

City of Jacksonville Social Services Division

Independent Living Resource Center

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Hubbard House



**Advocating and Collaborating for Change through
Empowerment, Safety, and Self-Determination in Jacksonville**

Collaboration Charter



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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Vision, Mission, and Focus	2
Core Values	4
Assumptions	7
Collaboration Partners	9
Contributions and Commitments	15
Decision Making Process and Authority	22
Conflict Resolution Plan	25
Confidentiality	27
Mandatory Reporting	29
Communications Plan	32
Talking Points	35
Work Plan	38
Glossary of Key Terms	39

Introduction

Established in October of 2015 after receiving funding from the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, AccessJax (“the Collaboration”) is comprised of four partners: the City of Jacksonville; the Independent Living Resource Center, which is the local disability center for independent living; Hubbard House, Jacksonville’s certified domestic violence agency; and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. The name of the Collaboration is an acronym for “Advocating and Collaborating for Change through Empowerment, Safety, and Self-Determination in Jacksonville.” The partners to the Collaboration have come together to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in a fully accessible and responsive network of services for victims of domestic violence in our community who are Deaf or who have a disability.

The partners to the Collaboration contributed to the following document, which outlines our vision for the project, our core values and beliefs, as well as policies and procedures that form the foundation of our work.

Vision, Mission, and Focus

Vision

We envision a safe, accessible, culturally competent, and empowering network of fully inclusive services for victims/survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

Mission

Our mission is to transform services provided by the Collaboration's respective agencies into a seamless, responsive, and sustainable network that fully meets the needs of survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability. To achieve this result, we will do the following:

- Build an effective collaboration
- Engage in cross trainings, so that partnering agencies fully share their knowledge and experiences
- Increase staff and volunteer skills, confidence, and comfort in serving survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability
- Identify barriers, needs, strengths, and resources in the Collaboration's partner agencies
- Identify, develop, and enhance our agencies' internal policies and procedures to improve responsiveness and accessibility
- Create and enhance environments where the right to self-determination is honored
- Formalize connections among agencies to build a seamless and dynamic system of support for survivors
- Build capacity to respond to cultural and linguistic needs, including effective modes of communication and culturally competent safety planning and advocacy

- Raise awareness of availability of services among survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability

Focus

Our focus is on serving victims/survivors of intimate partner violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

CORE VALUES

Accessibility

We firmly believe that Deaf individuals and people with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and less likely to disclose. They should not have the undue burden of facing obstacles while attempting to receive services. Our Collaboration commits to addressing these physical, systemic, cultural, and linguistic barriers.

Collaboration

All partners of our Collaboration have previously worked together towards the common goals of raising awareness and improving services. We recognize that trust is essential in advancing our work to create systems change. We agree that all partners have an equal voice, with all members bringing different areas of expertise to the project.

Commitment

Each member of the Collaboration commits to attending meetings, participating in discussions, and sharing their unique knowledge, experience, and expertise. Each member also commits to communicating project developments with the leadership team of their respective agencies to effect changes in policy that will improve and enhance services.

Community Responsibility

We believe that providing services to survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf should be informed by the social or community model of disability, which puts the responsibility on society to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers. As agencies who serve survivors, we are committed to eliminating these barriers in order to create and sustain an environment in which all survivors can actively participate on an equal basis.

Confidentiality

The Collaboration recognizes that confidentiality is a key element in providing a safe environment for victims of domestic violence. We support the rights of individuals to manage their own information, and we are thus committed to holding client information confidential unless the individual gives consent to disclose or unless the disclosure is required by law.

Cultural Competence

Our Collaboration understands that a survivor being Deaf or having a disability, as well as other cultural identifications, may require different approaches to service. Instead of a one-size fits all approach, we seek to develop and improve our knowledge, attitudes, and awareness to effectively engage and work across a diverse range of cultural groups. Our approach will be one of inclusiveness of all levels of ability, race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, and economic class.

Justice

We believe that the proper functioning of the civil and criminal justice systems is crucial in addressing domestic violence against Deaf individuals and people with disabilities. We value each partner's unique experiences with and perspectives on the justice systems in our community. We will work together to enhance the ability of those systems to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide legal remedies for survivors.

Safety

We believe that victims/survivors with disabilities or who are Deaf have a right to feel emotionally and physically safe when seeking services related to domestic violence. This includes recognizing the particular safety implications for people with disabilities or who are Deaf while acting in a way that also respects their choices. We believe that victim/survivors, when informed, are the best judges of what is safe for them, and we agree to support them by providing a safe and empowering environment for service delivery.

Self-Determination and Empowerment

We respect that individuals have abilities to make informed choices. We also recognize that many individuals who are Deaf or who have disabilities rely on the support and advocacy of others. We are fully committed to relying on the expertise and experience of the survivors we serve.

