

Partnership for Equality and Comprehensive Help for Deaf Domestic Violence Survivors

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Domestic Violence Survivors

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Georgia Statewide Collaboration

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Partnership for Equality and Comprehensive Help for Deaf Domestic Violence Survivors

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Introduction

This charter was created to guide the work of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration, which is a partnership between the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV), the statewide coalition on domestic violence, the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI), the statewide agency for deaf services, and Tools for Life, the statewide agency for assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

For many years, collaboration partners have found that survivors who are Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind or late deafened (D/d/HOH/DB/LD) are not provided adequate services from domestic violence (DV) programs and that other service providers working with the D/d/HOH/DB/LD population do not share information with these survivors about local resources for DV services.

Research over the past twenty years has documented the correlations between hearing loss, poverty, oppression and discrimination as it relates to violence against women. However, there has been minimal activity to address the barriers that prevent access to services and safety for survivors with hearing loss.

The gaps faced by D/d/HOH/DB/LD survivors in the state of Georgia are concerning, and to those of us who have seen the consequences of these gaps, they are considered unconscionable. There is an enormous gap in survivors with hearing loss having access to deaf advocates who can sign, communicate, translate and understand their culture. We know this is crucial to escaping an abusive relationship. Often D/d/HOH/DB/LD survivors are re-victimized and leave shelters to return to abusers as they would rather communicate than face further isolation. Because D/d/HOH/DB/LD survivors are more isolated than others in society, they are less likely to know about options or resources available. The survivor's network of support is likely small to non-existent and the lack of economic resources further fosters dependence on abusers.¹

¹ Frank, J. (n.d.). CSD of Minnesota Deaf DV Program. Retrieved March 4, 2013, from razoo: <http://www.razoo.com/story/Csd-Of-Minnesota-Deaf-Domestic-Violence-Program>

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In recognition of these barriers and gaps in services, the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration strives to create sustainable, systemic change within the organizations involved that will result in exceptional services for domestic violence survivors who are D/d/HOH/DB/LD.

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Mission

The collaboration's mission is to facilitate the provision of equitable access to safe, comprehensive and responsive person-centered services for Deaf, hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals who have experienced domestic violence. This will be accomplished by:

- Expanding the capacity of the disability, assistive technology, and domestic violence organizations to provide readily available, safe, appropriate and accessible services to Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals regardless of where they seek assistance.
- Creating a sustainable infrastructure that is reflective of the complex needs of Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened victims of domestic violence through the modification and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices with the collaboration's three partner organizations.
- Increasing the cultural competency of the Collaboration member organizations through cross-education of their staff regarding accessibility to culturally competent services, communication and information, Deaf culture, and domestic violence
- Identifying gaps in services with Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals(ideally DV survivors), and domestic violence, disability, and Deaf advocates (ideally those who have had barriers with service delivery).
- Increasing technology capacity to support full accessibility of the delivery of services for domestic violence survivors that are Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened.

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- Reviewing Collaboration member organization’s policies and procedures as they relate to domestic violence and accessibility and address areas of needed change.
- Promoting systems change through strategic communication and education of domestic violence, Deaf services, disability-related organizations, as well as Assistive Technology Resource Centers throughout Georgia.

Vision

The Vision of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration is that individuals who are D/d/HOH/DB/LD and have experienced domestic violence will have equitable access to safe, comprehensive and responsive person-centered services with service delivery systems addressing domestic violence, accessibility, removal of communication barriers for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened and use of assistive technology so they can achieve the changes they want in their lives.

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Values and Assumptions

Values

The shared values and assumptions of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will guide the work that they carry out. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration is committed to these values and assumptions and will strive to demonstrate these values in their work with domestic violence survivors that are D/d/HOH/DB/LD and with their interactions with each other.

Confidentiality

We will work to ensure that our collaboration and collaborative partner organizations respect the privacy rights of individuals and agencies and that we are knowledgeable of and adhere to confidentiality as it relates to multiple systems and to mandatory reporting requirements.

Choice

We believe that all survivors have the right to make informed choices that will best meet their needs and that those choices should be respected by individuals advocating on their behalf. In the event that it is not possible, individuals with disabilities may rely on others to make decisions on their behalf. This creates unique safety implications for the individual and may make them more vulnerable to abuse.

Safety

We believe that safety is living in an environment without fear of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. We also believe that D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other individuals with hearing loss have a right to feel emotionally and physically safe when seeking services. This includes recognizing the unique safety implications for people with disabilities while acting in a way that respects their choices.

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Person-First Language

We believe that people should be recognized, first and foremost, as individuals and should not be defined by their disability or hearing loss. We acknowledge that not all individuals with hearing loss identify as having a disability. For example, those who identify as Deaf do not consider their deafness as a disability or deficiency but rather a difference in life experience. We believe in using language that is appropriate and respectful of all survivors. We will use person-first language when talking with and about people with disabilities or those who are D/d/HOH/DB/LD.

Inclusivity

We believe that through the fostering and inclusion of the voices of those we serve, there will be active engagement and participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of services to D/d/HOH/DB/LD victims of domestic violence.

Cultural Awareness

We are committed to understanding our own biases and prejudices, especially as they are related to working with survivors with hearing loss, and believe we can continuously increase our awareness of differing experiences. We seek to understand our own privilege, internalized oppression, and experiences as oppressor or oppressed. We will demonstrate a willingness and commitment to challenge each other and ourselves in order to better serve our Collaboration mission.

Social Justice

We believe in the concepts of human rights and equality of opportunity for all members of our society. We commit to working toward a socially just world through this collaboration by creating systems that will deliver fully accessible, responsive, appropriate, and safe services for survivors with hearing loss.

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Integrity

We strive to put into practice actions that are consistent with our stated beliefs.

Dignity

We believe everyone has the inherent right to be treated with worth, respect and honor, thereby fostering to the development of positive self-esteem.

Systems Change

We believe that systems change is the mechanism that will assure long lasting and sustainable transformation beyond the scope of the cooperative agreement. We also realize that before we can foster capacity for systems change, change must first take place within our own organizations.

Innovation

We embrace new and creative strategies for providing safe, caring and competent services for survivors with hearing loss.

Trauma- Informed

We believe in responding to D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other individuals with hearing loss in a way that meets each person's individual needs and addresses the impact of traumatic events and oppressions experienced over the course of a lifetime including domestic violence, sexual violence, ableism, audism, poverty, racism and other trauma. Being trauma-informed includes creating a climate in which individuals feel safe, comfortable, and in control of what is happening on their behalf. We will work to ensure D/d/HOH/DB/LD domestic violence survivors receive services and support in a caring environment by embedding trauma-informed principles within the system changes we are making.

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Sexual Expression

We value the individuality and rights of all people and acknowledge that D/d/HOH/DB/LD people are sexual beings who have a right to seek and engage in self-stimulating and consensual sexual behavior.

Learning Community

The collaboration commits to be actively engaged in learning together to foster a welcoming and Deaf-friendly environment.

Accessibility

We believe that individuals that are D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other individuals with hearing loss should not face physical, attitudinal, or communication barriers when seeking services.

Commitment

We value commitment to the collaboration and to the process. We will continually reaffirm our promise of contribution, work and engagement to build upon our commitment to both.

Non-Violence

We oppose violence in all its forms. This includes domestic violence and oppression. We strive to use non-violent language and promote non-violence and anti-oppression.

Empowerment

We believe empowerment should be inherent in working with every survivor. This means we will work with our own organizations to foster a non-patronizing atmosphere in which decisions made by D/d/HOH/DB/LD individuals and other

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survivors with hearing loss will be respected so that survivors will build self-esteem and can gain control of their futures.

Respect

We value the opinions of others as well as believe that each person brings a unique set of beliefs, values and ideas to the table, which, when regarded equally and with detachment, enrich the process of making decisions, plans and services of this collaboration.

Trust

Members of our collaboration come from different backgrounds and represent different organizations, but we are grounded in our belief that trust is an essential element for collaboration success, systems change and social change. We recognize that we must work as an interdependent group and must have faith in the group process. We will do our part to work together in an honest and authentic manner and make decisions for the good of the collaboration.

Social Change

We believe in and are committed to working to transform societal and institutional negative and inaccurate attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and practices that contribute to the oppression and discrimination of D/d/HOH/DB/LD individuals and other domestic violence survivors with hearing loss.

