

A Roadmap to Success

Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence,
Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking

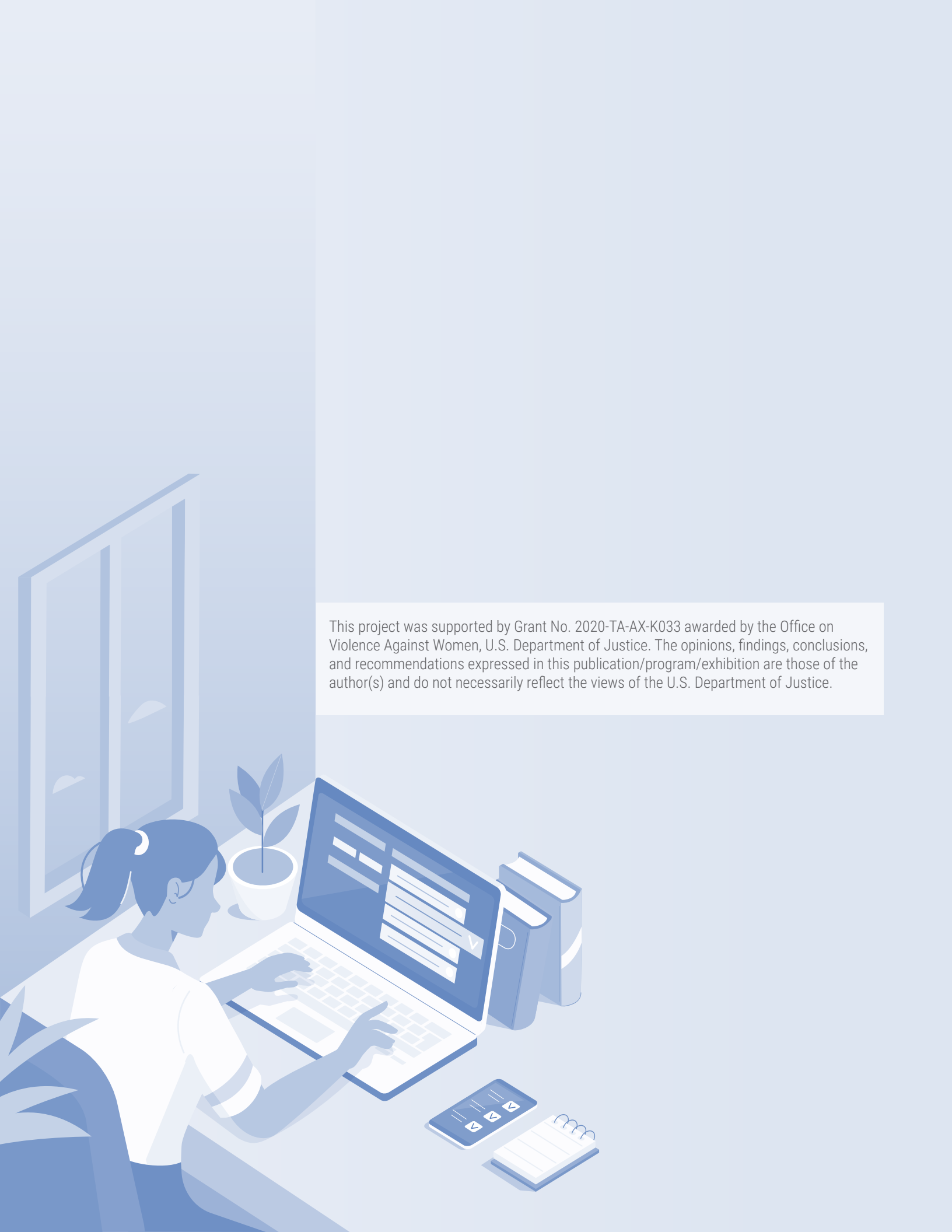


**CO-RESPONDER
PROGRAM**

A LETTAC Initiative

LETTAC

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CONSORTIUM

An illustration of a woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a white t-shirt, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The desk also holds a smartphone with a checklist, a small spiral notebook, and two books. A potted plant is on the desk to the left of the laptop. In the background, there is a window with a view of a landscape. The entire scene is rendered in a light blue color palette.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Acknowledgments

The National Violence Against Women Law Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Consortium (LETTAC) is serving victims/survivors by supporting law enforcement and transforming the current way of delivering training and technical assistance (TTA) to grantees and the field through a more efficient, effective approach.

LETTAC provides tools, resources, and opportunities for law enforcement, victim/survivor service providers, and communities to enhance the response to victims/survivors of crimes—domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking.

We are pleased to introduce this guide to communities across the country and beyond our borders that are interested in improving the response to the victims/survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other crimes. We hope that this resource and its accompanying tools will help communities to support victims/survivors and offer a safer, more compassionate response.

We would like to acknowledge the team of subject-matter experts (SMEs), including law enforcement, victim/survivor advocates, researchers, and other professionals who contributed to the guide. Collaboratively, they have hundreds of hours of experience in their respective fields and graciously devoted time to share their knowledge to create this comprehensive resource. We would also like to thank the law enforcement agencies and victim/survivor service providers who willingly and enthusiastically shared promising practices, protocols, policies, and tools to present in this national-scope document, including the Los Angeles, California, Police Department; the Clark County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office; Ms. Penni Micca, victim advocate, Interval House, Hartford, Connecticut; Captain Jon Laughlin, supervisor of the co-responder team, Manchester, Connecticut, Police Department; Ms. Katherine Verano, chief executive officer, Safe Futures, New London, Connecticut; Mr. Darrell Holly, lethality assessment program administrator, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence; the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Washington, District of Columbia; Safe Horizon in New York City; and Hope House in Jackson County, Missouri. We also extend our thanks and appreciation to the expert peer reviewers, Chief David Ryan and Mr. Cannon Han and associates, as well as Esperanza United and Ujima, who generously took time to review the guide. Together, we can make our communities safer by better serving victims/survivors.

