the 2020 Census that identifies as Asian or a combination of races inclusive of Asian. The Asian-American population in North Carolina is extremely diverse, with over 20 Asian ethnicities and countries of origin represented. Asian Indians are the largest ethnic group, making up over 25 percent of the state's Asian-American population: they are followed by Chinese (15 percent), Vietnamese (12 percent), and Filipinos (12 percent). The state is also home to several ethnic minority groups including the Hmong and the Montagnards from Southeast Asia.

In 2019 according to the state immigration data profile from the Migration Policy Institute, 8.4 percent of North Carolinians are "foreign-born" or 884,631 individuals. This term "refers to people residing in the United States at the time of the population survey who were not U.S. citizens at birth". The foreign-born population includes naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent immigrants (or green-card holders), refugees and asylees, certain legal nonimmigrants (including those on student, work, or some other temporary visas), and persons residing in the country without authorization". Of that 8.4 percent, 46 percent are Latino Origin of any race, as previously noted from the 2020 Census data as well. Black or African American is the second most prevalent race at 22 percent. Nearly 50 percent of immigrants or "foreign-born" individuals in North Carolina were born in Latin America which includes South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. The second highest region of birth for "foreign-born" North Carolina immigrants is Asia with 27.7 percent. This is a marked increase from the 2000 Census which saw only 5.3 percent of the population being "foreign-born" immigrants or 430,000 individuals, a population change from 2000 to 2019 of 105.7 percent (US Census, 2021). It has been expressed through feedback from direct service providers during Advisory Group meetings that North Carolina has also seen increased immigration from Afghanistan, Russia, and Ukraine due to ongoing conflicts that have necessitated evacuees and refugees

coming into the United States, particularly in 2021 and 2022. There is reasonable potential for continued migration in the following years as resettlement organizations and human rights agencies in North Carolina advocate with Governor Cooper to accept refugees into the state. Since 2000, North Carolina has accepted approximately 20,000 refugees from dozens of countries (Migration Policy Institute, 2021).

These statistics alone indicate the need for proportionate growth of victim service providers that have culturally specific and effective services as well as being able to meet any language barriers. As previously noted on page 9 of this plan, out of over 4 million households in North Carolina, nearly 12 percent speak a language other than English with Spanish being the most prevalent language, followed by Asian and Pacific languages, then Indo-European languages and the rest marked more broadly as Other Languages. Approximately 87, 106 households have been identified as Limited English-speaking households. At this time only approximately 30 percent of funded VAWA projects prioritize survivors with Limited English Proficiency within the text of their grants. Along with the identification of LEP survivors as an underserved population in the prior Implementation Plan and continued identification within the scope of this plan, language access, and culturally specific and competent victim services will continue to be a major focus area for Governor's Crime Commission. This is outlined within the Violence Against Women Act itself as well as in federal and state requirements for accessibility and equity of services to victims, families of victims, and offenders who are involved in treatment programs.

Nationally there are 574 federally recognized indigenous tribes including the Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina. There are 7 additionally state-recognized tribes including the Coharie, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Saponi, Haliwa Saponi, Waccamaw Siouan, and Sappony people. Other groups include the Guilford Native American Association, Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Metrolina Native American Association, and Triangle Native American Society. North Carolina has the largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River. As advised previously, the 2020 Census Bureau state report showed that approximately 1.1 percent of the population of North Carolina is American Indian or Alaskan Native alone however within 2019 American Community Survey data, 126,708 individuals

reported as American Indian or Native Alaskan alone with a total estimate of 208, 829 individuals who were identified as multi-racial with American Indian and Alaska Native and a combination of one or more other races (US Census, 2019).

The rise in people identifying as AIAN, alone or in combination with another race, made it the fastest-growing racial group in 37 NC counties. As referenced below by the map outlining county representation of tribal communities in North Carolina, American Indians, and Alaska Natives are present across the state. However, the total population is the largest in more rural counties. Robeson County has the largest AIAN population in North Carolina with 48,708 people, or 41.8 percent of the county population (the largest demographic group in the county). Swain County and Scotland County make up the top 3 with the largest percentage. It should be noted that the AIAN population decreased 9.5 percent from 2010 to 2020 in Robeson County, making it the only county with negative growth for this population group. Indicating that the community is further spreading throughout the state and a broader geographic scope of service providers will need to ensure capacity for culturally specific and effective services for those populations as well. Other identified needs for this plan and GCC to focus on assisting with through funding include that there are no hospitals in tribal territories to treating children who have been victims of sexual assault and there are no shelters for men who are victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault.

Figure 6: NC Tribal and Urban Communities

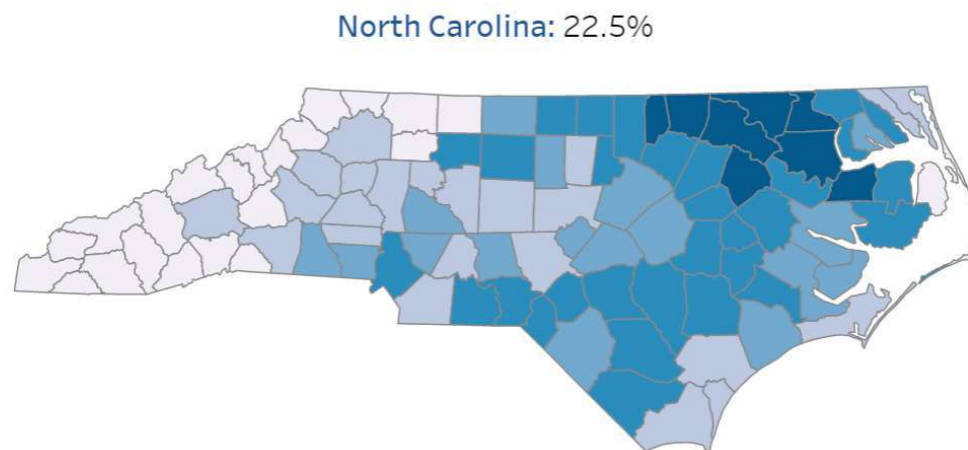


As of 2021 North Carolinians reporting their race as Black alone is 12.4 percent; Hispanic at 18.7 percent; Asian alone at 6 percent; American Indian and Alaska Native alone at 1.1 percent; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone at 0.2 percent; Some Other Race alone 8.4 percent and Two or More Races 10.2 percent. Within the 2019 data showing an estimated 2.4 million Black or African American individuals in North Carolina, approximately 53.3 percent are women and 46.7 percent are men. It is important to note that while 93 percent identify as Black or African American only, 7.1 percent identify as Black or African American as well as another race or multiple races, Hispanic or Latino being the most prevalent additional race identified within the Black or African community. Out of those 2.4 million, 99,815 individuals are foreign-born” with 66.4 percent immigrating from Africa and 28.8 percent immigrating from Latin America. Geographically as shown in Figure 7, central and eastern North Carolina have higher percentages of Black or African Americans alone or in Combination population, with counties in the Northeast portion of the state including Bertie County, Herford County, and Edgecombe showing the highest total percentage of the population. As of 2020,

Bertie County sees 65.6 percent of its population as Black or African American Alone or in combination. Bertie County is rural still and industry is agriculture based including tobacco and cotton which is relevant, as lands were worked by African slaves until after the Civil War. Hertford is also the home of the Meherrin Indian Tribe, with almost 1,000 members. Historically, part of Hertford and all of Edgecombe were broken off from Bertie County. For a better understanding of generational trauma, systemic racism that creates barriers to protections and legal services, and risk for victimization, these intersections are critical to acknowledge within all oppressed communities.

Figure 6: 2020 Total Population by County: Black or African American Alone or in Combination

**Percent Black or African American Alone or in Combination,
Total Population by County: 2020**



The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs summaries that North Carolina has one of the largest military footprints of any state in the country, representing three out of the four branches of service and totaling 129,049 in 2016. In 2019, nearly 642,000 veterans lived in North Carolina according to the most recent American Community Survey estimates. North Carolina is home to two major military bases—Fort Bragg (Army) and Camp Lejeune (Marine Corps)—in addition to two Marine Corps Air Stations at New River and Cherry Point and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. There were more than 40,000 incidents of domestic abuse involving service members, spouses, or intimate partners in fiscal years 2015 through 2019, according to an analysis of the military services' data conducted by the GAO. Of those incidents,

74 percent were physical abuse. A large issue that exists across the US and within North Carolina is that the "DoD hasn't collected comprehensive data about the number of allegations of domestic violence, which has been required by law since 1999, and data on actions taken by commanders in response to those allegations" (Jowers, 2020).

