

**Washington's Efforts to Support Services for Incarcerated Victims:
An Interview with SASP Administrator Stephanie Condon**

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Stephanie Condon, Washington's SASP Administrator, and Andrea Piper-Wentland, Executive Director of the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, have collaborated closely with each other and with the Department of Corrections to look at the most useful ways to involve sexual assault programs in serving incarcerated victims of sexual assault and partnering as the state works to implement PREA. Key drivers for their collaboration have been the shared beliefs that sexual violence anywhere is unacceptable and incarcerated persons should have meaningful access to healing and services. Additionally, they felt it was important to design a comprehensive external victim response system for incarcerated victims with access to services in the community that closely mirrored those available to other victims.

For the most part, SASP formula funding has not yet been an integral part of Washington's efforts. Washington grants SASP through a competitive solicitation process that is informed by an advisory committee that includes WCSAP. According to Stephanie, they have had consensus that SASP is best used separately and granted competitively so they could really track and see the difference it's making to survivors in Washington. She adds, "I would be surprised if the advisory committee would want SASP to be the designated funding source for work with incarcerated victims, but could see them supporting the availability of SASP for that purpose." In previous solicitations, they haven't received any SASP proposals specifically focused on serving incarcerated victims. In the current solicitation, which is still open, Stephanie included language saying that serving incarcerated victims is an eligible use of funds. She points out, "It's important for this work to be voluntary and to understand the groundwork that's necessary."

Some sexual assault programs in Washington already have long-standing partnerships with prisons in their communities. More commonly, local programs may be working with their jails. Washington's Department of Corrections is working in partnership with WCSAP and the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) on a statewide coordinated effort that includes financially supported partnerships with designated community sexual assault programs to work with incarcerated victims in prisons specifically. As a new funding source for expanded services, this approach seems ideal in many ways. Some of the programs also use other unrestricted funds.

Not every program has an existing relationship with local prisons and jails. Currently, Stephanie and WCSAP are working on a process of designating a specific program to be a partner to each prison for services. This does not currently include local jails. Stephanie says WCSAP is laying significant

groundwork for services. At first, this will likely be focused on advocacy for incarcerated victims during the forensic medical examination. Stephanie explains: “Eventually, there may be advocates who can go on-site in prisons, but the partnerships have to be developed and nurtured first. There’s lots of behind the scenes work to support community sexual assault programs in becoming a part of the prison response plan.” In terms of state-level response, Stephanie is coordinating efforts on a hotline to support prisoners who are assaulted that will be completely separate from the PREA reporting line.

Stephanie points out that both she and WCSAP have a shared concern about current service capacity and the potential numbers of incarcerated victims, “That could mean thousands of new survivors to serve when we know that programs have wait lists for therapy and have had to lay-off staff. How do we look at equitable quality services for someone incarcerated? It’s really difficult to do that at a time when victim services funding is diminishing. While we’re looking at places to be flexible to support that work, we are trying to be mindful and strategic to make sure we are supporting sexual assault programs to be successful in any efforts to serve incarcerated victims.” In the long-term, Stephanie, in partnership with WCSAP, is thinking deeply about how Washington can serve incarcerated victims in the context of an overall, integrated services framework.

Consider viewing this excellent webinar which details some of Washington’s good work:

<http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/training-and-technical-assistance/webinars/1868/developing-partnerships-with-community-based-service>