Use of Violence Against Women Act STOP Funds for Courts: Follow-up to the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence

Results of a Survey to State Court Administrators

August 16, 2012

Prepared for

CONFERENCE OF
COSCA
STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS
Highlights

In June 2012, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) surveyed state court administrators to determine how Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) STOP funds are allocated and used by courts. The survey also served as a follow-up to assess the impact of the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence held in 2010. Under the STOP block grant program, each state and territory must allocate at least five percent of the state STOP monies to court-based programs or initiatives. This report is based on survey responses from state court administrators from 43 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Four key findings are highlighted below.

1. **Nine out of ten states report having a domestic violence point of contact at the administrative office of the courts (AOC).**
   The vast majority of respondents (40 of 45; 89%) indicated that they have a designated point person in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on family violence issues. This is a substantial increase from reports in similar surveys conducted in 2003 and 2008 when 70 percent and 71 percent of responding states, respectively, had a point of contact. Seven respondents reported that their point of contact at the AOC was an outgrowth of the National Leadership Summit.

2. **About half of the responding AOCs reported receiving the five percent set-aside for the courts.**
   While nearly all states and territories have a designated point of contact, only twenty-four of the forty-five respondents (53%) verified that the courts are receiving the five percent set-aside. This proportion is lower than in previous years, when 63 percent and 65 percent of state courts reported receiving the set-aside. The reduction could be related to the relatively large proportion of state AOC’s (29%) that do not have a defined role in the STOP grant distribution process.

3. **Summit attendees reported increased coordination with their STOP administering agencies, as well as other benefits of the Summit.**
   Thirty-one responding states sent representatives to the Summit in 2010. Nearly all of these states reported that the Summit had made a difference in some way. The most commonly cited benefits of the Summit include improved communication between the STOP grant administering agency and the AOC point of contact, valuable networking with other state POCs, improved understanding of how STOP funds can be used, and development of a strategic plan for moving forward. All ten states that reported improved coordination with their administering agency in the past two years had attended the Summit.

4. **Judicial and court staff training are the most common usage of STOP funds and the areas in greatest need of technical assistance.**
   STOP funds were used for training for judges and judicial officials in 73 percent of responding states. Other common uses of STOP funds included training for court staff, developing judicial resource guides, and supporting problem-solving courts or dockets. The greatest needs in the area of technical assistance were in training for judges and judicial officials, training for court staff, supporting programs for offenders, understanding the requirements for using STOP funds, and learning about other states’ best practices.
Survey Background

The STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program is a formula grant program to states to develop and strengthen the justice system’s response to violence against women and to support and enhance services for victims. Under the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), each state and territory must allocate at least five percent of the state STOP monies to court-based programs or initiatives.

In the fall of 2010, the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), in partnership with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), held the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence in New Orleans, Louisiana. A key goal of the Summit was to foster communication between the grant administering agency and administrative office of the courts in each state and territory. Each state team returned home with an action plan aimed at improving the use of the STOP set-aside for courts.

In June 2012, NCSC conducted a survey to follow-up with states to see how they have progressed since the Summit and to determine how VAWA STOP funds are allocated and used by the courts (see Appendix A for the printed survey). An online survey was sent to all members of COSCA, which is comprised of state court administrators from the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and five territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands). Forty-five states/territories responded, for a response rate of 80 percent (see Appendix B for a list of respondents).

Two similar surveys of COSCA members to determine how STOP funds were allocated and used by the courts were conducted in 2003 and in 2008, with 75 percent and 55 percent response rates, respectively. When possible, results from the current survey are presented with results from prior years' surveys for comparison. It is important to note that only 22 states responded to all three surveys, so this report is not based on a cohort of the same states over time. However, when looking only at those 22 states, the differences across the three surveys were similar to differences for the entire sample; therefore the entire sample is presented in this report.

AOC Points of Contact

The vast majority of state respondents (40 of 45; 89%) indicated that they have a designated point person in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on family violence issues. Individuals who serve in this capacity are identified in Appendix C. This is an increase compared to 2003 and 2008, when 70 percent (28 of 40) and 71 percent (22 of 31) of responding states, respectively, had a point of contact.

Exhibit 1 is a geographic map of the points of contact. North Carolina, North Dakota, and Rhode Island did not have a point of contact at the time of the survey. Mississippi and
Pennsylvania's respondents were unsure whether they had a point of contact, but Pennsylvania reported that they were likely to have one in the foreseeable future. Seven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Minnesota, New York and Utah) reported that their point of contact was created as an outgrowth of their participation in the National Leadership Summit in 2010.