For more information, or to request TTA, please visit LETTAC.org.

Co-Responder Task Team Members



Deborah DeBare currently serves as the capacity technical assistance senior deputy director at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, a national membership organization of state and territorial domestic violence coalitions. In this capacity, she provides training and technical assistance to coalitions, senior staff, boards, and administrators around the country. She served as the executive director of the Rhode Island (RI) Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) for more than 22 years, leading the statewide organization's program development, planning, strategic partnerships, legislative advocacy, and membership development. Prior to that, Ms. DeBare served for five years as the executive director of the Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County and as the policy and information associate for the RI Division of Mental Health and Community Services. She has

served on the board of directors for the National Network to End Domestic Violence, RI Legal Services, the RI Emergency Food and Shelter Board, the RI Coalition for the Homeless, and numerous statewide task forces and committees to address violence against women. She received the RI Fund for Community Progress' Annual Award for Service in 2014, the YWCA Woman of Achievement award in 2016, and the RI NASW Community Service Award in 2018. She was also recognized by the RI legislature by having the state officially name its funding for domestic violence the Deborah DeBare Domestic Violence Prevention Fund in 2018. Ms. DeBare received a master's degree from the Heller School at Brandeis University and a bachelor of arts degree from Brown University.

Lauren Dennis has committed her time and talents to the intimate partner violence (IPV) field since 2013. She has worked extensively in all forms of advocacy, including crisis response, community-based advocacy, systems-based advocacy, and state-level advocacy. Ms. Dennis appreciates working directly with survivors of intimate partner crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking. She has a passion for legal advocacy and victim/survivor rights with a particular focus on marginalized communities. Ms. Dennis serves on a human trafficking task force as a panel member and is also involved in the Victims/Survivors Education and Enforcement Board with the state of Ohio. Ms. Dennis welcomes the opportunity to educate others on the various forms of IPV, the importance of understanding IPV (and the prevalence of its occurrence) to provide the best possible responses, and how to effectively communicate with community partners to enhance services and support for victims/survivors of IPV. She received a bachelor of criminal justice from Ohio University.





Deputy Chief Joseph Froehlich (retired) has consulted and conducted national trainings for the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. Deputy Chief Froehlich served as the director of law enforcement services at the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. As deputy chief of the Putnam, Connecticut, Police Department, he oversaw operations, conducted internal investigations, conducted performance evaluations for civilian and sworn personnel, drafted policy and procedures for the department (including the policy for responding to family violence), reviewed and evaluated training, reviewed and evaluated use of force by sworn personnel, and oversaw dispatch center operations. His 23 years in the Connecticut State Police prepared him for each of these roles. Deputy Chief Froehlich earned a bachelor of science in justice and law administration from Western Connecticut

State University. He is also a graduate of the 233rd session of the FBI National Academy. Since retiring from full-time employment, he has pursued his retirement dream and is currently a certified yoga teacher and a certified group fitness instructor.

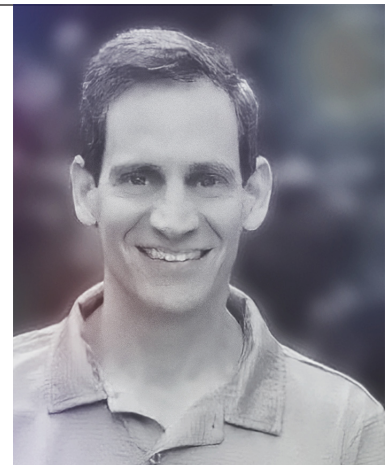
Lisa Gilmore, LCPC, MEd, is principal and founder of Illinois Accountability Initiative (IL-AI), which strives to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people (LGBTQIA+) in their self-determined efforts to create and sustain accountability practices in local communities, among individuals, and within systems and institutions. She believes that community accountability practices can increase safety and reduce harm in the lives of LGBTQIA+ people, transforming communities and directly challenging social conditions that support oppression and violence in many forms. IL-AI is a proud and active member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. Ms. Gilmore currently serves as lead consultant on the Alliance of Local Service Organizations' Underserved Technical Assistance Project for the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women's Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations grant. She is a senior trainer and consultant with the Morten Group, LLC, a national consulting firm specializing in organizational and resource development, focusing on incorporating racial equity efforts within strategic planning and everyday organizational practices. Ms. Gilmore also served as director of education and victim/survivor advocacy at the Center on Halsted, Chicago's LGBTQIA+ community center. While at the center from 2005 to 2013, she provided victim/survivor services and guided the work of the Anti-Violence Project, the Legal Program, professional training and technical assistance, and the implementation of the center's formal systems-level advocacy efforts—all aimed at reducing the impact of bias in the lives of LGBTQIA+ people. Ms. Gilmore is a licensed clinical professional counselor and has provided individual counseling, group support, or crisis counseling to hundreds of survivors and witnesses of domestic, sexual, hate, police, and HIV status-related violence. In March 2012, she was honored as one of four Women of Distinction by Lisa Madigan, Attorney General of the State of Illinois, during the inaugural year of this Women's History Month event. Before dedicating herself to LGBTQIA+-specific anti-violence efforts, Ms. Gilmore worked for several years with adults dually diagnosed with developmental disabilities and mental illness.





