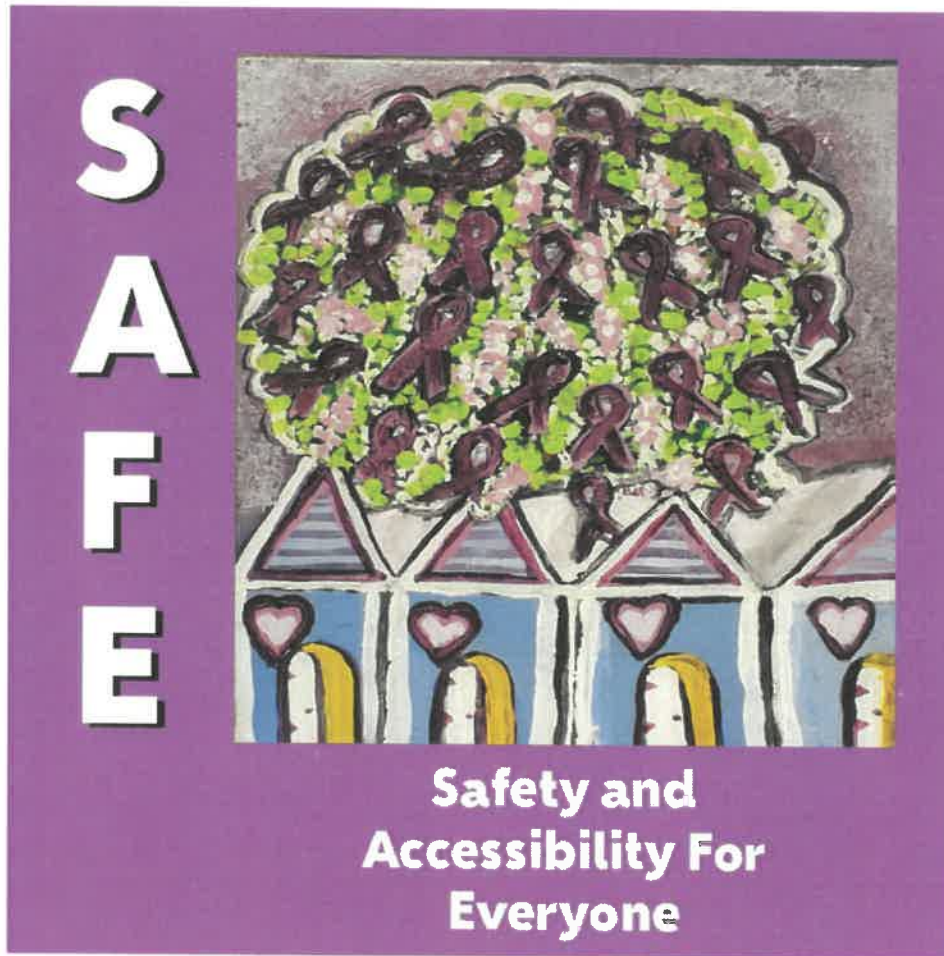


STRATEGIC PLAN



Toledo, Ohio, 2022

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INTRODUCTION:

The Safety and Accessibility for Everyone (SAFE) collaboration consists of three partner agencies located in Toledo, Ohio: Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), Bethany House (BH), and Legal Aid of Western Ohio (LAWO). Each agency has committed to thoughtfully scrutinize their organizational structures and to implement changes that will maximize accessibility and effectiveness of their services for survivors with disabilities. The collaboration received grant funding from the Office on Violence Against Women in 2019 to advance these goals.

In 2020, SAFE created a collaboration charter and focus memo to memorialize the goals, mission and focus population (survivors with physical and mental health disabilities) of the collaboration. A Needs Assessment was conducted in 2021. The findings of this assessment have been used to create this Strategic Plan. This carefully designed process has given us the opportunity to develop a strong foundation to build on as we work towards implementation.

SAFE COLLABORATIVE AGENCIES:

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE)

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE) is a non-profit regional law firm that provides high quality legal assistance in civil matters to help eligible low-income individuals and groups in western Ohio achieve self-reliance, equal justice and economic opportunity. ABLE, incorporated in 1969, serves 32 counties of western Ohio and has offices in Dayton, Defiance, and Toledo. ABLE programs and advocates provide specialized legal assistance, including representation on behalf of those who are discriminated against, advocacy for people living with disabilities, advocacy for nursing home and long-term care facility residents, litigation in public policy cases, and outreach and education to low-income people and community organizations serving people with lower economic means.

ABLE's Healthcare and Public Benefits practice group focuses on improving the health and economic stability of clients by securing or maintaining access to public benefits like Medicaid, Medicare, cash assistance, food assistance, unemployment compensation, and Social Security benefits. This practice group also engages in advocacy to address systemic issues, such as: lack of language access in state and federal agencies, discrimination against people with disabilities, and policies that deny life-saving treatment to Medicaid recipients.

ABLE believes that diversity and inclusion are essential for high quality legal services and promotes both by employing individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures, including religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical abilities.

Bethany House (BH)

Bethany House (BH) is Northwest Ohio's only long-term domestic violence shelter. Since 1984, BH has served more than 2,000 individuals and provided more than 300,000 nights of safe shelter for victims and their children escaping domestic abuse. Annually, BH serves an average of 30 families in shelter.

BH not only provides apartment style long-term transitional shelter, but also provides comprehensive services and support to domestic violence survivors. BH helps its participants to navigate social and legal services available in the community. BH also provides education and training on domestic violence for local community groups, including homeless shelters, and takes an active role in Toledo-area community organizations focused on preventing homelessness and domestic violence.

BH does not discriminate for any reason including race, ethnic origin, cultural experience, native country, sex, age, religion, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Shelter and support services are provided free of charge.

Legal Aid of Western Ohio (LAWO)

Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO) is a non-profit regional law firm that provides high quality legal assistance in civil matters to help low-income individuals and groups in western Ohio achieve self-reliance, equal justice, and greater economic opportunity. LAWO serves 32 northwest and west central Ohio counties. LAWO provides full range legal services including counsel and advice, negotiation, litigation, community clinics and community education.

LAWO provides holistic services in practice areas with an increased need for assistance including agricultural worker and immigration rights, civil legal assistance, consumer law, domestic violence, elder law, family law, housing programs, low-income taxpayer concerns, and public benefits. LAWO believes that diversity and inclusion are essential for high quality legal services and promotes both by employing individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures, including religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical abilities.