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Assumptions

1. We acknowledge that domestic violence is never the fault of the victim and is a pervasive problem that crosses over all lines of race, religion, gender identification, sexual orientation, age and economic status.
2. We acknowledge that D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other victims of domestic violence with hearing loss are more likely to have their vulnerabilities exploited as part of the power and control dynamics of an abusive relationship. Abusers frequently use power and control tactics that impede D/d/HOH/DB/LD victims' communication, such as hiding or damaging assistive listening devices or refusing to use sign language. All of these tactics increase the barriers and isolation victims experience and may jeopardize their independence and safety.
3. We acknowledge the fact that many domestic violence and disability service providers are not prepared or trained to address issues involving both domestic violence and individuals who are D/d/HOH/DB/LD. This is due to a number of factors including lack of awareness, cultural competency, funding, and community resources. As a result, domestic violence programs may not be fully accessible because they lack essential tools such as qualified interpreters or assistive communication technology. Additionally, disability service providers may fail to identify individuals experiencing domestic violence and/or provide services without understanding the impact and danger of the violence for that victim.
4. We acknowledge that D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other individuals with hearing loss are part of a unique culture comprised of language, communication, values, community, and support systems. A lack of understanding about Deaf culture may lead to misinterpretation of intended communication due to body language, facial expressions and/or interpreter error. Furthermore, negative attitudes and inaccurate stereotypes result in discrimination, exclusion and further isolation of D/d/HOH/DB/LD and other individuals with hearing loss.

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5. We acknowledge that because most Deaf individuals do not consider their deafness a disability, they are less likely to seek services from those organizations that traditionally serve people with disabilities.

6. We acknowledge that Deaf survivors may not seek services from a mainstream domestic violence program, in part, because the concept of domestic violence is obscure within the Deaf Community. For example, ASL lacks a direct translation for the term “domestic violence” and the idea of domestic violence is not typically discussed within this community. These things could drastically reduce the resources available to Deaf survivors and put them in more danger.

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Collaboration Member Organizations

GCADV

The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) is the statewide domestic violence coalition for Georgia. Founded in 1980, it is a statewide membership organization whose members represent a network of over 50 domestic violence programs that provide comprehensive emergency and supportive services to domestic violence victims. GCADV's mission is as follows: GCADV brings together member agencies, allied organizations and supportive individuals who are committed to ending domestic violence. Guided by the voices of survivors, GCADV works to create social change by addressing the root causes of this violence. GCADV leads advocacy efforts for responsive public policy and fosters quality, comprehensive prevention and intervention services throughout the State.

GACHI

Established in 1989, the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides a variety of assistive services to the D/d/HOH/LD/DB and other individuals with hearing loss, their family members, friends, and local state and federal agencies. In addition to their office in Decatur, Georgia, GACHI operates satellite offices in Columbus, Rome, Augusta, Savannah, and Macon.

GACHI's mission is to serve individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, Late Deafened and other individuals with hearing loss, and others with respect to all communication modes by providing support services, advocacy, and education, which foster self-determination, empowerment and independence.

To fulfill our mission, GACHI relies on a combination of funding sources, including state-appropriated funds set by the Georgia General Assembly, the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC), generous grants and donations from private foundations, businesses and individuals.

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Tools for Life

Tools for Life (TFL) is Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program and gives more options for greater freedom by increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in communities of their choice.

TFL oversees five Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC's) throughout Georgia. The ATRC's are a community resource to Georgians with disabilities, families, friends, healthcare professionals, support circles, and others who are interested in learning about assistive technology devices and equipment. Each ATRC is a hands-on learning center for assessment, demonstration, education, information and assistance, and training of assistive technology available on the market today.

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Contributions and Commitments

The members of the collaboration include both programmatic and executive/management level staff from each partner organization, creating a unique opportunity for deep agency level commitment and buy-in. Aside from their positions, many individuals participating have a distinguished service record in advocating for persons with disabilities and/or survivors of domestic violence.

The unique personal and professional histories of each individual partner contribute to profound and meaningful conversations and help to inform all decisions. Each person has made a personal commitment, with the support of their organization, to participate and to contribute their knowledge, expertise, and passion for this work.

Each organization also brings its own networks, connections, and resources which will be beneficial throughout the project. They have also demonstrated a record of creating change within their organizations and the systems they influence. Their shared history and commitment to working collaboratively will greatly enhance the project across the State.

GCADV

The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) is the statewide domestic violence coalition for Georgia. Founded in 1980, it is a statewide membership organization whose members represent a network of over 50 domestic violence programs that provide comprehensive emergency and supportive services to domestic violence victims. GCADV's mission is as follows: GCADV brings together member agencies, allied organizations and supportive individuals who are committed to ending domestic violence. Guided by the voices of survivors, GCADV works to create social change by addressing the root causes of this violence. GCADV leads advocacy efforts for responsive public policy and fosters quality, comprehensive prevention and intervention services throughout the State.

GCADV has an extensive history of advocacy and training and participates in collaborative efforts across a variety of constituencies to promote social change

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with local, state, and national organizations. Up to four times per year, GCADV conducts a three day comprehensive training to address advocates in the field, providing history, philosophy, and best practice information and resources. Partnerships and collaborations have occurred with organizations such as the Georgia Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia, Georgia Latinos Against Domestic Violence and other state advocacy organizations. GCADV also works side by side with governmental agencies such as the Georgia Commission on Family Violence, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Georgia Department of Health and the Georgia Department of Education, just to name a few.

Inclusiveness is also fundamental to GCADV's mission, guiding principles and operational structure. GCADV offers state and national leadership on the issues of linguistically and culturally-appropriate approaches to domestic and sexual violence service delivery, outreach, prevention and community-based social change.

GCADV is serving as the "lead agency" for the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration employs the Project Coordinator, the Associate Director, the Director of Training and Membership and the Director of Finance. GCADV manages the fiscal responsibilities of the grant. GCADV facilitates communication with OVW and the national technical assistance providers. The agency also serves as the expert on domestic violence and survivor focused philosophies on the grant.

GACHI

Established in 1989, the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI) is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides a variety of assistive services to the D/d/HOH/LD/DB and other individuals with hearing loss, their family members, friends, and local state and federal agencies. In addition to their office in Decatur, Georgia, GACHI operates satellite offices in Columbus, Rome, Augusta, Savannah, and Macon.

GACHI's mission is to serve individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, Late Deafened and other individuals with hearing loss, and others with respect to all communication modes by providing support services, advocacy, and education, which foster self-determination, empowerment and independence.

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To fulfill our mission, GACHI relies on a combination of funding sources, including state-appropriated funds set by the Georgia General Assembly, the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC), generous grants and donations from private foundations, businesses and individuals.

Programs and services GACHI provides include:

- Advocacy, including educating others about ADA, encouraging customers to foster self-determination as well as empowerment and independence.
- Information and Referral locates resources and referrals geared toward individuals with hearing loss and speech issues and the people surrounding them.
- Community Education & Outreach educates others primarily through workshops and special events as well as outreach to let others know about GACHI.
- The Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program provides free assistive telecommunication devices to qualified applicants.
- The ABE/GED Program is conducted from September through June each year; however, GED and Adult Basic Education courses are only offered in the Decatur office at this time.
- Camp Julienna, an annual weeklong resident camp for D/d/HOH/LD/DB and other children and teenagers with hearing loss, strives to build team work and self-esteem in its attendees.
- Community Resources: books, materials and testing Assistive Listening Device (ALD) equipment as well as use of office community centers for meetings, trainings, and social events.
- Employment Services upon referral from VR, to include job readiness training, Personal Social Adjustment Training and job coaching.

GACHI's Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (GATEDP) distributes assistive listening devices at no charge to Georgians who meet income and other stated requirements. iCanConnect GA is GACHI's Deaf-Blind Equipment

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Distribution Program. This program serves those Georgians with dual sensory loss and is funded by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

GACHI staff members are a team of hard-working, specially trained professionals dedicated to helping Georgians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened or Deaf-Blind as well as other hearing loss by improving their quality of life. Staff members have extensive knowledge of hearing loss and communication issues. GACHI also has a board of directors that sets policy and helps to guide the organization.

GACHI is a full collaborative partner of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration and is represented by the agency's Executive Director, a Project Manager, and an Advocate Specialist. GACHI also serves as a liaison to the Deaf community and an expert on Deaf culture.

Tools for Life

Tools for Life (TFL) is Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program and gives more options for greater freedom by increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in communities of their choice.

TFL oversees five Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC's) throughout Georgia. The ATRC's are a community resource to Georgians with disabilities, families, friends, healthcare professionals, support circles, and others who are interested in learning about assistive technology devices and equipment. Each ATRC is a hands-on learning center for assessment, demonstration, education, information and assistance, and training of assistive technology available on the market today.

Tools for Life provides training and technical assistance to Georgians with disabilities to help them try out, select, obtain and learn to use assistive technology products. Additionally, the staff provides a range of training to groups of people that include disability etiquette, assistive technology apps, self-advocacy skills, and funding solutions and resources to secure assistive technology. Tools for Life also supports the refurbishment of durable medical equipment, assistive technology, laptops and computers. The program also

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supports the Center for Financial Independence and Innovation (CFII), which offers affordable loans to purchase assistive technology like hearing aids, home modifications like alert systems, and adapted vehicles and vehicle modifications.