Sergeant Denise Jones has been a certified law enforcement officer since May 2001. She is currently assigned to the Investigations Division and serves as the Intimate Partner Violence Unit supervisor. Sergeant Jones is a member of her agency's Special Operations Team. She responds to and follows up on cases involving intimate partner violence, including domestic violence, stalking, strangulation, protection order violations, and sexual assault between intimate partners. Over the past five years, Sergeant Jones has worked as a consultant for the International Associations of Chiefs of Police, the Law Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Consortium, the Stalking Prevention and Resource Center, and the Institute for Coordinated Community Response. Sergeant Jones has reviewed documents and peer reviewed grants for the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. Sergeant Jones currently assists her own agency, other local agencies, and agencies across the United States and Canada in increasing and strengthening their response to gender-based violence, with a focus on understanding trauma and being trauma informed and victim centered. Sergeant Jones has facilitated training classes at the annual Conference on Crimes Against Women, the End Violence Against Women international conference, and the National Center for Victims of Crime National Training Institute.

Darren Mitchell, JD, is a consultant on domestic violence and other violence against women issues, with a focus on child custody and domestic violence, firearms and domestic violence, interstate child custody, protection order issuance and enforcement, and full faith and credit. Since 2000, he has trained judges, attorneys, advocates, family court professionals, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and other professionals for national, state, and local domestic violence and judicial organizations. Mr. Mitchell develops curricula for in-person and virtual training programs, ranging from one-hour webinars to multiple-day in-person programs, including synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid learning approaches. Mr. Mitchell develops agendas for and facilitates roundtable discussions and other topical meetings for judges, attorneys, and practitioners from across the country, including tribal and U.S. territorial jurisdictions. He has co-lead the Firearms Technical Assistance Project, a demonstration initiative funded by the Office on Violence Against Women, to help communities develop and implement improved practices and processes in their civil and criminal justice systems to prevent abusers from using firearms to kill or injure domestic violence survivors, children, bystanders, and others in the community. Mr. Mitchell's consulting clients include the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (for which he served as interim executive director), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Center for Court Innovation, the Legal Resource Center on Violence Against Women, the Battered Women's Justice Project, and other national and state organizations. From 2005 to 2016, Mr. Mitchell was co-executive director of the Legal Resource Center, a national nonprofit that provides training and technical assistance to attorneys and others who assist survivors of domestic violence. Mr. Mitchell has practiced law since 1995 and earned a juris doctor, with distinction, from Stanford Law School, a master of arts degree in chemistry from Harvard University, and a bachelor of science degree in biochemistry from the University of California, Los Angeles.





Lumarie Orozco, MA, is a survivor, community psychologist, and president of ELLO Consulting. As a community psychologist with more than 20 years of experience working to end violence against women and girls, she takes a survivor-led and community-centered approach to address gender-based violence in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Ms. Orozco develops and implements trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically responsive strategies that look at prevention as a way of promoting individual wellness and safety while intentionally collaborating with BIPOC communities to address their most pressing issues. In doing so, she aims to reduce social inequities by empowering communities through intentional community engagement, inclusion, and leadership strategies that enhance access and service provision for BIPOC survivors of gender-based violence.

Her areas of expertise include culturally responsive, human-centered, and community-informed project design, development, and implementation; curricula and tool development; engagement of nonculturally specific organizations/agencies in processes of organizational development and equitable, collaborative practices; development of strategies for addressing and enhancing service access and provision, including language access services for individuals with limited English proficiency; BIPOC youth development, engagement, and advocacy; community engagement; and leadership development. Until recently, Ms. Orozco had defined leadership roles in developing, coordinating, and implementing culturally responsive strategies for the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women's Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection, Firearms Technical Assistance Project, and Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Initiative while serving as the director of special initiatives at Esperanza United. Her responsibilities included project planning and implementation, project management and budgeting, training, technical assistance provision on issues relevant to lethality and domestic violence homicide prevention in Latino communities, and advocating on behalf of Latino communities and survivors at the national and local levels. As an international presenter and trainer, Ms. Orozco works with internationally and nationally recognized colleagues and partners to inform and enhance the practices of innovative, community-based, and dynamic nonprofit organizations and agencies to achieve dramatic social change in the field of gender-based violence. For the past 18 years, Ms. Orozco has provided strategic community-centered and culturally responsive training and technical assistance to federal funders, federal grantees, local and national organizations, agencies, coalitions, and others seeking to enhance service provision and access to services for Latina and BIPOC survivors of gender-based violence. Ms. Orozco is the current board secretary at ASISTA. She holds a master of arts degree in community psychology from Metropolitan State University and a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Iowa.



Reverend Dr. Sakima Romero-Chandler is a subject-matter advisor on domestic violence and sexual violence, addressing the challenges in targeting the cultural affairs of African, Caribbean, Black women, and Children. She has extensive experience working with grassroots communities and local organizations. As a consultant, Reverend Dr. Romero-Chandler began her work in domestic violence prevention in 2008 as a member of the community advisory board to provide feedback, support, and implementation of the Healthy Relationship Education Program through Howard University and other partnering entities. Serving as the program manager for the University's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)-funded grant, Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Initiative, she collaborated with other national technical assistance providers to conduct OVW-sponsored

conferences, with special emphasis on community engagement across diverse, social, economic, cultural, faith-based, and geographic locations. Reverend Dr. Romero-Chandler conducts key stakeholder and informant interviews, surveys, and hosts focus groups on communities with high domestic violence rates of Black women. She has provided oversight for Howard University support staff in developmental areas, directing projects, and developing systems for planning, performance, documentation, forecasting, and evaluation. She contributed to the design, preparation, site selection, and webinars of the OVW-sponsored Domestic Violence Firearms Project. Reverend Dr. Romero-Chandler specializes in community networking and working with diverse communities. Beginning in 2011, she served as a board member on the Engaging Men of Faith Against Domestic Violence Program, which served as an opportunity to collaborate with partnering organizations to educate men about domestic violence. She continues to support those affected by violence with Domestic Violence Awareness 365, which she launched in 2012, as the founding co-pastor of Family Life Ministry African Methodist Episcopal Church. Reverend Dr. Romero-Chandler continues to enhance education through her consulting company, Romero Conway Howard Consulting Group, LLC. Her volunteer work is extensive, as she served on the boards of Brook Lane Health Services, Young Life/Young Lives, Ishshah's Place, and multiple service organizations. She currently serves as the Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review State Implementation Team-Survivor Subcommittee Co-Chair. She is a licensed and certified educator credentialed by the states of New York and Maryland, with more than 15 years of experience. Reverend Dr. Romero-Chandler earned a doctorate in educational administration from Walden University; a master of divinity from Howard University, Washington, DC; a masters of education degree; and a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education from CUNY Queens College, Queens, New York.



