



## CDVSA Executive Director's Update

Prepared by L. Diane Casto, Executive Director

July – September 2023

FY2024 Quarter 1

An update of CDVSA activities/highlights July 1 – September 15, 2023

### **Staffing and personnel**

The work of CDVSA is dependent on a strong, skilled, and stable staff. The last quarter of FY2023 was uniquely challenging for our staff and ability to get our work done timely. While CDVSA has 11 full-time positions, we currently have seven (7) filled—we are operating with 63% of our allocated workforce.

During July and August, both MaryBeth Gagnon and Meggie Stogner resigned and moved to other employment opportunities. Within months we lost most of our staff with critical historical knowledge, including the retirement of Ann Rausch in May. Our current staff, other than me, have been with CDVSA for less than 2-years.

- Ella Nierra, GA3 began on November 1, 2021 (22+ months)
- Catherine Mohn, RA3 began on January 3, 2022 (20+ months)
- Chris Hardin, GA1-2 began on December 19, 2022 (9 months)
- Morgan Stonecipher, PC1-2 began on March 6, 2023 (6 months)
- Kay Riley (Ravert), AA2 began on March 21, 2023 (5+ months)
- Lisa Morley, PC2 began on April 10, 2023 (5 months)

The good news is we hired a new Prevention Program Coordinator, Danielle Redmond. Danielle will begin her new position on Monday, September 25. Danielle currently works for the Department of Administration. She worked for AWARE's prevention program in the past and is excited to get back to work focusing on the prevention of domestic and sexual violence. We continue to recruit for an Administrative Officer 2. The lack of a lead financial staff has made the end-of-year and beginning-of-year work very difficult. We are significantly behind in making General Fund payment advances to our current sub-grantees. Our deadline is to have all



advance payments made by September 15. Our reduced staff has been compounded by staff shortages in DPS finance, as well.

Two additional staff positions remain unfilled and as of yet, not posted for recruitment. Because the position of Criminal Justice Planner is the “number 2” position in CDVSA, working together with the Executive Director, I will leave this position open for the new ED to fill. The lead victim services Program Coordinator (Meggie’s position) has not been posted but I intend to post it within the next two weeks.

I am thankful for the great staff we currently have with their new energy and passion for the work we do. This time of rebuilding and adding new staff, with new ideas, will begin creating a new chapter for CDVSA! THANK YOU.

### **CDVSA SFY2024 Funding**

As discussed in my last report, CDVSA received three increments in the Governor’s FY24 budget:

- \$3,000,000 (UGF) One-time-increment for DVSA Victim Services Grants Support (continuing replacement of federal VOCA funds)
- \$1,200,000 (UGF) to increase and enhance community-based prevention and abusive partner intervention program activities
- \$420,000 (RJA) to align authority with the statutory distribution of the balance in the Restorative Justice Account

The CDVSA FY24 budget is \$31,687,600 from the following sources:

Federal =	\$ 13,982,700
UGF =	\$ 15,110,100
I/A receipts =	\$ 178,000
Restorative Justice (PFD)	\$ 502,000
Recidivism Reduction (DGF)	\$ 2,004,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,687,600</b>



Funds allocated for FY24 community-based sub-grantees equals \$25,030,533 across all grant programs:

Community-based Victim Services =	\$ 17,343,637
Enhanced Victim Services =	\$ 5,450,278
Primary Prevention Programs =	\$ 1,551,000
BIP/PBP Programs =	\$ 375,970
STOP/VAWA Victim Services =	\$ 309,648
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,030,533</b>

Other costs in the FY24 budget include \$1,467,500 in personal services; 87,500 in projected travel for site visits, monitoring, and required federal meetings; \$2,868,900 in services including direct service RSAs and contracts; and \$25,600 in commodities equaling the remainder of the FY24 budget at \$4,449,500.

Due to staff shortages both at CDVSA and DPS, getting our FY24 budget established in IRIS has been a slow process. As of September 7, we have not yet been able to begin processing payments. Our process internally was slowed due to staff vacancies, and DPS finance has been buried during the FY23 closeout process (staffing and capacity) and everything is taking significantly longer. Certainly, it is no one's fault, and we are working collaboratively to get the beginning of the year process established as quickly as possible. This means that Q. 1 advances of GF funding have been delayed. We are ready to begin submitting payments as soon as the IRIS structure has been completed. Our intent is to process a 6-month advance payment for all general fund grant dollars to accommodate our sub-grantee's need for funds. We anticipate beginning to process advance payments by September 8, or September 11 at the latest. We understand the hardship this has caused for some of our programs, but everyone is working double-time to get this process finished and funding to our subgrantees.