LAWO's Stability and Independence for Survivors practice group focuses on achieving short-term and long-term safety and stability for survivors of domestic violence. LAWO attorneys assist clients in a variety of ways to meet the individual needs of each client. Attorneys assist clients to obtain civil

protection orders, petition for immigration status under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), provide representation in custody or divorce, enforce child support orders, resolve housing instability, expunge criminal histories, and resolve other legal issues that are barriers to safety and stability. The goal of this practice group is to maximize safety and stability for clients who have experienced domestic or family violence through legal advocacy and representation.

VISION STATEMENT

The collaboration envisions a SAFE community that provides accessibility for all survivors of domestic violence, where resources and support are person driven and available for everyone to maximize safety, increase access to justice, and promote holistic advocacy. The collaboration also envisions a SAFE community that acknowledges individuality, prioritizes the needs of survivors with disabilities, and embraces diversity.

MISSION STATEMENT

SAFE's mission is to provide accessibility to survivors with disabilities by:

- Letting each person express their needs, rather than presuming their needs;

- Creating a process where we universally inquire about accommodation needs; and
- Resourcing our SAFE agency staff with the knowledge they need to solicit and meet accommodation requests.

All SAFE resources and supports will be person-driven and available to everyone by:

- Meeting the capacity needs of all staff in multiple ways that promote a variety of learning styles;
- Being open to creating new resources; and
- Ensuring that resources are effective, accessible and current.

SAFE partners will maximize safety and access to justice through holistic advocacy by:

- Recognizing that safety is not a universal concept and requires individualized approaches;
- Being open and flexible regarding the needs of each person;
- Researching best practices and seeking input from other community organizations; and
- Expanding justice and advocacy to include a holistic assessment of the individual needs of each person.

SAFE will prioritize the needs of survivors with disabilities and embrace diversity by:

- Ensuring that the agencies are accessible, comfortable, and trauma informed; and
- Educating ourselves about the individual's disability, providing necessary accommodations, and acknowledging and releasing our biases.

OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PHASE



In 2019, SAFE was awarded funding through the Disabilities Grant Program from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), U.S. Department of Justice. SAFE team members attended the New Grantee Orientation in

December 2019 and a Project Coordinator was hired in March 2020. In May 2020, the team attended its first technical assistance site visit, which provided us with the necessary guidance to begin working on our first deliverable.

In 2020, SAFE developed a charter which outlined our vision, mission, roles, guidelines and various processes that solidified the foundation of our collaborative work. The collaboration charter was submitted to OVW in August 2020 and was approved on August 18, 2020.

Upon approval of our Charter, our team developed a project focus memo to further center the areas of focus for our work. The focus memo was approved by OVW on October 21, 2020.

To help us develop a meaningful strategic plan tailored specifically to the needs of our agencies and the communities we serve, we recognized the importance of conducting an extensive needs assessment. SAFE developed a detailed needs assessment plan which included procedures, forms, scripts, training and other tools for the data gathering stage of our work, with a primary focus on confidentiality, safety and accessibility. The Needs Assessment Plan was submitted to OVW on February 12, 2021 and was approved by OVW on May 4, 2021. SAFE conducted the assessment from May - June 2021.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT GOALS

The primary purpose of the Needs Assessment was to obtain relevant information that could be used to improve services for survivors of domestic violence with disabilities. SAFE anticipated that the Needs Assessment would identify strengths and barriers to services for SAFE member agencies as well as help us to learn about the experiences of staff and the people we serve.

SAFE goals for the Needs Assessment included:

- Identifying current organizational structures, including barriers and gaps in policies, procedures, and practices at ABLE, BH, and LAWO that affect how they respond to, serve, and support survivors with disabilities;
- Identifying existing supports in each organization's culture to respond to and address staff's ability to provide safe, accessible, and responsive services for domestic violence survivors with disabilities;
- Identifying any barriers that may exist that affect accessibility, safety, or the ability of each agency to respond to the needs of survivors with disabilities;

- Identifying organizational policies, procedures, protocols, screening tools, and practices that enhance access to services for survivors with disabilities;
- Identifying training needs for agency staff to improve their ability to respond and provide services to survivors with disabilities.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY

Upon approval of the SAFE Needs Assessment Plan, the team set out to implement it over a three-month period, beginning in April of 2021 and ending in June 2021. SAFE conducted interviews and focus groups to gather data from partner agency staff, board members, domestic violence survivors, persons with disabilities, and domestic violence advocates associated with LAWO. Recruitment was performed via email, telephone, and/or in person. Safety, accessibility, confidentiality and consent considerations were discussed during participant recruitment and again, immediately prior to the start of the focus groups.

Focus groups and interviews were facilitated by a SAFE team member not employed by the agency whose staff and clients were being interviewed. The focus group was also attended by a recorder and a

support person, who was available to assist in the event of technical difficulty. A counselor/advocate was also available as needed for the survivor and persons with disabilities focus groups.

SAFE projected a target audience between 90-130 participants. We received feedback from a total of 65 people, consisting of 31 agency staff members, 14 program participants, 10 domestic violence advocates and 10 members of agency boards of trustees.

The following chart outlines group type, the number of anticipated participants and the actual number of participants.

Group Type	Projected # of Groups	Actual # of Groups	Projected Participants	Actual Participants
Staff				
ABLE	3	3	14-22	12
BH	3	3	13-21	6
LAWO	3	3	14-22	13
Survivor	2	1	12-20	9
Disability	2	1	12-20	5
DV Advocates	1	1	10	10
Boards of Directors	Survey	Survey	15	10
Total	14	12	90-130	65

The Covid-19 pandemic inhibited our recruitment efforts. Many traditional methods of recruitment were unavailable to us. People who might have participated in past years declined to participate, citing other obligations created by the pandemic such as assisting children schooling at home or having increased work obligations due to being essential workers. The pandemic also created an increase in domestic violence cases as survivors were forced to shelter at home and existing shelters (that also had to attempt to maintain social distancing with fewer numbers) quickly reached capacity. Finding survivors to participate who were not currently in crisis was more difficult, as many understandably prioritized their safety. Additionally, ABLE and LAWO, experienced staff reductions caused by decreases in funding related to the pandemic.

KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

After reviewing the data collected from agency executives, staff, survivors, people with disabilities, DV advocates and board members, SAFE identified six key findings.

Key Finding 1:

People feel most valued when they are heard and prioritized and will decline services if they are not.