Tools for Life is a full collaborative partner of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration and is represented by the Director of Assistive Technology Services and the Funding and Resource Coordinator. Tools for Life also acts as the expert on assistive technology and equipment for persons with disabilities on the Project.

The Georgia P.E.A.C.H Contributions and Commitments

The collaboration recognizes that organizational and individual contributions and commitments are important and will play a large part in the success of the project. As such, all collaboration members agree to the following:

- 1) GCADV, GACHI and Tools for Life agree to the following:
 - a. Victim-centered, trauma-informed services: all collaborative partners agree that providing victim-centered, trauma-informed service is the best and most effective way to support victims of domestic violence. In addition, we agree that all of our activities will promote dignity and self-sufficiency of victims will improve their access to resources and will create options for victims seeking safety from violence and that we will not engage in activities that compromise victim safety.
 - b. Meetings and leadership involvement: all collaborative partners agree that the Executive Director, Board of Directors and other organizational decision-makers will be involved in an active and meaningful way throughout the life of the Project and will attend meetings and engage in conversations at various points in time as needed. They will be prepared to implement systemic changes within their respective organizations to improve services and responses to Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals who have experienced domestic violence.

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- c. Technical Assistance: all collaborative partners agree that they will participate in all technical assistance events supported by OVW related to the Disability grant. This may include, but is not limited to frequent, regular contact with OVW's identified technical assistance provider, site visits, tele/video conference calls, All-site meetings and Web-based technical assistance.
 - d. Reporting Requirements: all collaborative partners agree to comply with performance measures, financial and other reporting requirements of the Project.
 - e. Policy Change: all Collaborative partners will commit to amending or creating new policies and procedures as determined necessary by the needs assessment
- 2) GCADV, GACHI and Tools for Life also agree to the following:
- a. Attending each meeting (i.e., representation from each agency)
 - b. Participating in discussions and development of materials between meetings
 - c. Bringing agency and system specific expertise and knowledge
 - d. Bringing field and movement specific expertise and knowledge
 - e. Reporting individual activities to the collaboration
 - f. Reporting collaboration activities to our respective partner organizations' executive director, chief executive officer, or their designee
 - g. Using open and regular communication that features inclusive, person-first language that reflects our honor and respect for each other and those we serve

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The Georgia P.E.A.C.H PIT Contributions and Commitments

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration includes a smaller group called the P.E.A.C.H. PIT (Pretty Important Team). The P.E.A.C.H. PIT is a working group comprised of select members of the full P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration. The purpose of the P.E.A.C.H. PIT is to plan and strategize for the group and to draft the content for all documents developed as part of the Collaboration. Materials created by the P.E.A.C.H. PIT will be presented to the full P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration for its review and input. The P.E.A.C.H. PIT will begin to meet after the completion of the Collaboration Charter so that the full Collaboration can participate in the process and have equal input in the development of the document.

The P.E.A.C.H. PIT will:

- 1) Examine his or her agency's internal policies and protocols pertaining to the safety of individuals that are Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Blind or with other hearing loss who have been subjected to domestic violence as part of the needs assessment process
- 2) Assist with the development of the collaboration's strategy for promoting systems change within the member organizations
- 3) Coordinate efforts to create capacity for sustainable change within his or her own agency

Collaborative Partner Individual Roles and Responsibilities

- 1) GCADV will provide the following:
 - a. Act as the lead agency for the Disability grant and provide overall Project management
 - b. Act as fiscal agent for the Project

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- c. GCADV will employ and provide supervision to the Project Coordinator
 - d. GCADV's Associate Director will serve on the Project
 - e. GCADV's Director of Finance will serve on the Project
 - f. GCADV's Director of Training and Membership will serve on the Project
 - g. Attend, participate in and assist with Project meetings and the formulation of the Project's Strategic Plan
 - h. Provide office space and use of GCADV equipment, supplies, and office technology
 - i. Provide training on domestic violence
 - j. Provide meeting space for Project meetings
 - k. Develop, print, disseminate and present on materials developed through the Project
 - l. Commit to addressing the Project's sustainability once grant funds are no longer available
 - m. Act as liaison with domestic violence programs throughout Georgia so that Project partners can gain access to provide training and technical assistance
 - n. Commit to providing and necessary services and resources as dictated by the Project's Strategic Plan
- 2) GACHI will provide the following:
- a. Lend expertise in the field of working with the Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, Late Deafened community and Deaf culture
 - b. Provide training to domestic violence advocates, Tools for Life staff, and GACHI staff on working with Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, Late Deafened and other domestic violence survivors with hearing loss
 - c. Provide the use of video phones and other technological resources

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- d. GACHI's Executive Director will serve on the Project
 - e. GACHI's Project Manager from their Columbus, GA office will serve on the Project
 - f. GACHI's Advocate Specialist from their Decatur, GA office will serve on the Project
 - g. Provide meeting space for Project meetings
 - h. Attend, participate in and assist with Project meetings and the formulation of the Project's Strategic Plan
 - i. Provide technical assistance upon request for domestic violence and assistive technology agencies
 - j. Act as a liaison with GACHI programs throughout Georgia so that Project partners can gain access to provide training and technical assistance
 - k. Commit to providing any necessary services and resources as dictated by the Project's Strategic Plan
 - l. Work together on addressing the needs identified in the Project's Strategic Plan
 - m. Commit to addressing the Project's sustainability once grant funds are no longer available
- 3) Tools for Life will provide the following:
- a. Contribute their experience in the field of assistive technology
 - b. Attend, participate in and assist with Project meetings and the formulation of the Project's Strategic Plan
 - c. Provide technical assistance and training upon request for domestic violence and Deaf services agencies
 - d. Tools for Life's Assistive Technology Initiatives Services Director will serve on the Project

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- e. Tools for Life's Funding and Resource Coordinator will serve on the Project
- f. Act as a liaison with Tools for Life programs throughout Georgia so that Project partners can gain access to provide training and technical assistance
- g. Commit to providing any necessary services and resources as dictated by the Project's Strategic Plan
- h. Provide meeting space for Project meetings
- i. Commit to addressing the Project's sustainability once grant funds are no longer available

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Decision Making Process

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration values the knowledge and opinions of the individuals and organizations within the Collaboration and recognizes that decision making authority and process will vary depending on the nature of the issue.

Decision Making Authority

It is important throughout the collaboration process to identify the decision makers for various Project- related activities. Decision makers for the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration include:

The Collaboration Team Members collectively have the authority to make decisions that could impact the direction of the Project or the Collaboration's ability to meet the Project deliverables and that include but not limited to:

- Development of the mission and vision of the Project
- Approval of Collaboration meeting minutes from previous meetings
- Consideration of individual membership of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration
- Recommendation of representatives from the Collaboration for OVW, Vera and other grantee events
- Collaboration agreements for working together (Collaborative Charter, MOU)
- Process of conducting the Needs Assessment and focus groups
- Other decisions that may impact the direction of the Collaboration's work
- Approve of all deliverable products sent to Vera, OVW

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The Project Coordinator has the authority to:

- Maintain regular contact with Vera for purposes of technical assistance, scheduling meetings, assistance with product development, or other forms of support
- Engage OVW for any additional assistance or questions
- Determine logistics related to Collaboration meetings such as location, times and agenda items
- Facilitate meetings
- Document all meetings and produce meeting minutes
- Draft grant reports and submit them as requested by OVW
- Submit all deliverable products to Vera, OVW with the approval of the Collaboration team members
- Represent the Collaboration when engaging other grantees or Vera at OVW sponsored events
- When necessary, appoint representatives from the Collaboration for OVW, Vera and other grantee events

The Lead Agency (GCADV) has the authority to:

- Make decisions regarding the Collaboration's budget and spending
 - The lead agency will provide Collaboration team members with information about budgetary decisions and work to ensure Collaboration support.
- Participate in the interviewing and hiring process of the Project Coordinator
- Supervise the Project Coordinator
 - Individual Collaboration team members can provide input to the direct supervisor on performance evaluations, concerns and decisions on hiring.