We are also ready to begin processing federal grant reimbursements for July (all invoices were due August 30) and those will be priority number 2 once the advances have been paid. Once the encumbrances are established in IRIS, this will not be a concern for future payments.



Two of the new increments received in the FY24 CDVSA budget outlined above will greatly enhance our expansion of both prevention and BIP programming and grant funding. The \$1.2 million increment for Prevention and BIP is allocated 60% to Prevention and 40% to BIP. These funds will allow us to increase grant funding by 25% to our 13 Prevention sub-grantees and our six (6) funded BIP programs. Because we were unable to get these funds available prior to the initial grant awards, our intent is to provide each Prevention and BIP subgrantee to request a small amount of increased funding for the remainder of FY24. Details of the process are being discussed and planned for at this time.

In the last 2-weeks, CDVSA has received three federal FFY2023 grant award notifications:

- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) = \$3,381,187
- Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) = \$774,790
- OVC discretionary (via Senator Murkowski) = \$4,000,000

We have two additional formula grant awards that should be made no later than September 30—STOP/Violence Against Women Act and Family Violence Prevention and Services from DHHS.

## **CDVSA Priority Projects Update**

### **▪ FY24-26 Funding Decision Appeals**

Following the decision and vote by the CDVSA Board of Directors regarding FY24 sub-grantee funding, CDVSA received two (2) Appeals regarding the award amounts. Following protocol, Angela Garay, CDVSA Board Chair, established a three-person Appeals Committee to review each appeal and determine if it met the criteria to move forward to a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. Board members Angela Garay, Kim Kovol, and John Skidmore comprised the Appeals Committee. They reviewed each appeal and met on Monday, August 14, and determined that each appeal met the criteria to move forward.

The next step was for CDVSA to establish an MOU with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH), meet with OAH and each appellant individually, and set dates for each hearing. The two hearings have been set for October 2, and October 9. An Administrative Law Judge has been appointed. Each side will have an opportunity to present their information and argument for an appeal of CDVSA's funding decisions.



Once the hearing is over, the ALJ will submit a report with a recommendation for action. The recommendation will go back to the Board Appeals Committee for their final determination.

#### ▪ **New Approaches for Those Who Cause Harm**

Lisa Morley, our new Program Coordinator 2, has jumped in with both feet to become steeped in ideas for improving our BIP work in Alaska. Lisa has already traveled to and met with each of our current six (6) funded BIP programs. She also is continuing to work with the UAA School of Social Work, in the development of a training curriculum on domestic violence directed at behavioral health providers. Training a broad array of professionals about DV will help us to expand the number of service providers in the state who have a solid understanding of domestic violence, becoming skilled at providing services to those who use violence and abuse in their relationships. Additionally, Lisa is working with DOC, to coordinate our efforts with theirs and to find ways to expand both community-based and prison-based BIP programming.

In April CDVSA, in partnership with the UAA Justice Center, co-sponsored "Voice! Acknowledgment! Power! Victims' Rights & Restorative Justice Symposium" in Anchorage. The outcome of this event was for CDVSA to continue to work in partnership with Dr. Ingrid Johnson and Dr. Rei Shimizu from UAA, as we explore alternative types of services that can be included in our comprehensive approach to working with individuals who cause harm and those who are harmed. The concept of Restorative Justice was included in the work from the Perpetrator Rehabilitation Workgroup and continues to be a key component of alternative approaches to reduce the rates of DV in Alaska. With this in mind, we are co-sponsoring three upcoming Restorative Justice events in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks.

Restorative Justice is being reviewed, in Alaska and nationally, as one option for intimate partner violence intervention. To better explore this topic, CDVSA in collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage is bringing together stakeholders in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau to provide information about restorative justice and how it is used in Alaska (1/2-day session) followed by a facilitated discussion using a talking circle format the next day (full day). Input from participants representing various state systems is critical as we explore how this could be implemented and review the risks and benefits for victims and in reducing domestic violence. Talking Circle events are scheduled for:

- Anchorage, September 14-15 at the Nuka Learning and Wellness Center. Partnering with South Central Foundation for circle facilitation.



- Juneau, October 19-20 at the Eagle Valley Center. Partnering with Haa Tooth Licheesh for circle facilitation.
- Fairbank will take place in early 2024—TBD.