Social Justice

We believe in the concepts of human rights, inclusion, and equality of opportunity for all members of society. We commit to working toward a socially just world by creating and enhancing systems that will deliver fully accessible, responsive, appropriate, respectful, and safe services for survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

Survivor-led (“Nothing About Us Without Us”)

From its earliest days, the domestic violence movement has been survivor-led. We are committed to learning from and being led by Deaf survivors and survivors with disabilities as we work toward a community where all survivors have full access to a well-informed, respectful, culturally competent, and a collaborative network of service providers. Our project’s success also relies heavily on the participation and feedback of survivors. Their input is invaluable to our work.

ASSUMPTIONS

Individuals who are Deaf or who have a disability:

- Are more vulnerable for domestic and sexual violence
- Tend to have a lack of trust in many community service providers
- Are often unaware of services and programs available to meet their needs
- Are less likely to disclose because of fear of systemic barriers, which include:
 - lack of training
 - restrictive access
 - communication barriers
 - lack of technology/equipment
 - stereotyping
 - outdated policies

Community service providers working with individuals who are Deaf or who have a disability:

- May lack the knowledge of how to communicate effectively
- May not be aware of cultural differences that can affect support
- May exacerbate victim trauma through their lack of knowledge
- May not be familiar with or understand the empowering ally model, which sees the client as an equal participant in the service provision process, rather than the helper model, which often views the service provider as the expert.

- May lack the dedicated resources to effectively meet needs and create access

Collaboration Partners

City of Jacksonville

The City of Jacksonville has been chosen to be the lead agency because it has been a leader in both domestic violence solutions and disability rights for many years. Sparked by the founding of Hubbard House in 1976 as the first domestic violence shelter in the state, the City of Jacksonville has made addressing domestic violence a top priority. As one striking example, it is one of only a few governmental entities in the nation to require that all of its employees have domestic violence awareness training. In the 1980s, the City of Jacksonville inaugurated the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), composed of other governmental units and community agencies, including the partners to this Collaboration. In monthly meetings, members of DVIP continue to coordinate their work with the goal of protecting victims of domestic violence and their children, holding perpetrators accountable, and bringing cases to court for resolution.

Two additional community programs resulted from critical needs identified through the City of Jacksonville's leadership on domestic violence issues. The Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) was created as a multi-disciplinary team to work intensively with families who are identified to be at greatest risk of severe injury or death due to domestic violence. Of crucial importance also was the coordination of the injunction process in the Duval County Courthouse to provide for domestic violence advocacy and safety planning to individuals seeking injunctions.

Jacksonville has also been a leader in addressing the needs and concerns of persons who are Deaf or who have a disability. The Mayor's Disability Council was created in 1989 through the collaborative grassroots efforts of many disability specific organizations and individuals and is dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities of all types. The Council also addresses the needs of the Deaf community. Approximately 80 percent of the 13 members appointed by the Mayor have disabilities. The Council members are community liaisons from a multitude of agencies, disability backgrounds, and various professions. Their mission is to raise awareness in a public forum of the needs of persons with disabilities and to assist in the formulation of solutions to meet those needs.

One of the initial outgrowths of the Council was the creation of the City of Jacksonville's Disabled Services Division. The mission of this Division is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities by addressing, assessing, and resolving the many barriers they encounter, including transportation, housing, accessibility, discrimination, and employment. The Division is responsible for increasing awareness of the needs and accomplishments of people with disabilities; monitoring federal and state legislation relating to disability rights and issues; advising the Mayor and his staff about necessary City compliance; and recommending and implementing ordinances that impact equal access and opportunity. Division employees serve as staff for the Mayor's Disability Council, engage in public speaking events or requests, and provide sensitivity training related to the issues persons with disabilities face on a daily basis.

The work of the City of Jacksonville Victim Services Center is a central component to provision of services to victims of crime, including individuals with disabilities and/or Deaf individuals. The Center, which is part of the City's Social Services Division, was created in 1984 to coordinate services for victims with the community and to provide for the unmet needs of crime victims and survivors. Services include crisis intervention and stabilization; emergency financial assistance; assistance with Florida Victim Compensation claims; criminal justice and court support advocacy; crisis recovery; crime victim rights information; and case management.

ILRC (Independent Living Resource Center)

The ILRC has a long history of collaborative service in the community and has an unparalleled depth of experience in disability issues and services. Its mission is to empower all people with a disability (as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act or Rehab Act of 1973) to live independent and self-empowered lives. The vision of ILRC is to be a consumer choice, cross disability, community-based, and consumer participant organization serving as a resource to people with disabilities. The ILRC of Northeast Florida is the Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Jacksonville and is part of a network of CILs across the nation. Each Center for Independent Living provides four core services.

