

**FINAL PROJECT REPORT**

for completion of the

**MASTER'S PROGRAM**

**IN**

**COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**NEW HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE  
MANCHESTER, NH**

submitted by

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## SECTION A - PROBLEM STATEMENT

### Domestic Violence in West Virginia

Before 1970 there was virtually no help for battered women and their children in West Virginia. Victims of domestic violence seeking safe space and protection from perpetrators of abuse were faced with limited social, legal, and economic options. Although hundreds of women and children suffered physically, medically, emotionally, economically, spiritually, mentally, and socially from patterns of coercive and dehumanizing behavior inflicted upon them by another person, batterers were not held accountable for their acts of violence and abuse. Society did not consider domestic violence a crime.

#### West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

In the 1970's pockets of concerned citizens throughout the state of West Virginia began to focus on the need to respond to domestic violence assault in their communities. Several of these groups incorporated into grassroots, community-based organizations whose primary purpose was to provide safe space where survivors of domestic violence would be supported in looking at alternatives to their present situation. The magnitude and scope of violence in the home heightened the need for those working in shelter programs to organize themselves into a statewide coalition whose mission would be to work for the eradication of domestic violence in West Virginia. Formed in 1979, the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV) is committed to the elimination of personal and institutional violence against women and their children. The thirteen local programs in the statewide domestic violence network provide a variety of services to meet the immediate needs of victims for safety and to provide them with support and information. Additionally, WVCADV's central service office serves as a vehicle for promoting change in systems affecting all persons who live in homes where violence and abuse occur.

Scope of Solutions to Achieve This Goal

The nature of domestic violence is all-encompassing. In order to effect changes that stop violence in the home and prevent further occurrences of abuse, domestic violence programming must go beyond the provision of direct services. Because violence in families is deeply rooted in social and cultural values and attitudes, programs have had to take on the much larger tasks of public education, training, advocacy and outreach. Eradication of the problem of domestic violence challenges all of society's institutions: religious, social, educational, economic, political, judicial, and medical. Working within this context WVCADV strives to create places of safety, change, and hope where long term goals of value-based violence-free relationships are possible.

In deciding on what specific area to focus the CED project, representatives from each of the thirteen domestic violence programs were asked to prioritize two from among five predetermined issues. The results of the programs' first and second choices are as follows:

<u>Cash Flow</u>		<u>Prevention</u>		<u>Law Enforcement</u>		<u>Criminal Justice</u>		<u>Housing</u>	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x
x		x	x	x			x		
x							x		
x									
<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>7</u>		<u>6</u>		<u>5</u>		<u>5</u>		<u>3</u>	

Many of the participants found the request to prioritize issues difficult because they felt that all the issues were equally important and necessary. At the same time, participants noted the criticalness of having an adequate cash flow in order to develop and implement projects on other issues. Based on the programs' financial dilemma this contract was initially set-up to address cash flow issues in the domestic violence network of West Virginia.

## Cash Flow Problem Statement

Since 1984 the thirteen programs of the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence have consistently experienced on-going problems of irregular cash flow from state funding sources. These sources of money are Title XX Purchase of Social Services, and the Family Protection Act. Coupled with federal funding programs such as Victims of Crime Assistance and Family Violence Prevention Services Act these sources fund a major percentage of the programs' budgets. Since the state is legally obliged to provide safety and protection to adults and children who are victimized by violent and abusive behavior in the home, program directors are insistent in negotiating with state agencies a funding transfer process that benefits the people for whom the funding is intended. As of December, 1989, Title XX funding was five to six months in arrears with some programs.

Delay in delivery of funds created havoc in the efficient and effective operation of programs. For instance, time and creative energy normally spent organizing around battered women's issues were diverted to figuring-out from where the next month's budget would come. Because of the financial crisis there was a freeze on expansion of services to outlying and remote areas; legislative advocacy was curtailed; long-range planning e.g., developing transitional housing, was postponed. The lack of programmatic and fiscal security nearly depleted staff morale and their willingness to hang-in for the long haul. Prevention work in the schools and training programs for magistrates and law enforcement officers were considered less essential when compared to keeping the shelter doors open. All of this created an atmosphere of uncertainty where minimal direct services were provided without substantive support for social change work.

Programs were forced into month-to-month survival and were obliged to use a variety of strategies to continue delivery of services. They borrowed money from lending institutions; laid-off staff, decreased health insurance benefits and staff hours. Some programs shifted major amounts of money through interfund transfers; others engaged in emergency community fundraising. If this problem continued, by Fiscal Year 1991-1992 specialized services to battered women and their children in West Virginia might have been severely curtailed.