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- Terminate the Project Coordinator with appropriate notification to the Collaboration team members
- Terminate MOU partnerships in consultation with Collaboration team members and OVW
- Make decisions about budgetary modification and spending
 - The lead agency will provide Collaboration team members with information about budgetary decisions and work to ensure Collaboration support

The Agency Leads within each organization have the authority to:

- Participate in the interviewing and hiring process of the Project Coordinator
- Determine Collaboration representation within their individual agencies
- Approve final products and deliverables prior to being sent to OVW
- Internally approve policy and practice changes within each organization
- Internally approve budgetary issues for their individual agencies
- Approve and sign the Memorandums of Understanding (GACHI only)

The Agency oversight Bodies (Board of Directors at GACHI and GCADV, AMAC at TFL) within each organization have the authority to:

- Give final approval of policy and practice changes within their organization
- Give final approval of budgetary issues for their individual agencies
- Approve and sign the Memorandums of Understanding
 - With the exception of AMAC/TFL, which must process MOUs through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)

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Consensus Decision Making Process

All issues that are critical to the work of the Collaboration will be approved by a consensus model of decision making. Consensus is a general agreement among the members of a group or community, each party of which has an equal right and responsibility to decision-making and follow-up action. The Collaboration believes that consensus decision-making builds trust and commitment among its team members and allows each member to express their own opinions. All Collaboration team members have an equal voice in the consensus decision-making process.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will utilize the following steps in the consensus decision-making process:

- Address the issue on the table
- Begin a facilitated discussion
- Conduct a structured check-in
- Utilize a gradient scale to gauge the level of consensus. The gradient scale will include the following:
 - 5= Full Support
 - 4= Moderate Support
 - 3= Neutral
 - 2= Opposed but Open to Further Discussion
 - 1= Absolutely Opposed
- Poll each Collaboration team member regarding the issue being discussed.
- Obtain the consensus among the entire Collaboration on all final decisions. Consensus on an issue will be reached when all Collaboration members indicate a rating of 3 or greater when polled. If consensus is reached at any time, the team members will be able to then move forward and/or make a final decision. Any poll rating less than 3 will require an explanation of the member's reasoning and further discussion of the issue among Collaboration team members. If there is a lack of consensus, team members will discuss the issue further and take another poll.

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- Table the issue until the next Collaboration team meeting if consensus is unable to be reached.
- Continue with facilitated discussions and structured check-ins at the next meeting regarding the issue until the group feels all arguments have been exhausted. In the event that consensus cannot be reached after following this process, the Collaboration will refer to the Conflict Resolution Process² for working through the conflicting viewpoints on the issue.

² Steps for Resolving Conflict, Conflict Resolution, The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Charter, pg. 43

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Communication Plan

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration recognizes that to work best together, clear guidelines for communicating with one another, our agencies, outside parties, and the media is the key to building and maintaining a successful collaboration. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration is also committed to using communication that utilizes inclusive, person-first language that is imperative for the integrity of our project. In order to encourage open communication that considers the needs of all, the following processes will be in place.

Internal Communication

Personal: Personal issues may be discussed during P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration meetings but there will be no personal information shared in the meeting minutes.

Organizational: Individual Collaboration members will keep the Collaboration informed of anything occurring within individual organizations that could impact the Collaboration's work. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration members will be responsible for reporting key Project-related activities to their organizational bodies. Likewise, they should report relevant organizational activities back to the Collaboration. Specifically, GACHI will communicate information regarding the Collaboration to their Board of Directors and staff; GCADV will communicate information regarding the Collaboration to their Board of Directors, staff, and member programs; and Tools for Life will communicate information regarding the Collaboration to their Advisory Board and staff.

The communication within Collaboration member organizations will occur on a regular basis in order to provide ongoing updates on the Project and to ensure

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continued buy-in. Collaboration member organizations will ensure confidentiality of sensitive information by following the guidelines outlined in the Confidentiality section of the Collaboration Charter.³

Collaboration's Work: The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration's work will be detailed in the meeting minutes. Minutes will be shared with the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration within 3 working days of each meeting and as needed with partner organizations, VERA, etc.

P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Meetings:

The full Collaboration will meet twice a month during the development of the Collaborative Charter. There will be one half day meeting and one full day meeting. After the completion of the Collaborative Charter, the frequency of these meetings will be reassessed. The P.E.A.C.H. PIT⁴ will not meet during the development of the Collaborative Charter. Once the Collaborative Charter is completed, the P.E.A.C.H. PIT will meet and the frequency of these meetings will be assessed at that time.

The Project Coordinator and a representative from each Collaboration member organization must be present at each scheduled meeting. If this requirement is not met, the meeting will be cancelled. Whenever a Collaboration member is not able to attend a meeting but is able to do so via conference call, the group will be informed of this prior to the meeting. If a meeting is cancelled, every attempt to reschedule will be made. If rescheduling is not an option, the duration of the next meeting may be longer to compensate for missed time.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will also utilize Video Relay Services whenever a Deaf member of the group is not able to attend a meeting in person or on the rare

³ Confidentiality Guidelines, Confidentiality, The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Charter, pg. 36

⁴ The P.E.A.C.H. PIT, Contributions and Commitments, The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Charter, pg. 22

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occasion an interpreter cannot be secured. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Project Coordinator, in consultation with GACHI, will hire interpreters for the Collaboration meetings. Any visual aids that will be utilized during the meetings will be sent out in advance whenever possible. The Collaboration members will be expected not to cross-talk during the meetings to allow the interpreters the opportunity to receive and relay adequate and accurate information. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for terminating the services of inappropriate or ineffective interpreters. This will be done with the guidance of GACHI and any D/d/HOH/DB/LD Collaboration members.

If an individual is no longer able to serve as a member of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration or of the P.E.A.C.H. PIT, the agency represented will inform the group as soon as possible. The said agency will be responsible for assigning another individual to serve in his or her place.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Project Coordinator will be responsible for developing and distributing the meeting agenda at least 24 hours before each meeting. The agenda will include space for reviewing and approving minutes and discussing any issues from the previous meeting. The agenda will also allow space for team-building and recognition of individual and/or group strengths.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration meetings will be recorded and the Project Coordinator will be responsible for creating and distributing minutes to the group within 3 business days. The Collaboration members are responsible for reading the minutes and acknowledging the receipt of the information within 2 business days. The minutes will include the high points of the meeting including any specific information concerning Collaboration member organizations and any Collaboration decisions made.

Communication between meetings will be conducted by email or Google Documents. Communication between meetings using email or Google Documents should focus on suggesting ideas and making edits to documents. This method of communication should not be used to make significant decisions about the Project that would benefit from group input and discussion. Google

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Documents is an internet-based project management tool that will enable the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration to discuss ideas and manage documents. Collaboration members will make changes to documents or weigh in on issues in a timely manner. The response time will be designated by the sender of the information.

External Communication

All communication regarding the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration that takes place outside the Collaboration or its member organizations will be considered external communication. External communication will be conducted in the following manner:

VERA

VERA is the designated technical assistance provider for all grantees of the Disabilities grant awarded through the Department of Justice, the Office on Violence Against Women. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Project Coordinator, unless otherwise designated, is the appointed contact person for both incoming and outgoing communication with VERA. The Project Coordinator will meet/teleconference with the VERA Senior Program Associate at least twice a month to review Project activities and receive feedback and guidance.

Collaboration team members are welcome to contact VERA directly with questions regarding the Project; however, team members should seek out information from the Collaboration when possible.

VERA will be available to consult with the Project Coordinator and to participate in Collaboration meetings on a regular basis, either in-person or via a conference call. Communication with VERA will include regularly scheduled telephone updates and possible requests for technical assistance, conflict resolution, and site visits.

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Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)

The Office on Violence Against Women is a program under the Department of Justice that provides funding for the Disabilities grant. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Project Coordinator, unless otherwise designated, is the appointed contact person for both incoming and outgoing communication with OVW. GCADV's Director of Finance will communicate with OVW directly regarding budgetary and other fiscal issues. Information to be communicated with OVW may include sending documents for final approval, budget modifications and updates, Grant Adjustment Notifications (GAN), quarterly and semi-annual reports, and programmatic changes to the Collaboration (staffing, partnership, direction, etc.). If other team members of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration would like to contact OVW directly, the Collaboration must discuss and agree on the need and appropriateness of the communication.

Community Partners

Community members and other relevant organizations outside this Collaboration will be considered community partners. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Project Coordinator is the primary contact person for incoming and outgoing communication with community partners regarding Collaboration activities. If needed, the Project Coordinator will request assistance from Collaboration team members for communication regarding specific issues.

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Confidentiality

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration agrees that survivor safety is our first priority. We believe that respecting and keeping survivor confidentiality is essential to survivor safety and for protecting the dignity and trust of the individuals we serve. In addition, we agree that respecting the confidentiality of the partner agencies and the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration team members is critical to promoting the systems change process; however, there may be limitations to confidentiality due to State laws regarding mandatory reporting and open meetings.

Georgia's Open Meetings and Open Records Laws

Georgia law requires that public agencies allow access to all meetings and public records (See O.C. GA 50-14-1 and O.C.GA 50-18-70). The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will comply with Open meetings and Open Records laws by providing information on scheduled meetings upon written request to the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration's Project Coordinator. The first requirement for a "meeting" is the gathering of a quorum of the members of the governing body of an agency, any committee of the members of the governing body of an agency, or any committee created by such governing body. The second requirement is that the gathering must be one at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the agency or committee is formulated, presented, discussed or voted upon. Both of these requirements must be met to come within the statute's definition of "meeting."