These services include:

- **Independent Living** - The ILRC assists consumers who have disabilities with skill development in areas such as money management, goal setting, accessing community transportation, utilization of equipment, and employment readiness.
- **Advocacy** - The ILRC assists consumers in self, individual, and systems advocacy. The ILRC staff assists individuals, businesses, and other interested organizations in learning more about the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to become ADA Compliant and Disability Friendly.
- **Information and Referral** - The ILRC acts as a clearinghouse for information to be provided to consumers to assist in living independently. The ILRC furnishes disability related information for consumers and the general public.
- **Peer Counseling** - The ILRC offers ongoing peer support opportunities for individuals and groups to support each other with information and experiences in order to facilitate independent living.

Additionally, two of its programs, the Deaf Consumer Program and the Disability Victims Advocacy Program, will be essential to the work of this Collaboration. These programs already have a solid, trusting relationship with the Jacksonville Deaf and Disability Community.

Hubbard House

Hubbard House, Inc. is the certified domestic violence center for Duval County. Hubbard House was founded in 1976, making it the oldest domestic violence shelter in Florida. Hubbard House services include:

- Emergency shelter
- 24-hour crisis hotline
- Safety planning for adults and children
- Therapeutic day care center
- Counseling for adults and children
- Outreach programs for adults and children
- Teen group counseling
- School-based educational programs
- Court advocacy
- Assistance with job training and placement
- Extensive community and professional education activities
- Media outreach and public awareness campaigns
- Batterers' intervention programs
- Many collaborative programs with local agencies, including the City of Jacksonville, and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Hubbard House also serves a significant number of sexual assault survivors as a high percentage of its program participants have experienced intimate partner sexual violence. In addition, Hubbard House provides shelter on a temporary basis to survivors of non-intimate partner sexual violence.

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

The mission of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office is to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the community, to preserve the peace and to prevent crime and disorder while constantly guarding personal liberties as prescribed by law. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office has a Victim Services Unit whose mission is to provide quality, professional, and caring assistance to all crime victims, witnesses, survivors, and their significant others. The goal of the JSO Victim Services Unit is to identify and meet the needs of victims by reviewing programs and resources available in the community to assure availability of services; disseminating pertinent information to JSO employees to keep them knowledgeable in assisting victims; training all employees regarding programs so proper referrals can be made; ensuring that all JSO employees are trained in victim/witness rights; and acting as a liaison between JSO and other service agencies. The JSO has long emphasized the importance of community involvement and support in its mission of protecting the citizens of Duval County; JSO is therefore a partner in many community collaborations aimed at addressing the needs of specific populations.

One of the most important of these collaborations is the Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST), a collaborative effort among the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO), the City of Jacksonville and Hubbard House. The mission of InVEST is to identify and intervene in the most potentially lethal domestic violence cases; its primary goal is to reduce intimate partner domestic violence homicides in Jacksonville. Hubbard House provides an advocate and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office assigns a detective to the InVEST program. An additional staff support position is provided by the City of Jacksonville Victim Services Center.

At InVEST, all domestic violence police reports and referrals from other agencies are reviewed daily and assessed for potential lethality. An important aspect in the formation of InVEST was agreement by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to include a 19 question threat assessment as part of every domestic violence police report. Cases identified as high risk for lethality are followed up by advocates and detectives who work together to provide services to victims and accountability to perpetrators. InVEST clients receive intense case management and advocacy throughout civil and criminal processes until their situation becomes safer or they choose to leave the

program. In addition, offenders receive heightened scrutiny by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.

The inclusion of the threat assessment by JSO in all domestic violence reports is just one example of the many instances in which JSO has been proactive in adopting policies and protocols to address specific needs identified through its many collaborative programs and outreach activities in the community.

Contributions and Commitments

The Collaboration recognizes that to effectively address gaps in services and to achieve sustainable systems change, all partners must contribute time, resources, and their particular expertise. Below are the commitments of our partners as well as specific commitments from the Project Administrator and Project Director.

Collaboration team members commit and contribute to the following:

- Serving as representatives for each individual organization
- Attending bi-weekly Collaboration team meetings
- Being flexible as issues arise that may constitute change in schedules
- Having an open mind and willingness to learn and accept new ideas
- Providing updates and applicable information to the partnering agencies
- Using the level of influence each member has to inform their individual agencies of changes needed to policies and procedures
- Attending all mandatory trainings and meetings provided by OVW and/or Vera
- Developing and endorsing Collaboration Charter
- Developing Statement of Focus Memo
- Participating in all aspects of the Needs Assessment planning and implementation
- Participating in strategic planning
- Reviewing products between meetings

- Accessing respective internal policies and procedures
- Keeping respective organizations informed of the project
- Keeping the members informed of important organizational changes in agencies as needed
- Making changes based on findings of this project
- Conducting cross trainings to build and strengthen shared knowledge base

Project Administrator commits and contributes to:

- Overseeing grant management and reporting to OVW
- Preparation and submission of semi-annual programmatic reports
- Fiscal responsibilities including disbursements to MOU partners in accordance with the approved budget and submission of quarterly financial reports.
- Coordination with City of Jacksonville Victim Services

