

# CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

## Resolution 1

### **Support of Point of Contact Positions in State Administrative Offices of the Courts to Improve Court Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking**

WHEREAS, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides grant programs designed to develop the nation's capacity to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by strengthening services to victims and holding offenders accountable; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators (Conferences) were instrumental to the multidisciplinary strategic planning platform of the 2010 *National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence* and the 2015 *Workshop for State Court Violence Against Women (VAW) Points of Contact*; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences supported a revision in the 2013 Reauthorization of the VAWA to ensure that the STOP Formula Grant Program 5% court set-aside funds go directly "to" courts; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences supported the White Paper, *Safety and Accountability: State Courts and Domestic Violence*, which recommended the designation of a domestic violence single point of contact for the state court system; and

WHEREAS, the most recent National Center for State Courts' *Survey of Use of Violence Against Women Act STOP Funds to Courts* (2015) indicates challenges remain regarding direct access to the 5% court set-aside and collaborative implementation efforts; and

WHEREAS, while many state courts now have staff formally or informally identified as a VAW Point of Contact, dedicated resources and institutional support for a designated Point of Contact position at the state court level vary widely; and

WHEREAS, state court VAW Points of Contact serve vital roles in connecting the court to resources and multidisciplinary collaborations to improve court responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, including:

- Bringing the Court perspective and needs to the STOP implementation planning process and other collaborative programming efforts,
- Leveraging current funding and identifying new funding opportunities to support and expand court initiatives,
- Identifying resources and programs needed to address current challenges confronting the courts,
- Recognizing emergent issues, trends and innovative programs that will shape the courts' efforts to address violence against women,

- Enhancing community outreach and collaborative partnerships to maximize resources for the courts and strengthen public trust and confidence in the courts.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of State Court Administrators encourages state court efforts to:

1. Institutionalize a dedicated VAW Point of Contact staff position in the Administrative Office of the Courts,
2. Develop and implement strategies to sustain support for the VAW Point of Contact position over time,
3. Leverage funding (including STOP Formula Grant funds) and infrastructure necessary to enable Points of Contact to participate in and lead multi-agency efforts to combat violence against women on behalf of the state courts, and
4. Strengthen awareness among court leadership of the value of the VAW Point of Contact position and the fundamental and enhanced roles Points of Contact can effectively serve on behalf of the state courts and their constituents.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, the Conference of State Court Administrators recognizes the vital role dedicated VAW Points of Contact in the states' Administrative Offices of the Courts play in enhancing the courts' response to violence against women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference of State Court Administrators recognizes that stability of the Point of Contact position is critical to effective performance of their role to both support and innovate the Court's vision and response to violence against women; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Conference of State Courts fully supports efforts to institutionalize and sustain formal VAW Points of Contact positions in the state courts.

Proposed by the Courts, Children, and Families Committee at the 2015 Midyear Meeting of the Conference of State Court Administrators