



Extending Project Passport Holds First Regional Meeting in San Francisco

By Denise Dancy

Extending Project Passport aims to improve recognition and enforcement of orders of protection within and between states/tribes by encouraging states to adopt a recognizable cover sheet for orders of protection. The model first page/template was originally developed through a regional effort led by Kentucky with its seven surrounding states. The Southeast, led by Alabama with seven of its neighboring states and tribes, recently led a similar initiative. The critical aspects of the model template for the first page are common data elements jointly identified by state multi-disciplinary teams. Without this essential data readily available and easily recognizable on an order of protection - especially on "foreign protection orders" (i.e., a protection order issued in another jurisdiction outside of the enforcing jurisdiction) - verifying a protection order's authenticity, the proper identification of presenting parties at the point of enforcement, and securing the safety of a domestic violence survivor (and potential others) are in jeopardy.

Representatives from six Western states (Alaska, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Nevada and Washington), three U.S. territories in the Pacific (Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, and American Samoa) and various tribal leaders in contiguous tribal regions gathered in San Francisco last month at the Western-Pacific Regional Meeting of Extending Project Passport. State and tribal teams represented in San Francisco met jointly several times during the course of the 2-day meeting to discuss adopting and implementing the first page for their protection orders. Plenary sessions offered expert-led sessions on Full Faith and Credit provisions, their significance specific to protection orders and victim safety, ongoing challenges to law enforcement despite those provisions, and states participation in the National Crime Information Center Protection Order File (NCIC POF). The introduction of a new XML-based first page for protection orders based on the model template and its potential to enhance data sharing on protection orders illustrated further potential for the use of a recognizable first page. Ideally, XML creates an environment in which data can be easily exchanged between court case management systems, state protection order registries, and the NCIC POF.

State and tribal teams left the meeting with written action plans and timelines derived through joint consensus and greater awareness of the benefits and challenges of adopting the model template. Some teams acknowledged legislative and required statutory changes as potential challenges. Others noted very recent changes to their protection orders and potential impediments to yet again change their protection order forms. All, however, reported a willingness to work towards the adoption of the first page nonetheless - recognizing its significance for increasing safety for domestic violence survivors, facilitating issuance and enforcement of protection orders, and strengthening interstate, intrastate, and tribal coordination and collaboration to enhance those efforts. Ongoing technical assistance

from Extending Project Passport faculty and staff will also be available in the upcoming months as these teams move forward on their action plans.

Fifteen states, through similar regional efforts, in the U.S. now have or are in the process of adopting the model template first page for their orders of protection. A handful of other states have adopted the model template independently. With the convening of this first regional meeting of *Extending Project Passport*, over half of the country has been introduced to the model template of the first page and is at some stage of its adoption and use. The second regional meeting of *Extending Project Passport* for the Central-Southwestern area - comprised of ten invited states and a large tribal concentration - is scheduled for 2005. With the convening of that second regional meeting, nearly two-thirds of the country will have been introduced to the use of the model template and its potential to strengthen and enlarge the safety net for domestic violence survivors - regardless of where they live or where the protection order was issued.