Exhibit 1: State AOCs with DV points of contact

*States colored white did not respond to the survey

Survey Question: Does your state AOC have a designated point of contact on violence against women (VAW) issues (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence)?

Allocation of STOP Funds for the Courts

Respondents were asked if they were receiving all of the five percent set-aside designated for the courts. In the 2012 survey, just over half of state respondents (53%) verified that the courts are receiving the five percent set-aside. Ten states were not sure (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, New York, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin) and eleven states indicated they are not receiving the entire set-aside (California, Georgia, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Virginia). Ten states
(22%) reported that their AOC must compete with local courts and other entities for the set-aside, while four states (9%) were unsure if this is the case.

Exhibit 2: Distribution of STOP Funds for Courts: Three Points in Time

AOCs reporting state court receipt of the 5% STOP set-aside

Survey Question: Are the courts receiving all of the 5 percent set-aside designated for the courts in your state?

Role of the AOC

The role of the AOC in STOP grant distribution and in the identification of court needs and priorities varies among states. Exhibit 3 compares findings of the 2012, 2008, and 2003 surveys regarding the roles of the AOC in these aspects of the STOP program.

In the 2012 survey, nineteen of the responding states reported that the AOC submits a single STOP application for the courts and distributes the STOP funds for statewide projects and local courts. One state reported that their AOC coordinates the local STOP applications, but has no role in the distribution of funds. In nine states, the AOC primarily serves in an advisory capacity to the state funding agency in charge of the distribution process. In thirteen states the AOC plays no role in the distribution of STOP funds or the identification of court needs. In two states the AOC seems to have an advisory role in how the money is used but is not involved in the grant review process.
Exhibit 3: AOC’s Role in STOP Grant Distributions and Identification of Needs


Survey Question: What is the AOC’s current role in STOP grant distributions and the identification of court needs and priorities? Please select the most pertinent role.

Coordination Between the AOC and the STOP agency

The survey included a question regarding the level of coordination between the AOC and the state STOP administering agency. Respondents were asked to indicate any change in coordination over the last two years on a scale that ranged from much worse to much better, with an option of no change. In 2012, nearly three-fourths of respondents reported no change in coordination; seven (16%) reported that coordination is better and three (7%) indicated it is much better. Only two indicated that coordination had declined (4%). (See Exhibit 4.)

One of the two states reporting less coordination attributed that decline to the AOC no longer being involved in the grant review process as it had in the past. The other state reported that its
administering agency had outsourced all STOP contracting to an outside coalition, which essentially removed the AOC from state STOP planning.

All of the ten respondents that reported improved coordination in the past two years also reported that their states had sent representatives to the 2010 National Leadership Summit in New Orleans. When asked what accounted for the change in coordination, six of the ten attributed the improvement to the Summit and the state plans that were developed there. Two states mentioned more frequent meetings and communication contributing to increased coordination.

### Exhibit 4: The State of Coordination Between the AOC and State STOP Administering Agency Compared to Two Years Ago (N=45)

Survey Question: *In the last two years, how has coordination changed between the AOC and the state STOP administering agency?*
Use of STOP Funds and Ongoing Technical Assistance Needs

The state courts use STOP funds for a variety of purposes; the most common uses are listed in Exhibit 5. In the majority of states STOP funds are applied to training for judges and judicial officials. The next two most common uses of STOP funds are training for court staff and developing judicial resource guides. States that indicated an "Other" response reported activities that included training for those working in courts, such as guardians ad litem and advocates (2 states), supporting tribal courts (1 state), and translating protection order forms (2 states).

Exhibit 5: Use of STOP Funds for State Courts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2003 %</th>
<th>2008 %</th>
<th>2012 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training for judges and/or judicial officers</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for court staff</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing judicial resource guides (e.g., “benchbooks”)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting problem-solving courts or dockets (e.g., domestic violence courts)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting programs for victims (e.g., advocacy programs, visitation centers)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting court participation in coordinated community responses</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/assessment of policies and procedures</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding an AOC point of contact</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology acquisition and/or data collection (e.g., protection order registries, kiosks)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring court staff (e.g., clerks, coordinators, judicial officials)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting programs for offenders (e.g., batterer intervention programs)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting pre-trial services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents could check more than one activity; therefore, the percentages exceed 100 percent.

Survey question: How are the STOP funds used by the state courts in your state? Check all that apply.

