**FFY17 Rural and Underserved Advocate Program
Overview and Reporting Information**

**SARSSM VOCA**

**Overview**: Marginalized communities – including rural communities – often have higher rates of victimization than their peers, as well as higher barriers to appropriate and accessible services. In order to ensure that these services are accessible and equitable, and that there is no wrong door for individuals needing support and information regarding sexual violence, services must be embedded within the communities they serve, in partnership for and by those communities.

The Rural/Underserved Outreach Advocate expansion in FFY2017 will build on existing strengths within identified communities, and address gaps unique to the communities. This will be done by developing relationships with providers within those underserved communities and formal and informal community leaders, increasing capacity for allied providers and law enforcement to respond more effectively to sexual violence, and delivering appropriate services on the ground.

**Staffing**: The funds which will support this program – through both OVW Rural Grant and VOCA - are intended to fund dedicated rural outreach advocates in the identified region (though in some (VOCA funded) cases this role may be specific to a different underserved population). MECASA has completed a sample job description and sample interview questions to support centers in hiring. Some of the anticipated required skills include: understanding of sexual violence and awareness of oppression and privilege; skill and experience with training delivery; coalition building and team facilitation; background in human services; willingness to use technology to increase accessibility of services; and the preferred candidate is a representative of the community they serve.

**MECASA Role:** MECASA will have dedicated staffing and programming to support the expansion of this work. This will include monthly opportunities for peer connection, problem solving, and resource sharing through televideo platforms; quarterly news and information that can be shared with local partners; outreach materials specific to rural and underserved communities; dedicated web-based resources specific to this program; and one-to-one planning and other support.

**Reporting**: MECASA will be relying on a number of measures to track and report the success of this initiative. Most of those are items that are already being tracked in the statewide EmpowerDB database. In some cases, simple changes can be made to the database to ensure that we are capturing all of the information. Additionally, we will repeat the Underserved Needs Assessment from 2015 in the summer of 2017. This round will include additional outreach to more providers, and more qualitative components to obtain nuanced information about the changes that individuals have witnessed over the course of the service period.

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|  **Activities** | **Measures** | **Priority outreach, training and programs** | **Statewide OVW Grant Goals/Year** |
| Ongoing periodic outreach to a growing group of allied providers. | Number of outreach meetings; Increase in outreach meetings over time.  | ??Caring Unlimited, York County Shelters, Biddeford Teen Center, PPNNE, churches, community centers, CAP Sanford, GA | --- |
| Increasing the capacity of providers for underserved/rural communities to respond to sexual assault by providing direct training (using statewide training templates); developing cross-referral protocols with allied providers.  | Number of trainings delivered; number of trainees; Increase in self-described content knowledge and skills of trainees.  | State Police, SO,  |  |
| Representing sexual assault services at community-based coalitions, network meetings, etc. | Number of coalition meetings attended or convened.  | Homelessness Council, CAC, Providers meeting |  |
| General awareness and outreach efforts (tabling, postering, etc.). | Number of tabling events; number of awareness materials distributed.  |  | 12 tabling events; distribution of 5,000 outreach materials. |
| Deliver direct services through drop in hours, specialized and televideo support groups, and core victim services.  | Number of individuals served; number of contacts; number of support groups held; number of support group participants.  |  | 500 hours of drop-in/direct service hours; 75 new clients; 25 televideo support group clients. |
| Enhancing the agency’s own accessibility and appropriateness programming by supporting shifts in organizational policy or practice.  | Increase in host center perceived change in knowledge, skills and accessibility and appropriateness of services. |  | --- |