Survivors and participants with disabilities identified a need for service providers to express concern and empathy for them and the experiences they share. They also identified a need for agencies to provide services in ways that were best for them and not just easier for the agency.

Key Finding 2:

The absence of uniform action steps for staff regarding services has resulted in staff confusion, frustration and a reduction in utilized resources for survivors with disabilities.

Staff participants at all partner agencies almost unanimously expressed a need for written policies and procedures that outline what services and resources are available to survivors and people with disabilities. There was also a need for regular training on best practices for working with survivors and people with disabilities.

Key Finding 3:

When partner agencies work independently of one another, staff and survivors with disabilities fail to access shared resources.

Staff and client participants expressed a need for a list of current community resources available to survivors and people with disabilities. Staff

participants also reported a desire for periodic cross-training on services provided by partner agencies.

Key Finding 4:

The legal services application process creates barriers, makes obtaining services difficult and causes more trauma to the survivor.

Legal Aid Line (LAL) is the centralized intake department for ABLE and LAWO. LAL processes hundreds of requests for legal assistance every week in addition to providing brief services, counsel and advice, and other forms of limited representation. To process as many applications as possible, intake staff works quickly. While this process works well for many applicants, it may not work as well for survivors and people with disabilities. Some people with disabilities may have mental health or cognitive concerns which may necessitate a slower paced application process. Survivors may have experienced recent violence-based trauma that makes it difficult to recall information and answer questions quickly. Additionally, the current process can be seen as impersonal and off putting to some applicants.

Key Finding 5:

Current funding streams inhibit partner agencies from providing fully accessible spaces and decrease opportunities to provide services that would make survivors with disabilities safer.

Interviews with agency executives revealed a desire on the part of all collaborating agencies to improve accessibility for survivors with disabilities. This sentiment was echoed on board member survey responses. While executives believe that it would be relatively easy to make certain changes, i.e. enhanced protocols and procedures, it was clear that other changes would be financially prohibitive.

Key Finding 6:

Partner agencies do not provide critical services to survivors with disabilities because they are unaware of the services each agency provides.

Survivors and people with disabilities were asked a series of questions about how they find out about the services they need and how they felt agencies could best reach them. Survivors reported learning about partner agency services through crisis service providers i.e. domestic violence advocates, law enforcement and courts. These providers tend to have protocols that include referrals to legal services and DV shelters, so survivors using these services were more likely to hear about these resources than survivors who are seeking help but were not ready to contact law enforcement or seek help from domestic violence advocates. Moreover, law enforcement is the main source of referrals to domestic violence advocates in some areas, particularly rural communities. This has important implications for

Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) survivors who may avoid interactions with law enforcement or systems-based domestic violence advocate programs which are often located in prosecutors' offices. These survivors are less likely to find out about partner agency services through traditional methods and when they do receive referrals, there is no guarantee that services will be culturally competent. Reaching these survivors will require targeted outreach at agencies and community institutions that serve BIPOC people.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN

On December 2-3, 2021, SAFE participated in a two-day virtual strategic planning site visit with our technical assistance provider. Under the facilitation and guidance of our technical assistant, the team utilized the key findings and the recommendations from the key findings report to identify three key initiatives and a variety of activities that support our vision and mission to create sustainable systemic change within our organizations.

The three key initiatives are:

Key Initiative 1:

Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Key Initiative 2:

Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Key Finding 3:

Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities served by Project SAFE agencies.

SAFE's Project Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating strategic plan implementation activities and work groups, with the support of SAFE collaboration team members. Collaboration team members will participate in work groups specific to their areas of expertise and interest and will recommend key individuals within the partner agencies to participate in work groups. Other members within the agencies of our collaboration may be recruited to provide expertise or to assist in the completion of activities. We also anticipate seeking the input of BIPOC survivors and persons with disabilities to ensure that our activities are person-centered and respect the

lived experiences of those most affected by these activities. SAFE will continue to meet regularly to review the progress of the various work groups and activities.

To create sustainable change, we recognize that this work needs to become an essential part of each agency's culture. By encouraging participation by agency staff outside the SAFE team, we hope to expand the awareness of the experiences of people who utilize our services and develop a shared sense of responsibility to engage in activities that increase our capacity to serve people at the intersections of domestic violence, race and disability.

OVERVIEW OF KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.1: Conduct a safety and access review at all SAFE partner agencies.

Activity 1.2: Create accessible outreach materials describing our services.

Activity 1.3: Revise priorities for case processes at ABLE and LAWO to account for access.

Activity 1.4: Revise admission policy and procedure at Bethany House to account for access.

Activity 1.5: Create accessible printed and electronic Frequently Asked Questions and Common Misconceptions communications for ABLE and LAWO.

Rationale:

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed that survivors with disabilities value services that are accessible and acknowledge their lived experiences. Initiative 1 will focus on activities that increase the accessibility of services by removing identified barriers and reviewing admissions and application protocols to ensure that processes are inclusive and that those who need services receive them.

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at all Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.1: Revise mandatory reporting policies at all SAFE partner agencies.

Activity 2.2: Revise confidentiality policy at all SAFE partner agencies.

Activity 2.3: Revise accommodation policies at all Project SAFE partner agencies.

Activity 2.4: Create accommodations resource list/guide for staff for use of all SAFE agency staff.

Activity 2.5: Develop safety planning and trauma-informed curriculum or training to reflect the unique needs of people with disabilities.

Activity 2.6: Create kick off events for staff to learn about the work of the collaboration and meet each other.

Rationale:

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed that staff wanted concrete directives regarding agency procedures for mandatory reporting, confidentiality and accommodations. The Assessment also revealed a lack of awareness regarding the services provided by partner agencies. Initiative 2 activities will focus on creating written policies and procedures regarding mandatory reporting, confidentiality and accommodations to increase the likelihood that survivors with disabilities are not negatively impacted when accessing our services. It will also focus on activities that improve the warm referral process to partner agencies, which will increase needed resources for survivors with disabilities.

Key Initiative 3: Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Activity 3.1: Develop a “lunch and learn” event calendar to engage partner agency staff in learning about the intersection of race and disability.

Activity 3.2: Review all SAFE partner agency policies, procedures and practices of all SAFE partner agencies to ensure equity in our recruiting, hiring, job descriptions, and intake processes.

Activity 3.3: Review of SAFE partner agency demographics to determine if we are seeing the numbers of BIPOC survivors and survivors with disabilities that reflect the population of our area.