Project Director commits and contributes to:

- Coordinating Collaboration team meetings, including preparing agenda and meeting minutes as necessary, as well as other relevant materials to be shared with the team
- Acting as the Collaboration's liaison with OVW, seeking feedback on or approval of grant deliverables and use of grant funds, and seeking clarity on questions about the grant program when they arise
- Participating in all Vera Institute of Justice grant program technical assistance activities, including bi-weekly check-in meetings for feedback and technical assistance

- Participating in the monthly Project Director's call.
- Participating in all webinars and other required grant program conferences and trainings and sharing pertinent information with the group
- Preparing the narrative portion of the OVW semi-annual programmatic reports
- Determining action steps as required as a result of the assessment

The **City of Jacksonville**, as the primary recipient of the OVW grant, additionally commits to:

- Providing a Project Administrator who will have an office in the Social Services Division
- Contributing staff time and resources to consult with the partners about changes that will be made during implementation
- Overseeing grant management and reporting to OVW
- Preparing and submitting semi-annual programmatic reports
- Providing office space and computer equipment for the Collaboration's monthly meetings
- Participating in all phases of project planning and implementation including collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning, and implementation
- Agreeing to the communications plan as outlined in this charter

Hubbard House additionally commits to:

- Providing a representative to the Collaboration
- Complying with all grant requirements
- Contributing staff time and resources to implementing the changes identified during strategic planning, as a result of the needs assessment
- Participating in all phases of project planning and implementation including collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning, and implementation
- Agreeing to the communications plan as outlined in this charter
- Providing domestic violence expertise
- Providing the services of its Chief Operating Officer to consult as needed on all phases of the project
- Participating in project planning and implementation
- Using the Performance Indicators every six months to track progress
- Assisting with planning and administering the needs assessment
- Determining actions required as a result of the assessment
- Reviewing and revising policies and procedures as determined to be necessary by the Collaboration
- Executing plan focusing on training and systems change for the Collaboration to effectively serve victims

ILRC additionally commits to:

- Providing a Project Director
- Complying with all grant requirements
- Contributing staff time and resources to implementing the changes identified during strategic planning, as a result of the needs assessment
- Participating in all phases of project planning and implementation including collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning, and implementation
- Agreeing to the communications plan as outlined in this charter
- Being open to assessing agency policies and procedures
- Providing expertise in the area of services to Deaf people and people with disabilities as those services pertain to domestic violence
- Providing assistance with American Sign Language interpretation
- Using the Performance Indicators every six months to track progress
- Reviewing and revising policies and procedures as determined to be necessary by the Collaboration
- Executing plan focusing on training and systems change for the Collaboration to effectively serve victims/survivors

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office additionally commits to:

- Providing a representative to the Collaboration
- Complying with all grant requirements
- Providing expertise in the area of law enforcement as it pertains to domestic violence
- Providing expertise on community collaboration by law enforcement
- Participating in all phases of project planning and implementation including collaboration building, needs assessment, strategic planning, and implementation
- Contributing staff time to participate in focus groups as part of the needs assessment
- Contributing staff time and resources to implementing the changes identified during strategic planning, as a result of the needs assessment
- Agreeing to the communications plan as outlined in this charter
- Determining action steps as required as a result of the assessment to improve access and services to victims of the Deaf and disability communities
- Executing a plan focusing on training and systems change to effectively serve victims
- Reviewing and revising policies and procedures as determined to be necessary by the Collaboration
- Providing access to historical data
- Holding perpetrators responsible for their actions

Resignation of Representative of a Partner Agency

While all partners involved in our Collaboration have been with their respective agencies for decades, we realize that unforeseen circumstances can arise and that a representative may resign from their partner agency. It is imperative to our work to have continued representation from each partner agency.

With this imperative in mind, we request that any representative from a partner agency who intends to resign notify the Collaboration as soon as possible. The Project Director and, if possible, the partner representative will schedule a meeting with the executive leadership of the involved agency to discuss the process of having the organization identify a new representative in a timely manner, the qualifications for a new representative, and how to ensure the organization's continued representation in the interim.

Qualifications, in addition to the commitments outlined by OVW and this charter, will be determined by partners of the Collaboration, in consultation with, and approval by, the affected agency.

In addition, we may decide by consensus to pause the work of the project until a new representative is available.

Decision Making Process and Authority

The Collaboration has committed to adopting the consensus model of decision-making. All members' input will be considered of equal value. The process to achieve group solidarity will include discussion of the item to be decided upon followed by a proposal to be tested for consensus. The following gradient tool will be used to test for consensus. If the Collaboration members are all at a two or above, the item will move forward. If the partners are below a two on the gradient scale, concerns will be aired and if needed, modifications to the proposed idea will be discussed. Consensus will be retested and proposals modified until all members are at a two or above or until it has become clear that consensus cannot be reached. At that time, we will employ the Conflict Resolution Plan outlined below.