COVID-19, like in the case of non-military-related domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or dating violence has further exacerbated the ability of victim service providers to connect victims to critical services. During discussion within the STOP IP Advisory Group, Patricia Harris the founder of Women Veteran Support Services, Inc further illuminated that what direct service providers who work with active-duty military, veterans, and military families are *not* hearing is what is incredibly concerning. Also of note is the thousands of US active-duty military who have returned from the war in Afghanistan between 2020 and 2021 who may experience mental health issues that, when untreated, have been correlated to an increased risk of violence according to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Multiple recent surveys have provided updated data on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer population in the United States as well as within the state of North Carolina. Most significantly, the Census Bureau's 2021 Household Pulse survey found that at least 20 million adults in the U.S. identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, according to a new analysis of government data, representing nearly 8 percent of the nation's total adult population. According to a 2021 Trevor Project survey, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people, approximately 10.5 percent of 13- to 18-year-olds in the US identify as LGBTQ. It should be noted of course that a majority of LGBTQ statistics have been estimated and or cannot provide pinpoint accuracy due to a lack of consensus on how to measure and record sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as not all respondents feeling comfortable providing data and a lack of understanding or education on terms used when responding.

The 2020 Census Data also showed in North Carolina that there are just over 16,000 same-sex married couple households as well as just over 12,000 same-sex cohabitating couple households. Again, the Census does not include LGBTQ individuals who reside as single people

within the state or country. However, research done by UCLA Williams Institute found that North Carolina has approximately 382,000 individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the state, age 13 years old or up in 2020. A Gallup poll in conjunction with the Williams Institute found that 4 percent of adults in North Carolina identify as LGBTQ which is up from 3.3 percent identified in the previous STOP Implementation Plan (Jones, 2022). LGBTQ people experience domestic violence in 25-35 percent of relationships, which is the same rate as the general population. Black, Indigenous, and women of color who identify as bisexual and Black trans women are continually shown to have the highest risk for domestic violence and sexual assault, this increases even further when those individuals are disabled. LGBTQ victims face discrimination when accessing services, including being turned away from a shelter, mis-arrested as the primary aggressor by local law enforcement, and denied orders of protection. As of 2020, North Carolina had been the only state in the country that did not allow non-married or divorced LGBTQ individuals to be granted emergency domestic violence protections from abuse by a same-sex partner. However, at the end of 2020 and upheld by the NC Supreme Court in 2022, LGBTQ people who are dating or used to date in North Carolina can no longer be prevented from getting domestic violence protective orders (Doran, 2022).

As noted previously on page 10 of this implementation plan, the American Community Survey uses six questions to identify disabled persons including hearing disability, visual disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, and independent living disability. In 2019, 13.2 percent of North Carolinians reported having a disability, up from 12.4 percent of North Carolinians in 2015. Alone in the state, individuals who identify themselves as having a hearing difficulty are 366, 978 people, with a vision difficulty, is 244, 982 individuals, with cognitive disability 525, 670 individuals, with an ambulatory difficult 729, 524 individuals, with a self-care difficulty 261, 288 individuals, and with an independent living difficult is 482, 392 individuals. Many of these disabilities overlap but once again, this Census does not include institutionalized individuals; incarcerated or in a mental health facility. The Bureau of Justice statistics advised that incarcerated individuals are four times more likely to report having a disability and North Carolina has an incarcerated population of 29,858 people in the prison system as of April 2022 according to statistics from the NC Department of Public Safety. North

Carolina's veterans are much older, on average than the non-veteran adult population. 45 percent of NC veterans are 65 or older compared to just 20 percent of non-veteran adults. North Carolina veterans are nearly twice as likely to have a disability than non-veterans. Thirty percent of the state's veterans reported a disability in 2019.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' Crime Against Persons with Disabilities reported that people with disabilities are three times more likely to be sexually abused as children and three times more likely to be victims of violent crimes both as adolescents and adults. A report produced by the Vera Institute (2014) advised that victims with disabilities have higher rates of victimization as they often must rely on perpetrators for housing, care, and survival. Research has found that 68 percent to 83 percent of women with developmental disabilities will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime, which represents a 50 percent higher rate than the rest of the population. People with developmental disabilities are more likely to be re-victimized by the same person and more than half never seek assistance from legal or treatment services (Pease & Frantz, 1994). The Colorado Department of Health estimates that upward of 85 percent of women with disabilities are victims of domestic abuse, in comparison with, on average, 25 to 50 percent of the general population. It is not just individuals with developmental disabilities who suffer very high rates of victimization. A study of psychiatric inpatients found that 81 percent had been physically or sexually assaulted.

The 2021 Household Pulse survey showed that before COVID-19 in 2018-2019, the share of adults in North Carolina with a mental illness was 19.3 percent which ran similarly to the US share which was 19.9 percent at the time. Before the pandemic, 16.7 percent of adolescents and 7.6 percent of adults in North Carolina reported having a major depressive episode in the past year. Mental health conditions have been extenuated by the global pandemic and adults reporting symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder increased nationally to 31.6 percent of adults and was reflected in North Carolina to 35 percent of adults reporting such symptoms. Leading up to the pandemic, large shares of adults with mental illness did not receive care. As shown in the figure below, in North Carolina, 61.4 percent (459,000) of adults with mild mental illness, 53.5 percent (233,000) of adults with moderate mental illness, and 29.4 percent (108,000) of adults with serious mental illness in the past year did not receive mental health

treatment. People with mental health conditions have a significantly higher risk of becoming victims of violence compared to the general population. Significant differences between male and female individuals have also been described in the general population and among people with severe mental illness: men are more often victims of violence overall while women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence and sexual offenses. Counseling services were provided as a needed service 70, 639 times in conjunction with domestic violence services from July 2020 to July 2021. In that same time frame, as reported by Council for Women and Youth Involvement, counseling services were provided as a needed service 22, 176 times in conjunction with sexual assault services across the state from July 2020 to July 2021.

Data from the NC Department of Health and Human Services advised that in 2020, over 9 North Carolinians died each day from a drug overdose. From 2000 to 2020, more than 28,000 North Carolinians lost their lives to a drug overdose. overdoses are rising more quickly among communities of color. The annual growth rate from 2018 to 2020 for Black individuals (16.1 percent) and Latinx individuals (12.6 percent) well surpassed the rate of white individuals during the same period (3.8 percent). What's more, overdoses among Native Americans are above the national average, and the rate continues to grow according to the National Vital Statistics System. In 2018, more than 175,000 deaths in the U.S. were related to alcohol and other drugs. That makes substance use the third largest cause of death in the nation. In September 2020, 15.1 percent of U.S. adults reported new or increased substance use due to pandemic-related stress. Deaths due to drug overdose also increased from over 72,000 deaths nationally in 2019 to over 93,000 deaths in 2020.

For many survivors who use substances, it is a way to cope with the traumatic effects of abuse (Bennett & O'Brien, 2007; Schumacher & Holt, 2012, Warshaw et al., 2014, Wingwood et al., 2000), others are coerced into using by an abusive partner who then sabotages their efforts toward recovery. The data as a whole indicate a high prevalence of co-existing IPV and substance use or abuse. However, the exact prevalence rates of substance use or abuse among IPV survivors vary from 18-72 percent, and the prevalence rates of IPV among people using substances vary from 31-90 percent. People who have experienced sexual violence are more likely to abuse substances. At the same time, people who abuse substances are at a higher risk

to become victims of sexual violence. Teens with substance use issues are 18-21 times more likely to be sexually abused. Approximately one-half of all sexual assault victims report that they were drinking alcohol at the time of their assault. Perpetrators target victims who are perceived as vulnerable and often use substances to incapacitate their victims to facilitate a sexual assault. These trends are also true for dating violence which can be emotional, physical, and/or sexual, and it also includes stalking.

North Carolina is home to more than 100 colleges and universities including 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities as well as 1 college that historically serves a largely indigenous population. At North Carolina colleges, there are 564,470 students including 486,732 undergraduate and 77,738 graduate school students in total for the academic year 2021-2022. By attendance status, there are 351,384 full-time and 213,086 part-time students with a gender distribution of 224,901 male and 339,569 female students. As illustrated in the map below, campuses are spread across the state in rural, urban, and suburban areas with previously mentioned diverse geographical and economic structures as well as demographics that surround and inhabit the campuses.

Figure 8: Colleges in North Carolina



Data shows that gender-based violence is prevalent on college campuses and among college-aged individuals. Male college-aged students (18-24) are 78 percent more likely than non-students of the same age to be a victim of rape or sexual assault. Female college-aged

students (18-24) are 20 percent less likely than non-students of the same age to be a victim of rape or sexual assault. 5.8 percent of students have experienced stalking since entering college. Only about 1 in 5 college-aged female survivors has received assistance from a victim services agency. 23.1 percent of TGQN (transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming) college students have been sexually assaulted. Only 20 percent of female student victims, aged 18-24, report to law enforcement. Only 32 percent of non-student females of the same age do make a report therefore many of the statistics regarding the victimization of college students are not accurate for many of the same reasons. 1 in 5 college women reports physical abuse, sexual abuse, or threats of physical violence (Knowledge Networks, 2011). The same study also revealed that more than half of college students surveyed (57 percent) said that it's difficult to identify dating abuse and 58 percent said that they don't know what to do to help someone who is a victim of dating abuse.