Detective Marie Sadanaga has been with the Los Angeles, California, Police Department (LAPD) for almost 20 years. She currently serves as their domestic violence, elder abuse, U Visa, and gun violence restraining order coordinator. Ms. Sadanaga was a patrol officer for five years and a gang crime investigator for six years before being promoted to detective in January 2015. She became LAPD's assistant domestic violence coordinator in August 2016 and was promoted to domestic violence coordinator in November 2018. Ms. Sadanaga currently oversees the department's response to domestic violence, from patrol officers to detectives. She writes and revises policies and procedures and manages the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) Program in conjunction with the Los Angeles Mayor's Office. There are 21 DART units, one in each of the department's geographic areas, which consist of a specially trained officer and a domestic violence advocate from a community-based organization. Ms. Sadanaga is recognized as LAPD's subject-matter expert regarding domestic violence and has testified as an expert in civil court and departmental personnel hearings. She also provides training to the department and outside entities. In 2021, Ms. Sadanaga received the Dr. Marjorie Braude Award from the City of Los Angeles Domestic Violence Alliance for her innovative collaboration in serving victims/survivors of domestic violence. She has a bachelor of arts in law, societies, and justice and a bachelor of arts in sociology from the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington.

Chanel Smith has spent 15 years working to enhance services available for marginal and vulnerable populations. She serves as the executive director of Los Angeles (L.A.) County's Women and Girls Initiative through the Chief Executive Office of L.A. County and as a commissioner for the Human Relations Commission for the City of Long Beach. She began her career in L.A. as a case manager at the Children's Institute, Inc. Ms. Smith focused on behavioral interventions for children exposed to trauma and managed a 32-week domestic violence (DV) education program for adults and children. She has worked for nonprofit organizations, including The People Concern—one of L.A. County's largest social services agencies working to address the effects of DV, homelessness, poverty, mental and physical illness, abuse, and addiction—and Rainbow Services, which seeks to end the cycle of abuse and violence in families. Prior, Ms. Smith worked with the City of L.A.'s Community Investment for Families Department, where she managed the city's programming for survivors of interpersonal violence, including programs to address the intersection of DV and homelessness. In her role as policy director for DV and vulnerable populations at the L.A. Mayor's Office, she oversaw the City of L.A.'s gender-based violence initiatives—which include the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Response Teams, Family Justice Centers, as well as other city-based strategies for the safety of their most vulnerable residents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Smith oversaw Project Safe Haven, the largest comprehensive response to DV during the pandemic in the world. Ms. Smith was the 2020 recipient of L.A. County's Excellence in Public Service Award, the 2020 California Partnership to End DV Partnership Award, and the 2021 Woman of Distinction Award from California Assembly member Patrick O'Donnell for her work with the DV and human trafficking populations.



Contents

- 03 Acknowledgments**
- 04 Co-Responder Task Team Members**
- 12 Executive Summary**
- 14 Introduction**
- 15 Understanding Co-Responder Model Programs**
 - Co-Responder Models*
 - The History of Co-Responder Programs*
 - Why Establish a Co-Responder Program?*
- 17 Courageous Conversations**
- 18 Assessing Organizational Culture, Capacity, and Community: The Best Co-Responder Program for Your Community**
 - Understanding Your Organizational Culture*
 - Every Organization Develops Culture Over Time*
 - Understanding Your Community's Needs*
 - Community Mapping*
 - Community Advisory Boards*
 - Understanding Your Organizational Capacity*
 - Language Access*
- 25 Building Your Co-Responder Program**
 - Step 1: Identify and Develop Partnerships*
 - Considerations for Establishing Partnerships*
 - Partnering With Prosecution*
 - Potential Partners in the Community*
 - Challenges to Effective Collaboration*
 - Step 2: Form an Implementation Team and Plan*
 - Defining Partner Roles*
 - Establishing Communication and Decision-Making Processes*
 - Step 3: Develop Guiding Principles*
 - Step 4: Define Success*

Step 5: Selecting Key Components*When Do You Call an Advocate to the Scene?**How Will the Advocate Respond?**Who Will Respond? A Community-Based Advocate, a System-Based Advocate, a Culturally Specific Advocate, or a Combination of Advocates?**Confidentiality**What Happens On-Scene?**Body-Worn Cameras**Benefits of BWCs to Survivors**Safety Planning**Safety Planning With a Limited English Proficient Victim/Survivor**Identifying the Predominant Aggressor and Dual Arrests**Concluding a Call**What Will Happen During a Follow-Up Visit?**What Equipment Will Be Needed?***Step 6: Formalize Decisions, Manage Logistics, and Implement Your Co-Responder Program***Policies, Procedures, and Program**Guides**Legal Considerations**Personnel and Recruitment**Piloting a Co-Responder Model**Sharing Your Co-Responder Program***44 Training***Training Delivery**Training Topics**Follow-Up Training and Retraining***46 Sustaining Your Co-Responder Program***Evaluating Your Program's Effectiveness***48 Conclusion****50 Supplementary Materials Index**

Executive Summary

A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking is a guide detailing the importance and implementation of co-responder programs. Co-responders are teams of a law enforcement officer and an advocate working together. The guide is a roadmap to develop a partnership-based program to provide greater access to justice for victim/survivors, especially those from culturally specific and marginalized communities. Utilizing a co-responder model will also reduce stress on the criminal justice system while improving relationships between criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations. The guide was developed by a multidisciplinary team consisting of law enforcement, victim advocates, national experts serving culturally specific and marginalized communities, attorneys, academics, and others. It is intended for law enforcement, advocates, and community partners interested in developing a co-responder program.