Activity 3.4: Create specific, tailored safety plan for BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Rationale:

SAFE places a high value on racial and disability justice and seeks to ensure that agency services are provided with cultural humility and fairness. Initiative 3 activities will focus on activities that increase staff knowledge about issues that very specifically affect BIPOC survivors with disabilities and examine agency policies and procedures to ensure that services are provided equitably.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.1: Conduct a safety and access review at all SAFE agencies.

SAFE is committed to creating an atmosphere that is welcoming, safe and accessible. To ensure this, we will conduct a safety and access review at all partner agencies using existing OVW-approved safety and access review tools. These tools will be customized for our needs and will help to ensure that barriers are identified and corrected.

SAFE will create a safety and access review team which will consist of agency staff and self-advocates. The safety and access review team will conduct cross-agency reviews to ensure that potential barriers will be viewed through the lens of those who would be most impacted. Once the reviews are

completed, SAFE will create a barrier removal and safety enhancement plan to address identified deficiencies.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that the safety and access review will eliminate identified access barriers in our physical spaces resulting in increased access to services for survivors with disabilities. To encourage access and inclusion, partner agencies will be encouraged to conduct safety and access reviews at all agency locations.

Sustainability:

SAFE will conduct an annual safety and access review to ensure that safety and accessibility barriers are identified and addressed on a consistent basis.

Activity 1.1: Conduct a safety and access review at all SAFE partner agencies.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.2	Research tools for review												
1.1.3	Conduct safety and access review												
1.1.4	Compile data from review												
1.1.5	Draft barrier removal and safety enhancement plans												
1.1.6	Submit to agency decision-makers for review												
1.1.7	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.8	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.2: Create accessible outreach materials describing our accessible services.

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed that survivors with disabilities were most often referred to us by domestic violence advocates, law enforcement and courts. We discovered that survivors who were in need of shelter or legal assistance, but not ready to contact law enforcement or seek help from domestic violence advocates (whose main source of referrals is from law enforcement) were less likely to know about our services. This barrier to services was further exacerbated for BIPOC survivors who may avoid interactions with law enforcement or system-based domestic violence programs which are often located in prosecutors' offices.

SAFE will address this barrier by establishing a cross-agency work group to create an outreach plan. The outreach plan will identify the best service access points for survivors with disabilities who may be unlikely to hear of our services and create a plain language brochure for distribution and online access. The brochure will be available in English and Spanish. We will ensure that outreach materials are accessible and will prioritize locating

service access points for BIPOC survivors who are most adversely affected by the current referral sources.

The SAFE logo will be updated for compatibility with digital formats.

Anticipated Outcome:

SAFE anticipates that creating the outreach plan will help us reach survivors with disabilities who would not normally hear about our services from traditional referral sources.

Sustainability:

We seek to make these changes sustainable by reviewing the outreach plan each year as part of the annual safety and access review. Updates will be made to the printed and electronic communications, if necessary.

Activity 1.2: Create accessible outreach materials.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Determine method of messaging												
1.1.4	Draft materials												
1.1.5	Send to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.6	Seek feedback from intended audience												
1.1.7	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.8	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Get approval from agency decision-makers												
1.1.11	Submit to OVW for approval												
1.1.12	Post and distribute materials												

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.3: Revise priorities for case processes at ABLE and LAWO to account for access.

A key finding of the SAFE Needs Assessment was that when partner agencies worked independently of one another, staff and survivors with disabilities failed to access shared resources. During the ABLE and LAWO staff focus groups, several staff members noted that there was a lack of understanding about the case acceptance priorities for the various practice groups. Staff reported being hesitant to have clients apply for services because they were not sure that the case would be accepted. It is highly likely that clients did not receive additional services they were eligible for. This is particularly impactful for those who have legal issues in areas that private attorneys don't normally handle, like government benefits and housing.

SAFE will address this barrier by meeting with representatives from LAWO's intake managers to inform them about this finding. A workgroup will then be created to clarify case acceptance priorities and draft a communications plan for staff.

Anticipated Outcome:

A review of current case acceptance priorities will enable ABLE and LAWO to address any disability or racial inequities that may exist. The

subsequent communications plan will ensure that staff is updated about the resulting plan and any future changes.

Sustainability:

Sustainability will be achieved by having a written case priority policy that is routinely updated and communicated to staff. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create presentation for identifying key finding	█											
1.1.2	Meet with intake managers to discuss findings	█											
1.1.3	Create workgroup (include intake specialists and attorneys) to make recommendations	█											
1.1.4	Set meeting schedule	█											
1.1.5	Draft proposal of intake procedures and changes		█	█									
1.1.6	Get SAFE team, intake specialists and managers for feedback			█									
1.1.7	Make necessary edits				█								
1.1.8	Submit to decision-makers for feedback				█	█							
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback					█							
1.1.10	Submit to ASI for feedback					█							
1.1.11	Make necessary edits					█							
1.1.12	Submit to OVW for approval					█	█						

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.4: Revise admission policy and procedure (including interview questions) at Bethany House to account for access.

The SAFE Needs Assessment highlighted a need for accommodation protocols to be in place at every point of service delivery. Bethany House, a long-term transitional shelter, is often the first contact for shelter for survivors with disabilities. In light of the Needs Assessment and everything that has been learned since becoming part of the Disability Grant Program, a workgroup will be created to review their current accommodation language, admissions policy and procedure for intake to ensure that there is a written protocol for accommodations. The workgroup will consist of Bethany House team members, the Project Coordinator and any other participants identified by Bethany House.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that these activities will give staff the procedural tools they need to ensure that the accommodation needs of Bethany House residents will be met.

Sustainability:

This activity will be reviewed biennially as part of the annual review of SAFE strategic plan activities.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Notify the board of current work product												
1.1.2	Create workgroup of Bethany House staff												
1.1.3	Review current policy and procedure												
1.1.4	Discuss content change,												
1.1.5	Draft proposal of changes												
1.1.6	Submit to SAFE team for edits												
1.1.7	Make necessary edits												
1.1.8	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to board for approval												
1.1.11	Make necessary edits												
1.1.12	Submit final product to ASI for feedback												
1.1.13	Make necessary edits												
1.1.14	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 1: Create Project SAFE services that prioritize safety, actively remove barriers to services, and offer accessible and inclusive spaces for all survivors.

Activity 1.5: Create accessible printed and electronic Frequently Asked Questions and Common Misconceptions communications for ABLE and LAWO.