Survivor Confidentiality

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration does not provide direct services to individuals with disabilities who have been subjected to domestic violence. However, members of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration may periodically share information pertaining to

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experiences with individuals with disabilities who have been subjected to domestic violence. Information directly related to any individual will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the purpose for which it is shared. In light of Georgia's Open Meetings and Open Records Laws, the names of individuals with disabilities who have been subjected to domestic violence will not be shared during meetings.

Confidentiality Standards – Collaborative Member Organizations (GACHI, GCADV, Tools for Life)

Members of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration understand that while working together, some information pertaining to the collaboration's member agencies or community partners may become known but should not be shared outside the collaboration. Minutes of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration meetings are developed to summarize progress only. However, members shall keep sensitive information regarding the collaboration's organizations confidential while complying with Georgia's Mandatory Reporting and Open Meeting laws if applicable. Sensitive information may include but is not limited to:

- Challenges with accessibility or buy-in
- Issues of personnel or organizational capacity
- Funding or financial information
- Competing political interests or sensitive issues related to the partner organizations and collaborative partners

Confidentiality Standards – Community Partners

Throughout the Project, the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will be working in various capacities with disabilities and domestic violence service providers, i.e. community partners. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration's role in this Project is not to monitor or attempt to find fault with programs or policies at our community

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partners; nor is it our role to mandate compliance with the Collaboration's confidentiality and mandatory reporting policies. Instead, it is the Collaboration's role to create sustainable change within these organizations. As we work together through various phases of the Project, sensitive information about their organization practices or service delivery might be revealed. In these instances, the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will continue to offer support, training, and technical assistance to the greatest extent possible. Any sensitive information about community agencies that is learned as a result of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will be kept private while complying with the State of Georgia mandatory reporting requirements and respecting the survivor's right to voice concerns about the organization.

Needs Assessment and Data Protection

Data collected from needs assessment interviews, focus groups or surveys will contain no personally identifying information, nor will data be linked in any way back to the participant. Each needs assessment participant will be fully informed via a written consent form or oral statement of how data will be collected, retained, and used by the Peach Collaboration and its partners. All interviews or focus groups will be conducted in a private place to minimize the risk of private information being overheard by others not participating in the interview/group. Any forms or paperwork containing personally identifying information (such as consent forms) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the GCADV, available only to the Project Coordinator and her immediate supervisor, the Director of Training and Membership (P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Member). Any identifying forms will be retained for the life of the grant cycle and destroyed via confidential means thereafter.

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Mandatory Reporting

According to Georgia law O.C.G.A. § 30-5-1-5 under the Protection of Disabled Adults and Elder Persons Act, all abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of elderly persons (65+) or an adult (18+) with a disability who ***do not*** reside in a long-term care facility is mandated to be reported to the appropriate officials. This law defines “disabled adults” as a person 18 years of age or older who is not a resident of a long-term care facility but who is mentally or physically incapacitated or has Alzheimer's disease or dementia. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration partners will report cases of abuse of a vulnerable adult as required by GA law. It is apparent that individuals that are Deaf with no disabilities are not covered under this law. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration understands that being D/d/HOH/DB/LD alone does not make someone susceptible to any mandatory reporting laws in the State of Georgia. Therefore, we will only make a report if the individual is covered by Georgia statute. Even then, Collaboration partners will be cognizant of stereotypes regarding the D/d/HOH/DB/LD community such as the assumption that if an individual is Deaf they are intellectually delayed or are incapable of making responsible decisions own their own.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration had extensive discussions surrounding the domestic violence and disability movements and the values that surround these movements. Inclusion and equality in decision making are core values of the disability movement that have shaped their philosophies and services to individuals; while the domestic violence movement embraces such core values as empowerment, self-determination, safety, and confidentiality. The domestic violence community values confidentiality for victims – both to protect the safety of the individual and to allow victims a measure of control in their own lives – including when and to whom they disclose their abuse. Mandatory reporting laws by definition remove any discretion about disclosure – they were created to address the insular culture in some service agencies and to create a system in which perpetrators were held accountable for their actions. The P.E.A.C.H.

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Collaboration agreed on the core values of both movements. The Collaboration discussed that many states, including Georgia, have laws that are unclear and may unintentionally negatively impact persons with disabilities. Still, the members all agreed that mandatory reporting is important for those individuals for whom the law was written. It was also acknowledged that all Collaboration members are mandated reporters under Georgia law.

The members of the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration all agreed that it is of utmost importance to make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the survivor at all times. Collaboration partners understand the implications on confidentiality and trust-building in the survivor-advocate relationship and that reporting could harm that trust relationship. Having a mandatory reporting policy could have various implications on the survivor such as:

- Lost/lack of trust in staff of an agency
- Fear of seeking help
- Fear of full disclosure
- Thought that confidentiality does not exist
- Fear of information getting back to the abuser
- Fear of losing children
- Report may increase danger
- Isolation
- Re-traumatization
- Manipulation of the mandatory reporting policy by the abuser
 - Abuser telling the survivor that if she discloses the abuse to anyone a child protective services or adult protective services call will be made
 - Abuser accuses the victim of being the aggressor and discloses abuse in order to trigger a mandated report/investigation

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration agrees that these implications could hold true simply by having a mandatory reporting policy, even if a report is never made. Prior to discussing domestic violence with an individual,

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Collaboration partners will inform the survivor of any mandatory reporting requirements and potential implications. This communication will be done in the survivor's own language with the proper tools and mechanisms in order to facilitate optimum communication. Proper communication will assist the survivor in understanding the law and deciding whether they are comfortable with disclosing the abuse. The same protocol will be followed during focus groups and in-person surveys.

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Conflict Resolution

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration recognizes that we each bring our own unique perspectives, opinions, and voices to the table as strengths for our Collaboration, agencies, and community. These diverse perspectives may sometimes lead to differences of opinion and conflict within the Collaboration or between Collaboration members. The Collaboration believes each member's viewpoints should be valued and respected equally. Because of this, members of the Collaboration are committed to using the following framework and steps to resolve conflicts that may arise throughout the course of the Project.

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration recognizes a conflict as an issue that cannot be agreed upon through structured discussions during team meetings. The Collaboration understands that the conflicts team members may encounter could vary in importance and intensity, but agree that they will be addressed by the same process. Examples of conflict the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration may encounter are:

- Personality conflict between Collaboration team members
- Collaboration team member not completing assigned work, not participating in meetings, or consistently missing meetings
- Collaboration team member consistently missing meetings
- Philosophical or values based conflicts

Framework for Addressing Conflict

- All Collaboration members commit to the Conflict Resolution Framework and Steps.
- Collaboration members will resolve any conflicts in a manner that is respectful of our unique approaches and values.

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- Conflict will be resolved using open communication that that features inclusive, person-first language that reflects the respect we have for each other.
 - Collaboration members will:
 - Be non-confrontational
 - Use “I” statements
 - Be willing to work together to resolve the issues
 - Be willing to listen
 - Keep the Collaboration’s Vision central
- Collaboration members will be open to each person’s perspective and allow ample time for each person to get their point across.
- Collaboration members recognize that it is okay to disagree and that agreement is not required in order to reach a resolution. If the Collaboration is not able to come to an agreement on an issue, they will work to find common ground to help move the group towards resolution.

Steps for Resolving Conflict

- If there is a conflict with a particular Collaboration member, the nature and reason for the conflict will be addressed directly with that member.
- If there is a conflict with Collaboration members that affects the entire Collaboration, it should be discussed and/or openly communicated the conflict with all members of the Collaboration.
 - Conversations will include the nature and reason for the conflict, any specific details, and also potential solutions.
 - Collaboration members will avoid discussion of the conflict outside the Collaboration. Such conversations may lead to misunderstandings of the issues involved or exacerbate the conflict.
- If a Collaboration member discusses the conflict with another member outside the Collaboration or without having gone to the individual, it is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator to maintain the integrity of the

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Conflict Resolution process and redirect that member back to the appropriate place to discuss the conflict.

- If conflict between individual Collaboration team members cannot be resolved, the Project Coordinator will be added to the conversation for additional input and/or mediation. If the conflict involves the Project Coordinator, GCADV's Executive Director and/or Vera will be sought out for input and/or mediation.
- If conflict involving the entire Collaboration cannot be resolved, the Project Coordinator will seek help from Vera.
 - The Project Coordinator will contact Vera to schedule a time that they can meet with the entire Collaboration to discuss the conflict.
- If a conflict cannot be resolved with the support of Vera, OVW will be engaged in the conversation.
- If a conflict cannot be resolved through the additional support of OVW, an outside mediator such as the Keybridge Foundation may be necessary.