It outlines the core components of co-responder programs, various types of co-responder models, community and organizational preparedness assessments, team composition considerations, suggested trainings, keys to program sustainability, and success evaluation matrices. It emphasizes that all actions during a co-response, including linking a victim/survivor to resources, are centered around the victim/survivor's immediate safety while respecting confidentiality.

Co-responder models vary based on community needs, size, and available funding. The primary purpose of having an advocate partner with law enforcement at the scene or during follow-up calls for service is to plan for the safety of victim/survivors of VAWA crimes.

The primary recommendations noted in the guide are as follows:

1. Successful implementation of a co-responder program involves a community-based approach, with programs tailored to the specific needs and resources of each partner organization including culturally or population specific organizations.
2. Employ "courageous conversations" to tackle difficult and challenging subjects with empathy and compassion.
3. Assess your community's capacity to implement a co-responder program to save time, resources, and reduce partnership challenges.
4. Prioritize the needs of underserved and marginalized communities, and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable co-responder program using a language accessible, trauma-informed approach.
5. Create a victim/survivor board to ensure they have space and time to share their experiences with your implementation team privately and confidentially.
6. Policy and procedure manuals should address the co-responder model, including establishing frequency of partnership meetings, handling of confidential information, providing interpreters at no cost for partners, and managing conflict resolution.
7. Your implementation team should develop a timeline that includes milestones, important dates, and time for program evaluation and adjustments.

8. Agencies and communities engaged in the development and implementation of co-responder programs should create guiding principles that address common values and goals that can sustain the partnership through difficult times and staff turnover.
9. Additional protocol options regarding risk assessment tools should be implemented to ensure all victim/survivors benefit from your co-responder program.
10. When developing your co-responder program, bring your prosecutor into the conversation to ensure victim/survivors' autonomy is respected and no unintended consequences will result from your program related to prosecution or other court-based proceedings.
11. Ensure that you are hiring the best candidates for the co-responder team. Staff hired for or assigned to co-responder work must be open to working with partners outside your organization and open to developing honest, productive, and supportive partnerships.
12. Provide recommended training and technical assistance (TTA) for your co-responder program. Consult with LETTAC for assistance with TTA.



Introduction

Mary was in a very dangerous and abusive relationship. Despite the severity of her situation, she had never reached out to law enforcement for assistance. An opportunity arose when she met a victim advocate in her community. This advocate suggested that someone from the local co-responder program could reach out to her. When the advocate and police officer team showed up at her home, Mary was hesitant. They asked if they could check back with her in a week.

“I thought I would have killed myself by now . . . but this lady and this cop kept coming by to check on me, and so here I am today.”

—Domestic Violence Survivor from Missouri

On their next visit, Mary cracked the door open and spoke to them through it. Again, they asked if they could check on her in a week. The third time that they visited, she opened the door and spoke with them directly. A week later, Mary attended a support group meeting. She confided to the group leader, *“I was not supposed to be here. I thought I would have killed myself by now, because I was*

determined not to give my husband the satisfaction of killing me himself . . . but this lady and this cop kept coming by to check on me, and so here I am today.”

Accounts like Mary's have led the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to prioritize increased access to justice and healing for victims/survivors of crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, collectively referred to as VAWA crimes in this guide.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a roadmap for law enforcement, advocates, and community partners interested in developing a co-responder program. The guide outlines what comprises a co-responder program, various co-responder models, how to assess a community's preparedness, who to consider for the team make-up, how to create a sustainable program, and how to measure and celebrate successes. This guide will help your team move through a process that will take time. In the end, it will help you develop a partnership-based program that will improve services for victims/survivors in your community.

About VAWA Crimes

Across the United States and internationally, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) crimes are defined differently. The United Nations Human Rights Council defines **gender-based violence** as “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females.” For this guide, we will be looking at VAWA's subset of gender-based violence categories. VAWA crimes include **intimate partner violence**, which is a pattern of violent and controlling behaviors used by a partner in an intimate relationship to exert power over the other partner. The VAWA crimes also include stalking and nonintimate partner sexual assault. Examples of intimate partner violence include, but are not limited to, physical, verbal, emotional, and financial abuse. Sexual abuse and stalking are also forms of intimate partner violence but are perpetrated by nonintimate partners as well. We are referring to both types of sexual violence in this guide. While more women report VAWA crime victimization statistically, men are also victims/survivors. Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking occur in both LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual relationships. For more information, visit the **Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) ([justice.gov](https://www.justice.gov))**.

Understanding Co-Responder Model Programs

This guide will discuss co-responder programs comprised of teams that are made up of a law enforcement officer and an advocate working side-by-side. These teams provide support to victims/survivors of VAWA crimes, improving law enforcement response and enhancing access to services for victims/survivors.

Co-Responder Models

All co-responder models share some similarities and common purposes; however, approaches to how programs are implemented vary from community to community. Factors impacting these variations include the community's needs, size, and available funding streams.

The principal reason for having an advocate partner with law enforcement at the scene is safety planning for all victims/survivors of the VAWA crimes. Everything that occurs during a co-response, including linking a victim/survivor to resources, is planned around the victim/survivor's imminent safety. It is critical to ensure that information is provided in the victim/survivor's primary language.