Client respondents to the SAFE Needs Assessment expressed some confusion about the intake procedure and case acceptance requirements for ABLE and LAWO. Much of this confusion is due to a lack of communication about the intake process and what happens when a case is accepted. To address this, a workgroup will be created to review the current intake procedures to identify activities that make the application process difficult. The workgroup will consist of staff and domestic violence advocates that routinely refer survivors to ABLE and LAWO for legal assistance. The workgroup will then use these findings to create a communication that explains the intake process and next steps when a case has been accepted for services.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that these communications will make future applicants better informed about application and case acceptance procedures, thereby making the process more predictable and less frustrating. It is our hope that

applicants who have previously chosen not to apply because they did not understand the process will now feel comfortable enough to apply.

Sustainability:

The communications developed from this activity will be made available in print and online. Newly accepted clients will be given a copy of the printed communication with the first written correspondence or at the time they sign a retainer agreement. Changes to these processes will be reflected in the printed and electronic version of the communication.

Activity 1.5: Create accessible printed and electronic FAQ and Common Misconceptions

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Draft fact sheets												
1.1.4	Submit to SAFE team for review												
1.1.5	Make necessary edits												
1.1.6	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.7	Make necessary edits												
1.1.8	Submit to decision-makers for approval												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit ASI for feedback												
1.1.11	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.1: Revise mandatory reporting policies at all SAFE agencies.

During the Needs Assessment, staff from all SAFE partner agencies were asked questions about mandatory reporting protocols. Many participants were unclear about the mandatory reporting protocols for their agencies and in some cases did not know who among their staff were mandatory reporters. Most participants did understand the negative impact of mandatory reports on the people they serve.

Mandatory reports to child welfare agencies or adult protective services constitute a breach of confidentiality that will likely destroy the relationship between the survivor and service provider and could result in negative consequences for the survivor. Protective services investigations are frightening for the survivor. Threats of (or actual) removal from the home to institutional placement create an additional stressor for survivors already experiencing the trauma of domestic violence.

Survivors with disabilities are often told by their abusers that they will lose custody of their children because their disability makes it impossible to

care for them. To these survivors a child welfare investigation could mean removal of their children because of their disability. Survivors with disabilities may also be in situations where their caretakers are their abusers. For these survivors, an adult protective services investigation could lead to institutionalization if the abusive caretaker is arrested or the environment is deemed unsafe. Fear of mandatory reports often results in survivors with disabilities going without the medical care they need after an abusive episode and keeps them from seeking supportive services.¹

Mandatory reports have additional implications for BIPOC survivors. Structural and institutional racism is embedded in most American institutions, and protective services is no exception. Mandatory reporters, caseworkers and judges may have implicit biases that affect when reports are made and what the outcomes of those reports will be. BIPOC children are more likely than white children to be removed from their families after a charge of abuse or neglect and are heavily overrepresented in the child welfare system.²

Mandatory reports have severe consequences for all survivors, with or without disabilities, black or white. A report should only be initiated when the reporter is certain that a report should be made. Measures that were

¹ See <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10896-019-00103-w.pdf>

² See <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-AnalysisofRacialEthnicDisproportionality-2007.pdf>

designed to protect too often lead to a loss of autonomy and empowerment. SAFE seeks to review our mandatory reporting policies with a trauma-informed lens so that we can empower survivors who must endure this process.

SAFE will create a cross-agency workgroup comprised of SAFE team members and staff and will recruit additional participants as needed, to review existing partner agency policies and procedures and Ohio mandatory reporting laws. The workgroup will also research additional materials related to best practices for survivors with disabilities. On completion of the research and review phase, the group will recommend changes to partner agency policies and procedures. A training curriculum explaining the new policy will be developed for current and onboarding staff.

Anticipated Outcome:

Clearly written and communicated policies and procedures will ensure that staff use best practices when determining the legal obligation of a mandatory report.

Sustainability:

SAFE recommends an annual review of the policies and procedures created and revised as a result of the Strategic Plan to ensure that policies and procedures align with state law and best practices.

1.1.1	Create cross-workgroup																		
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule																		
1.1.3	Review current policies and procedures																		
1.1.4	Research Ohio mandatory reporting requirements and best practices																		
1.1.5	Notify decision-makers of current work																		
1.1.6	Draft proposed changes using ASI tool																		
1.1.7	Submit to SAFE team for feedback																		
1.1.8	Edit based on feedback																		
1.1.9	Submit to ASI for feedback																		
1.1.10	Edit based on feedback																		
1.1.11	Submit to decision-makers for approval																		
1.1.12	Edit based on feedback																		
1.1.13	Submit final product to ASI																		
1.1.14	Submit to OVW for approval																		

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.2: Review Confidentiality policy for all SAFE partner agencies.

SAFE recognizes that the line between mandatory reporting and confidentiality can be complicated, as all mandatory reports, despite being legally obligated, are, in fact, a breach of confidentiality. The line can become even more unclear in light of attorney-client privilege. For this reason, we believe it is necessary to review the confidentiality policy while reviewing the mandatory reporting policy.

The mandatory reporting workgroup will also review the confidentiality policies for each partner agency. The workgroup will research best practice protocols and will make recommendations for revisions as needed.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that the confidentiality rights of survivors with disabilities will be better preserved by an updated policy that reflects current best practices.

Sustainability:

SAFE recommends an annual review of the confidentiality policies and procedures to ensure that policies and procedures align with best practices.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-agency workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Review current policies and procedures												
1.1.4	Research best practices for confidentiality												
1.1.5	Notify decision-makers of current work												
1.1.6	Draft proposed changes using ASI tool												
1.1.7	Submit to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.8	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.9	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.10	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.11	Submit to decision-makers for approval												
1.1.12	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.13	Submit final product to ASI												
1.1.14	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.3: Revise Accommodation policy at all SAFE partner agencies.

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed that many staff participants were unaware of the full range of accommodations provided by their agencies. When staff is unaware of available accommodations, clients are not able to optimally utilize services, and in some instances, the services may be inaccessible. Furthermore, when staff have no written process regarding accommodations, they are forced to try to figure it out themselves. This can be frustrating and time consuming for staff and also makes the client feel that the agency is not prepared to help people with disabilities.

To address this issue, SAFE will create a cross-agency workgroup to review existing policies and research best practices in this area. The workgroup will use this information to develop a policy to guide staff regarding available accommodations, and how to access them, at every entry point of service. Training on this policy will be provided to both current and onboarding staff.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that survivors with disabilities will be more likely to receive the accommodations they need because staff will have a clear directive about what accommodations can be provided and the processes involved in obtaining them.