Effective intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence can prevent new victims from being created, as well as prevent current victims from being revictimized. In North Carolina, Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (DVIPs) provide state-approved 26-week treatment programs for domestic violence offenders. The purpose of these programs is to increase victim safety and hold offenders accountable for their actions by intervening, addressing, and changing abusive behaviors. Many counties in the state either do not have access to these programs or do not fully utilize available ones. Currently, 102 victim services agencies are in the state of North Carolina, while there are only 45 certified DVIPS. In 2016-2017, DVIP services were available in 72 counties; today, there are only available in 45. The increasing number of victims served by the state demonstrates the growing need for offender services. In 2016-2017, while the number of domestic violence victims served in North Carolina increased 13.7 percent from 51,074 to 59,239 in 2019-2020, DVIP enrollment decreased 40 percent from 3,996 to 1,656 during that same time. The rising number of victims utilizing services demonstrates the need to better explore funding and programming for offenders to address and change their abusive behaviors through effective treatment programs and highlights the discrepancy in access and utilization of offender services in the state.

III. Description of Planning Process

A. Planning Process

The Implementation Plan is in service to North Carolina state, local, and community-based programs, as well as government agencies to seek out and identify the needs and challenges they face in ensuring those affected by violence can access services in a trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and evidence-based manner. While the social, economic, cultural, and demographic make-up of the population of North Carolina changes from year to year, women and children remain the most vulnerable population to violence and many underserved populations continue to be at increased risk for victimization with fewer resources to meet those unique needs.

The Implementation Plan Advisory Group has agreed that quarterly meetings are appropriate and provide input from their perspectives and areas of expertise to make us aware of emerging issues and populations that have not been effectively served or have emerged as having an immediate need for prioritization. Representatives from stakeholder communities were invited by email to join the Implementation Planning Team as well as during one-on-one meetings with GCC Planning staff. Outreach through email, phone calls, and networking with current members has expanded the Advisory group over the past year to include representatives previously insufficiently represented including tribal communities, mental health professionals, as well as probation and parole staff. This outreach is ongoing to ensure increased accessibility and lower barriers for a fully representative Advisory Group. Members who agreed to join the team were requested to review the previous plan and use their expertise to identify new priorities, areas of unmet need, best practices, and suggest ways that VAWA funds could be best used in North Carolina.

The process for creating the STOP Implementation Plan begins with collecting information from subrecipients and victim service agencies across North Carolina that may not receive funding currently from VAWA STOP or other federal resources. The Governor's Crime Commission also solicits expertise from statewide partner agencies/coalitions that

coordinate the management of services to victims of crime. The overall goal is to ensure local communities and local government agencies have the resources needed to implement services and improve the efficacy level of services provided to women who are victims of violence. By providing funding to these agencies, GCC can directly support and assist these entities in establishing or expanding comprehensive plans to address violence against women in their communities. The funding also further allows these agencies to be responsive as those plans change, potentially abruptly and acutely, as was necessary throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic and through recent social movements highlighting violence against marginalized groups. VAWA funding priorities are established based on federal guidelines and the needs of communities across the state.

The Implementation Plan was developed during several planning team meetings via in-person meetings with virtual attendance options that began in 2019 and then transitioned to fully virtual meetings through 2022. The initial meeting was in September of 2019 and the agenda included an overview of the STOP Implementation Plan that had been previously submitted and approved, the purpose of the advisory group, brainstorming for the development of the upcoming STOP Implementation Plan, and the next steps to address purpose areas and funding needs. During the September meeting, GCC staff distributed the 2017-2020 STOP Implementation Plan via email and then provided the Implementation Plan checklist as well as the OVW Purpose Areas to all attendees both in-person and virtually. A large piece of this development during the first meeting included identifying underserved populations that had been previously documented as well as those that were being currently identified but *not* previously documented in the 2017 STOP IP. Additionally, service needs for these communities as well as barriers to services were a large part of the preliminary discussions and developing a consensus on how VAWA funds and documentation in the 2022 STOP IP could address these items.

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the extensive increased needs for program staff and service recipients, the Implementation Plan Advisory Group did not meet again until September 2020. During the September 2020 meeting, the Advisory Group reviewed the purpose of the VAWA STOP Implementation Plan and continued with the

process of identifying needs for specific providers including Prosecutors, Law Enforcement, Courts, Victim Services, and the specialty allocations for culturally specific agencies, sexual assault projects, and underserved communities. COVID-19's impact was a large topic of conversation, based both on the immediate needs that came to light as well as the longer-term needs due to the understanding that the global pandemic and its effect on victims would not be temporary. With such an unprecedented event and its deep impact on organizations, direct service staff, and survivors, it necessitated an extensive review and assessment of needs, barriers, and how funding can be most effectively and efficiently utilized once the Advisory Group met again in August 2021. Before the meeting, VAWA staff prioritized outreach to North Carolina's tribal communities and leadership to address a gap in representation on the Advisory Group and to establish an improved relationship for further collaboration and identified funding opportunities. The July 2021 Advisory Group Meeting was held, and plan development focused on agreements of underserved populations, priority populations, barriers to service, and emergent needs since the previous meeting occurred in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Portions of this STOP Implementation Plan in draft were sent out via email in January 2022 for feedback and input from the Advisory Group. While it was being written, GCC Planning staff continued to complete one on one meetings with tribal representatives and tribal organizations, as well as Latino organizations to better understand outreach needs and historical process barriers to engaging with GCC and funding processes.

Current and former GCC staff contributing to the implementation planning team include Sandy Dixon, Lead Crime Victim Services Planner, Karen Lombri, the former Lead VAWA Administrator, Daun Brown, the current VAWA Lead Administrator, Lindsay Bohan, VOCA Planner, Shagufta Hakeem, former VAWA Planner, Diane Barber-Whitaker, Deputy Director and Caroline Farmer, Executive Director of The Governor's Crime Commission. Additional staff includes six crime victim services grant management specialists who work with individually funded projects across the state. Grants management specialists provide fiscal oversight and programmatic monitoring of individual subrecipient agencies. GCC staff is supported by the appointed members of the Governor's Crime Commission, the

management team, and the NC Department of Public Safety as a whole.

**B. 2022-2025 NC Governor's Crime Commission VAWA Implementation Planning Team
 Members**

Name	Agency/Address	Email	Phone
Deanna Harrington - Sexual Assault Statewide Coalition	Director of Member Services, TTA - North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault 811 Spring Road Suite 900 Raleigh, NC 27609	deanna@nccasa.org	919-871-1015
Erica Blackwood - Sexual Assault Statewide Coalition	Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative Specialist - North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault 811 Spring Road Suite 900 Raleigh, NC 27609	erica@nccasa.org	919-871-1015
Alice Lutz - Family Services/Supervised Visitation	Chief Executive Officer - Triangle Family Services 3937 Western Boulevard Raleigh, NC 27606	Alutz@tfsnc.org	919-821-0790 ext 107
Jennifer Brewer-Young Lumbree Tribe	Vice-Chair - American Indian Women of Proud Nations	jby4819@yahoo.com	336-312-9330
Seema Kak - Southeast Asian Victims	Executive Director - Kiran 1012 Oberlin Road, Raleigh NC 27605	seema@kiraninc.org	919.831.4203
Amber Barwick - NC Courts Prosecutor	Domestic and Sexual Violence Resource Prosecutor - NC Conference of District Attorneys PO Box 3159 Cary, NC 27519	Amber.LuekenBarwick@nccourts.org	919-890-1500
Tiffany Bell - Domestic Violence Offender Management Committee Chair	DVIP Program Director - Sparc Foundation 225 E Chestnut Street Asheville, NC 28801	tbell@thesparcfoundation.org	828-707-7330

Patricia Harris - Women Veterans/Military families	Executive Director - Women's Veterans Support Services	sgtpattycak1wvss@gmail.com	Needed
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- **See Appendix A for a full list of 2022-2025 NC Governor's Crime Commission VAWA STOP Implementation Advisory Group**
- **See Appendix B for Implementation Planning Participation Forms**

Documentation from each member of the planning committee as to their participation in the planning process. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(B); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(b)(7)).