Analysis of State Plan Problem Statement  
March 1990

- a. Fixed in Time: Since 1989 WVCADV has operated without a State Plan that could give direction to long range plans.
- b. Place: Lack of long range planning is a problem for the Coalition's central service office, for the Coalition's thirteen member programs and ultimately for all victims of domestic violence in WV, of whom the overwhelming majority are women and children.
- c. Nature of the Problem: Without clearly articulated and agreed upon goals and objectives, and without specific strategies to achieve these goals, the collective voice of battered women in the state of WV is effectively silenced. In addition, lack of a State Plan dooms the Coalition to sporadic activity and places the Coalition in a reactionary stance regarding social change work.
- d. People Affected: This problem affects the Board/Staff of the Coalition office, all thirteen member programs, all persons living in violent home situations in WV, and ultimately affects social change work in the area of domestic violence.
- e. Size of the Problem: At this time not having a State Plan is manageable but if the Coalition does not develop a strategy for long range planning the problem will become overwhelming in the very near future. Members of the Coalition are ready to act on revising the outdated State Plan; the timing is right to address this problem.

Problem Statement

Since 1989 WVCADV had operated without an agreed upon State Plan that would provide direction and focus for its activities, fundraising, service expansion and creation, legislative action, community education and public awareness. If the Coalition did not develop long-range strategies for change WVCADV's actions will be sporadic and its impact barely felt.

## SECTION B - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Project Goals and Objectives

1. To develop with the following state agencies written and agreed upon processes for efficient distribution of funds to domestic violence programs who have contracts with the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) and with the Family Protection Services Board (FPSB).
2. To develop a written long-range fiscal plan for the Coalition. (Minimum of three years, maximum of five years.)

### Objectives:

1. To assist in developing an agreed upon process for timely distribution and more efficient allocation of state grant awards.
  - a. By evaluating the impact cost-reimbursement has on the cash flow in grassroots, non-profit domestic violence programs in WV.
  - b. By meeting with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Resources in order to critique and revise the current process of grant award distribution.
  - c. By meeting with representatives from the Family Protection Services Board in order to look at the possibility of the Coalition itself being the depository for Special Revenue Accounts e.g. Marriage License Tax and Divorce Surcharge Fee.
2. To gather and analyze relevant statistical data that will inform WVCADV's financial projections/decisions and WVCADV's program development.
  - a. By comparing and analyzing levels of funding from state funding sources to WVCADV programs between FY 85-86 and FY 89-90.
  - b. By projecting ideal and feasible financial conditions for effective delivery of services.
  - c. By collecting and analyzing program data submitted on a monthly basis to the Coalition office.
3. To coordinate the revision, printing, and distribution of the WVCADV State Plan.
  - a. By developing and distributing a program survey to the thirteen domestic violence programs that will assist the Coalition in identifying future project needs and costs.

- b. By meeting with program representatives to analyze the information received from the domestic violence programs.
- c. By developing with programs representatives specific objectives and processes for the implementation of the revised and agreed upon State Plan.
- d. By presenting the WVCADV State Plan for approval to the Board of Directors at its December quarterly meeting.

Projected End of Project Status

Minimum: To have draft of State Plan for Coalition critique.

Expected: To have approved State Plan in process of being printed.

Maximum: To have new State Plan printed and available by January 1991 in time for the WV Legislative Session.



## SECTION C - METHODS

The general process of identifying the focus and subsequent development of my CED project involved input from the entire Coalition at its quarterly meetings in September 1989 through December 1990. In November 1989, while in the throes of a statewide domestic violence network financial fiasco Coalition members identified the cash flow crisis as their top priority issue. After release of funds in early 1990, at the Coalition meeting in March members agreed that long range planning was essential in shaping an accountable and responsible future for the organization.

### Goal One - Cash Flow Crisis

#### 1. Legal procedures.

Title XX Funds: WVCADV planned to sue the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) for its failure to reimburse approximately \$200,000 that was due programs. In the preliminary legal phase of meeting to notify DHHR of the Coalition's intent the Department pledged a release of funds to domestic violence programs by a specific date. The Coalition agreed to temporarily refrain from pursuing legal recourse until that date. Because the Department held to its word the Coalition abandoned plans to sue. In addition the Department entered into a written agreement with the Coalition guaranteeing to release on-going funds in a timely manner with a maximum of sixty days turnaround time.

