

MMDI:ACCESS Strategic Plan

MMDI:ACCESS

**Metro-Milwaukee DART Initiative:**  
**A Community Collaborative Effort**  
**Serving Survivors**  
*With Disabilities From Crisis to*  
*Healing*

**Strategic Plan**

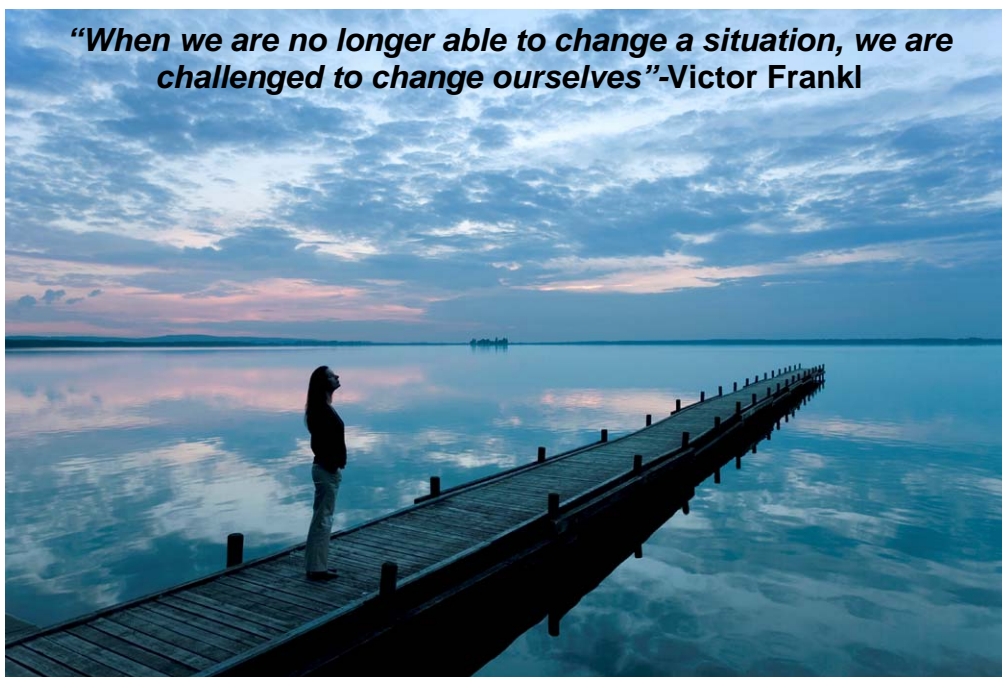


Metro-Milwaukee DART Initiative: A Community Collaborative Effort Serving Survivors *With Disabilities From Crisis to Healing* is being supported by Grant No 2007-FW-AX-K005 "Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program" awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Department of Justice

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***“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves”-Victor Frankl***



## 1 OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATION AND PLANNING PHASE

In October 2007, Independence<sup>First</sup> and the Task Force on Family Violence were awarded the 2007 Office on Violence Against Women's Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program. After deliberating the objectives of this grant a decision was made to expand the collaboration, so in January 2008, the Milwaukee County Disability Services Division and the City of Milwaukee Health Department, Office on Violence Prevention were added as partners. Together these four (4) agencies form the Metro-Milwaukee DART Initiative: A Community Collaborative Effort Serving Survivors *with Disabilities from Crisis to Healing* (MMDI:ACCESS). MMDI:ACCESS was created to improve the response to survivors with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse. The four (4) partner agencies are:

1. **Independence<sup>First</sup>** is the independent living center serving Milwaukee County, as well as the three adjoining counties, and serves people with all types of disabilities from birth to death. Over the last ten years, Independence<sup>First</sup> has become a leader in serving people with disabilities who have experienced violence/abuse.
2. **The Sojourner Family Peace Center (SFPC)** is a private, non-profit organization created by the merging of Task Force on Family Violence<sup>1</sup> and Sojourner Truth House on February 1, 2009. SFPC provides shelter for abused women and their children, advocacy and supportive services for adult victims of abuse, children who have been abused or have witnessed domestic violence, batterer's intervention programming for men and women who have used violence in their relationships and a 24 hour crisis hotline for victims. SFPC has been at the forefront of fighting intimate partner and family violence in the Greater Milwaukee area, providing advocacy, education and resources to keep people safe.
3. **Milwaukee County Disability Services Division (DSD)** consists of four bureaus: The Resource Center, the Children and Family Services Bureau\*, the Developmental Disabilities Bureau and the Physical and Sensory Impairment Bureau. The programs offered through DSD are an essential component of the overall disability service delivery system in Milwaukee County. *\* We will not be working with the Children and Family Services Bureau as it is outside the scope of the grant.*
4. **The City of Milwaukee Office on Violence Prevention (OVP)** provides strategic direction and oversight for the City of Milwaukee's effort to reduce the risk of violence, through community policing; the development of a citywide comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force on Family Violence was one of the four partner agencies that made up MMDI:ACCESS. In February 2009, the Task Force on Family Violence merged with Sojourner Truth House (a local battered women's program) to become the Sojourner Family Peace Center. The Sojourner Family Peace Center will be the MMDI:ACCESS partner.