1. North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault
2. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence
3. ~~Dual Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition~~ N/A
4. Law enforcement entity or State law enforcement organization
5. Prosecution entity or State prosecution organization
6. A court or the State Administrative Office of the Courts
7. Representatives from tribes, tribal organizations, or tribal coalitions
8. Population-specific organizations representing the most significant underserved populations and culturally specific populations in the State other than tribes (which are addressed separately)
9. Other if relevant (including survivors, probation, parole, etc.)

C. Consultation and Coordination with Collaboration Partners not included in the Planning Committee.

There were barriers to communication and identification of collaboration partners outside of the planning committee, these included decreased capacity of The Governor's Crime Commission as a result of staff turnover and increased workload, in conjunction with off-cycle funding of COVID-19 resources. GCC pulls data from VAWA STOP reports and reports from domestic violence and sexual assault providers through the NC Council for Women and Youth Involvement as well as the Domestic Violence Commission which is under the NC Council for Women, the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Administration, Administrative Office of the Courts, and additional state government

partners. The Governor's Crime Commission is in the process of hiring additional planning staff on the Crime Victim Services Team which administers VOCA and VAWA funds to further engage providers, expand capacity to implement consistent outreach efforts, and meaningfully consult with population-specific organizations, representatives from underserved populations, and culturally specific organizations. The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission has a specific funding priority, outlined in the state's solicitation, for programs that target underserved victim populations. It is posted on the GCC website and describes the populations outlined by VAWA. In addition, The DV/SA planning team continually works to gather information from programs that help to identify underserved populations; their characteristics, location, and needs. With the goal of being fully staffed and trained by the end of 2022, the Crime Victim Services Team will be able to re-establish and build holistic and stable coordination with agencies, service providers, and underserved communities to better ensure the sustainability and implementation of this plan and structures to provide meaningful feedback on progress. Efforts and planning for this goal are ongoing and the expansion with the current planning staff has begun.

Outreach meetings have been held with agencies serving Latinx and LGBTQIA survivors and continue to be prioritized to bring victim service providers in as collaborative partners for consultation and planning around the on-the-ground implementation of this plan. Those agencies include the Association of Mexicans in NC, the NC Latino COVID-19 Task Force, and the Centro Unido Latino-Americano who assist in providing direct services but do not necessarily have funding or structured organizations as partners. GCC staff is also in the process of consulting with GCC committee and advisory group members who are not represented within the STOP IP Advisory Group but who would provide beneficial expertise and consultation moving forward.

D. Consultation and Coordination with Tribes

As previously noted in the description of the planning process, there has been an ongoing gap in the North Carolina STOP Implementation Plan and planning process as it pertains to the consistent, meaningful, and fully inclusive representation of the tribal communities across the state. This has been further impacted by COVID-19 and the inability for relationship-building to include face-to-face interactions, community events, or site visits to better understand how American Indian tribes in North Carolina are serving victims of

domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence within their unique and culturally specific communities. Tribes were contacted from the following: Coharie, Haliwa Saponie, Lumbee, Occaneechee, Sappony, and Waccamaw Siouan. The tribal representatives were contacted via phone, email, and video chat. Many tribal members also attended the virtual STOP Advisory Meeting on July 14, 2021. Additional communication, including emails and phone calls, was completed before the next Advisory Group meeting to maintain contact with tribal representation who were present in July 2021 as well as develop a better understanding of specific tribal community needs of sexual assault victims, domestic violence victims, dating violence victims, and stalking victims as well as barriers to service and barriers to the application process. By September 2021 however, all VAWA-specific planning staff transitioned from GCC to other positions. VOCA planning staff stepped in and began to follow up with representatives from The NC Commission on Indian Affairs and leadership with American Indian Women of Proud Nations. During this communication, multiple areas of improvement and outreach were identified to have meaningful collaboration and engagement in the planning process as well as increase culturally specific VAWA STOP funding to tribal organizations providing services to sexual assault victims, domestic violence victims, and dating violence victims, and stalking victims. These will be outlined in detail in Section V. Once again, this is an ongoing process and will require consistent and long-term efforts that the Governor's Crime Commission is committed to prioritizing, as North Carolina has diverse and thriving American Indian communities that continue to be in critical need of funding and support.

E. Summary of Major Concerns

A summary of major concerns that were expressed during the July 14, 2021, STOP Advisory Meeting involved gaps in victim services related to continued and increasing critical need for language access, access to services in conjunction with accessibility and transportation, court-related obstacles and issues related to a lack of resources for agencies from tribal representation to culturally specific organizations. These major concerns are outlined in this plan and goals to address these concerns are documented to address this

through prioritized VAWA STOP funding as able as well as procedures within the application process to reduce barriers, meaningful outreach, and advertisement, and consistent communication/networking to ensure year-round feedback and responsiveness to the needs of victims and service providers. During the draft review for the Implementation Plan, there were no major concerns reported however thorough and considerate input was provided regarding the most up-to-date verbiage for programming and trauma-informed, client-centered language, as well as a broader understanding of domestic violence intervention programming in the state and underserved populations which was utilized to edit the final version of the plan.

➤ **See Appendix C for Supporting Documentation**

F. Description of Coordination with FVPSA/VOCA/RPE

North Carolina coordinates this Implementation plan with the State Plan for the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and the programs under the Victims of Crime Act and section 393A of the Public Health Service Act. The North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement under the NC Department of Administration administers the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program, which serves as the primary federal funding stream dedicated to the support of emergency shelter and related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their children. The Governor's Crime Commission uses the NCFWYI generated and approved list of their funded recipients as the basis for our non-competitive, basic service grant-making of VOCA funds to domestic violence and sexual assault providers. In this way, we collaborate with NCFWYI to financially support a coordinated group of North Carolina service providers across the state, covering as many counties and service areas as possible, that meet the VOCA requirements, the FVPSA requirements, and those of the VAWA/STOP program.

In North Carolina, The Department of Health and Human Services administers The NC Rape Prevention Education program as outlined in section 393A of the Public Health Service Act. The program currently funds ten local agencies to provide primary prevention programming in their communities. Under RPE funding, these agencies can develop policies

and provide educational services in their communities. In addition, funds are provided to the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) to facilitate training and to build statewide capacity for sexual violence prevention through technical assistance, training, and tool development for these 10 RPE-funded and other local rape crisis centers and community agencies. NCCASA also is tasked with maintaining a resource library and website that provide information on sexual violence and effective prevention strategies; and various other tasks that support the prevention of sexual violence across the state.

In addition, the CFWYI team and DHHS each have a representative on the VAWA STOP IP Advisory Group, who participates with GCC and the statewide coalitions in quarterly meetings. In July 2021, both agency Program Managers presented to the full STOP Advisory Group on FVPSA and RPE funding to further explain eligibility, allocations, and administration of the funds along with how they have historically collaborated with the Governor's Crime Commission and VAWA STOP to meet the needs of service providers and North Carolina. The meetings serve, in part, as a venue to share information, but also to coordinate the provision of technical assistance or other services to fund programs that are experiencing difficulties, undergoing significant change, or that have otherwise been identified as in need of technical assistance.

In addition to employing VAWA funds to address strategies and goals, the planning staff of the Crime Commission coordinates the use of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds, Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program (Byrne) funds, state funds administered through the CFW, the Department of Health and Human Services, United Way funds, and whenever possible, private funding. While some of these alternative funding sources are limited, it is important to recognize and take advantage of every resource available to assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. As previously noted, a primary goal within this STOP Implementation Plan is rebuilding the capacity of the Crime Victim Services Planning Team to prioritize outreach and communication pathways with collaborators. In addition, new staff within collaborating agencies need to be contacted and onboarded regarding VAWA STOP funds, the STOP Implementation Plan, how funding sources overlap and enhance programming for victims of

sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking as well as how the State will hold offenders who commit each of these crimes accountable. This will allow for more consistent, meaningful consultation and sustainable problem-solving alongside strong coordination of all funds within state administering agencies across North Carolina.

IV. Documentation from Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Court, and Victim Services Programs

➤ **See Appendix D for Supporting Documentation from Current Grantees**

Multiple agencies were reached out to in order to meet this documentation requirement however either due to the time frame or other interfering situations, we only received 3 response letters. GCC can make further efforts to meet this requirement fully or utilize the amendment process in 2023 for the updated context needs that came through the 2022 VAWA Reauthorization.

V. Plan for the Four-Year Implementation Period

A. Goals and Objectives

Four main goals will be prioritized under this program that has coalesced through communication within the Governor's Crime Commission and consistently throughout statewide partners, VAWA-funded agencies, and non-funded service providers. These goals encompass federally mandated requirements, state requirements, and agency-specific understanding of gaps in our current operations.