Addressing a victim/survivor's concerns initially allows them to feel heard and centered in the chaos surrounding them. It also leads to a focus on safety concerns identified by law enforcement and the advocate. For example, an advocate may be concerned for the victim/survivor's physical safety, however the victim/survivor is concerned because the offending party is the primary source of income. To address the victim/survivor's primary need, the advocate may offer financial resources before law enforcement asks questions about the abusive partner. The advocate will also explore

what physical safety decisions may be required, determine if relocation is needed, and what else the victim/survivor needs to support their safety.

The History of Co-Responder Programs

Co-responder programs have been in operation for many years. Historically, these programs have been defined as **teams that pair mental or behavioral health professionals with law enforcement**. These teams respond to calls involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, intoxication, homelessness, or have other health or social service needs.¹ This model is increasingly common for law enforcement when responding to incidents where there is a mental or behavioral health crisis.

In such instances, law enforcement is called to the scene. If they believe that an individual may be experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis, they call for a crisis response team. This team helps mitigate the situation by listening and responding to the subject's needs. Having an advocate and officer respond to a scene together bridges the gap between law enforcement, medical, and community services. This reduces stress on the justice system and often results in improved outcomes for the citizen.²

Today, advocacy and law enforcement agencies have increased interest in enhancing the VAWA crime response in their communities. They aim to expand access to safety and services for victims/survivors and their children by adapting the co-responder model to fit the needs of victims/survivors of VAWA crimes.

¹ The Council of State Governments Justice Center, February 2021, "Developing and Implementing Your Co-Responder Program" (Law Enforcement Field Notes), https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CSGJC_Field-Notes_Law-Enforcement_Co-Responder-Program.pdf.

² Developing and Implementing Your Co-Responder Program, [Developing and Implementing Your Co-Responder Program | Bureau of Justice Assistance \(ojp.gov\)](https://www.ojp.gov/assstance/developing-and-implementing-your-co-responder-program).

Why Establish a Co-Responder Program?

There are many benefits to implementing co-responder programs. These benefits extend not only to victims/survivors, but also to advocates, law enforcement, and the community-at-large. Advocates responding with law enforcement can safely meet with victims/survivors on the scene to provide support and safety planning. Law enforcement can focus on interviewing witnesses, collecting evidence, and conducting a thorough investigation at the scene.

A co-responder program also provides consistency and protocol for law enforcement when responding to domestic violence calls. **The primary focus of a co-responder program is safety for all. However, communities may also experience improved community relationships, better outcomes for victims/survivors, and reduced strain on law enforcement.**

Co-responder programs are flexible and not one-size-fits-all. Successful implementation of a co-responder program involves a community-based approach, with programs tailored to the specific needs and resources of each community partner.

For example, nonprofits and faith-based organizations create shared accountability for program implementation and outcomes. Involving the community in creating, implementing, and evaluating a co-responder program strengthens bonds and ensures that the efforts of law enforcement and advocates are responsive to the specific needs of their community.

Co-responder programs require a significant investment of time, commitment, and resources. Implementation and sustainability require continuous learning and accountability to the program's goals and objectives.



Courageous Conversations

This roadmap is an outline for the possible processes or procedures that your agency may take to create, maintain, or sustain a co-responder model. An intangible aspect is the culture that currently exists in each community as you engage in this meaningful work. Each agency, partner, or individual may have very different thoughts on the process, preparation, and even the outcomes.

To have a successful courageous conversation, partners need to listen to understand, not listen to defend.

To have a successful and sustainable co-responder model, partners need to communicate clearly on difficult issues without being discouraged by the nature of the topic. The work should never stop if the team comes to an impasse.

The Denver Foundation outlines several Agreements for Courageous Conversations and Active Learning on their website. These agreements can help partners prepare for and navigate uncomfortable discussions, whether about issues of race, privilege, social justice, or any other topic. Key factors for successful courageous conversations are:

- Set aside ample time for difficult conversations so that you can stay engaged in the conversation.
- Speak your truth while acknowledging other factors in the room such as history, circumstances, or other emotionally charged factors.
- Expect and accept that some of the most valuable work is done between people in small settings who are willing to understand and learn from one another.
- Keep your focus on individual experiences and avoid generalizations.
- Maintain confidentiality, as is appropriate for your roles.

Developing a co-responder program requires a willingness to engage in “courageous conversations” between partners on various issues. These include policies and practices, defining roles, and intentionally striving for equity and parity among co-responder service providers. In the end, the program requires mutual respect, trust, and vulnerability among all partners.

- Suspend judgement and listen with the intent to learn and not defend.
- As leaders, model what you expect to see.
- During your conversation, open a path to move forward.³

Throughout this guide, we have included examples of courageous conversations by co-responder program implementors in their communities. These examples are included to help you build a solid foundation for your co-responder program based on lived experiences.

Engaging in these conversations early and often aids in designing a better co-responder program and begins the process of building and strengthening trust among partners.

Starting when everyone is eager and excited will help partners build the skills to maintain courageous conversations down the road.

³ [What Does It Take to Have Courageous Conversations at Work? \(betterup.com\)](https://www.betterup.com/what-does-it-take-to-have-courageous-conversations-at-work/)

Assessing Organizational Culture, Capacity, and Community: The Best Co-Responder Program for Your Community

Assessing your community's capacity to implement a co-responder program can save you time, resources, and reduce partnership challenges. Having a comprehensive understanding of your organization's capacity and culture allows you to create a programmatic structure prior to starting the program, ensuring equitable engagement of all partners, both internal and external.

Understanding Your Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that characterize an organization. Often referred to as the "personality" of an organization, this culture influences how members think, behave, and interact with each other as well as with those outside the organization.

