

---

**Sponsor:** Public Health

**Meeting Date:** 11/12/2024

**Title:** Amendment to the Grant Agreement with Minnesota  
Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs Crime Victim  
Services, Violence Against Women's Act STOP Grant

**File Number:** 2024-499

---

**Background and Rationale:**

Public Health's Sexual Offense Services (SOS) program provides victims of sexual violence 24/7 crisis advocacy, ongoing individual advocacy, counseling and support, community awareness, information and education. SOS services have been provided in Ramsey County since 1976 and SOS provides services to approximately 1,100 victims of sexual violence, annually. These services include:

- Transportation as necessary and appropriate.
- Information and referral regarding criminal justice process, victim's rights, other victim service referrals including counseling options, Legal Advocacy for Victim service immigration services and other community organizations services.
- Assistance and accompaniment in obtaining emergency medical procedures 24/7/365 and any additional follow up information and referral.
- Assistance to survivors including any criminal justice system services including accompaniment during criminal justice events including law enforcement investigations, notification regarding criminal justice events and with victim impact statement needs.
- Follow up with victim survivors after initial contact and post any criminal justice events.

In the last two years, SOS has engaged in multiple outreach activities with a diverse array of disciplines including multiple private and public schools, Public Health, Ramsey County Social Services, shelters for people experiencing homelessness, libraries, the National Guard, clinics, and other community-based programs. In partnership with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, local law enforcement and medical providers, SOS helped train every new and current patrol officer in Ramsey County from all nine law enforcement agencies in 2019-2020. SOS is also a standing member of the Ramsey County Children's Multidisciplinary Team, especially with cases where there is risk of sexual violence and exploitation, and the Ramsey County Adult Protection Multidisciplinary Team. Additionally, SOS supported the Minnesota Department of Human Services in developing statewide training for nursing homes and elderly care facilities in identifying signs of sexual violence, mitigating risks and supporting survivors.

Public Health applied for a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety titled, Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) STOP special project to develop, implement, and pilot a program offering victims of sexual violence options when reporting to law enforcement and a multijurisdictional investigator through Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD). This grant supports victim/survivors served by Public Health's SOS program who choose to report a sex crime and/or desire more autonomy and control over their engagement within the criminal justice system (CJS). Ramsey County has committed to providing trauma informed and victim-centered care through the Implementation Plan which was placed into action in 2019. A key element in this plan is direct collaboration and referrals from SPPD to SOS allowing sexual assault advocates to support victims reporting to law enforcement. The special project was developed and piloted from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024, will expand SOS services creating an avenue for victims of sexual assault to

report directly to an advocate and have greater control of the depth of the investigation they desire. End Violence Against Women International published *Opening Doors: Alternative Reporting Options for Sexual Assault Victims* by Lonsway, Archambault, Huhtanen articulated the success of offering reporting options and the significant community demand to expand resources outside of the criminal justice system.

Additionally, this grant will fund an existing sex crimes investigator from SPPD to provide consultation and guidance across jurisdictions. Supplying expertise in the investigation process will significantly mitigate the retraumatization of a victim by ensuring that trauma informed care is of the greatest standard and minimizing a victim's chances of being re-exposed to the crime through efficient and effective protocols and procedures. To accomplish this work, Public Health will use one previously approved limited duration position throughout the term of the grant to develop, implement, evaluate, and complete the pilot program. SPPD will use one previously approved limited duration sex crime investigator to support the program development and provide multijurisdictional investigative support.

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the amendment to the grant agreement with Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, Crime Victim Services for the period upon execution through June 30, 2025.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the amendment.
3. Authorize the County Manager to execute amendments to the grant agreement in a form approved by the Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Frethem. Motion passed.

Aye: - 4: Frethem, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 2: McGuire, and Moran

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Yang, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board