1. To utilize improved data from sources including the newly created Justice Data Portal from the Criminal Justice Analysis Center and the UNC-Chapel Hill Victim Needs Assessment that is projected to be completed by the end of 2022, to confirm identified underserved populations, service needs, and barriers and expand understanding of gaps where VAWA STOP funding can effectively address issues.
 - The CJAC Justice Data Portal is currently live with crime statistics per reporting state and counties from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation. By the end of 2022, this data portal will include victimization information, offender data, and

- victim-offender relationship data from additional sources. This portal and data will be available publicly.
- The UNC-Chapel Hill Victim Needs Assessment is projected to be completed by the end of 2022 and in Spring 2023 will be brought to the full appointed Governor's Crime Commission, the Crime Victim Services Committee, and Advisory group, as well as to the VAWA Implementation Plan Committee. The assessment will be utilized to inform 2023 priorities both for funding and legislative recommendations.
 - In addition to these new data tools, through the duration of this Implementation Plan, VAWA STOP staff along with the statewide coalitions and the Advisory Group will continue to identify data sources in progress and already in place that should be highlighted for the above goal as well as the rest of the goals of the STOP Implementation plan including but limited to reporting from:
 - ✚ Camino Research Institute on the North Carolina Latino Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (NCLCSA)
 - ✚ The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Content Analysis of Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Reports
 - ✚ Sovereign Bodies Institute – Missing Murdered Indigenous Women Database
 - ✚ North Carolina Justice Center - North Carolina Poverty Report
 - ✚ Disability Rights North Carolina
 - ✚ North Carolina Rural Center
2. To establish a meaningful and consistent outreach process within the Crime Victim Services Planning Team that prioritizes relationship-building and sustainable networks for assessing agency needs, funding barriers, and application barriers, especially for historically underserved communities including Black, Indigenous, and people of color as well as smaller, non-mainstream service providers who are culturally specific.
- Fully staff Crime Victim Services Planning Team by end of 2022 including both VAWA and VOCA Planners.
 - Continue coordination of virtual outreach calls and application training for the 2022 Application cycle that begins in November 2022.

- Develop Standard Operating Procedures around the yearly schedule of application workshops and individual agency training with prioritization of culturally specific and underserved populations to ensure allocation percentages and mandated set-asides are being met and exceeded when appropriate.
 - Continue attendance and presentation virtually as well as in-person with COVID protocols in place as appropriate, at community events and collaboration meetings for relationship building and advertisement of relevant funding priorities.
 - Ongoing assessment and feedback to GCC leadership and OVW regarding the identification of barriers to the application and funding processes. This will be marked by agenda items during the quarterly Implementation Plan meetings, Committee and Commission Meetings where relevant, to ensure state and federal entities are lowering barriers so that historically high-risk, underfunded communities and organizations can more easily access critical funding.
 - Consideration of extending funding cycle length, changing application calendar, provision of off-cycle grants, and additional advocacy for procedure changes are included in this goal however these are not all strategies able to be considered.
3. To develop and strengthen North Carolina's access to language services across law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim services, and discretionary allocation categories to better support effective offender accountability and treatment, and enhance services to victims, particularly within disabled, culturally specific non-English, and limited English speaking communities.
- Assess 2021 VAWA applications being scored for specifications of budgeted services including language line access or other language-related services. Approximately 30 percent of 2020-funded VAWA projects included language line access or related services within the project application. Budgeted items and application language will assist in supporting changes needed to 2023 VAWA Request for Application and Application questions within GEMS to ensure requests are being made and standards are being met by all funded projects.

- Collaborate with statewide coalitions to provide domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking specific training to language line services to ensure all commonly utilized services have at least a basic understanding of core terms and definitions for proper context and definitions to ensure accurate translation and interpretation services. Prioritize local and state of North Carolina-specific providers and expand out from statewide services if needed, however, the priority is within the state at this time.
 - Review of federal and state mandates to be completed by staff yearly as well to ensure understanding of legal standards and ADA standards, along with a review of Fundamental Elements of Accessibility published by The North Carolina Office on Disability and Health. The review will also be completed with the Implementation Plan during at least two quarterly meetings to understand practical use including both service provider impact as well as impact to survivors.
 - Ensure all public meetings held by Governor's Crime Commission includes interpretation services both ASL and any additional language needed including automatic captioning by end of 2022. In addition, move towards Request For Application and all required application documentation having publicly posted Spanish versions. Additional input will expand translated languages as needed by subrecipients and service providers who wish to apply for funding.
4. To improve and enhance current approaches to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking through further developing and strengthening the North Carolina criminal justice system's response to and understanding of trauma within these types of victimizations. This includes historical systemic barriers to marginalized communities that contribute to a lack of reporting or utilizing criminal-legal avenues for safety and accountability. This will be done to support and enhance services for victims who interact with the criminal justice system however it can also be utilized for the criminal justice system and community-based providers to better collaborate. Training can aid in a broader understanding of survivor-centered and led strategies such as restorative or transformative

justice practices that are outside of criminal-legal and carceral response pathways when appropriate.

- In 2020 VAWA-funded projects, approximately 30 percent prioritize improving interactions with all levels of the criminal justice system to increase reporting and successful legal interventions to victimization. The GCC Crime Victim Services Planning team will assess 2021 and 2022 projects for budget items and application narratives to better understand needs across geographic and demographic populations as well as county and city jurisdictions that would like to implement programs with these goals but have yet to secure funding.
- Engage in training and presentation opportunities utilizing state and national experts with state and local criminal justice departments (law enforcement, courts, prosecutors) regarding restorative justice and transformative justice practices as they are applied to working with victims and offenders in the response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- Educate and fund projects with law enforcement, court officials, and legal service providers specifically about tribal populations in North Carolina. Education is needed to appropriately respond to the cultural and historical factors of working with the tribal population as a victim or offender. The family composition and cultural responses of tribal families also impact how receptive a victim may be to receive assistance, especially assistance from agencies outside the tribal unit. In addition, service providers require adequate training to learn how to navigate tribal government's policies and procedures for protective orders.
- Educate and fund projects with law enforcement, court officials, and legal service providers regarding marginalized communities particularly Black victims, people of color, LGBTQIA+ victims, disabled victims, and those existing at the intersections of such communities to better address community-specific abuse dynamics and needs for interaction with the criminal-legal system. This will be in addition to systemic barriers to marginalized communities that contribute to a lack of reporting or utilizing criminal-legal avenues, for safety and accountability.

The state's goals and objectives during the implementation period will be initially met through analysis and review of current VAWA STOP funding procedures that are documented through the VAWA STOP RFA. The STOP Request for Application and Priority Areas outline the total award allocations every year. This document is posted publicly on the Governor's Crime Commission website at the beginning of the application period in November of every year, however, the allocations and priorities are reviewed with subrecipients during September virtual workshops as well as online shortly thereafter for all potential subrecipients. It currently outlines the federally mandated allocations with 35 percent going to Victim Services which is 5 percent above the mandated allocation, 25 percent to Law Enforcement, 25 percent to prosecutors, 5 percent to State and Local Courts, and 10 percent to discretionary prevention and domestic violence intervention programs. The Crime Victim Services Committee in the 2021 session decided to increase the Victim Services percentage by 5 percent, removing 5 percent from discretionary to ensure there was more funding available for that priority. These funds are distributed as noted and then additionally have application submission limits and growth limits to ensure effective and representative funding across distribution areas. Project applications have been limited to 0 percent growth over the last few years however every year, funding levels and identified priorities will be assessed to determine when those growth limits can be adjusted and with what goals in mind. Each year the Crime Victim Services committee takes costs associated with the provision of services into account as well as additional concerns voiced among applicants. Funding limits read as follows for the FFY 2021 VAWA STOP applications:

STOP Application Limitations and Funding Caps

Application Submission Limits: Agencies may only submit one application under each GCC Funding Priority Service Area for the STOP program. NOTE: A prosecutorial district is a single subrecipient. Additional applications will not be considered for funding.

Growth: As funding is limited, agencies requesting funding for continuation projects in the Victim Services and Discretionary priorities are limited to 0% growth. This means that an agency applying for a previously GCC funded project can only apply for the same amount of the previously funded project. If an agency submits an application with an increased budget, the application may not be considered for funding.

NOTE: Projects must take into consideration the Growth Limitation (above) when reviewing the Funding Caps outlined below.