Sustainability:

New staff will be trained on this policy as part of the onboarding training protocols. Each partner agency will seek additional revenue streams to fund accommodations that are deemed necessary but that have previously been cost prohibitive.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Review current policies and procedures												
1.1.4	Research best practices for accommodations												
1.1.5	Notify decision-makers of current work												
1.1.6	Draft proposed changes using ASI tool												
1.1.7	Submit to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.8	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.9	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.10	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.11	Submit to decision-makers for approval												
1.1.12	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.13	Submit final product to ASI												
1.1.14	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.4: Create resource list/guide for staff for all three agencies to access regarding accommodations.

Staff participants of the SAFE Needs Assessment expressed a need for a list of community resources and supports. SAFE partner agencies understand the importance of holistic services, but recognize that each agency is not able to individually provide all the supports that our clients need. Furthermore, in many instances, the best provider for supports and services are those who specialize in the needed area of service. Currently, when staff identifies a client need, they are forced to try to locate the resource on a case by case basis as there is no existing comprehensive list of resources for survivors with disabilities. This process is time consuming and takes away from time that could be used to work directly with clients.

To address this concern, a workgroup will be created to research existing community resource lists. The workgroup will also contact the local 2-1-1 community resource agency to explore the possibility of partnering to create a comprehensive list if no other suitable list exists.

Anticipated Outcome:

The resulting resource list would provide survivors with disabilities with additional resources and supports. The list would also enable staff to utilize more of their time addressing the specific need the client applied for while also ensuring that the client has the ancillary resources they need to empower their autonomy.

Sustainability:

Collaborating with 2-1-1 would create a resource that should be relatively cost free and available to all survivors with disabilities in Lucas county. 2-1-1 is also a resource hotline that keeps up to date service listings. This will decrease the likelihood of getting referrals to agencies that no longer exist or are no longer offering the requested service.

Activity 2.4: Create resource guide.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Meet with Independent Living Center if possible												
1.1.4	Meet with translation/interpreting department for resources												
1.1.5	Draft resource list												
1.1.6	Seek guidance regarding trauma-informed vetting of resources												
1.1.7	Vet resources												
1.1.8	Submit to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.11	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.12	Submit to OVW												

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.5: Develop safety planning and trauma-informed curriculum or training to reflect the unique needs of people with disabilities.

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed that clients feel most valued when they are heard and prioritized. Participants also reported that they place great importance on working with staff who have empathy and concern for their lived experiences. While some staff at SAFE partner agencies have had trauma-informed training, many have not, and it is unlikely that any have had trauma-informed training specific to disability or racial trauma.

To better enable partner agencies to provide client-centered, trauma informed services, SAFE will establish a cross-agency workgroup that will create and/or identify interactive curriculums that include survivors, BIPOC survivors and survivors with disabilities. In the event that we identify a need for additional expertise, the workgroup will make recommendations for a suitable trainer(s). SAFE recommends that this training be mandatory for current and onboarding staff and that the training be repeated biennially.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that survivors with disabilities will be better served by staff trained in the varied ways they may be affected by trauma. We also anticipate that staff will be better able to anticipate the needs of their clients if they have a better understanding of how their experiences affect how they receive services.

Sustainability:

All trainings will be video-taped for use by onboarding staff. SAFE also recommends that other funding streams be identified to finance future training needs that may require expertise not found within the collaboration.

**The SAFE Needs Assessment also revealed a need for trauma-informed training for ABLE and LAW0 intake staff. This training happened in October 2021. SAFE recommends that intake staff participate in all future trauma-informed trainings.

Activity 2.5: Develop trauma-informed training for all SAFE partner agencies to reflect the

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Review training materials												
1.1.4	Adapt existing training materials or create PowerPoints												
1.1.5	Submit to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.6	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.7	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.8	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.9	Submit to OVW for approval												

Key Initiative 2: Increase staff and leadership capacity at Project SAFE agencies to holistically serve all survivors with disabilities by collaborating amongst each other, actively benefiting from shared resources, and offering concrete guidance so that survivors are aware of, and use, all services available to them.

Activity 2.6: Create kick off events for staff to learn about the work of the collaboration and meet each other.

While the SAFE team has had opportunities to interact with staff from partner agencies on an informal basis, there has been little opportunity for a majority of the staff to meet the team and learn about the services each agency provides. As we move into implementation, it is important that staff realize that this is not only the project of the members of the team, but a project of the collective that needs their input and support. To increase the potential for staff buy-in, we plan to host a virtual kick off event to give staff an opportunity to learn about our agencies and how the collaborative process can work to help us provide more inclusive and accessible services.

During the event, we will provide information about the services each agency provides. We will also discuss the process that lead to the event and implementation activities. We anticipate that the event will generate opportunities for the collaboration to identify staff expertise and interest in implementation activities and workgroups. We will schedule at least two kickoff dates to accommodate as many staff as possible.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that this event will increase staff buy-in and participation in our work. It will also allow staff to network with staff in other agencies, creating an opportunity to develop additional referral possibilities.

Sustainability:

Our goal is to create an environment that fosters long-term connections between our agencies and increases buy-in for the future work of the project. Staff buy-in and participation in our work will increase the likelihood of long-term success.

Activity 2.6: Create virtual kickoff events for staff at SAFE partner agencies. (SAFE Team)

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Identify topics to be covered at event												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Create agenda												
1.1.4	Create PowerPoint and activities												
1.1.5	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.6	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.7	Submit to OVW												

Key Initiative 3: Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Activity 3.1: Develop a 'lunch and learn" curriculum to engage partner agency staff in learning about the intersection of race and disability.

"Racism and ableism are often thought of as parallel systems of oppression that work separately to perpetuate social hierarchy. Not only does this way of looking at the world ignore the experiences of people of color with disabilities, but it also fails to examine how race is pathologized in order to create racism. Meaning that society treats people of color in specific ways to create barriers, and these poor conditions create disability. The concept of disability has been used to justify discrimination against other groups by attributing disability to them.

To summarize, institutional racism has pathologized brown bodies in order to maintain the status quo while simultaneously failing to acknowledge that the state is responsible for creating environments where disability is inevitable. As a result, ableism will always exist if racism exists because it is a tool of racism, creating societal barriers for people of color creates disability. The social model of disability that the disability community is embracing by definition includes people of color, and yet the disability community is not inclusive of the struggles of people of color. Understanding the connection between these two systems of oppression should unite the disability and people of color

communities, and yet little is known about this history. This does negate the experiences of people of color with disabilities, as there are many (myself included) who identify as both a person of color and as a person with a disability. It is true, however, that both these communities' movements for civil rights have existed in primarily separate spheres. Understanding the historical connection between racism and ableism should lead to a connected effort to disable these systems of oppression. The ultimate goal of meaningful inclusion for the disability community will never be fully realized until black and brown people are also free."