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| Planning and Development Work Plan | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Activity | Timeframe | Target Completion Date |
| Hire a Project Manager | October 2011- May 2012 | May 2012 |
| VERA Site Visit- Collaboration Charter | June 2012 | June 2012 |
| Create Collaboration Charter | June 2012-March 2013 | March 2013 |
| Vera Site Visit- Needs Assessment | April 2013 | April 2013 |
| Charter Approved by OVW | April- May, 2013 | May 2013 |
| Plan Needs Assessment | April - June 2013 | June 2013 |
| Submit Needs Assessment Plan to OVW | May- July 2013 | July 2013 |
| Conduct Needs Assessment | August- October 2013 | October 2013 |
| Compile Data and Complete Needs Assessment Report | November 2013 | November 2013 |
| Vera Site Visit- Strategic Planning | December 2013 | December 2013 |
| Create Strategic Plan | January- March 2014 | March 2014 |
| Submit Strategic Plan to OVW | April 2014 | April 2014 |
| Implementation | April- September 2014 | September 2014 |

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Glossary Of Terms

Ableism: Ableism is a form of discrimination or social prejudice against people with disabilities. Generally, ableism prevents persons with disabilities from having the same access to rights and services people without a disability have no problems obtaining.

Abuse: Abuse is actions with or without physical contact that cause harm. It is to harm or injure by maltreatment, neglect or improper use of power or resources.

Accessibility: A basic right to an environment that allows an individual and/or a service animal to move freely, communicate, obtain services and participate in work and community activities.

Accommodations: Actions taken to ensure individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in activities, services, employment and education. The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration will utilize the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rule of what is “reasonable accommodations.”

Advocate: A person who acts in support of or on the behalf of an individual, in order to ensure the individual’s interests are represented and/or rights upheld.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALD): An Assistive listening device is used to provide hearing ability for people in a variety of situations. A common usage is to aid people who are hard of hearing. The ALD may be used to help people hear televisions and other audio devices and also to help people hear speech through public address (PA) systems such as in church or at a lecture. The assistive listening device is usually used as a system where the audio source is broadcast

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wirelessly over an FM frequency. The person who is listening may use a small FM receiver to tune into the signal and listen at their preferred volume.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990: Federal law that prohibits discrimination against “identified individuals with disabilities” on the basis of employment, services/programs rendered to the public by state and local governments, services/programs by businesses that provide public services, in telecommunications and provides guidance to federal entities charged with enforcement of the Act.

American Sign Language: American Sign Language is a visually perceived language based on a naturally evolved system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the body, along with non-manual markers such as facial expressions, head movements, shoulder raises, mouth morphemes, and movements of the body. It is the primary sign language used by Deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States and Canada.

Assistive Technology (AT): Assistive Technology is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home and in the community. Assistive Technology ranges from low tech to high tech devices or equipment.

Assistive Technology Service: Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

AT: Assistive Technology

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AT Lending Library: Borrowing a device or software to make sure the assistive technology works for the individual; try before you buy.

Audism: Audism describes the mentality that to be able to hear and to speak is necessarily better and leads to a higher quality of life. On this basis, different forms of discriminating behavior against Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or late deafened individuals may arise.

Capacity Building: Capacity building is activities to assist and support individuals and systems to successfully implement and sustain change.

Barrier: Physical object, action (or inaction), or lack of adaptive device that blocks, prevents or hinders movement or access.

Caregiver: A person who is responsible for the direct care, protection and supervision tending to the needs of a person with disabilities.

Choice: A choice is a decision made by an individual based on options.

Collaboration: According to the Fieldstone Alliance, collaboration is “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.

Confidentiality: The ethical principle and legal right that a professional will hold all client information, not intended to be disclosed to third parties, in confidence

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unless the individual gives consent permitting disclosure or unless the disclosure is required by the law.

Consensus: General agreement among the members of a group or community, each party of which has an equal right and responsibility to decision-making and follow-up action.

Cultural Competency: Cultural competency refers to the process by which individuals are able to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups to enhance diverse care. This includes awareness of systemic bias and belief systems and how these impact and can work to oppress survivors with hearing loss.

Deaf (D): Individuals that have shared social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values, and shared institutions of communities that are affected by deafness and which use American Sign Languages as the main means of communication. Deaf individuals have their own sense of identity and resultant actions. As with all social groups that a person chooses to belong to, a person is a member of the Deaf community if he or she identifies him/herself as a member of the Deaf community, and other members accept that person as a part of the community.

deaf (d): The term deaf (written with a lower case "d") refers to a physical condition characterized by a relative lack of auditory or individuals that have hearing loss and/or hard of hearing. These individuals identify themselves mostly with the hearing community and are not culturally deaf.

Disability: Disability is the interaction that causes the limitation based on the individual's perception of whether they consider a limitation a disability. It's the intersection between disability and the environment that needs to be accommodated. (World Health Organization)

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DOJ: Department of Justice

Domestic Violence (DV): Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner that can include physical and sexual violence, emotional or psychological abuse and economic deprivation (using money and financial tools to exert control). It may also be referred to as abuse, battering, family violence, dating violence/abuse, or intimate partner violence.

Empowerment: Empowerment is enhancing an individual's ability to make choices and then to implement those choices into the individual's desired actions and outcomes. It involves a multi-dimensional social process that allows an individual to take care of his/her own life. This definition is based on actions and experience, freedom of choice and will. It encompasses the individual's ability to influence the course of their life and the decisions that affect them. It is important to note that empowerment assumes that power can change.

GACHI: Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired

GCADV: Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Hard of Hearing (HOH): refers to individuals who have some degree of hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. This may be because they were born with a hearing loss or they may have lost some or all of their hearing later in life. People who are hard of hearing may benefit from the use of hearing aids or other

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assistive listening devices. They depend primarily upon spoken English in communicating with others.

Inclusion: Inclusion is a term used by people with disabilities and other disability rights advocates for the idea that all people should freely, openly and without pity accommodate any person with a disability without restrictions or limitations of any kind.

Late Deafened (LD): refers to individuals that have severe to profound hearing loss, which occurred after the development of speech and language. People who are late deafened can benefit from the use of visual display technology, but usually very little from hearing aids or other listening technology.

Member Organizations: Member organizations and agencies represented in the P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration.

OVW: Office for Violence Against Women

P.E.A.C.H.: Partnership for Equality and Comprehensive Help for Deaf Domestic Violence Survivors

P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration: All agencies involved with the Georgia Disabilities Project funded under a cooperative agreement with Office for Violence Against Women.

P.E.A.C.H. PIT: The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration includes a smaller group called the P.E.A.C.H. PIT (Pretty Important Team). The P.E.A.C.H. PIT is a working group

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comprised of select members of the full P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration. The purpose of the P.E.A.C.H. PIT is to plan and strategize for the group and to draft the content for all documents developed as part of the Collaboration.

Person-Centered Services: Recognition of an individual's preferences and needs during all components of service planning giving individuals the power to use resources in ways that make sense in their lives.

Person-First Language: People-First Language is defined as choosing words about people with disabilities that define the person first, not the disability. It is important to define who the person "is" before defining what disability the person "may have."

Reasonable Accommodation: A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment or modification made in a system to "accommodate" or make fair the same system for an individual based on a proven need.

Safety Plan: A safety plan is a plan developed between an advocate/counselor and a survivor that contains specific activities and/or options relevant for a survivor to be safe from an abuser. Safety planning is an essential step to be completed with all adult survivors of domestic violence. It allows individualized planning for situations the survivor and children or family may encounter regardless of what the survivor decides to do about the relationship with the abuser.

Service Area: The entire State of Georgia

Survivor: A survivor is a person who has continued to live, prosper, or remain functional after a traumatic event. The word "survivor" is considered to be an empowering term preferred by the Violence Against Women Act. (VAWA)

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Sustainability: Effective and efficient enhancement of services for all individuals in a community that can be maintained over time.

Systems Change: The process of improving the capacity of service providers to promote and provide collaborative person-centered services through the creation of sustainable, transferable and replicable change.

Technical Assistance (TA): providing advice, assistance, and resources to systems, agencies, and individuals in order to build capacity for services to survivors of domestic violence and/or individuals who are Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind or late deafened. TA often involves troubleshooting challenges, providing access to resources on specific topics and assistance with policy planning and program implementation.

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD): A TDD is a teleprinter, an electronic device for text communication over a telephone line, that is designed for use by persons with hearing or speech difficulties. Other names for the device include teletypewriter (or TTY), text phone (common in Europe), and minicom (United Kingdom). The typical TDD is a device about the size of a typewriter or laptop computer with a QWERTY keyboard and small screen that uses LEDs or an LCD screen to display typed text electronically. In addition, TDDs commonly have a small spool of paper on which text is also printed — old versions of the device had only a printer and no screen. The text is transmitted live, via a telephone line, to a compatible device, i.e. one that uses a similar communication protocol. It was invented in 1964 by 2 deaf physicists, James C. Marsters and Robert Weitbrecht.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP): Founded in March 2003 by the Georgia State Legislature and managed by the Public Service Commission, the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (GATEDP) provides free Telecommunications equipment to qualified applicants

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who have hearing or speech impairment GACHI is responsible for administering the program, distributing the equipment, and providing training sessions.