Organizational culture is shaped by a variety of factors, including an organization's history, its leadership styles, norms within the professions of members of the organization, and experiences of individual staff and other team members. An organization's culture can either support or hinder the successful leveraging of the organization's assets—personnel, skills, and resources—in relation to implementing a co-responder program.

It is important to consider and assess your own organizational culture and how it might impact the successful implementation of a co-responder model. Bearing in mind the organizational culture characteristics listed in [Supplementary Materials A](#), ask yourself and your team:

- What current practices can be leveraged to implement a program?
- What successful practices can be built on?
- Have you planned and budgeted for interpreting and translation services?
- What positive community response has the agency received that we can build on?
- What might create challenges to successfully collaborating with other organizations?
- Is my organization prepared to have courageous conversations internally and with partners?
- Is my entire organization ready to implement a co-responder model or is there only a single enthusiastic champion?
- How might mutually sharing information about my organizational culture with another organization benefit the planning and implementation of a collaboration? How might issues of confidentiality and privilege arise?⁴
- For advocacy agencies: How do my employees feel about partnering with law enforcement? Will they be open to moving from an office setting to a field setting and able to handle challenges such as weather, cleanliness, witnessing poverty, etc.? Are my supervisors ready to support staff responding on-scene? If we already struggle with staff retention, how would making these changes help or hurt efforts to keep qualified staff members?
- For law enforcement agencies: How do my officers feel about responding with advocates? Will they be able to handle the additional responsibility of protecting the advocate on-scene or during follow-up visits? Is my organization willing to make domestic and sexual violence calls a priority?
- How would my organization feel about sharing funding with partner organizations such as community-based organizations, culturally specific partners, faith-based organizations?

⁴ [Practitioners' Toolkit—Victim Rights Toolkit and Enforcement \(ncvli.org\)](#)

Every Organization Develops Culture Over Time

Every organization develops culture over time, and the culture can be a powerful force that impacts morale, productivity, creativity and innovation, and overall organizational performance. It is also important to recognize the impact that organizational culture may have on the functioning of a collaborative partnership. Partners will experience organizational and cultural differences and will have to be prepared to navigate those situations.

To fully understand your organizational capacity, your assessment should allow for informed decision-making based on direct feedback tools, such as:

- Staff satisfaction surveys or annual climate surveys that include questions about co-responder models.
- Using mock scenarios to drive conversations during staff meetings, organizational retreats, or individual staff check-ins.
- Community surveys or listening sessions around partner organizations responding in the community together.
- Client surveys and/or listening sessions about their experiences with partners and how they impact their willingness to engage in services. Ensure that these surveys or listening sessions also include victims/survivors from different cultures in your community and different marginalized groups. For example, have a listening session with Latina/o victims/survivors and ask what barriers they experience. Note: Anonymize feedback when sharing client information with partners.
- For law enforcement, pull reports and see how officers are documenting VAWA crimes calls for service, including dispatch logs and cleared cases. Review your VAWA crimes policy. Has it been recently updated? Has it been evolving to keep up with promising practices?
- For law enforcement, review current training curriculum for response to VAWA crimes. Does the training include only the minimum hours

required for certification? Are officers requesting additional training in this area? Does it include various experts from outside the agency? Is there collaboration with victim/survivor service providers on training programs? Review feedback and evaluations from personnel who attend these training programs.

- Talk through scenarios with your partners to see how your organizations compare and where more alignment might be beneficial. Please see [Role-Play Scenarios in Supplementary Materials B](#) for more information.

A culture-building process in which intention and innovation are aligned at the onset to engage all leadership and frontline personnel is beneficial. Additionally, successful co-responder programs are developed with feedback and input from communities to determine what is most beneficial to victims/survivors, with the understanding that the co-response will be a collaborative effort between law enforcement and advocates.

Before implementing a co-responder program, identify and understand the barriers to accessing services within all segments of your jurisdiction. In this next section, we will provide information on assessment tools and practices to help agencies gather this information.

Note: Do not make the mistake of looking at the diversity within your organization and think that the professionals in the organization represent the desires of the people in the community solely because they share a racial, ethnic, or gender identity with these people. The lived experiences of the community are crucial as you build your co-responder program; just checking a box and believing that you have included the perspectives of the BIPOC or LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors is not the best practice.

For more information on agency and community assessment on gender bias, see [Agency Self-Assessment and Community Assessment: Approaches to Domestic and Sexual Violence | International Association of Chiefs of Police \(theiacp.org\)](#).

Understanding Your Community's Needs

As you embark on your journey to success, centralizing the most marginalized communities is a crucial step towards addressing historical oppression, marginalization, and neglect. By prioritizing the needs and amplifying the voices of underserved and marginalized communities, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable co-responder program using a language accessible, trauma-informed approach. Engage community representatives in meaningful and equitable conversations.

This process involves recognizing the unique challenges faced by these communities, understanding their experiences, and actively involving them in decision-making processes. It requires a commitment to dismantling systemic barriers and empowering individuals to take control of their own narratives. Centralizing underserved and marginalized communities is not only about offering support but also about creating space for their leadership, creativity, and resilience to flourish.