1. I fully agree. I commit fully.
2. I don't fully agree, but I agree that the decision is the best for the Collaboration, and I commit fully to act on the decision.
3. I need more information or would like to continue discussion.
4. I prefer something different.
5. I disagree and am unwilling to go forward.

Decision Making Authority

Collaborative members as a group are given the authority to, by consensus:

- Determine the Collaboration work process including the setting of priorities and timelines, schedules, and length of meetings, etc.
- Initiate decision-making and conflict resolution process

- If determined appropriate by the members of the Collaboration, initiate contact with Vera or OVW following guidelines set in the External Communication Plan
- Determine when internal and external stakeholders, including Vera and OVW, should be consulted regarding the development of deliverables
- Approve deliverables prior to sending to Vera and OVW
- Work with the Project Administrator to determine how to allocate discretionary grant funds
- Represent the Collaboration to other grantees in situations such as all-grantee meetings

Project Administrator (Grant Recipient) is given the authority to:

- Monitor and administer the project budget
- Schedule meetings in consultation with the Collaboration
- Create agendas in consultation with the Collaboration
- Facilitate meetings
- Consult with the Collaboration to determine allocation of grant funds
- Submit fiscal reports to OVW
- Provides fiscal information and support to partner agencies
- Represent the Collaboration to other grantees in situations such as the project director listserv, conference calls, and all-grantee meetings

Project Manager is given authority to:

- Manage the administrative aspects of the project
- Schedule meetings with the Collaboration's input
- Prepare materials for meetings
- Facilitate meetings
- Initiate conflict resolution and decision-making process
- Submit drafted deliverables to Vera
- Submit final deliverables to OVW after approval by the Collaboration
- Submit OVW progress reports
- Represent the Collaboration to other grantees in situations such as the project director listserve, conference calls, and all-grantee meetings.

Conflict Resolution Plan

All members of the Collaboration have worked together over the years and have mutual respect for one another and their prospective organizations. However, we realize that conflicts may arise as each partner has guidelines and policies that may not be easily modified and that may cause disagreement. Additionally our various backgrounds and schema could also result in approaching the work with a different philosophy that could cause conflict when making decisions. With this in mind, we agree to the following conflict resolution plan:

- To allow for time to process and look inwardly for solutions, members of the Collaboration will set up a future meeting with the purpose of defining and analyzing the problem.
- When we reconvene we will attempt to clear the air of tensions and give everyone time to explain their different perceptions of the problem.
- Our Collaboration will brainstorm and evaluate solutions, giving everyone the opportunity to have equal input.
- When discussing the issue we will ensure that the mission and vision of the Collaboration's integrity is maintained.

In the event that the above does not result in agreement, the group will seek outside help as follows:

- The Collaboration will enlist the help of their Vera Associate to help resolve the conflict.
- If a consensus cannot be reached through the support of our assigned Vera technical advisor, the Vera Associate may seek the assistance of an additional staff member from Vera or recommend that the Collaboration engage the Office on Violence Against Women. The Collaboration at that time would contact OVW.

- If a consensus cannot be reached through the additional support of Vera or OVW, an outside mediator may be necessary.

Should a conflict of a personal nature arise between partners, the issue will first be discussed privately between those involved following the protocol outlined below if necessary.

- If a private meeting does not result in a resolution, the members can mutually decide to involve the Project Director to assist with mediation.
- This meeting can either take place privately or with the entire Collaboration depending on the circumstances and preferences of those involved.
- If the Project Director is unable to assist with resolving the conflict, we will enlist the assistance of our Vera technical advisor.
- If a resolution cannot be reached with the help of the Vera Technical Advisor, the Project Director and involved parties may contact OVW.

Confidentiality

Collaboration members value confidentiality and the privacy of members of our team and especially confidentiality for victim/survivors seeking support from each partner agency to ensure safety and minimize trauma.

Confidentiality for individuals served by each partner agency

Members will prioritize the safety of individuals who engage their agencies above all and consider how discussing victims/survivors at the Collaboration table, even in generalities, may affect safety. In order to protect confidentiality of individuals served at partner agencies, we will take the following steps:

- Members will avoid discussing specific cases and will instead present hypothetical scenarios, being careful to avoid any potential identifying information about individuals.
- Members will honor confidentiality practices required by federal and state laws, their respective agencies, and professional guidelines.
- ASL interpreters working with our team will uphold the [Code of Professional Conduct](#) of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID).

Confidentiality for partner agencies

While investigating obstacles victims/survivors may experience at each partner agency, it is possible sensitive agency information will be revealed, including details about gaps in service, attitudinal barriers of agency personnel, or internal agency conflicts. In order to maintain a confidential collaborative space, we will take the following steps:

- The members acknowledge that the need to discuss sensitive agency information may arise on occasion. Members will not share such sensitive information outside the Collaboration,

except on a need-to-know basis with leadership of their respective agencies when deemed necessary.