Priority	Maximum Federal Share
State and Local Courts	Non Competitive, designated agency only, will be notified of the amount by GCC.
Victim Services	Up to \$200,000
Law Enforcement	Direct Services Up to \$100,000 for projects with less than 2 FTE equivalent staff member(s) Up to \$150,000 for projects with 2 or more FTE equivalent staff members. Training of Frontline Staff Up to \$55,000 for regional training grants of Sworn Officers Up to \$200,000 for statewide training grants of Sworn Officers
Prosecutors	Direct Services Up to \$100,000 for projects with less than 2 FTE equivalent staff member(s)

	Up to \$150,000 for projects with 2 or more FTE equivalent staff members Training of Frontline Staff Up to \$55,000 for regional training grants of Prosecutors Up to \$200,000 for statewide training grants of Prosecutors
Discretionary	Batterer’s Intervention Programs Up to \$55,000 for <u>individual regions</u> and Up to \$100,000* for programs that propose to <u>expand and serve multiple regions</u> Prevention Programs Up to \$55,000

As outlined in the goals and objectives, the Requests for Application and current VAWA STOP projects will be reviewed by Crime Victim Services staff, the Implementation Planning Advisory Group, and Crime Victim Services Committee to align, including the goals based on the statutory priority areas.

➤ **See Appendix E for Supporting Documentation**

B. Statutory Priority Areas

Within the allocations for the priority areas that have statutory minimums, GCC has outlined focus areas across Victim Services, Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and State and Local Courts to illustrate the sexual assault set aside and the projected amount of the total award that **MUST** be awarded to projects that solely and meaningfully address sexual assault. During the application process, GCC encourages the applicants to develop projects that:

1. Support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking by ensuring that the stigma of reporting is no longer a barrier for victims.
2. Providing resources for training to help law enforcement better understand victims and ultimately reduce any stigma around reporting.
3. Utilize best practices and/or evidence-based interventions.

Additionally, within the Priority Service Areas, applicants are directed to identify in their application ONE of the following for the proposed project:

- 1. Victim Services**
- 2. Law Enforcement**
- 3. Prosecutors**
- 4. State and Local Courts** – designated agencies only; if you are not contacted by

GCC, you are not eligible

5. Discretionary

- a. Court Sanctioned Domestic Violence Intervention Programs

As per the North Carolina Administrative Code, programs must be certified by N.C. Council for Women and Youth Involvement.

- b. Primary and Secondary Prevention

Primary prevention means strategies, programming, and activities to stop both first-time perpetration and first-time victimization. Primary prevention is stopping domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking before they occur. Secondary prevention is identifying risk factors or problems that may lead to future domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and taking the necessary actions to eliminate the risk factors and the potential problem. No more than 5 percent of the State's total STOP award may be used for this purpose.

Secondarily applicants are advised to identify IF their proposed project plans to serve one of two STOP Focus Areas including Sexual Assault and Culturally Specific projects. The **Sexual Assault focus area** advises the following:

Projects in the Victim Services, Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and/or Courts Priority Service Area are eligible to choose this Focus Area. Discretionary projects are not eligible for this focus area. Projects must have a sole and legitimate focus on sexual assault and personnel funded under the projects must have sufficient expertise and experience in the field of sexual assault response.

To better ensure that not only the sexual assault set aside is met but that it is doing so in a way that aligns with state goals to positively impact service needs and barriers that have been outlined within the underserved populations, in particular, the following actions are being implemented and will be further assessed for impact throughout the life of this plan.

- Due to the impact of COVID on direct service agencies, including sexual assault agencies across the state in 2020 who had to convert many services to virtual, saw disruptions in reporting and access to services, as well as turnover and funding issues, an extension has been submitted to OVW for VAWA STOP funds. The 2021 applications are also showing that the sexual assault set-aside is very close to being met and the 2022 allocation has been met. They are being reviewed by the Crime Victim Services team and will be reviewed by the Crime Victim Services Committee for scoring to assess what service gaps exist both in types of services within project narratives and budgets but also geographically and as it pertains to underserved populations.

- Collaborate with NCCASA, sexual assault agencies, and the Implementation Planning Team to review the current Request for Applications and priorities as they are listed to better reflect sexual assault set-aside instructions and explanation of needed projects. Also collaborate on outreach efforts to new agencies providing sexual assault services and culturally specific agencies providing sexual assault services who are not aware of VAWA STOP funding but who could apply. This, as well as working with currently funded agencies to increase capacity regarding needed services for sexual assault victims, including, but not limited to peer-to-peer support, training for law enforcement and courts, mental health and trauma counseling, in-home services, and on-campus services.

Reducing Domestic Violence-Related Homicides

Within the state of North Carolina, there are multiple reporting entities around domestic violence-related homicides. Under a state law enacted in 2007, law enforcement agencies are required annually to report to the State Bureau of Investigation (NCSBI) homicides in which the offender had a personal relationship with the victim as defined by Chapter 50B-1(b) of the NC General Statutes. Reporting of domestic violence-related homicides is an ongoing requirement for all state and local law enforcement agencies and is reported yearly through the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigations. The yearly report released by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety was developed in consultation with N.C. Council for Women and the Domestic Violence Commission, N.C. Sheriffs' Association, and N.C. Association of Chiefs of Police. It should be noted, however, that a domestic violence homicide report is completed upon the "filing of charges, or when charges have been filed against the offender if other circumstances, (like the death of the offender) had not intervened." As such, it has accuracy issues in that any domestic violence-related homicides which do not fit the constraints to be added to a report, will not be counted even if there are additional circumstances or knowledge that confirms or has clear reason to believe a domestic violence homicide has occurred.

Their data reports that in 2019, there were 108 victims of domestic violence-related homicides, with 134 victims in 2020, and 148 victims during the 2021 calendar year. In each of these years,

over 60 percent of those killed were female, and close to 80 percent of the offenders were male. The relationship between the individuals is noted, with the majority across the three years being “related as parents and children, including others acting in loco parentis to a minor child, or as grandparents and grandchildren”, “Current or former household members” and “persons of the opposite sex who live together, or have lived together”. It should also be noted that for reporting, same-sex couples are not included in significant sections of the reporting and are left out by the wording of “persons of opposite sex” in definitions. In addition, race/ethnicity is not reflected in the data for DV homicides.

The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence also maintains a list of domestic violence homicides in the state as they occur yearly and advises that the list “serves as a memorial to the victims of domestic violence and their surviving families”. The data currently tracks deaths that are a result of intimate partner violence and includes both victims killed directly by their current or former intimate partner, as well third parties who are killed as a result of intimate partner violence. Within their tracking, intimate partners include both same-sex and opposite-sex. Their data collection is noted to not be an official record of all domestic violence homicides and family homicides as they are primarily pulled from media reports and are included based on “case-specific information that demonstrates a correlation between intimate partner violence and the death of the victim”. In 2019, there were 57 DV homicides listed, with 61 DV homicides listed in 2020, and 63 DV homicides listed in 2021. Despite different definitions and thresholds for consideration of DV homicides, both sources show increases from 2019 to 2021. Due to NCCADV counting same-sex intimate partner relationships and not necessarily those DV homicides that result in legal charges to the offender, it is very possible and likely that some of the domestic violence homicides reflected are not actively counted by the NCSBI report.

Another reporting system utilized for DV homicides is the North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS). The data dashboard is public health, a population-based surveillance system that contains detailed information on deaths that result from violence. It is operated by the North Carolina Division of Public Health's Injury and Violence Prevention

Branch under the Department of Health and Human Services. Its most recent report on Intimate Partner Violence in North Carolina was for 2019 data. Where it reported 109 IPV-related homicides. Approximately 40 percent of female homicides in 2019 were as a result of intimate partner violence compared to 9 percent of males. Female IPV-related homicide victims were most likely to have been killed by a current spouse or partner. This data source does include race/ethnicity and shows that 41.1 percent of the IPV homicide victims were non-Hispanic and white, while the second most prevalent race at 38.7 percent was non-Hispanic black victims. A total of three female victims of other races/ethnicities (non-Hispanic Asian, American Indian, and unknown race/ethnicity) were excluded from the percentages however were important to note for acknowledgment of those individuals and to further express the need for improved data and records for accurate reflection of victims.

According to the CDC, Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women experienced the highest rates of homicide (4.4 and 4.3 per 100,000 population) and over half of all homicides (55 percent) were related to IPV. American Indian and Alaska Native women are more likely to be killed by their intimate partners compared to other offenders. National rates show the second-highest rate of homicide victimization after Black women and depending on state and county data in particular when comprised of tribal lands, can show rates as high as 10 times the national average. This is not adequately reflected in the primary data sources for DV homicide in North Carolina despite best efforts and the understanding of communities at high risk as well as providers and those within those communities who see the realities of DV homicide constantly.