~Isabella Kres-Nash

SAFE recognizes the importance of creating a culture that provides safe and accessible services to all people. To date, our work has been an exploration of our capacity to identify and then eliminate organizational barriers that inhibit survivors with disabilities from accessing our services. Our work would be incomplete without applying a race equity lens to what we are trying to achieve.

As Ms. Kres-Nash notes, disability has been used to fuel racist ideologies and policies that have harmed BIPOC people for hundreds of years. These racist policies ensured that when hard won resources were afforded to the disability community, BIPOC people benefited less from those

resources.³ Furthermore, racist ideologies exist within every group, even groups that have been historically marginalized. While these groups should, in theory, be working together to advance their equity goals, too often, they work independently of one another, even though they often have shared oppressions.

For our work to be successful, it is imperative that staff understand the historical struggle for justice of each of these communities and how intersectionality creates a different set of challenges for people of color with disabilities. To address this concern, we plan to create a curriculum of lunch and learn sessions for partner agency staff to become more familiar with the intersection of disability and race. A cross-agency workgroup will develop a curriculum and promotion plan for the sessions and will identify facilitators and/or trainers. We will facilitate twelve monthly lunch and learn sessions. The sessions will be held virtually to encourage maximum participation and will be structured to be interactive to engage the participants.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that after attending these sessions, that partner agency staff will be better informed about the intersection of race and disability and the historical struggles of each of these communities. We believe that with

³ <https://www.aapd.com/racism-and-ableism/>

this knowledge staff will be better able to provide trauma-informed services to BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Sustainability:

This activity is a virtual monthly one-hour event that will encourage open and honest dialogue about race. It is our hope that ongoing discussions about race and how it affects the people they serve will motivate participants to examine the internal culture of their agencies. We expect that this examination will result in racially equitable policies and practices that create systemic change in each agency.

Activity 3.1: Develop a ‘lunch and learn’ curriculum to engage partner agency staff in learning

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Identify topics for monthly discussions												
1.1.4	Identify potential trainers/facilitators												
1.1.5	Set monthly schedule for lunch and learns												
1.1.6	Submit to SAFE team for feedback												
1.1.7	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.8	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to OVW												

Key Initiative 3: Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Activity 3.2: Review all SAFE partner agency policies, procedures and practices of all SAFE partner agencies to ensure equity in our recruiting, hiring, job descriptions, and intake processes.

The SAFE Needs Assessment revealed several practices that could negatively impact BIPOC survivors with disabilities. Most survivor referrals for services come from law enforcement or other system based agencies. We noted in activity 2.1 that many BIPOC survivors with disabilities would be unwilling to seek services from these providers and so may not be informed of our services.

Respondents to the SAFE Needs Assessment expressed difficulty completing the ABLE and LAWO intake process because they work and often can't take time off to complete an intake. Many BIPOC people may be eligible for services but are unable to access them because they are at work during business hours. Other respondents shared that it was important that the people who provided services to them understood and had empathy for their experiences. They are seeking assistance from agencies whose organizational cultures represent them. When BIPOC people with disabilities come through our doors do they see anyone who looks like them? If they do, do any of those people help to inform the policies and procedures that dictate the terms of service?

These examples highlight a need to review partner agency policies, procedures and practices to identify any that may negatively impact BIPOC clients. To address this, a cross-agency workgroup will be created to develop a review plan. The group will initially start by reviewing each organization's intake and hiring/recruitment policies. The workgroup will make recommendations to the executive staff of each partner agency upon completion of the review.

Anticipated Outcome:

We anticipate that decision-makers in each agency will incorporate recommended changes. These changes will increase the number of BIPOC survivors utilizing services and will ensure that services are being provided equitably.

Sustainability:

It is our hope that by implementing the suggested recommendations, partner agencies will create a culture that intuitively considers race prior to making additions or changes to policies and procedures. This shift in culture should create enduring change within each agency.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-agency workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Identify policies to be reviewed												
1.1.4	Notify decision-makers of review												
1.1.5	Review policies												
1.1.6	Draft agency specific proposal for changes												
1.1.7	Submit to SAFE team for review												
1.1.8	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.9	Submit to ASI for feedback												
1.1.10	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.11	Submit to decision-makers for approval												
1.1.12	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.13	Submit to ASI for final review												
1.1.14	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.15	Submit to OVW												

Key Initiative 3: Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Activity 3.3: Review of SAFE partner agency demographics to determine if we are seeing the numbers of BIPOC survivors and survivors with disabilities that reflect the population of our area.

A review of our ability to serve BIPOC people and people with disabilities would be incomplete without an exploration of whether we are serving them in the numbers we should and, if not, why. The SAFE team will review demographics for all partner agencies to identify who is being served. We will also review census and other statistics to determine the number of BIPOC people and people with disabilities we should or could be seeing. If it is determined that we are not seeing the numbers we expect to see, the team will develop a plan to rectify this. We will bring in persons with additional expertise, if needed, to assist in analyzing the demographics and determining the projected numbers we should be assisting based on the population density of this demographic. Recommendations will then be forwarded to the Executive Directors of the partner organizations.

Anticipated Outcome:

Applied recommendations should result in increased service provision to BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Sustainability:

This activity and resulting outcomes will be reviewed biennially as part of the strategic plan activities review.