violence prevention strategic plan and community crime prevention collaborations for violence prevention. In addition, OVP oversees the work of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (MCDVSA), manages the City's Mayors Against Illegal Guns Project and is situated within the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD).

The 2007 Office on Violence Against Women's Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program is divided into two (2) phases; planning and implementation. Our initial task during the planning phase of this grant was to develop a collaboration charter and include a vision and mission statement.

**MMDI:ACCESS Vision Statement:** Milwaukee area residents with disabilities who experience domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse will gain access to a network of interdisciplinary service providers who will assist them on their journey from crisis to healing in a timely and comprehensive manner that embodies choice, safety, and justice with the full support of the community.

**MMDI:ACCESS Mission Statement:** MMDI:ACCESS will build an interdisciplinary service network that offers Milwaukee area residents with disabilities, a seamless, comprehensive and timely response to their experience of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse. This response will exemplify choice, safety, dignity and justice to empower survivors. MMDI:ACCESS will foster a culture of change within this service network and the collaborating agencies by equipping itself with the tools needed to strengthen its relationships, improve communication and break down barriers that exist for survivors with disabilities.

Our second task of the planning phase was to narrow our focus. Using grant guidelines and the populations being served by the four (4) partner's agencies, MMDI:ACCESS planned to focus on women with disabilities who fall into the following four categories:

**(1) Cross-disability-** MMDI:ACCESS will look at the needs of individuals across the various disability types, as this is the population served by both Independence *First* and DSD.

**(2) Age eighteen to fifty-nine (18-59)-** MMDI:ACCESS will focus on individuals who fall between the ages of eighteen to fifty-nine (18-59) as these ages mark the cutoff points for determining which system an individual falls under in Milwaukee County. Anyone under eighteen falls under the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and anyone over fifty-nine falls under the Department on Aging.

**(3) Residing in Milwaukee County-** MMDI:ACCESS will focus it's attention on Milwaukee County because approximately 21.9% (n=169,939) of all the people with disabilities in the State of Wisconsin reside in Milwaukee County providing us with access to a large number of persons with disabilities.

**(4) Survivors of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse-**MMDI:ACCESS will focus on the experiences of survivors with disabilities as access to this group can be made through all four of the partners.

Our third task of the planning phase was to develop a needs assessment plan and the tools we would use to accomplish this plan. MMDI:ACCESS chose to use four (4) modalities to complete the needs assessment: individual interviews, pre-focus group surveys, focus groups and a community dialogue.

Once all of the activities of the needs assessment were complete; MMDI:ACCESS was ready to begin the fourth task of the planning phase; the development of a Needs Assessment Report. To do this MMDI:ACCESS had to compile all of the data, sort through-it and identify common themes. An overview of the needs assessment report and a summary of the key findings can be found in the next section, for detailed information on the needs assessment please see the “MMDI:ACCESS Needs Assessment Report” (a separate document available through MMDI:ACCESS).

MMDI:ACCESS used this needs assessment report as a template as we moved into the final task of the planning phase; the development of the strategic plan. During a two (2) day strategic planning meeting MMDI:ACCESS looked at the key findings from the needs assessment and reworked them into short-term initiatives; those initiatives that will be completed over the remaining time left on this grant (approximately eighteen (18) months) and long-term initiatives; those initiatives that either fall outside the scope of this grant or those that cannot be completed during the life of this grant. These initiatives were then prioritized; broken down into activities and steps; and a timeline was developed for the implementation phase of the grant. Once this preliminary work was completed, MMDI:ACCESS began developing this strategic plan which can be found in Section 3.