- When appropriate, members should remind the team when certain agency information is confidential.

Confidentiality of Work-in-Progress

The members recognize that they will be reviewing drafts of documents throughout the Collaboration period. The members agree that they will not share drafts beyond the Collaboration unless all members agree or until a final draft has been approved for wider dissemination.

Exceptions to Confidentiality for Victim/Survivor Information

1. An exception will be made for information related to suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation that triggers the duty of mandatory reporting by members of the team, all of whom are by law mandatory reporters in the state of Florida.
2. Certain agencies and members of the Collaboration are guided by state laws and/or professional standards that identify exceptions to confidentiality in circumstances when individuals may be a threat to themselves or others.

Exceptions to Confidentiality for Agency Information

There may be circumstances that require involvement of OVW or Vera Institute of Justice, for example, when information shared could critically impact the partner configuration, the direction of the Collaboration, or its ability to implement the Strategic Plan.

The Collaboration will explore confidentiality concerns further when developing the Needs Assessment Plan.

Mandatory Reporting

Florida has broad laws mandating the report of maltreatment to the Department of Children and Families. The duty to report abuse of a vulnerable adult or of a child in Florida applies to everyone, but certain professionals have a heightened duty as professionally mandated reporters. It is important to note that “vulnerable adult” is defined as a person 18 years of age or older who meets certain conditions, including many that might involve a disability.

Chapter 415 of the Florida Statutes defines “vulnerable adult” as follows:

“Vulnerable adult” means a person 18 years of age or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to a mental, emotional, sensory, long-term physical, or developmental disability or dysfunction, or brain damage, or the infirmities of aging.

“Activities of daily living” means functions and tasks for self-care, including ambulation, bathing, dressing, eating, grooming, toileting, and other similar tasks.

In Florida, there are essentially two types of mandated reporters:

Mandated Reporter: Applies to the general public; the “any person” referred to in the statutes.

Professionally mandated reporter: Applies to certain professions listed in the statutes; they must provide their name to the Abuse Hotline Counselor when reporting. (A member of the general public may report anonymously, if they choose.)

All members of the Collaboration are mandated reporters. It is possible that situations will arise among the partners in which reports must be made to DCF. Each individual representative of the partner agencies who receives information that requires a report will make such report immediately as required by law and in accordance with their particular agency protocols and procedures. If appropriate, and taking into account all safety considerations, the person making the report will inform the victim and involve the victim in the making of the report.

Needs Assessment Considerations

Although the needs assessment will focus primarily on service provision and will not directly inquire about a participant's possible experiences with domestic violence or other abuse or neglect, there is the potential for a disclosure to be made during this phase of the project that could result in a mandated report. Therefore, agreements and planning are necessary to prepare for response to such disclosures and will include the following:

- Prior to conducting any phase of the needs assessment, the Collaboration will inform participating individuals of mandatory reporting requirements and that their disclosure of personal information about possible abuse or neglect may result in a report being made to the Department of Children and Families.
- If a disclosure is made that mandates a report, the member of the Collaboration receiving the disclosure will follow her/his organization's respective reporting policies. (See above.)
- If appropriate, and taking into account all safety considerations, the person making the report will inform the victim and involve the victim in the making of the report. (See above).
- A discussion will be held during the needs assessment preparation phase as to what the appropriate process is for conducting the needs assessment to ensure careful consideration of mandatory reporting and confidentiality requirements of each organization.

Relevant statutes:

Vulnerable Adult

[415.102](#) Definitions

[415.1034](#) Mandatory reporting of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults

[415.111](#) Criminal penalties

Children

[39.01](#) Definitions

[39.201](#) Mandatory reporting of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect

[39.205](#) Criminal penalties

Communications Plan

The members of this Collaboration will honor the principles of “Ethical Communication” by providing a framework conducive to the sharing of information in an honest, straightforward, and supportive manner, with the purpose of increasing understanding and avoiding misunderstanding among the partners.

The partners have committed to open and regular communication throughout the duration of the grant period. We have the following policy in place to keep all core members equally informed.

Internal Communications Plan

1. Meetings will be held bi-weekly for three-hour intervals. These in person meetings are preferred for discussions that will impact decision-making and/or finalizing products to be submitted to the Office on Violence against Women for approval.
2. Additional meetings will be scheduled, as needed, during more intensive stages of the Collaboration.
3. In the event an individual from the Collaboration is unable to meet due to an unexpected conflict, or if a partner’s vacation time coincides with a scheduled meeting, the team will reschedule as we feel it is critical to have all members present.
4. In an emergency, communication should be made either through phone calls or text. Everyone in the team has been given an emergency contact list with each member’s phone number and preferred method of contact.
5. Outside of group meetings, email will be the preferred method of communication among partners.
6. If an email is time sensitive, the email should be flagged as such. If the recipient does not respond in the indicated time frame, the sender should follow up with a phone call or text.