Many DV-related cases go unreported or are filed as "accidents" or "missing persons cases," making the actual impact of DV homicide difficult to assess (Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007). The Governor's Crime Commission must utilize resources at our disposal including the Criminal Justice Analysis Center and collaborations with NCCADV, NCSBI, NCDHHS, and communities that are underrepresented in the statistics despite knowledge of the high impact on their communities for victimization, to fully assess the gaps in data and develop a plan to fill them. This must include ensuring same-sex and gender non-conforming occurrences of IPV/DV homicides are counted and reflected, as well as data from other culturally specific groups like

North Carolina's tribal communities. Understanding the legal definitions of IPV versus DV homicides being used across law enforcement agencies and courts in the state, how to ensure that rural and under-resourced agencies can keep track of this data and understanding of qualitative methods used that are valid and add to the overall picture of how to prevent and respond to homicides in the state will be a focus over the next 4 years. Currently helpful data regarding DV homicides and perpetrator-specific information outside of their relationship to the victim is either unknown to the Governor's Crime Commission or not being collated, including those who have been through DVIPs, are currently incarcerated, have been re-arrested or reincarcerated for DV related crimes. To look at the effectiveness of some programming and offender treatment, this data will also be further assessed in conjunction with adult corrections, NC SAVAN, and other potential collaborating agencies to better address those needs and responses.

Alongside improved data methods, VAWA STOP funds can be utilized to establish and provide support to existing Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams that are tasked with reviewing a specified set of DV-related fatality cases to determine the factors that contributed to the fatalities and whether there are changes that can be made to prevent future similar incidents. Currently counties such as Wake, Mecklenburg, and Buncombe. Reports completed by these entities are completed in different time intervals and have historically been submitted to the County leadership, the North Carolina Domestic Violence Commission, and the Governor's Crime Commission. It is important to have some standardized measures within each DVFRT and to have community-specific operations to address needs specific to the deaths experienced at the city, county, and sometimes state levels. Collaboration with existing DVFRTs to understand their operations, process, and procedures, as well as community feedback on impact, is necessary to assess prioritizing this avenue for other communities in North Carolina who could benefit from a review team and demonstrate an interest in such a strategy to respond to, decrease, and ultimately help prevent domestic violence homicides. The Governor's Crime Commission will also look to organizations and experts across the state to bring legislation forward regarding addressing the prevention, intervention, and response to

domestic violence homicides. When appropriate, GCC can support legislation and assist in advocating for its passage within the Statehouse.

C. Addressing the Needs of Underserved Victims

The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission has a specific funding priority, outlined in the state's solicitation, for programs that target underserved victim populations. It is posted on the GCC website and describes the populations outlined by VAWA. In addition to the Sexual Assault focus area, with the VAWA STOP Request for Application, Culturally Specific agencies are also highlighted and prioritized to serve those communities from at least the federally mandated minimum of 10 percent set aside of the yearly allocation. The 2022 RFA language reads:

2) Culturally Specific

Only projects in the Victim Services Priority Service Area are eligible to choose this Focus Area. To be eligible, projects must be focused on working with racial and ethnic minorities as defined in section 1707(g) of the Public Health Service Act, which means:

- American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts);
- Asian Americans;
- Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders;
- Black; and
- Latinx

To receive the funding from the culturally specific funding allocation, the organization must be a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, or tribal organization that serves a specific geographic community that:

- focus primarily on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- has established a specialized culturally specific program that addresses domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- has a primary focus on underserved populations (and includes representatives of these populations) and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
- obtains expertise, or shows demonstrated capacity to work effectively, on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking through collaboration.

- is primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups, AND
- is providing services tailored to the unique needs of that population.

As noted in Section B(II) identified underserved populations for this STOP Implementation Plan include the following*:

- ❖ Asian American, Asian Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian communities
- ❖ Immigrant communities, Limited English proficiency individuals and families
- ❖ American Indians/tribal communities
- ❖ Black/African American communities
- ❖ Military and military families
- ❖ LGBTQIA+ individuals
- ❖ Deaf or hard of hearing individuals
- ❖ Individuals with mental health issues
- ❖ Individuals with disabilities
- ❖ Individuals with substance use issues
- ❖ Rural communities
- ❖ College Students

Over the years covered under the previous STOP Implementation Plan and in 2021 as well, the culturally specific set-aside has been an area for much-needed improvement both in meeting the set-aside minimum and ensuring that identified underserved populations both know about and have the capacity to apply for funding. Much of the past year within the Crime Victim Services team and in the Governor's Crime Commission on a larger level, has been committed to assessing current policies and procedures at the agency level to identify barriers to applying for funds including getting technical assistance from OVW and OVC on monthly and biweekly

meetings to get input from other state administering agencies on how to streamline application, reporting, and grant award processes to be more accessible to smaller, more culturally specific providers. This is an ongoing effort along with meeting with service providers, community leaders, and liaisons within identified communities to better understand historical barriers, communication needs, and outreach opportunities. This has been impeded by not only the expansive turnover being experienced by front-line providers and non-profit leadership heavily impacted by the global pandemic and compounding community traumas within the field but also by staff turnover within the Governor's Crime Commission.

Outreach efforts and relationship building with underserved and culturally specific communities continue to be a critical piece of ensuring a fully inclusive understanding of the needs of victims in North Carolina as well as funding and service provider needs to provide sustained and consistent support. COVID 19 and critical accessibility standards will continue to necessitate particular venues and modes of technical communication for these efforts. Through the STOP Implementation Plan Committee meeting virtually, as well as individual meetings with the state coalitions and representatives from the identified underserved populations, the successful strategies and those that need to be implemented have been singled out to prioritize funding efforts and advocacy with OVW and elected leadership in North Carolina.

- Analysis and review of current VAWA STOP funding procedures that are documented through the VAWA STOP RFA to update priorities and services identified as highly needed within underserved populations including but not limited to:
 1. Language and translation services access especially in court and law enforcement interactions that are training in victimization areas as well as legal language/advocacy
 2. Training for law enforcement and Family Justice Centers to be culturally competent/sensitive and better understand domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence within underserved populations
 3. Assisting victim service providers to have the capacity to train internally and externally, and have bi-lingual, disabled, LGBTQIA, and BIPOC staff and

management.

4. Increasing the number of culturally specific providers in tribal territories and in areas that have underserved populations.
 5. Ensuring up-to-date technology to maintain virtual accessibility and assist clientele: text line, video relay, smartphones, telehealth/mental health services, computers, and laptops.
 6. Enhance trauma-informed services to include harm reduction approaches for substance use, on-site and in-home counseling, peer-to-peer support, and virtual support groups.
- 2021 and 2022 VAWA applications are being reviewed by the Crime Victim Services team and will be reviewed by the Crime Victim Services Committee for scoring to assess what service gaps exist both in types of services within project narratives and budgets, also geographically and as it pertains to underserved populations and culturally specific agencies. An assessment is being made of which populations are represented within those applications and where they are not to further target outreach efforts like advertisement of funds, application training, VAWA STOP training, and community site visits.
 - Expanding the grant process to include targeted off-cycle grants for culturally specific communities when appropriate, to assist in emergent issues, and when counties/areas are identified as having a gap in services for victims that no other agency is available or can intervene.
 - Continued targeted outreach to build trust within underserved communities across the state and better advocate for procedural changes within the agency, state level and federally to make the funds more accessible to smaller and non-mainstream organizations including but not limited to:
 1. On-site visits with COVID protocols in place
 2. Virtual one-on-one meetings with leadership and representatives from communities
 3. Community events for staff education and understanding of cultural structure

and needs

4. Presentations and training within culturally specific organizations and task forces both regional and statewide
5. Translated RFA and other required documents available publicly on the GCC Website

The STOP Implementation Plan Advisory Group will continue to examine underserved specific population groups in North Carolina and in engage in discussions to better serve those victims as well as working on additional avenues to prioritize victim representation in the process.

D. Grant-making Strategy

1. Timeline for the STOP grant cycle

In September, there are two workshops for subrecipients to attend. The first meeting occurs for information regarding the submission of applications. This allows applicants to learn and ask questions about the application process. The second workshop is for post-Grant awards and specifically advises on grant management. The GEMS Application Period is from November 1st to January 31st. Governor's Crime Commission staff is available to answer questions related to applications and submitting applications. The priorities for that fiscal year will be open and available in GEMS. From February to March, preliminary reviews of applications take place. This is a high-level assessment from Governor's Crime Commission staff to make sure the application meets eligibility criteria, instructions have been followed, the application was submitted under the correct priority, the project period aligns with the funding sources, and activities/costs are allowable. Required documents are also reviewed to make sure attachments are uploaded, numbered, and named as instructed in the RFA.