As we have completed phase one of the grant and are ready to move into phase two, it is important to note that the four (4) programs which make up MMDI:ACCESS, have both the capacity and the commitment, to foster change within our programs. While we will focus on our own organizations to be the sites of change, MMDI:ACCESS has the potential to create a ripple effect of change across the community because of the pre-existing collaborations within the Milwaukee area and the interweaving of the agencies that make up MMDI:ACCESS and other programs in the community.

Now, before we delve into the strategic plan, we have provided a brief overview of the needs assessment and a summary of the key findings.

## **2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**

MMDI:ACCESS prepared for the needs assessment process by designing a plan and the tools needed to accomplish the plan. MMDI:ACCESS designed four (4) modalities, with the hope of eliciting information that we could use to create systems change.

## Methodology

MMDI:ACCESS conducted a needs assessment using four (4) methodologies; individual interviews, surveys, focus groups and a community dialogue. The needs assessment ran from September through December in 2008. We anticipated talking with between one hundred and twenty-nine (129) and three hundred and sixteen (316) people and ended up meeting with two hundred and fifteen (215) people.

1. Individual interviews were held with ten (10) people:
  - Four (4) Leaders, including Executive Directors, Administrator and Commissioner
  - Five (5) individuals who are Deaf-Blind
  - One (1) Optional Interview (offered as an alternate to participating in focus groups)
2. Pre-focus group surveys were completed by the managers and staff at each of the partner agencies. These surveys asked respondents to rate the extent to which the core values of MMDI:ACCESS are emphasized and integrated into the organization's culture and practices. We received thirty-four (34) completed surveys from management and eighty-three (83) completed surveys from non-management staff.
3. Twenty-five (25) focus groups were conducted during the needs assessment. Focus groups were held with managers and staff at each of the four (4) partner organizations, as well as individuals and survivors with disabilities. Fifteen (15) of these groups were held with managers and staff at each of the partner agencies (117 total participants). An additional ten (10) focus groups were held with individuals and survivors with disabilities (57 participants). Some of these focus groups were aimed at specific populations while others provided a cross disability perspective. Several agencies/programs throughout the community were asked to host focus groups with individuals and survivors with disabilities. We felt that holding focus groups at various locations in Milwaukee would ease transportation issues for participants and also help ensure that we were getting representation from a wide cross-section of Milwaukee residents.
4. A community dialogue was conducted, using the members of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (MCDVSA), a coordinated community response team made up of individuals appointed from domestic violence, sexual assault, the criminal justice system, police and sheriff's departments, as well as other community programs. Thirty-one (31) participants took part in the community dialogue,

MMDI:ACCESS met regularly during the needs assessment, to discuss the activities, findings and effectiveness of the needs assessment. The meetings were used to review the information we received and to start creating a list of common themes.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

Even though scientific methods were not used to ensure the findings from the needs assessment were representative, we did hear a number of consistent messages from participants. Given the consistency in the themes, MMDI:ACCESS identified five (5) key findings:

1. There is a lack of consistent policies and procedures that:
  - Tell staff how to handle cases of abuse
  - Address mandated reporting requirements for staff and the agency as a whole
  - That addresses violence/abuse issues in the workplace
2. There is a lack of awareness about the four (4) partner agencies and their programs and services among the staff and managers at the partner agencies, individuals and survivors with disabilities and within the community as a whole.
3. There are barriers, at each of the four (4) partner agencies, that impact people with disabilities who have been hurt by violence/abuse. These barriers include physical, communication and attitudinal accessibility, the agencies appearance of being welcoming to survivors with disabilities and the perception of safety within the agencies
4. There is a need for staff training and cross training on the basic topics of violence and abuse, disabilities and accommodations, as well as training on agency policy and procedures.
5. There is a need to fully integrate the fifteen (15) core values of MMDI:ACCESS into the four (4) partner agencies' culture and practices

The needs assessment participants provided us with a great deal of information and once all of the activities were complete, we merged the results and began the process of narrowing down and identifying common themes. We then proceeded to identify those things that could bring about lasting systems change; which we did by eliminating those things that were out of our control and those things that were outside the parameters of this grant. Our narrowing process also involved combining results and using information we received as possible solutions, rather than separate findings. Using this information we have laid the foundation for the second phase of the grant, implementation.

### **3 STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **Overview of Strategic Planning Process/Strategic Plan**

MMDI:ACCESS met regularly, throughout the needs assessment, to discuss what we were hearing from participants. Once all the activities were complete we merged what we heard and identified five (5) key areas for improvement.