Respondents were asked to identify their current technical assistance needs in regard to the STOP program. In the 2012 survey, 21 states listed at least one area in which they needed assistance. Exhibit 9 lists these technical assistance needs and the number of states citing each topic area.
### Exhibit 9: Courts’ Needs for Technical Assistance Regarding the STOP Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence training for judges and court staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting programs for offenders (e.g., batterer intervention programs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements of STOP program and how funds can be used</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn what other states are doing/development and dissemination of best practices</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic coordination</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing protective orders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to efficiently work with victim services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language access</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing information concerning recent research and evidence-based practices</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentencing in DV cases</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant writing training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-disciplinary summit to discuss issues, including enforcement and use of criminal protective orders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for advocates and community providers on the role of courts and attorneys</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for the administering agencies on necessity of the court's role</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey question:** *In what areas do the courts need technical assistance regarding the STOP program?*
Summit Follow-up

The majority of respondents (31) reported that a representative of their state had attended the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence, held in New Orleans in 2010 (see exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: State Attendance at 2010 National Leadership Summit (N=45)

Survey question: Did your state send a state representative to the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence held in New Orleans, LA in 2010?

Nearly all Summit participants cited an example of how attending the Summit had made a positive impact on their state or territory's STOP grant program. Most comments are captured in the following categories:

- The Summit provided an opportunity to improve communication between the STOP grant administering agency and the court POC
- Courts were able to share information about the programs the court implements and emphasize their need for STOP funding to the administering agency
- The Summit provided a great opportunity for informal interaction and networking among POCs and a forum to hear about other states' projects and innovations
- Participants came away with a better understanding of how STOP funds could be used
- An action plan or a strategy for moving forward was developed
- The Summit was the impetus for some states to move forward with long-term goals.

Promising Court-Based Programs

Respondents were asked to identify STOP-funded projects in their states/territories that appear to be promising. The identified projects and programs are summarized in the following categories:
1. **Training Programs**
   a. Sending judges to NJIDV training (Wisconsin)
   b. Training court marshals (Puerto Rico)
   c. Domestic Violence Safety Partnership (California)
   d. Training pro-bono attorneys (Montana)
   e. Full time resource staff for judges (Arkansas)
   f. Judicial training and education (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Utah, Louisiana, Idaho)
   g. Online judicial training (Nebraska)
   h. Virtual Court distance learning (Florida)
   i. Multidisciplinary training (Oregon)
   j. Media campaign targeted at men and boys (Alaska)

2. **Protection Order Registries**
   a. Louisiana Protective Order Registry
   b. Domestic Violence Registry (West Virginia)

3. **Problem-Solving/Coordinated Approaches**
   a. Satellite Domestic Violence Unit (District of Columbia)
   b. Domestic Violence Court (Arizona, Puerto Rico)
   c. Coordinated review and assessment of court policies and procedures for handling DV and sexual assault cases (Washington)
   d. Specialized DV dockets (Georgia)
   e. Hospital to Court Project (New Jersey)
   f. Victim Services co-located with court/social service agencies (Nevada)
   g. Domestic Violence Court pilot (West Virginia)
   h. Services to Access Resources and Safety (STARS) Program (New York)
   i. Tribal projects program (California)

4. **Judicial Resources**
   a. DV benchbooks (Oregon, Wisconsin, Utah)
   b. Lethality Assessment Project (New Hampshire)

5. **Technology Solutions Related to Protection Orders**
   a. Filing system for protection orders (Alabama)
   b. I-CAN! Online protection order filing (Virginia)
c. Update software system for protection orders (Minnesota)
d. System to reduce backlogs of protection orders (South Carolina)

6. Programs for Victims and Offenders
   a. Batterer intervention program monitoring pilot (Florida)
   b. Victim advocacy (Ohio, Mississippi)
   c. Project EVOLVE (Connecticut)
   d. Family Court Advocate Program (South Carolina)
Appendix A

2012 Survey

Please provide the contact information for the person completing this survey

Name: (1) ______________________________
Email address: (2) ______________________________

Did your state send a state representative to the National Leadership Summit on State Court Responses to Domestic Violence held in New Orleans, LA in 2010?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

Does your state AOC have a designated point of contact on violence against women (VAW) issues (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

Please provide the contact information for the AOC’s VAW point of contact. If you are the point of contact, check the box below and only provide your address and telephone number.

☐ I am the point of contact

Name: ______________________________
Email address: ______________________________
Telephone number: ______________________________
Mailing address: ______________________________

Was the point of contact position created as an outgrowth of your state’s participation in the National Leadership Summit?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

(If no current POC)
How likely is your state AOC to have a designated point of contact on violence against women issues in the foreseeable future?

☐ Very Likely (4)
☐ Likely (3)
☐ Unlikely (2)
☐ Very Unlikely (1)
Current Allocation of STOP Funds for Courts

This section of the survey explores the way in which courts receive STOP funds through the state administering agency.