#### 2. Alternative funding formula for and administration of Family Protection Funds.

Family Protection Services Board: as staff to the Family Protection Services Board, WVCADV Team Coordinators actively participated in committee work whose task was to develop and introduce an equitable funding formula for distribution of Family Protection funds. In addition to accepting the recommended funding formula the FPSB proposed to the state a new model of administration of funds. This model initially transferred \$325,000 from a state Special Revenue Account directly to a FPSB account administered by WVCADV staff through the directives of the Family Protection Services Board.

#### 3. Negotiating and planning meetings.

Many meetings were scheduled from December 1989 through June 1990 to negotiate the terms of the transfer of funds from the state to the FPSB account, to determine short-term investment and use of funds, to clarify processes for distribution, and to plan means of evaluating programs' compliance with Licensing Standards.

## Goal Two - Revision of WVCADV's State Plan

### 1. Surveys

Program surveys were used to prioritize issues upon which to develop my project contract.

### 2. Needs Assessment

A needs assessment questionnaire was completed by each of the thirteen programs in order to ascertain the unmet needs of each program's catchment area, to identify underserved counties in the state, to examine program policies in light of Affirmative Action and equitable salary scales, to specify legislative concerns and to envision the Coalition three years from now.

### 3. Ad Hoc Committee

At the March 1990 meeting several program directors and the other WVCADV Team Coordinator agreed to meet with me as an ad hoc committee whose task was to review and analyze information received from the needs assessment survey, to decide on the content for the State Plan, to facilitate discussion on the State Plan at quarterly Coalition meetings, and to present a final draft to the Coalition for approval in December, 1990.

### 4. Quarterly Coalition meetings

Reports on the development of the CED project were presented at all Coalition quarterly meetings from September 1989 through December 1990 for several reasons. One, WVCADV Board of Directors agreed to contribute to and support my educational goals by agreeing to give me two days with pay each month in order to participate in the CED program. In return they asked for quarterly updates. Two, WVCADV members were invested in successfully resolving the cash flow crisis and supported all efforts to achieve that goal. Three, programs were enthusiastic about developing a long-range plan and took ownership in the process and eventual product. They wanted information from the ad hoc committee and they wanted to be part of the process of shaping the next three years.

## SECTION D - RESULTS

### Goal One

1. In early 1990 action taken by the Family Protection Services Board and the Department of Health and Human Resources released funds earmarked for the domestic violence network. The initial influx of money eased the cash flow crisis in all programs. An on-going commitment from the Department of Health and Human Resources to keep turnover time under 60 days and an innovative method of distributing funds through the Family Protection Services Board presently maintains an adequate cash flow of state funds into the programs.
2. WVCADV strengthened its professional relationship with the Department of Health and Human Resources; the Coalition is affirmed as accountable, responsible and informed.
3. WVCADV staff administered nearly half a million dollars (\$495,000) through the Family Protection Services Board.

### Goal Two

1. Publication of a three year WVCADV State Plan was completed and will be distributed to legislators, state agencies, funders, and supporting and active members. This document establishes clearly defined consensual goals and objectives in six specific areas for implementation over the next three years.
2. With a long-range plan in hand, WVCADV is ready to begin strategic planning at the Coalition's quarterly meeting in March, 1991.
3. Coalition ties among programs were strengthened through the process of identifying needs and priorities on a statewide level.
4. With clearly defined goals and objectives in the areas of outreach, children's services, and prevention programs WVCADV is ready to act when federal legislation is passed increasing funds to domestic violence programs.

## SECTION E - ANALYSIS

Both Project Goals were successfully achieved in the sixteen-month CED Program timeframe.

### Reasons for Success

#### 1. The timing was right.

##### Goal One

Establish an agreed upon process for distribution of state funds particularly in regards to Family Protection Funds and Title XX.

In November, 1988, a new government administration was voted into office effective January, 1989. The new administration stressed the building of partnerships between statewide organizations and government agencies in order to increase effectiveness of service providers and accessibility of services to consumers. Coalition members took seriously this pledge and scheduled time to meet with newly appointed heads of state government. In November 1989, when domestic violence programs throughout the state were experiencing severe cash flow problems due to a bottleneck of funds in the state's finance system, the Coalition believed it had a place of support upon which to stand.

Almost all Coalition programs had reached the end of their credit line with local financial institutions in late 1989 and several programs were considering closing their doors. Instead, Coalition members rallied together in their commitment to provide safe space for victims of domestic violence and decided to pursue legal channels to secure state funding already awarded to them. Programs were ready to "hit the press" with stories of persons unable to find protection from violent home situations due to the state's apathetic response to survivors' basic human needs.