MMDI:ACCESS felt that these key findings would be effective in creating systems change within our organizations. Policy and procedure changes, as well as the integration of core values are deep gut level changes within the organizations culture. They affect both the staff individually and the way staff interacts with survivors with disabilities. Staff training increases the individual and agency's ability to respond to the needs of survivors with disabilities. Environmental changes, while they may seem superficial on the outside also increase the capacity of the agency to respond to the needs of survivors with disabilities. Increasing awareness internally connects our organizations at a deep level, one in which will help us reach the MMDI:ACCESS mission of creating an "interdisciplinary service network that offers Milwaukee area residents with disabilities, a seamless, comprehensive and timely response to their experience of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse". Increasing awareness of the community about the MMDI:ACCESS partner agency affects the larger service delivery system and this had to be considered as we began our strategic planning process.

### **Short Term Initiatives, Justification and Sustainable Systems Change**

The following four (4) short term initiatives, those initiatives we will complete during the remaining time on this grant, were identified and grew out of what we heard from key stakeholders; the managers and staff directly affected by the initiatives and the individuals and survivors with disabilities who will be indirectly affected, we feel that the stakeholders planted the seeds of change and this strategic plan will be the blueprint to cultivate these changes.

**Initiative 1:** Developing Policies and Procedures

**Initiative 2:** Creating Safe, Welcoming and Accessible Environment

**Initiative 3:** Developing Linkages with Other Allied Agencies

**Initiative 4:** Training and Cross Training

MMDI:ACCESS believes that our choice of initiatives will create systems change, as they delve at the core and affect the organization as a whole, rather than touching the surface and changing only one or two people. While we believe these four (4) initiatives have merit on their own, we also believe that they work together and build off of one another, making them even stronger agents of change.

Our first initiative addresses policies and procedures, the changes made during this initiative will provide staff with guidance on handling cases of abuse, as well as influence workplace behaviors and obligations. We will use training and cross training to give staff the skills they need to implement the policies and procedures, removing any doubt staff have about their ability to integrate violence/abuse/disability into their everyday work. This is a sustainable initiative since we will offer continuing training and new staff training; to ensure these skills are honed over the years and are not lost as new staff is hired and old staff move on. We wove into our first initiative an evaluation process, that gives staff the opportunity to tell us what works and what does not; it was obvious during the needs assessment that staff remember some policies and



procedures but not all; by making these policies and procedures flexible and “workable”, staff will be more likely to implement them, making them a part of their work, not just part of their employee handbook.

This initiative will function as the backbone of change, as it sets the stage for further change within the organizations. Once we have the guidelines in place and staff trained, MMDI:ACCESS will be ready to “open our doors” to survivors of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse; so we need to make sure that these survivors have access; and feel safe and welcome when they come to us.

Our second initiative then will pull together a team of staff and individuals and survivors with disabilities, to tell us what we need to do to before we open that door. Barrier removal plans will be formulated for each partner agency and MMDI:ACCESS will look for ways to remove those barriers that cannot be addressed with OVW dollars. Once these barriers are removed, they are sustainable through regular review and by aiming for universal design in all remedies. Besides access issues, this initiative will address how safe and welcoming our agencies appear to survivors with disabilities. These types of changes will be sustainable through their effect on programming, as well as their influence on the way staff interacts with survivors with disabilities.

Our third initiative will build off the intersection of violence against women and disabilities organizations that MMDI:ACCESS has started, and we will use the other three initiatives as opportunities to build additional bridges with those allied agencies in Milwaukee. This initiative will be both a short and long-term initiative, as the need to keep these connections/resources up-to-date is essential and is ever changing. The sustainability of this initiative not only benefits MMDI:ACCESS but the community as a whole and as such we will seek ways to move the responsibility for sustaining this from MMDI:ACCESS to the larger community network.

Since most of the MMDI:ACCESS partner agencies offer community education, our final initiative will take a close look at what is being taught and integrating violence/abuse/disability into these educational opportunities. Utilizing the collaboration process developed through this grant, this effort provides staff, who have not had direct contact through MMDI:ACCESS, the opportunity to collaborate during these community education activities, this collaboration/joint effort can prove to be easily sustainable over the years as it serves to meet agency goals within other initiatives (outside of this grant).