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-agency workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Pull demographic info for all agencies and review or contact consultant to assist with review												
1.1.4	Submit to SAFE team for review												
1.1.5	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.6	Submit to ASI Change for feedback												
1.1.7	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.8	Submit to decision-makers for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to ASI for final review												
1.1.11	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.12	Submit to OVW												

Key Initiative 3: Create a culture of safety, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC survivors and BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Activity 3.4: Create specific, tailored safety plan for BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

BIPOC survivors face unique challenges when reporting domestic violence and seeking supportive services. Challenges may include:

- A fear of reporting the abuse due to a distrust of law enforcement, the justice system, and social systems.
- Cultural or religious views that keep them in a relationship.
- Lack of service providers who look like them, speak their language, or understand their unique cultural experience.
- Have experienced racism that keeps them from speaking out.
- Pressure from their community to keep family matters private.
- Black women (who experience domestic violence at high rates) are more likely to be criminalized by the system and are routinely arrested when trying to defend themselves against an abusive partner. They are also more likely than others to die at the hands of their abuser (nearly 3x the rate of White women)⁴

Survivors with disabilities also face unique challenges. Some of these challenges include:

⁴ <https://www.myharmonyhouse.org/how-we-help/survivor-resources/dv-and-bipoc/>

- Fear of institutionalization;
- Ineffective, inappropriate response from community and institutions;
- Lack of resources or accommodations for disability from service providers and shelters;
- Language and communications barriers; and
- Providers do not believe reports.⁵

BIPOC survivors and survivors with disabilities face many of the same challenges and barriers as white survivors without disabilities, but clearly have barriers unique to their marginalization. To be effective, safety planning tools for these survivors must reflect their challenges at the intersections. The SAFE team will work with ASI and other agencies to locate existing safety planning documents that could be adapted to account for the specific needs of BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

Anticipated Outcome:

The safety of BIPOC survivors with disabilities will be improved because the created safety planning tool will better reflect the safety concerns they face.

Sustainability:

⁵ <http://www.calcasa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/angie-blumel-advocate-guide-safety-planning-final-printer.pdf>

This activity will be reviewed biennially as part of the strategic plan activities review.

Activity 3.4: Create specific, tailored safety plan for BIPOC survivors with disabilities

Tasks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1.1	Create cross-agency workgroup												
1.1.2	Set meeting schedule												
1.1.3	Review and/or create existing tools and research safety planning tools and best practices for survivors with disabilities												
1.1.4	Create safety planning tip sheets												
1.1.5	Submit to SAFE team for review												
1.1.6	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.7	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.8	Submit to Activating Change for feedback												
1.1.9	Edit based on feedback												
1.1.10	Submit to OVW												

TIMELINE

SAFE believes that all key initiative activities are necessary to improve our ability to promote access to services for survivors with disabilities. It is important that we give each activity the time and attention needed to ensure its success. For this reason, we will address key initiative activities based on a three-tier system. Tier 1 activities are activities that we believe need to be addressed first. For instance, the kick off event will be used to inform staff about the project and solicit buy-in for their participation in other activities. Tier 2 activities are overlapping activities that can only be initiated after the completion of another activity or were not time sensitive enough to be considered a Tier 1 activity. Tier 3 activities are activities that, due to their complexity, will take a longer time to accomplish. They may also be activities that overlap with other activities in Tier 1 or 2 activities that need to be completed.

Tier 1 Activities

- Activity 1.1: Conduct a safety and access review at all SAFE partner agencies.
- Activity 1.4: Revise admission policy and procedure at Bethany House to account for access.

- Activity 2.1: Revise mandatory reporting policies at all SAFE partner agencies.
- Activity 2.2: Revise confidentiality policy at all SAFE partner agencies..
- Activity 2.6: Create kick off events for staff to learn about the work of the collaboration and meet each other.
- Activity 3.1: Develop “lunch and learn” curriculum to engage partner agency staff in learning about the intersection of race and disability.

Tier 2 Activities

- Activity 1.3: Revise priorities for case processes at ABLE and LAWO to account for access.
- Activity 1.5: Create accessible printed and electronic Frequently Asked Questions and Common Misconceptions communications for ABLE and LAWO.
- Activity 2.3: Revise accommodation policies at all Project SAFE partner agencies.
- Activity 2.4: Create accommodations resource list/guide for staff for use of all SAFE agency staff.
- Activity 3.2: Review all SAFE partner agency policies, procedures and practices of all SAFE partner agencies to ensure equity in our recruiting, hiring, job descriptions, and intake processes

Tier 3 Activities

- Activity 1.2: Create accessible outreach materials in describing our accessible services, access needs of survivors and getting that information
- Activity 2.5: Develop safety planning and trauma-informed curriculum or training to reflect the unique needs of people with disabilities.
- Activity 3.3: Review of SAFE partner agency demographics to determine if we are seeing the numbers of BIPOC survivors and survivors with disabilities that reflect the population of our area.
- Activity 3.4: Create specific, tailored safety plan for BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

****We anticipate filing a no cost extension to continue using unspent Disability Grant funding to support the activities that will extend beyond the current funding cycle. We also anticipate developing a safety enhancement and barrier removal plan that will outline projected expenditures related to our safety and access review.**

POTENTIAL FUTURE WORK

Development of a comprehensive advocate guide to safety planning with BIPOC survivors with disabilities.

The needs assessment and strategic planning processes have underscored the need for a comprehensive safety planning tool for advocates and other providers who provide supportive services to BIPOC survivors with disabilities. Many agencies have had little exposure to the historical oppressions experienced by BIPOC people and people with disabilities and may also have limited knowledge about the unique challenges and barriers they face when they experience abuse. Attempts to safety plan without this knowledge makes BIPOC survivors with disabilities less safe and, in some instances, may cause harm to the people they are trying to assist. An advocate guide to safety planning with BIPOC survivors with disabilities would be a resource to make users aware of potential key areas of concern to consider when safety planning with these survivors. In turn, survivors will be safer and empowered to create a comprehensive plan for their safety that considers all the intersections they hold.

This project would require work beyond our implementation period. It may also require collaboration and input from experts outside our collaboration.

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest strengths of the Disability Grant program is its phased development structure. The structure ensures that grantees only advance through its development phases once they have successfully completed the previous phase. As a collaboration, we appreciate the team-building activities we completed at the beginning of the process. Our first collaborative activities helped to solidify our relationships and revealed each team member's commitment to our work. Working together to identify our collaboration's mission and core values also revealed the values we hold as individuals. These activities prepared us to move through subsequent stages confident that we would be able to ask tough questions of each other, sometimes disagree about a course of action, and yet still be able to move forward to achieve our goals.

The needs assessment process has given SAFE a better understanding of the barriers that exist for survivors with disabilities when seeking and attempting to utilize services. Through focus groups, interviews and surveys, SAFE identified the changes that would be necessary to make services more accessible. SAFE also learned that partner agency staff are remarkably dedicated and creative advocates for the people they serve and have

expressed enthusiasm about learning how to better assist survivors with disabilities.

SAFE is committed to the initiatives and activities outlined in this strategic plan, which will guide our work and enable us to better support survivors with disabilities. We are excited to begin the implementation stage and are confident that the goals for our identified initiatives and activities are achievable and sustainable.