Each event is limited to 20 attendees, by invitation, to make sure representation is diverse. If you would like more information, you can reach out to Lisa directly at [lisa.morley@alaska.gov](mailto:lisa.morley@alaska.gov).

- **Communications, Outreach, and Media**

We are excited to have additional prevention funding this year, to increase and expand our regular presence in public education campaigns on social media, radio, and television. This has been our goal since I arrived. Due to the small increase in prevention funding in FY24, we are going to double our budget to both increase the number of campaign postings and create new messaging to reduce DVSA in Alaska. We will continue to have a strong presence during the national and state recognition months of February (Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month), April (Sexual Assault Awareness Month), and October (Domestic Violence Awareness Month). Additionally, we intend to have a year-round presence beginning in September this year.

This new funding will expand our reach with more consistent and stable messaging, including new creative and targeted themes. Our contractor Walsh|Sheppard is already working to create new material and will be using focus groups (urban and rural) among Alaskans 18-65 to test the messaging prior to finalizing. WJS will be working with Adam Hays of Hays Research Group to facilitate the focus groups—one for those who identify as female, with a female moderator, and one for those who identify as male, with a male moderator. They recognize that these topics can be triggering for anyone who has been or is a survivor and have plans to address issues if they arise.

We are excited to have the opportunity to create new content and to have a more robust public education and action campaign. More to come...

- **New Data Management System**

Finally, after years of trying to find and procure a new data management system, we have established a contract with Element 74 for the Vela cloud-based software system. As we discussed during several Board meetings, and you heard presentations from Chris Edmonds and Katie Hughes, Vela is a data management system made specifically for agencies like ours, receiving the 4 federal formula grants that constitute our current federal funding. Catherine Mohn, Research Analyst 3 is taking the lead in getting the system set up and working to meet



the needs of CDVSA and our subgrantees. ANDVSA is working to assist their member agencies who are also CDVSA subgrantees to transition to this new data system. More details to come during a presentation by Chris, Katie, and Catherine during Friday's Board meeting. Brenda will provide their progress on this project during her presentation. Yay!

#### ▪ **Victim Services Regulations Project**

The Victim Services Regulations Project continues to move forward. The final revised regulations, including additional revisions made following the 30-day public review and comment period. The final version is now with the Department of Law for a final review and possible secondary public comment period. I have not had time to reconnect with DOL but will do so next week, following the Board meeting to determine the immediate next steps.

#### **A Time of Transition**

My time at CDVSA is nearing an end. It has been 6+ years guiding CDVSA through numerous changes, new processes, significant funding challenges, and staff changes. Through it all, CDVSA continues to keep public money going to Alaska communities that provide emergency services, victim advocacy, resources to victims and their families, critical services to children and youth impacted by family violence, community-based prevention initiatives, and healing and accountability services to those who cause harm to others.

My last day of work will be Thursday, November 2, 2023, having been here since May 1, 2017 (6 years, 6 months). Once a new director is hired and there is a full staff, I am confident that CDVSA will continue to be a strong voice and resource for all Alaskans who are survivors of family abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault. I will miss all the great work and colleagues that have shared my 28 years of state employment – there have been great accomplishments and sad disappointments, but always a sense of working as a team to make Alaska a better place for children, youth, adults, families, and communities. While I will no longer be employed, I will continue to dedicate my time to making Alaska a better place to live and flourish.

Thank you to the Board, staff, and colleagues for a great 6 1/2 years to end my 45-year work career!



## Potential Board Meeting Times for FY24 Q. 2-4

Possible dates for the remaining Board meetings in FY24:

- Q. 2 week of December 4
- Q. 3 week of March 25
- Q. 4 week of June 3 – Rural Outreach Meeting?\*

\*To assist in determining which community you want to consider for the FY24 Rural Outreach meeting, listed below are the rural communities (definition = off-the-road system or on-the-road system with a population of 3,000 or less) we have never visited or have not visited since FY2014.

- Seward
- Emmonak
- Craig
- Unalaska
- Valdez
- Utqiagvik
- Hooper Bay (new grantee FY24)

Here is a list of all Rural Outreach locations since FY15:

- FY15 = Sitka
- FY16 = Kotzebue
- FY17 = Bethel
- FY18 = Kodiak
- FY19 = Nome
- FY20 = Dillingham
- FY21 = Petersburg (this was only a virtual Rural Outreach meeting during the pandemic)
- FY22 = Ketchikan
- FY23 = Cordova