MMDI:ACCESS has made an effort to inform the staff and managers, at four (4) partner agencies, about its activities, progress and plans, throughout the life of this grant. We will continue these formal and informal opportunities to discuss the grant as we progress through the implementation phase. MMDI:ACCESS believes that this will eliminate any “surprises”, as the initiatives take effect and offer managers and staff a sense of control over what is happening, and in turn eliminate any resistance to change that might be experienced. MMDI:ACCESS formulated the following six (6) guiding principles that underlie these initiatives and will be used to direct our implementation process:

1. Initiatives are lasting, built into the existing infrastructure
2. Accountability to consumers and staff (directly affected by initiative) and organizations
3. Inclusive of all disabilities and abuse types; continues to bring together two different response systems (disability and violence against women)
4. Incorporates core values in all aspects of planning and implementation
5. Effects change across key areas
6. Builds on organizational and individual strengths

### **Initiative 1: Developing Policies and Procedures**

During the needs assessment we received mixed messages from staff about what policies and procedures (including informal) exist at each of the agencies. MMDI:ACCESS feels that this initiative is an excellent start at creating systems change because policies and procedures provide staff with guidance in performing their jobs and provide a standard for behaviors in the workplace. Policy and procedure changes are done at the heart of the agency and will affect staff behavior and interaction with survivors with disabilities. We will see immediate changes within the four (4) partner agencies but these changes will also have long term effects. Policies and procedures are “living” documents that can be utilized with existing staff and passed on to future staff; once incorporated they can remain in effect even if there are administrative or agency changes. In addition, these documents can be changed with the “times” (for example, when there are laws or ordinance changes that directly or indirectly affect the policy/procedure being followed). This means that this initiative has good potential for being sustainable over time. We have broken this first initiative into five separate parts. Each part will occur simultaneously and follow the same steps and timeline.

- a. Policies and procedures that tell staff how to handle cases of abuse
- b. Policies and procedures that address the mandated reporting requirements for staff and the agency as a whole
- c. Policies and procedures that address workplace issues such as workplace domestic violence
- d. Policies and procedures that address abuse by caregivers
- e. Policies and procedures that address abuse by employees

#### **Action 1: Review and Evaluate**

During this action, we will look at what each of the partner agencies is currently doing, whether it is based on following a formal policy and procedure or an informal process. We will gather all of the existing policies, the tools that staff is using and the steps staff are following. Once we have them all together we will evaluate them, looking at what is effective and what is not; we will then have information to offer our agencies about how we can put together a policy that clearly instructs staff in the five areas listed.

#### **Action 2: Implement Recommendations**

During this action we will compile the information and recommendations into policies and procedures. We will decide if it is beneficial to have a single universal policy that

can be used at all four partner agencies or if it would be better to have four (4) separate policies, one for each partner agency. Each of the policies will contain the following basic information:

- A statement of importance which clearly states the agency's position on this matter
- The consequences for staff who do not follow the written policy and procedure
- Tools, like a decision tree, that will provide staff with specific steps they should follow
- Referral sources, including the names of available community programs and the services they offer, their contact numbers and information on how to make a referral
- A training component to ensure that all staff is aware of the policy and the procedures that support that policy
- A peer review component to ensure that all of the partner agencies are enforcing the policy and following the procedures that support the policy. This will allow MMDI:ACCESS to address any problems with the effectiveness of the policy and any issues of non-compliance.

Once the policies have been developed they will go to each of the partner agencies to get the approval needed. After approval we will begin designing and writing all the supporting material for the policies and procedures, including training material, tools needed for implementing the policies and procedures (i.e. checklist, resources, and decision trees), and the actual policy for inclusion in all employee handbooks; all of these material will be made available in accessible formats. Once the policy and the supporting material are complete, they will go to OVW for approval.

### **Action 3: Rollout**

The final action for this initiative will be the roll out. The rollout will be MMDI:ACCESS opportunity to provide staff, at each of the four (4) partner agencies, training on the new policies and procedures. While new policies and procedures are the focus of this roll out, we will take advantage of getting staff together to also provide them information on topics that were requested during the focus groups with managers and staff, including, but not limited to:

- DART-Disability Abuse Response Team
- Basic information on disabilities
- Basic information on violence/abuse
- Specific information on abuse of people with disabilities
- Core values of MMDI:ACCESS (which will be woven into all of the training topics)

Each of the agencies will have the opportunity to choose times and places for the staff training, though MMDI:ACCESS will encourage some joint trainings take place to help increase the awareness and establish connections between agency personnel.