7. Additional communication will be accomplished through phone contact and meeting one-one-one, as necessary.
8. Meetings are considered confidential in order to foster open and honest communication.
9. Partners from each organization will share information about the project with fellow staff following the guidelines set below.
 - The Collaboration will share progress updates with our respective organizations to maintain organizational engagement via a quarterly report.
 - This report will be developed and approved by the team and submitted to executive leadership.
 - Documents and deliverables on which the Collaboration has reached consensus and that have been approved by OVW may be shared outside the Collaboration if agreed to by all the partners.

External Communications Plan

Vera

1. The Project Director will be responsible for the majority of the communications with the Vera technical assistance provider. The Project Director will be transparent with the Collaboration about any communications with Vera.
2. Any member of the Collaboration can contact Vera at any time but will discuss her/his intentions with the team and be transparent about the communication.

OVW

1. The Project Director will be the primary person from the Team communicating with OVW.
2. The Project Administrator (Grant Recipient) will communicate with OVW regarding fiscal and reporting issues of the grant.
3. If a partner wishes to communicate directly with OVW, the partner will discuss her/his intentions and be transparent about the communication.
4. The Project Director will send an e-mail to OVW notifying OVW that a partner will be initiating contact and if applicable, providing the context for the contact.

Media and Other External Organizations

1. Any formal external communications/discussions with the media/public presentations will be agreed to by partnering organizations prior to release.
2. For consistency purposes, talking points have been developed and will be used by the Collaboration as needed.

Talking Points

1. The Collaboration is a partnership among the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the Independent Living Resource Center and Hubbard House.
2. The partners to the Collaboration have come together to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in a fully accessible and responsive network of services for victims of domestic violence in our community who are Deaf or who have a disability.
3. People with disabilities or who are Deaf are at high risk of being victims of abuse, including domestic violence. Some of the factors linked to increased risk include: barriers to communication; devaluation of Deaf people and people with disabilities in our society; dependence on others for personal care and basic necessities; limited ability to escape; fear of losing needed resources; history of being taught to comply with authority figures; and fear of being disbelieved because of perceived non-credibility. In addition, perpetrators of domestic violence will often specifically target a person's disability or the fact that they are Deaf to abuse them.
4. The Collaboration is funded by a three-year grant from the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The Collaboration was awarded the grant in October 2015 and the grant will continue through September 2018.
5. The Collaboration is not a direct services program; its purpose is to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within the partner organizations that will result in improved response to domestic violence victims who are Deaf or who have a disability.
6. The project has two phases:
 - a. Planning and Development Phase: This phase has four components: creation of a Collaboration charter; a

community needs assessment; a report on the findings; and the completion of a strategic plan.

- b. Implementation Phase: This phase follows the strategic plan to make needed organizational changes that will maximize accessibility, safety, choice, and services for victims of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

6. The purposes of the Collaboration are set out in our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to transform services provided by the Collaboration's respective agencies into a seamless, responsive, and sustainable network that fully meets the needs of survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability. To these ends, we will do the following:

- Build an effective Collaboration
- Engage in cross trainings, so that partnering agencies fully share their knowledge and experiences
- Increase staff and volunteer skills, confidence, and comfort in serving survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability
- Identify barriers, needs, strengths, and resources in the Collaboration's partnering agencies
- Identify, develop, and enhance our agencies' internal policies and procedures as needed to improve responsiveness and accessibility
- Create and enhance environments where the right to self-determination is honored
- Formalize connections among agencies to build a seamless and dynamic system of support for survivors

- Build capacity to respond to cultural and linguistic needs, including effective modes of communication and culturally competent safety planning and advocacy
- Raise awareness of availability of services among survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability

Work Plan

Date	Activity
October 2015	Awarded OVW Grant
December 2015	New Grantee Orientation
January 2016	Collaboration building, including Charter Development
May 2016	Vera Site Visit for Technical Assistance
September 2016	Charter submitted for approval
October 2016	Statement of Focus
October 2016	Needs Assessment Planning
December 2016	Conducting Needs Assessment
February 2017	Prepare Summary Findings Report
March 2017	Submit Summary Findings Report
April 2017	Developing Strategic Plan
June 2017 – September 2018	Implementation of Strategic Plan

Glossary of Key Terms

Ableism

Ableism is the discrimination or prejudice against people who have disabilities. Ableism can take the form of ideas and assumptions, stereotypes, attitudes and practices, physical barriers in the environment, or larger scale oppression. It is sometimes unintentional and many people are unaware of the impact of their words or actions.