Tools for Life (TFL): Georgia's Assistive Technology Program

Value Laden Language: What you say and write may enhance the dignity of people with disabilities or inadvertently reflect stereotypes and negative attitudes. Some words and phrases don't recognize the broad range of capabilities of people with disabilities. People with disabilities don't need or want to be pitied, nor should they be deemed "courageous" or "special" as they accomplish daily activities or work; basically people first before the disability.

VAWA: Violence Against Women Act

Vera: Technical assistance provider for the Disabilities Project Grant

Victim: A victim is a person against whom a crime has been committed. The word "victim" is most often used as a legal term, but is also used by some when discussing women or survivors who have experienced domestic violence.

Videophone (VP): Video phones allow people who are deaf and hard or hearing to communicate with others using American Sign Language over a videophone connection. They can contact other deaf people who also have videophones directly, or they can contact hearing people through the Video Relay Service.

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Appendix A: Media and Public Communications Talking Points

The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration Talking Points

- The P.E.A.C.H. stands for the Partnership for Equality and Comprehensive Help for Deaf Domestic Violence Survivors.
- The P.E.A.C.H. Collaboration includes three agencies. They are the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, GACHI, and Tools for Life.
- This is a 3- year grant funded by the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).
- The funding for this Collaboration was awarded in October 2011 and the grant will continue through September 2014.
- The project is not funded to provide direct services, but rather to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in improved accessibility and domestic violence services for the D/d/HOH/DB/LD communities.
- The purpose of the Collaboration is to:
 - Expand the capacity of the disability, assistive technology, and domestic violence organizations to provide readily available, safe, appropriate and accessible services to Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals regardless of where they seek assistance.
 - Create a sustainable infrastructure that is reflective of the complex needs of Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened victims of domestic violence through the modification and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices with the collaboration's three partner organizations.
 - Provide cross-education regarding accessibility to culturally competent services, communication and information, Deaf culture, and domestic violence

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- Identify gaps in services with Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened individuals(ideally DV survivors), and domestic violence, disability, and Deaf advocates (ideally those who have had barriers with service delivery).
- Increase technology capacity to support full accessibility of the delivery of services for domestic violence survivors that are Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late Deafened.
- Review Collaboration member organization’s policies and procedures as they relate to domestic violence and accessibility and address areas of needed change.
- Promote systems change through strategic communication and education of domestic violence, Deaf services, disability-related organizations, as well as Assistive Technology Resource Centers throughout Georgia.

Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence Talking Points

- The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc. (GCADV) brings together member agencies, allied organizations and supportive individuals who are committed to ending domestic violence.
- Guided by the voices of survivors, GCADV works to create social change by addressing the root causes of this violence.
- GCADV leads advocacy efforts for responsive public policy and fosters quality, comprehensive prevention and intervention services throughout the state. We do this through:
 - Fostering quality services for victims by increasing capacity of members and service providers.
 - Mobilizing a statewide voice to increase public policy development that helps victims and prevents DV.

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- Educating the public to take action and prevent DV.
- GCADV provides services to member programs through a strategic communication plan that includes regular publications, such as the Georgia Advocate e-News and the GCADV Weekly Informational e-Blasts.
- GCADV administers the Georgia 24-hour statewide toll-free domestic violence hotline
 - The Georgia domestic violence hotline is an extensive telephone routing system to Georgia's Department of Human Services (DHS) Certified Shelters. Calls to the hotline are automatically connected to the caller's nearest certified shelter based on the caller's telephone number exchange.
- GCADV's training department provides on-site consultation and training to programs with specific needs and requests.
- GCADV provides hundreds of technical assistance contacts, from a wide variety of callers, such as executive directors, advocates, police officers, judges, probation officers, faith-based programs, batterer intervention programs and others.
- The Fatality Project is a joint initiative of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.
 - This project works with Task Forces throughout Georgia to facilitate a deep assessment of domestic violence fatalities and near fatalities in the communities in which they occurred.
- GCADV initiates and maintains contact with outside organizations in order to form relationships and collaborations around issues and projects impacting victims of domestic violence.
- GCADV's advocacy is used to educate and inform legislators and their staff so that they have the knowledge to make informed decisions around public policy and legislation that may impact domestic violence victims.
 - GCADV contracts with a lobbyist who is extremely familiar and committed to the issue of domestic violence.

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GACHI Talking Points

- GACHI is a state-wide organization serving Georgia's Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind with respect to all communication modes.
- By reaching and connecting with those who can benefit from our services, they will begin to show self-determination, empowerment and the independence as productive, contributing members of society.
- Through advocacy we guide, empower, represent and educate individuals with various stages of hearing loss and assist businesses and organizations by educating them on the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act with proper resources to accommodate those with hearing loss.
- Through information and referral we offer information and literature about interpreters, hearing aids, parenting a deaf child, Deaf culture, locating social services and more.
- GACHI reaches out to the community through a wide variety of workshops and presentations with the goal of expanding the public's awareness of issues pertaining to people with hearing loss.
- GACHI provides free telecommunications equipment to qualified applicants who have a hearing loss or speech impairment through the GA Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (GATEDP).
- GACHI is committed to helping individuals achieve their dreams through education by offering individualized classes to improve basic skills in reading, writing and/or math; pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test; or earn a GED (General Education Degree).
- GACHI offers Deaf, deaf, Hard of hearing, Deaf Blind and Late Deafened individuals who are referred by the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) for the following services: Personal adjustment training, job readiness training and job coaching.
- GACHI lends out assistive listening devices to allow Hard of Hearing individuals to experiment with devices such as a pocket talker, TV ears,

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Comfort Duett and other available devices before they purchase their own assistive listening device.

- GACHI’s Camp Julienna is a weeklong residential camp for youth and teens that are deaf or hard of hearing where through challenging, team-oriented activities, and campers form lasting friendships as well as leadership, social and communication skills.
- GACHI celebrates and supports the core values upon which we were founded:
 - Respect
 - Trustworthiness
 - Loyalty
 - Confidentiality, and
 - Fairness

Tools for Life Talking Points

- Tools for Life is one of 56 federally funded, state operated programs tasked to increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and services.
- Such items are defined in law as any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life – school, work, home and community.
- The program is statewide, and seeks to increase access to and acquisition of AT devices and services for all Georgians with disabilities, regardless of their age, type of disability, geographic area of residence in Georgia, economic status, or need for AT in educational, work, and/or communication living settings or for purposes of telecommunications.
- Tools for Life does is not allowed by law to purchase or provide for the purchase of AT directly to individuals, but does assist in exploring various

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sources of funding through public and private sources know to pay or provide for assistive technology.

- Tools for Life operates assistive technology lending libraries so that Georgians can explore AT solutions. These lending libraries are done in partnership with other organizations such as Centers for Independent Living and are listed on the website (www.gatfl.org).
- Tools for Life offers many opportunities each year for learning about what kinds of AT devices are available and how to use them. These opportunities are provided in partnering with many different organizations and conferences in the state and by offering monthly free webinars on various types of products for individuals with disabilities that include D/d/HOH/DB/LD individuals. The program offers many types of training and technical assistance that include disability etiquette language and inclusive practices, and technology solutions helpful in leveling the playing field for many types of disabilities that affect one's full inclusion in living, learning, working and playing activities.
- The Tools for Life website is www.gatfl.org and includes contact information of Centers, locations that offer gently used, sanitized and refurbished AT such as durable medical equipment, computers and laptops.
- Tools for Life is designed to assist Georgians with disabilities and their circles of support.