The table on the next two pages provides details of the steps we will follow and our timeline for completing this first initiative.

**Initiative #1 Policies and Procedures\***

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	
Review and Evaluate	Identify holder of policy & procedure	↔																		
	Collect policies & procedures both formal and informal	↔																		
	Meet with agency staff to understand policy, training & implementation		↔																	
	Review & assess policies & procedures			↔																
	Identify strengths & gaps in each agency policy			↔																
	Make recommendations				↔															
	Implement Recommendations	Make revisions/write new policy				↔														
Get approval at IndependenceFirst							↔													
Get approval at SFPC							↔													
Get approval at DSD							↔													
Get approval at OVP							↔													
Design & write supporting materials									↔											

**Initiative #1 Policies and Procedures\***

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	
	Submit changes & materials to OVW for approval											↔								
Roll Out	At IndependenceFirst											↔								
	At SFPC											↔								
	At DSD											↔								
	At OVP											↔								
	Assessment, Review and "Tweak"											↔								

**\*This time line applies to these five parts**

- a. Policies and procedures that tell staff how to handle cases of abuse
- b. Policies and procedures that address the mandated reporting requirements for staff and the agency as a whole
- c. Policies and procedures that address workplace issues such as workplace domestic violence
- d. Policies and procedures that address handling abusive caregivers
- e. Policies and procedures that address handling abusive employees

## **Initiative 2: Creating Safe, Welcoming and Accessible Environment**

This initiative will be centered on the environments at each of the partner agencies. We will look at three (3) key areas:

1. **Accessibility**-how accessible the agency is to individuals with a variety of disabilities:
  - Physical access (e.g. elevators, path of travel, location of services, etc.)
  - Communication access issues (e.g. interpreters, material in alternate formats, etc.)
  - Programmatic access (i.e. adapting services to meet individual needs, etc.)
  - Attitudinal access (e.g. using people first language, etc.)
2. **Safety**-how safe the agency seems to individuals and survivors with disabilities (e.g. is there security, is there restricted access, etc.); does staff convey a sense of safety (e.g. staff seems to know what to do in an emergency, individuals feel safe disclosing that they have a disability or that they have been abused, etc.); and is my information safe (e.g. there is a private place to meet, staff do not talk about others in public, etc.).
3. **Welcoming**-how welcoming does the agency appear to individuals and survivors with disabilities, (e.g. Does it say that the individual belongs there? Is there disability information or décor? Is there information or décor related to survivors/empowerment?), Are the surroundings comfortable? (e.g. Is there someplace for the individual to sit?, Is the area safe?, Is there something to keep the person busy while they wait? Etc.)

Making changes to the environment increases the capacity of the agency to respond to the needs of survivors with disabilities and therefore creates systems change. While some of the needed environmental changes are outside the scope of this grant they have been included in our long term plans. Since it is unlikely that changes to the environment will be removed after this grant comes to an end, this initiative should be sustainable.

### **Action 1: Review, evaluate, create**

During this action we will determine what exactly we mean by accessible, safe and welcoming. We will use Vera to help us make this determination and for connections with others doing similar initiatives. We will then collect tools and review and rework them to fit our needs, which will allow us to develop a comprehensive tool that will work across all four (4) programs. MMDI:ACCESS will also assemble and train a team of reviewers, using both survivors and individuals with disabilities who took part in the needs assessment.

### **Action 2: Conduct Survey**

Once we have our team of reviewers trained, we will set up times for the team to conduct the surveys. Since the Task Force on Family Violence has merged and is now the Sojourner Family Peace Center, they will be moving or building a new location so

we will focus only on programming access as a short term initiative with them, and make a long term initiative to address access as they finalize the plans for the new agency.

**Action 3: Barrier Removal Plan**

During this action we will meet with the review team and go over their findings and prioritize the removal of barriers.

**Action 4: Implement Plan**

The final action in this initiative involves presenting our findings to the leadership at the four (4) partner agencies. We will discuss those items on the barrier removal plan that can be addressed under this grant, as part of this short-term initiative and those items that cannot. We will then assist the leadership in exploring how these changes can be accomplished, including funding sources and make a plan for the removal of these remaining barriers in long term goal.

The table on the next two pages provides details of the steps we will follow and our timeline for completing this second initiative.