Accessible/Accessibility

In general 'Accessible' refers to the ability to use services without barriers, including physical/architectural barriers, language barriers, and attitudinal barriers. For the purposes of our work, accessibility will refer to improvements made to meet individuals' needs to obtain resources, receive advocacy, or find safety.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

This act recognizes and protects the civil rights of people with disabilities and is modeled after race and gender laws prohibiting discrimination. The ADA covers a wide range of disabilities, from physical conditions affecting mobility, stamina, sight, hearing, and speech to emotional conditions and intellectual disabilities.

Audism

Audism is the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or to behave in the manner of one who hears, or that life without hearing is futile and miserable, or an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear.

Battered Women's Movement/Domestic Violence Movement

The Battered Women's Movement grew out of three significant social imperatives of the 20th Century: the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the Anti-Rape Movement. The Movement has always understood that abuse is not just the problem

of individual women, but a wide-ranging social issue. Abuse of women is first and foremost about oppression and to be fully understood must be looked at in the context of the history of women's rights.

Abuse of women has in common with all forms of oppression the belief that one individual or group has the right to control the actions of another individual or group. The elimination of oppression requires fundamental social change, in individual thinking and behavior, and in law and other social institutions.

As the movement has progressed from its beginnings in the 1960s and 70s, it has expanded to include male victims and all types of intimate partner relationships so the term Domestic Violence Movement is how it is identified today. This expansion has also embraced the significance of intersecting oppressions in addressing intimate partner violence.

Criminal Justice

Criminal justice is the system of law enforcement that is directly involved in the apprehension, prosecution, defense, sentencing, incarceration, and supervision of those suspected of or charged with criminal offenses. The criminal justice system is comprised of police, prosecutors, public defenders, the private bar, the judiciary, and victim advocates, as well as corrections and probation personnel.

Deaf (Capital D)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) includes deafness as a classified disability. However, not all individuals with hearing loss consider being d/Deaf a disability. This includes some individuals who are part of a small but tightly knit Deaf Community with an emphasis on Deaf Pride who share a visual language, similar values, beliefs and treasure their cultural identity.

deaf (lower case d)/hard of hearing

This refers to individuals who have a mild to profound hearing loss and only identify from a medical/audiological perspective and not a cultural one.

Disability

Disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence: Behavioral Definition

Domestic Violence (also often referred to as Intimate Partner Violence) is the pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners in order to gain and maintain power and control in the relationship.

The legal definition in Florida embraces a wider range of relationships than violence against intimate partners and is found here. [741.28](#).

Effective Communication

The ADA requires that Title II entities (State and local governments) and Title III entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. The goal is to ensure that communication with people who have these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.

Covered entities must provide auxiliary aids and services when needed to communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services can include assisted listening devices, interpreters, video phones, pen and paper, note takers, software for individuals who are blind, Real Time Captioning, speech translators, or any other device or technique to aid in facilitating communication.

Empowerment

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals to identify their own strengths and needs to make informed choices to improve their situation. Advocacy under the empowerment model is survivor-led, not directed by the advocate.

Independence

For the purpose of our work, independence is the ability of individuals with a disability or who are Deaf to make self-determined decisions and pursue a course of action just as individuals who do not have a disability or who are not Deaf do. We recognize this freedom of choice may or may not have adverse effects including failures.

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV), a common tactic used by abusers, is any unwanted sexual contact or activity by an intimate partner with the purpose of controlling an individual through fear, threats, or violence. It can affect anyone from teens to elders. Most types of IPSV constitute criminal acts, even among married partners, as the marital rape exemption has been repealed in all states in the United States.

Trauma-informed

A trauma-informed approach to working with victims/survivors requires knowledge about and sensitivity to the dynamics of acute and chronic trauma, its impact on a survivor's body and mind, and the numerous ways trauma can manifest, including symptoms of emotional numbing, re-experiencing, hyper-arousal, and hyper-vigilance. A trauma-informed approach also considers the cultural context in which trauma occurs, recognizing that symptoms manifest differently for different survivors. A key goal of trauma-informed advocacy is not to re-victimize survivors who have experienced trauma.

Victim/Survivor

Different terms are used in different settings to name those who have experienced violence. The most common of these are "victim" and "survivor."

There has been much discussion over the years about these words, with people advocating that one or the other is more appropriate to describe a person who has been abused. "Survivor" is generally the word of choice with domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, especially in a therapeutic setting, because it is thought to be more

compatible with ideas of strength and healing. “Victim” tends to be preferred by other agencies, especially law enforcement and is also used in the Florida Statutes. Victim is also used by many in the victim rights movement. Professionals in most settings sometimes use both.

In the course of our work in this Collaboration, both terms will likely be used at different times, in part depending on the subject being discussed. It is important to note that the word “victim” simply means someone who has been harmed by another. It has no inherent negative connotations except as to the perpetrator of violence. We should avoid assigning and strengthening negative connotations as to the person who has experienced violence that the word does not otherwise have.