According to legal protocol, WVCADV met with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Resources (Title XX funding) to inform them of its decision to proceed with legal recourse. At this meeting the Commissioner of DHHR and her financial adviser promised to have Title XX money in the programs by the end of January, 1990, and to decrease the cost-reimbursement time from 120 days to 60 days by the end of the Fiscal Year: June, 1990.

WVCADV agreed to temporarily refrain from suing the Department. By June, 1990, DHHR managed to keep their promises and Title XX funding flowed smoothly into the programs.

In 1989, the 68th West Virginia Legislature enacted the Domestic Violence Act which created the Family Protection Services Board. Five members comprise the Family Protection Services Board. Three are appointed by the Governor; two serve by right of office. Those appointed by the Governor are the Director of a Domestic Violence Shelter; a representative of WVCADV, the programs' Major Trade Association; and a representative of the public-at-large. Appointed members serve three year terms. Those serving by right of office represent the Commissioner of the WV Department of Health and Human Resources and the Chair of the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency, and Correction. In addition, the law assessed a divorce filing fee for allocation to domestic violence programs. Two major tasks of the Board are to enforce standards for licensure and to distribute funding generated through marriage and divorce fees to domestic violence programs.

At their meeting in November, 1989, the FPSB decided to contract with the staff of WVCADV's central service office for administrative purposes. In practical terms this meant that the Coalition had four representatives at FPSB meetings which increased WVCADV input into decisions directly affecting the local programs: distribution of funds, licensing standards, peer evaluation processes, etc.

In order to avoid the traditional pitfalls of the state's finance system, cost reimbursement processes, and bureaucratic structures, the FPSB proposed an alternate way of channeling funds to domestic violence programs. The proposal recommended that Marriage License Fees and Divorce Surcharge Fees deposited in a State Special Revenue Account be transferred to an account administered by WVCADV staff according to decisions made by the FPSB. The proposal passed and on February 14, 1990, the first transfer of \$325,000 occurred.

In effect, the process proposed by the FPSB eliminates the need for each of the thirteen programs to invoice the state on a monthly cost-reimbursement basis. Fund allocations are made to the programs in June with the understanding that half of the awards will be distributed in July and the other half in January. Programs are required to submit monthly financial statements regarding the use of FPSB funds but they do not have to hassle with the tension of cost-reimbursement procedures. The decision to transfer funds also allowed the FPSB to invest portions of the money in Certificates of deposit. In the first eleven months, the CDs generated just under \$15,000 in interest.

Goal Two  
To revise WVCADV's State Plan.

The previous WVCADV State Plan covered Fiscal Years 1987 to 1989 and many of the goals and objectives of that document were realized by the end of 1989. The increase in state funding generated through the Divorce Surcharge Fee increased the necessity for the Coalition to have a current long-range plan. Coalition members thought that an updated State Plan could lay the groundwork for future funding strategies, assist state funding agencies in deciding on what to focus funding, inform state legislators about possible amendments to and creation of laws that pertain to domestic violence issues.

**2. The community supported the work of the project.**

The entire Coalition supported work evolving around the development of an agreed upon process for distribution of state funds and on the revision of a State Plan. In addition the Coalition received support and encouragement from state agencies and legislators who were familiar with the mission of the Coalition and wanted to promote in helpful ways effective implementation of that mission.

**3. The community received encouragement from federal legislative action.**

In the summer of 1990 the Coalition learned that Senator Joseph Biden from Delaware introduced into the U.S. Senate a significant piece of national legislation with potential impact on the issue of violence against women in this country. This bill --- currently S.B.15, the Violence Against Women Act of 1991 --- clearly addresses violent crimes against women and offers national sanctions for offenders. The second section of the bill contains provisions for increased funding for battered women's shelters, and funds for domestic violence training for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and courts.

In December 1990 the Coalition received several calls from federal and state legislators inquiring about the use of these funds if the Biden Bill is passed into law. Team Coordinators of the Coalition's central service office informed legislators of the Coalition members' nine month process of identifying statewide goals for domestic violence service providers. WVCADV assured legislators that their office would receive a copy of the revised State Plan which outlines goals and objectives with attached fiscal notes for a three-year period of time.

## Insights Affirmed and Gained

1. Input and cooperation from the people affected is fundamental to successful completion of a project.

From the beginning WVCADV's Board of Directors supported my participation in NHC Community Economic Development program and committed their active involvement in the process of deciding on what to focus the project and how to achieve the goals identified. Member programs completed surveys and questionnaires, formed ad hoc committees specific to the State Plan, were available for consultation and reflection, scheduled time at the quarterly Coalition meetings for CED project updates, input and direction. In a very real sense member programs shared ownership of the project and were a source of encouragement during the demanding days of balancing fulltime work, school and family.