### Initiative #2 Creating Safe, Welcoming and Accessible Environment

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	
<b>Review, Evaluate &amp; Create</b>	Define parameters (accessible, safe and welcoming)	↔																		
	Collect existing tools	↔																		
	Review and evaluate tools	↔																		
	Develop new tool (s)		↔																	
	Assemble team of reviewers (multidisciplinary)			↔																
	Train and orient reviewers				↔															
<b>Conduct Survey</b>	Identify sites	↔																		
	Schedule survey at each site					↔														
	Conduct site survey at IndependenceFirst							↔												
	Conduct site survey at SFPC								↔											
	Conduct site survey at OVP									↔										
	Conduct site survey at DSD										↔									



## Initiative #2 Creating Safe, Welcoming and Accessible Environment

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10		
<b>Barrier Removal Plan</b>	Review findings								↔												
	Prioritize changes needed and draft barrier removal plan								↔												
	Make recommendations								↔												
<b>Implement Plan</b>	Team presents findings									↔											
	Agency determines priority & commitment											↔									
	MMDI:ACCESS assists in making OVW approved changes													↔							
	MMDI:ACCESS looks for money for non-OVW changes													↔							

### **Initiative 3: Developing Linkages with Other Allied Agencies**

Increasing staff's awareness about the other MMDI:ACCESS organizations and the resources available in the community will help staff respond effectively to survivors with disabilities and also serves to connect our organizations.

MMDI:ACCESS acknowledges that individuals and survivors with disabilities need to be aware of what help is available in the community, however MMDI:ACCESS represents only a small piece of the larger service delivery system in Milwaukee and as such any community awareness must take into account the ability of that larger system to respond to a potential increase in need for services by persons with disabilities. With that in mind MMDI:ACCESS has decided to develop linkages with allied agencies rather than doing a more comprehensive public awareness campaign. Sustaining this initiative will require an ongoing effort to keep the resources up to date, which we will address in our long term goals.

#### **Action 1: Enhancing Awareness of Community Programs and Services**

This will be an ongoing initiative throughout the implementation phase. Our first step in this initiative will serve to inform staff and managers at our own agencies about each other and the other programs and services available in the community. MMDI:ACCESS will be to use its connection with the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to inform community allies about what we are doing under this grant. A final step will be to use the information we gain from programs to develop a resource kit, which can be continually updated and easily accessible to staff at the partner agencies, this kit will not only include resources but will also include assistive technology and accommodation information.

The table on the next page provides details of the steps we will follow and our timeline for completing this third initiative.

### Initiative #3 Developing Linkages with Other Allied Agencies

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	
Enhancing Awareness of Community Programs & Services	Conduct resource fair/event										↔									
	Build feedback loop with Commission	↔																		
	Develop training/resource kit																	↔		

## **Initiative 4: Training and Cross Training**

In Initiative #1 we included an initial training requirement on new policies and procedures, as well as a training requirement for all new hires and an ongoing re-training requirement for all staff. We also found that there are a number of possible joint training efforts that could be done across the four (4) partner agencies, which will help increase our collaboration efforts. Representatives from each of the partner agencies will work on co-presenting or co-hosting trainings (for the community) that are done on a regular basis.

One area we found of particular interest was Field Safety Training; MMDI:ACCESS learned during the needs assessment that even though most of the staff from our programs are doing their work out in the community, no one is receiving Field Safety Training, except for OVP. Field safety training will be a useful tool, as staff begins asking questions about abuse, as it can help keep them safe in the home of a potential abuser.

The Health Department provides this safety training on a regular basis to their employees, and we will use this as one of our cross training opportunities.

This initiative creates systems change because training and cross training offer staff a chance to keep them up-to-date on information, methods, and intervention techniques and for many, training is required for certifications or licenses. These cross training opportunities will also offer staff and managers the chance to get to know about the other agencies and network with other staff and managers. In addition, this will bring the disability and violence against women organizations together and allow them to learn each others' philosophy, service delivery approach and language. These connections will also move us towards our mission of creating an "interdisciplinary service network that offers Milwaukee area residents with disabilities, a seamless, comprehensive and timely response to their experience of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse". These relationships and contacts being made through training and cross training can be sustainable and are often fiscally beneficial as it offers opportunities to combine resources from multiple organizations.

### **Action 1: Review and Evaluate**

We will first find out what types of training that each of the partner agencies is currently doing. Whether it is internal or external training we will gather all of curriculum and materials that are being used by staff and evaluate them, identify the strengths and gaps and recommend changes.