In April, the Committees reviews and score the projects. The project concept and budget are reviewed and taken into consideration: who will benefit from the grant, the cost of administering the grant, geographical representation, ad past performance of the applicant. There are three reviewers per application. The average score of the reviewers will determine the project score. Those projects are then ranked in score by priority. In May, the committee

votes on which programs they would like to fund and bring forward to the Commission. The committee will review application scores by priority, then assess the geographical and victim-specific reach of priorities throughout the state. The committee discusses the scored projects and makes recommendations for specific adjustments for the project. Lastly, the committee will vote on priorities with any recommendations made. In June, the Commission meets to review priorities and recommendations provided by committees. It is determined if any additional projects or priority-specific adjustments need to be made. The Commission will vote on priorities agreed to by the Commission. Applicants are notified of the outcome of the review process through an acceptance, declination, or acceptance with modifications letter. From July to September planners review assigned applications for compliance with federal and state funding guidelines as well as application requirements. A Modification Conditions letter is sent to applicants to communicate the required adjustments to the application. Applicants must mail the required adjustments and resubmit the application through GEMS. The planner will review the applications again for the required changes.

Upon completion of all modifications, award packets containing binding award documents, federal and state special conditions, and additional documentation requirements are sent to applicants. An award document, signed by GCC's Executive Director, will require the signatures of the Authorizing Official and Project Director. Completed award packets are required to be returned to GCC within 30 days and will be reviewed by GCC staff for compliance. Projects open on October 1st. This is all projects except for Juvenile Justice. Organizations will transition to working with an assigned Grant Administrator (GA) and the Project Director will open the project. Project funds cannot be expended before the start date of the period of performance, October 1st.

2. Description of how the State will ensure that eligible entities are aware of funding opportunities, including projects serving underserved populations. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(5) and (g)(4))

The Governor's Crime Commission ensures that eligible entities are aware of funding by emailing all current projects and former projects that may not receive funding any longer.

North Carolina State Coalitions for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence are drawn on as well. The state coalitions are also utilized to reach out to their contacts and subrecipients to ensure programs know funding is available. GCC operates a website and multiple social media accounts including LinkedIn and works closely with NC Department of Public Safety Communications to identify how to best utilize these resources to expand notification of funds moving forward. GCC staff have also developed a monthly newsletter for subrecipients and possible subrecipients to receive news about what is happening within the agency including funding options, off-cycle possibilities and highlighting agencies that are doing great, innovative work in their communities. Efforts continue to make these platforms and the information advertised on them are also more acceptable to underserved communities in North Carolina both geographically and demographically.

3. Description of how the State will ensure that any subgrantees will consult with victim service providers during the course of developing their grant applications to ensure that the proposed activities are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims. (34 U.S.C. 10446(i)(2)(D))

Agencies must demonstrate a record of effective services to the community by having a history of providing direct services cost-effectively and by showing a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking. This is shown through multiple different activities including the pre-award risk assessment that is completed with all agencies who are receiving VAWA funding for the first time. This also includes the review of Organization Documents within each grant to verify adherence to state and federal grant conditions that work in conjunction including fundamental service element adherence and confidentiality policies. Site monitoring visits and review of program progress reports further enhance GCC's ability to ensure the design of projects not only state that they are designed to promote the safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims but it can be shown. Collaboration with state victim agencies and a Funder's Round Table brings issues to the forefront regarding where gaps and improvements in these processes might be needed. Within the VAWA STOP IP Advisory Group and the CVS Committee, discussions have been had regarding peer-to-peer technical assistance to ensure consultation with agencies who

are victim service providers and who have a history of providing these activities effectively regarding safety, confidentiality, and economic independence of victims. The Governor's Crime Commission will also be utilizing the Victim Needs Survey to determine how to better meet and collaborate with state agencies and community-based providers to ensure this is being done successfully and in a survivor-centered manner.

4. Description of how the State will identify and select applicants for subgrant funding, including whether a competitive process will be used. If different selection methods will be used for each allocation category, describe the method. (28 C.F.R. 90.12(g)(8))

The VAWA grants are competitive, therefore, the Crime Victim Services Committee from the Commission reviews applications. To select applicants for subgrant funding, each application is to be viewed by at least three people and scored by them. The top-scoring projects in each allocation category will be chosen for funding. Culturally specific and sexual assault projects are prioritized by the committee.

The VAWA STOP grant is a competitive application process. Members of the Crime Victim Services Committee review all submitted STOP grant applications that meet eligibility requirements and score each organization's overall project based on the following:

1. Who will benefit from the grant;
2. How many will benefit from the grant;
3. The cost of administering the grant
4. Geographical representation; and
5. Past performance of the applicant with grants and publicly funded projects.

Members of the Crime Victim Services Committee of the GCC will assess each application based on the following criteria:

- Data/Evidence of Problem (20 Points)
- Community Collaboration (20 Points)
- Logic/Clarity of Proposal (10 Points)
- Implementation Schedule/Timeline of Activities (10 Points)
- Program Goals and Objectives (20 points)
- Potential for Positive Impact (10 Points)
- Evaluation (10 Points)

5. Whether STOP subgrant projects will be funded on a multiple or single-year basis. (See 28

C.F.R. 90.12(g)(8))

STOP subgrants are currently funded on a single-year basis. The Governor's Crime Commission is working towards implementing internal processes that allow for funding on a multi-year basis. GCC has been consulting with other state administering agencies and

6. Description of how the State will determine the amount of subgrants based on the population and geographic area to be served. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(B) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(2))

To determine the amount of subgrants based on the population and geographic area to be served, each priority has funding caps to ensure fair distribution throughout the state. This ensures that there isn't a larger program in one county using a larger portion of the funds because it scored higher when being reviewed by the committees.

7. Description of how the State will give priority to areas of varying geographic size with the greatest showing of need based on the availability of existing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking programs. (34 U.S.C. 10446(e)(2)(A) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(1))

While the projects are competitive, we do fund in rank order. Since there are varying geographic sizes in the state with different levels of needs, the Committee can look at the order and suggest changing if all funding is in one geographic location or if we are short of meeting the federally mandated allocation category. Another way this need is met is through the formula funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which GCC also administers. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault programs are certified by the North Carolina Council for Youth and Involvement to receive base funding from GCC. The service area size and population are taken into consideration when determining their base VOCA funding, and further assessment is occurring within the planning team to ensure geographic area and need are being accounted for proportionately.

8. Description of how the State will equitably distribute monies on a geographic basis including

non-urban and rural areas of various geographic sizes. (34 U.S.C. 10446 (e)(2)(C) and (i)(2)(F); 28 C.F.R. 90.12(d)(3))

We are currently in discussion to assess the Tier that each county falls into within the state. Currently, the Governor's Crime Commission utilizes approved domestic violence and sexual assault provider list from the NC Council for Women and Youth Involvement for VOCA basic allocations based on the number of counties, geographical size, and the population of those counties. Additional information is provided during the application process regarding VAWA STOP funds, their service areas in a geographic area, population amount, and underserved population, however, more analysis is needed to ensure that the smaller amount of VAWA STOP funds can be distributed equitably despite increasing need and costs.

9. Information on projects that the State plans to fund if known. (28 C.F.R. § 90.12(g)(5))

Crystal Judson: Currently, North Carolina does not have any law enforcement, state, tribal, territorial, or local government agency receiving funding under the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Protocol Program.

VI. Conclusion

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides critical funding to the State of North Carolina to support victim service programs and agencies to assist women who are victims of violent crime. It is also referred to as STOP/Violence Against Women. The funding is available to programs and government entities that serve victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The funding provides for positions and activities that improve the response of law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and service providers for a coordinated approach against violence. This funding is available to local communities through a competitive grant process and awarded by the Governor of North Carolina through the Governor's Crime Commission. The Governor's Crime Commission serves as the State Administering Agency for North Carolina and is tasked with the responsibility of awarding and administering VAWA funds according to federal laws, state laws, policies, and guidelines. The VAWA Administrator is

primarily responsible for the state's compliance with the act, the appropriate allocation of the funds, technical assistance needed to local programs, and all federal reporting. The administrator responds as the state's point of contact for the Office on Violence Women regarding STOP funding and can support local programs with discretionary grant needs through local governments.

VAWA planning involves a collaborative process to determine the needs of victims and developing funding priorities to allocate funds equitably and effectively. CVS team members work with service professionals to assist in guiding the decision-making process of the commission based on current needs, trends, legislation, effects of local policy, local assessments, research and literature review, and key findings. The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission reviews and approves all funding priorities and makes grant recommendations to the governor based on information submitted within the application and from the expertise that exists within the commission itself and the disciplines they represent from across the state.

The primary purpose of STOP funding in North Carolina is to develop and strengthen the response of the state's criminal justice system to violence against women and to support and enhance services for victims. To reach this goal, program development must involve ways to strengthen the coordinated community response to victims through technology and partnerships, an increase in culturally appropriate, evidenced-based/field-tested services, and an increased focus on offender accountability through Domestic Violence Intervention Programs, and by finding ways to sustain training on emerging violence against women issues with an education that is conducive to both professionalism and successful program outcomes. Finally, to reach the goal of this plan, the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission will act as an advisory body to the Governor on issues regarding violence against women.

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