2. Researching basic assumptions is critical in assessing an honest and accurate understanding of the causes of a particular situation.

When I agreed to focus on the cash flow crisis of the local programs I secretly assumed that one of the major causes of this statewide crisis was the programs' heavy reliance on state funding with little diversification from other sources. An analysis of each of the programs' funding plan revealed exceptional funding diversification plans in many of the programs. Access to this information was the basis of revising my CED project contract to include work on a three-year Coalition State Plan.

3. Effective negotiation and development of a working partnership with some government agencies is crucial for the work of the Coalition.

In terms of the cash flow crisis this meant that the Coalition yield some control in the actual process of transferring funds from the Special Revenue Account to the FPSB Account and that DHHR forego the 5% administrative cut (\$15,000 in Fiscal Year 90) to the Coalition's central service office.

4. Comprehensive planning is essential to developing strategies for implementing goals and objectives of an organization.

Planning provides a basis of communicating, envisioning and organizing for members of an organization. Planning also presents to the public a positive image of an organization that is serious about its mission, accountable to its constituents, responsible in decision-making, and proactively concerned about the future.

5. There are times when state government agencies welcome workable alternative proposals to traditional ways of distributing and channeling funds.  
The state's bureaucratic system of efficiency is time-consuming, white collar labor intensive, unimaginative and oppressive. These characteristics forced the Coalition and the FPSB to develop an alternative proposal to traditional ways of distributing and channeling funds. None of us were optimistic about the proposal passing all of the bureaucratic red tape but we had nothing to lose in trying to gain access to funds earmarked for domestic violence programs. To our surprise the proposal was accepted.
6. The state's financial system of disbursing grant awards is archaic. This is a fact many people are aware of and some state personnel are in fact looking for model, innovative ways of updating the entire system of fiscal management.
7. Because of value differences, social change organizations must negotiate cautiously and diplomatically with government agencies in order to maintain principles upon which these organizations are founded.
8. Participation in the process of developing funding formulae emphasized the fact that equitable distribution of funds is much easier to theorize about than to actually achieve. Recipient programs were more supportive of the theory than the necessary shifts in allocation of funds when the theory was implemented.
9. Skills in conflict resolution are essential in developing a statewide agenda supported and implemented by local, autonomous programs.

#### Next Steps

The next steps for the Coalition are:

1. To distribute copies of WVCADV's State Plan to legislators, funders, programs, state agencies, supporting members, etc.
2. To engage in legislative education particularly around the Violence Against Women Act of 1991 and other significant domestic violence legislative issues at the state and national levels.
3. In March, 1991, to schedule strategic planning sessions that address achievement of State Plan goals and implementation of State Plan objectives. These planning sessions will include the following: What are the underlying obstacles or issues preventing the Coalition from realizing its vision? What new directions will we take that honor our vision while recognizing the obstacles? What substantial actions are required for the Coalition to carry-out the new directions?



### Insights about the Community

1. Although the programs are autonomous, geographically diverse, and pragmatically distinct they share a similar mission and purpose. Directors recognize they can do more together than any one program can do alone and therefore are committed to the on-going hard work of developing coalition among domestic violence service providers.
2. Coalition programs wanted greater voice in decision-making on the state level, struggled to get this, and eventually a law was passed including Coalition representatives in the process of decision-making on the state level. When selected Coalition representatives made decisions in the name of WVCADV some members accused these representatives of wearing 'too many hats' and of not being objective enough. The Coalition community learned how hard it is to accept ownership and responsibility for the whole Coalition when it meant not getting everything a particular program hoped for. As a result the Coalition learned that it must continue to address the potential conflict-of-interest without relinquishing the achievements made in WVCADV's organizational process of empowerment.
3. I learned that programs agree much more easily on issues unrelated to funding. Acquisition of financial resources is likely to cause disagreement at its best and divisiveness at its worst when it comes to distributing these resources.
4. The entire Coalition is involved in gathering statewide statistics on the occurrences of domestic violence in West Virginia and many programs use these statistics in their grant applications to funding sources. In deciding what graphs to use in the State Plan I learned that programs consider statistics useful except for the times when the statistics point to an unwelcome message e.g. underserved counties in program catchment area and excessive referrals to mental health facilities.

### What Would I Do Differently?

1. I would start work on the State Plan earlier in order to incorporate strategic planning around legislative goals for that year.
2. I would include local and state government agencies in a needs assessment survey.
3. I would develop a tool whereby local domestic violence programs could incorporate recipients of services in a needs survey.