### **Action 2: Implement Recommendations**

During this action MMDI:ACCESS will make revisions and enhancement to existing training materials and curriculum, which means that disability will be included in the topics discussed by our violence against women organizations and violence/abuse will be included by the disability providers. We will then train those staff that does the training for each of the programs, on the revisions and enhancements.

### Initiative #2 Training and Cross Training

**Note: All MMDI:ACCESS agencies will be participating in these activities, IndependenceFirst will lead the initiative**

Action	Steps	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10	
<b>Review and Evaluate</b>	Identify holder of training curriculum/material	↔																		
	Collect training curriculum/material	↔																		
	Meet with appropriate agency staff to understand training & their implementation	↔																		
	Review and assess training curriculum		↔																	
	Identify strengths & gaps in existing training curriculum		↔																	
	Make recommendations			↔																
<b>Implement Recommendations</b>	Make revisions & enhancement to existing training curriculum/material						↔													
	Train the trainer, identify staff responsible for internal & external training						↔													
	Do the training														↔					

## 5 LONG TERM PLANS

### Interest and Key Activities

**Long Term Initiative #1:** Work with the Sojourner Family Peace Center on creating a new space using universal design and keeping access at the forefront while obtaining or building their new location. Activities: Work with the survey team throughout the search and/or design process. Look for funding to accomplish remodeling location or building new facility. Use MMDI:ACCESS partner agencies as references on grant applications.

**Long Term Initiative #2:** Work with the other partner agencies in their barrier removal plan (focusing on those efforts that cannot be accomplished through this grant). Activities: Look for funding to accomplish recommended changes. Use MMDI:ACCESS partner agencies as references on grant applications. Work with the survey team as changes are being made.

**Long Term Initiative #3:** Conduct a community wide needs assessment to determine the capacity of Milwaukee to accommodate an increase number of survivors with disabilities. Activities: Look for funding to conduct the needs assessment. Design a needs assessment plan.

**Long Term Initiative #4:** Increase the awareness of the community and individuals and survivors with disabilities about the issues of violence and abuse, as well as the help available. Activities: Look for funding to conduct an awareness campaign. Make materials available in alternate formats. Use suggestions from needs assessment participants on best way to reach people with disabilities.

**Long Term Initiative #5:** Maintain resource kit. Activities: Make this a community wide effort (possibly web-based). Offer inclusion to all disability and violence against women organizations. Share cost or look as a community for resources to maintain the kit.

## 6 SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout this document we have indicated how the specific initiatives will be sustainable and have added some long term goals that involve MMDI:ACCESS partner agencies. The four (4) partner agencies have a long history of collaborating with one another and this grant has acted to solidify these collaborative relationships. All four (4) partners are also part of the Disability Abuse Response Team (D.A.R.T.), which serves as a multidisciplinary entity to better serve individuals with disability who have experienced violence and abuse. These relationships are not contingent on funding or special initiatives. Through some of the initiatives listed in this plan, there are additional opportunities for the agencies and the staff within the agencies to build “different” collaborations, which means that these connections can remain even if the staff directly involved with MMDI:ACCESS move on.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The planning phase of this grant has offered MMDI:ACCESS a chance to solidify the collaboration and the result is this plan for implementation. We have focused on four (4) short-term initiatives to address over the next eighteen (18) months:

1. Developing Policies and Procedures
2. Training and Cross Training
3. Creating Safe, Welcoming and Accessible Environment
4. Developing Linkages with Other Allied Agencies

In this plan we have shown how these initiatives will create systems change, the steps we will take to put them in play and how they will be sustained past the life of this grant. We have also included five (5) long term goals into this plan as a way to meet those gaps and needs that fall outside of the grant parameters.

We feel that these initiatives are key to MMDI:ACCESS fulfilling it's mission:

*“MMDI:ACCESS will build an interdisciplinary service network that offers Milwaukee area residents with disabilities, a seamless, comprehensive and timely response to their experience of domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse. This response will exemplify choice, safety, dignity and justice to empower survivors. MMDI:ACCESS will foster a culture of change within this service network and the collaborating agencies by equipping itself with the tools needed to strengthen its relationships, improve communication and break down barriers that exist for survivors with disabilities”. And will help move us toward our vision: “Milwaukee area residents with disabilities who experience domestic and sexual violence and/or abuse will gain access to a network of interdisciplinary service providers who will assist them on their journey from crisis to healing in a timely and comprehensive manner that embodies choice, safety, and justice with the full support of the community”.*