Are the courts receiving all of the 5 percent set-aside designated for the courts in your state?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)
- Unsure (97)

Does the AOC compete with local courts and other entities for the 5 percent set-aside?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)
- Unsure (97)

What is the AOC’s current role in STOP grant distributions and the identification of court needs and priorities? Please select the most pertinent role.

- The AOC submits a single STOP application for the courts and distributes the STOP funds for statewide projects and to local courts. (1)
- The AOC coordinates the local STOP applications, but has no role in the distribution of funds. (2)
- The AOC serves as an advisory role to the state agency that makes the distribution decisions. (3)
- The AOC has no defined role. (4)
- Other, please specify. (5)__________

In the last two years, how has coordination changed between the AOC and the state STOP administering agency?

- Much better (5)
- Better (4)
- No change (3)
- Worse: Please specify how (2)__________
- Much worse: Please specify how (1)__________

What accounts for the change in the level of coordination between the AOC and the STOP administering agency?
Current Use of STOP Funds and Ongoing Needs

How are the STOP funds used by the state courts in your state? Check all that apply.

- Training for judges and/or judicial officers (1)
- Training for court staff (2)
- Supporting problem-solving courts or dockets (e.g., domestic violence courts) (3)
- Supporting programs for victims (e.g., advocacy programs, visitation centers, underserved populations, etc.) (4)
- Supporting programs for offenders (e.g., batterer intervention programs) (5)
- Supporting pre-trial services (6)
- Technology acquisition and/or data collection (e.g., protection order registries, kiosks) (7)
- Review/assessment of policies and procedures (8)
- Hiring court staff (e.g., clerks, coordinators, judicial officers) (9)
- Funding an AOC point of contact position (10)
- Supporting court participation in coordinated community responses (11)
- Developing judicial resource guides (e.g., "benchbooks") (12)
- Other, please specify. (13)____________

Which STOP-funded project(s) in your state, if any, appear to be promising in addressing violence against women?

In what areas do the courts need technical assistance regarding the STOP program?

Answer only if someone from your state attended the Summit

What difference, if any, did your state’s attendance at the Summit make?
Regarding your state’s action plan:

What are your current TOP three priorities?

______________________________

Please describe your progress in addressing those priority areas.

______________________________
### Appendix B

**Responding States and Territories in 2012**

| * Alabama      | * Hawaii       | * Nebraska        | Pennsylvania  |
| * Alaska       | * Idaho        | * Nevada          | * Puerto Rico |
| * Arizona      | * Illinois     | * New Hampshire   | * Rhode Island|
| * Arkansas     | * Iowa         | * New Jersey      | * South Carolina|
| * California   | * Kansas       | * New Mexico      | * South Dakota |
| * Colorado     | * Louisiana    | * New York        | * Tennessee   |
| * Connecticut  | * Massachusetts| * North Carolina  | * Texas       |
| * Washington DC| * Michigan     | * North Dakota    | * Utah        |
| * Delaware     | * Minnesota    | * Ohio            | * Virginia    |
| * Florida      | * Mississippi  | * Oklahoma        | * Washington  |
| * Georgia      | * Montana      | * Oregon          | * West Virginia|

* indicates that the responding state has an AOC Point of Contact on domestic violence issues
### Appendix C

### VAW Points of Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>VAW Point of Contact</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Susanne DiPietro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>907-264-0785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:sdipietro@courts.state.ak.us">sdipietro@courts.state.ak.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Bob Maddox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>334-954-5032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:bob.maddox@alacourt.gov">bob.maddox@alacourt.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Lensa Odima-Warden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>501-413-5606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lensa.odima-warden@arkansas.gov">lensa.odima-warden@arkansas.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Kay Radwanski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>602-452-3360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kradwanski@courts.az.gov">kradwanski@courts.az.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Diana Nunn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>415-865-7689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:diane.nunn@jud.ca.gov">diane.nunn@jud.ca.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Jalice Vigil-Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>303-837-3685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jalice.Vigil-Kelly@judicial.state.co.us">Jalice.Vigil-Kelly@judicial.state.co.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Linda Cimino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director, Office of Victim Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>860-263-2760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:linda.cimino@jud.ct.gov">linda.cimino@jud.ct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>Cheryl Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>202-879-1434</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cheryl.bailey@dcsc.gov">cheryl.bailey@dcsc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Rose Patterson</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:pattersr@flcourts.org">pattersr@flcourts.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Marla Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grants and Project Management</td>
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<td>Perry C. Taitano</td>
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<td>Administrator of the Court</td>
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<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Maureen Kiehm</td>
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<td>808-539-4406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Becky Kinnamon</td>
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<td>515-725-8045</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Amber Moe</td>
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<td>208-947-7451</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Margie Groot</td>
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