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Appendix B: P.E.A.C.H Collaboration Contact List

| Name | Organization | Reason for Contact |
|---|--------------|--|
| <p>Letitia Lowe Project Coordinator llowe@gcadv.org O: (404) 209-0280 C: (850) 556-9093</p> | GCADV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary contact person for all external communication and media requests for P.E.A.C.H Collaboration |
| <p>Jan Christiansen Associate Executive Director jchristiansen@gcadv.org O: (404) 209-0280 C: (404) 387-1342</p> | GCADV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member Primary contact person for lead agency Back-up to Project Coordinator for critical incident responses 1st contact person for organization specific communication needs |
| <p>Christy Showalter Director of Membership and Training cshowalter@gcadv.org O: (404) 209-0280 C: (770) 823-2566</p> | GCADV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member 2nd contact person for organization specific communication needs 2nd back-up for critical incident responses |
| <p>Penny Rosenfield Director of Finance prosenfield@gcadv.org O: (404) 209-0280 C: (201) 248-8248</p> | GCADV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member 3rd contact person for organization specific communication needs 3rd back-up for critical incident responses |
| <p>Sondra Rhoades-Johnson Executive Director srjohnson@gachi.org O: (404) 292-5312 C: (404) 457-5170</p> | GACHI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member Primary contact person for member organization 1st contact person for organization specific communication needs |
| <p>Jamaica Villegas Advocate Specialist jvillegas@gachi.org O: (404) 292-5312 C: (818) 312-3598</p> | GACHI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member 3rd contact person for organization specific communication needs 3rd back-up for critical incident responses |
| <p>Kathy Keeter Project Manager kkeeter@gachi.org VP: (706) 225-7124 C: (706) 718-9236</p> | GACHI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member 2nd contact person for organization specific communication needs 2nd back-up for critical incident responses |
| <p>Joy Kniskern Principal Investigator, Assistive Technology Initiatives Joy.kniskern@gatech.gatfl.edu O: (404) 894-7669 C: (404) 403-8708</p> | TFL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member Primary contact person for member organization 1st contact person for organization specific communication needs 2nd back-up for critical incident responses |
| <p>Jackie Stapleton Funding and Resource Coordinator jackie.stapleton@gatech.gatfl.edu O: (404) 385-7029 C: (404) 788-2082</p> | TFL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration team member 2nd contact person for organization specific communication needs 2nd back-up for critical incident responses |

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Appendix C: Charter Authors

Christy Cardina

Christy Cardina is the Director of Training and Membership of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) and previously coordinated GCADV's Legal Assistance to Victims Project. She has worked as an advocate and educator in the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault since 1996. Christy has provided specialized training and technical assistance around domestic violence intervention and advocacy best practices to a wide range of professionals including advocates, judges, law enforcement, and health professionals, particularly with a focus on technology safety and stalking, women's health and intimate partner violence, and the link between pets and domestic violence.

Christy's strong communication skills and experience working in collaborations to develop policies and practices for responding to domestic violence will help in the Disabilities' Project planning and implementation phases. The Project will also benefit from her knowledge of domestic violence dynamics, technology safety, and underserved communities as well as her experience in curricula development and training advocates and other helping professionals to provide effective screening and intervention with survivors of domestic violence.

Jan Christiansen

Jan Christiansen is the Associate Director of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She has twenty years of experience in the domestic violence field. As Associate Director, Jan has an intimate knowledge of budgeting and finance as well as knowledge of the OVW system, processes, grant writing and reporting. Jan is well-versed in the philosophical underpinnings of the Domestic Violence Movement and also has a vast knowledge of laws that affect domestic violence survivors. Jan has direct and managerial service at various levels throughout DV organizations which lends itself to knowing what is needed during choosing a pilot site and the implementation phase. Other skills that Jan brings to

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the Disabilities Project are her experience in collaboration building and creating buy-in, strategic planning, and knowledge of underserved communities and marginalized populations.

Kathy Keeter

Kathy Keeter has personal experience as a Deaf individual who has experienced barriers in life. As a Culturally Deaf individual, she shares with others the aspects of Deaf Culture, an in depth understanding of American Sign Language and knowledge and life experiences with individuals with hearing loss and Autism. Kathy currently works with the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired as a Project Manager. Her educational background is in Psychology and Family Studies. As Project Manager at GACHI, Kathy supports advocates to infiltrate the Deaf communities for the purpose of training, feedback and bringing awareness about issues associated with domestic violence.

Kathy brings to the Disabilities Project in depth information in regards to removing communication barriers from numerous years of advocacy work at GACHI. She also offers creativity in regards to visual aids and developing curriculum materials for trainings. Kathy will be able to utilize her experience as an advocate who has seen and assisted survivors with hearing loss toward safety and empowerment.

Joy Elizabeth Kniskern, M.Ed., CRC

Ms. Kniskern has over 36 years of experience in vocational rehabilitation and in launching technology-related initiatives. She served as a Director of Assistive Technology Services with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In this capacity, she led the development of the agency's rehabilitation engineering program and secured and managed federal grants of over 13 million over a 20 year period to develop the Georgia Assistive Technology Act – Tools for Life, the Alternative Finance Program – the Center for Financial Independence and Innovation, and the Pass It On Center, a national technical assistance center to support the development of safe, effective and appropriate reutilization of

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assistive technology. Prior to joining the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation program in 1988, she launched and operated a highly successful computer programmer training school for vocational rehabilitation clients at Georgia Tech under the auspices of Goodwill Industries. She is currently serves as the Assistive Technology Initiatives Director at the Alternative Media Access Center, Enterprise Innovation Institute at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

She has specific skills in training and technical assistance, strategic business planning, assistive technology and disability sensitivity issues, and in capacity-building. She has written and secured many national and state public and private grants to support the launching of new efforts. She has launched one non-profit organization and has worked with many others in a variety of areas concerning strategic planning and capacity-building.

Letitia Lowe, MSW

Letitia Lowe is currently employed with the lead agency for the Disabilities grant, the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She serves as the Project Coordinator for the Disabilities Collaborative Project. Letitia will serve as the primary contact with OVW on all programmatic issues. Letitia will manage the day-to day operations of the Disabilities Project and provide overall guidance for all activities carried out under the memorandum of agreement. In the collaboration, Letitia will represent the interests of the Disabilities Project- not GCADV.

Letitia will convene meetings, facilitate discussion during meetings and communicate internally with the Collaboration. Letitia will also be responsible for all OVW program reporting and submission of cooperative agreement deliverables. Letitia will be tasked with the responsibility of ensuring all program activities and deliverables are completed within the allotted timelines.

Letitia brings very unique experience and skills to the Collaboration that qualifies her to serve as the Project Coordinator. She has a Masters in Social Work and more than ten years experience working with domestic violence survivors. As a survivor herself, Letitia has intimate knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence and the process of accessing services in underserved communities.

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Letitia also has numerous years of experience working with individuals with disabilities and individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This experience gives Letitia a special quality that she will be able to contribute to the Collaborative team.

Sondra Rhoades-Johnson, M.B.A.

Sondra Rhoades-Johnson is the Executive Director of the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired. Sondra has more than twenty years of executive leadership and strategic planning expertise. Sondra also has a diversity of professional experience such as outreach and training, community education and cultural diversity.

Having worked across multiple sectors, Sondra brings perspectives from the government, corporate, academic, entrepreneurial and non-profit sectors. She also brings a network of corporate and community leaders as an alumna of Leadership Atlanta, the Regional Leadership Institute, Leadership Georgia and Leadership America.

Sondra's work within the D/d/HOH, LD/DB communities has become not just employment but a passion for an improved and positive change while building bridges between the respective communities.

Penny Rosenfield

Penny Rosenfield is an expert in finance. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Montclair State University. She also has over twenty years of accounting and management experience in both the profit and non-profit world. Penny brings a layperson's view to the collaboration. She has only been working in the Domestic Violence movement for 3 years, and although she has been educated, she still has much to learn. As for the Deaf Community, she is just beginning her education. This means that the other members of the collaboration will have to communicate in a way that a layperson will understand.

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Jackie Stapleton, M. Ed.

Jackie Stapleton is the AMAC Funding and Resource Coordinator and has a Master's degree in Special Education. For over 19 years, Jackie taught children with disabilities in the Public Schools and has extensive professional work experience in the communication, cultural, and advocacy issues facing Individuals with Disabilities and their families. She will be sharing knowledge gained from her experiences to help in understanding the restrictions and resulting problems faced by People with Disabilities.

Jackie's dedication in advocating for help in bridging the gaps in services provided to People with Disabilities also stems from a close, personal perspective. Jackie adopted a son in 1999 and in 2004; he suffered a severe, open wound, Traumatic Brain Injury. Her one-on-one dealings with all those involved with her son and his disability in educational, medical, physical and social situations has given her a unique, in depth understanding of the barriers People with Disabilities often face.

"Disable the Limits," Jackie's small fund-raising business inspired by her son, advocates for a more open and supportive attitude towards People with Disabilities. Her creative and positive approach hopes to encourage and to motivate individuals in overcoming all perceived limitations.

Jamaica Villegas

Jamaica Villegas is an advocate and a domestic violence survivor and has worked with several non-profit agencies specifically for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Jamaica works as an Advocate Specialist at GACHI and provides advocacy, education and outreach for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened and Deaf and Blind individuals. She will be sharing her expertise and knowledge on the Deaf issues by breaking the barriers and creating awareness in the community. After working with several Deaf survivors, she found her dedication in helping survivors and excited to be involved with a committee that is working hard to end domestic violence and create awareness on the existence of Deaf survivors.

Jamaica grew up in the Deaf Community in the Philippines and has seen the violence and discrimination in all aspects of life whether at home, in the

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workplace, within the community and in the entire country. This steered her to do outreach and educational workshops for shelters and other organizations. Her passion for assisting the Deaf community has led her to work with educational programs like Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Cancer Awareness for Deaf Women and HIV/AIDS Programs for Deaf Women under GLAD in California.