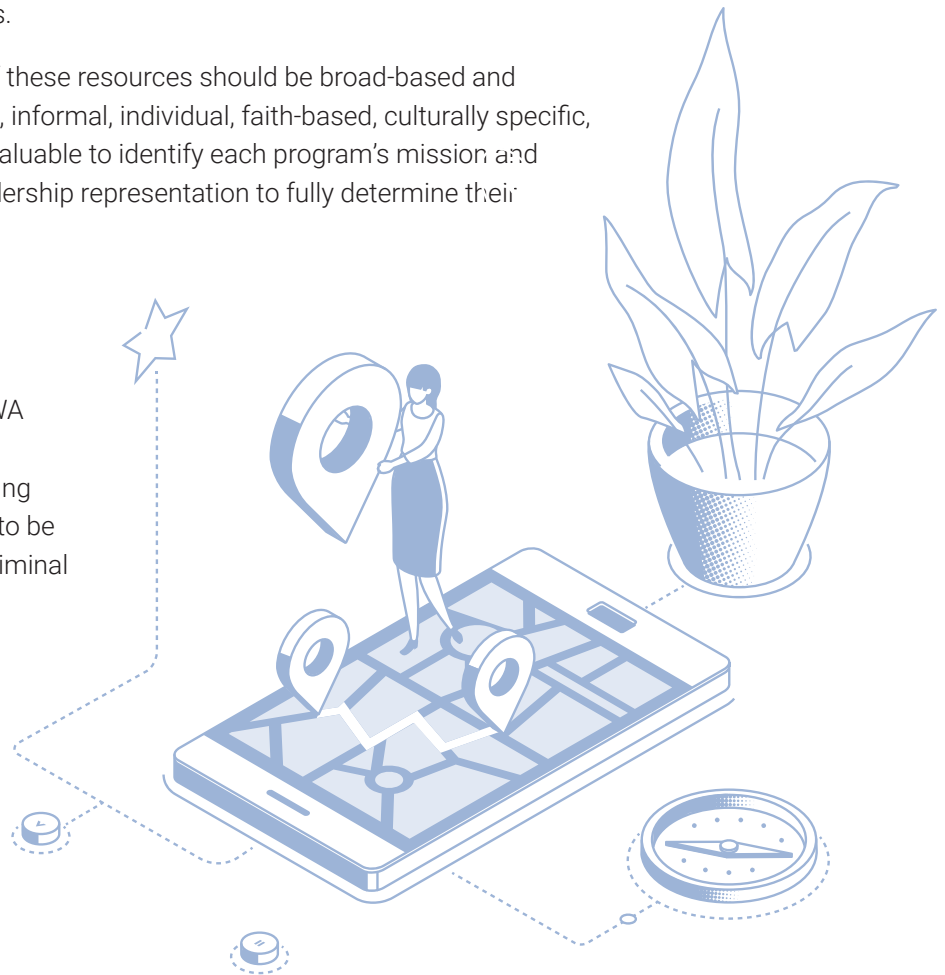
Communities are impacted by a variety of unique factors. Historical, communal, and geographical trauma, such as gentrification, over-incarceration, and adverse interactions with mental health or law enforcement agencies may have long-term repercussions on community members.

Community Mapping

One way to learn about the available resources for culturally specific and marginalized populations in your community is to engage in **community mapping**. This process identifies local resources, services, and strategies that are accessible to victims/survivors and that may become an important part of the co-responder network. Interpret the results of your community mapping exercise and provide context around service gaps.

Identification and documentation of these resources should be broad-based and systematic. It should include formal, informal, individual, faith-based, culturally specific, and grassroots organizations. It is valuable to identify each program's mission and vision statements as well as its leadership representation to fully determine their role in the community.

Understanding and documenting resource capacity is critical as well. Organizations that offer **mutual aid** and are culturally responsive to VAWA crimes may be available to assist victims/survivors with food or housing needs but do not have the capacity to be directly involved in navigating the criminal justice system.



Community Advisory Boards

During the community mapping process, identify leaders from culturally specific, underserved, and marginalized communities who could serve on a community advisory board or committee. A community advisory board, also known as a community advisory committee, consists of representatives from law enforcement, advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, and other community leaders, who can assist in the formation of the co-responder program. Usually, advocacy organizations have established connections, relationships, and resources in the community and may be linked to culturally specific organizations, individuals, or other victim/survivor-serving entities. Various programs may exist that provide resources and services that are accessible, and in many cases, law enforcement has connections already established (e.g., via a Family Justice Center or Coordinated Community Response [CCR] Program). Ensure that community advisory boards have the capacity to serve on the board for a minimum of two years and have decision-making abilities.

VAWA requires a coordinated community response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, encouraging jurisdictions to bring together players from diverse backgrounds to share information and to use their distinct roles to improve community responses to violence against women. These players include, but are not limited to victim advocates, police officers, prosecutors, judges, probation and corrections officials, health care professionals, leaders within faith communities, and survivors of violence against women.

Based on the composition and demographics of your community, your team can determine who should serve on the advisory board to ensure inclusive representation of the population.⁵ Select the number of participants for the community advisory board that will both balance representation from the community and still move agenda items forward. Ensure that community advisory board members have the capacity to serve on the board for a minimum of two years. **A group of six to eight community participants along with representation from the implementation team is manageable and efficient.** If the advisory board is larger, consider organizing it into committees or sub-groups. You should make every effort to compensate community advisory board members, as their time and expertise are extremely valuable to your efforts.

This process needs to be done with care and thoughtfulness, not to bring harm to community members from other members of the board. Identify noncommunity member allies on the board to not put all the pressure and responsibility on the community member (from marginalized communities) to identify historical system issues.

Change happens at the speed of trust, and taking the time to build relationships is important.

Investing time to build trust may take up a good part of the first year of your co-responder program development, but it is critical to success. Utilize relationships that are already established and bring in experts who have a history of responding in the field, such as those working in child advocacy services and/or mental health crisis responders, to benefit from their lessons learned. **Note:** It is recommended to use staggering terms for board members for continuity.

⁵ Some jurisdictions have government mandated community advisory boards. While these groups can meet this need for community accountability, politics and relationships may impact the dynamics of the group, so putting in the effort to establish an independent co-responder advisory board is recommended when feasible.

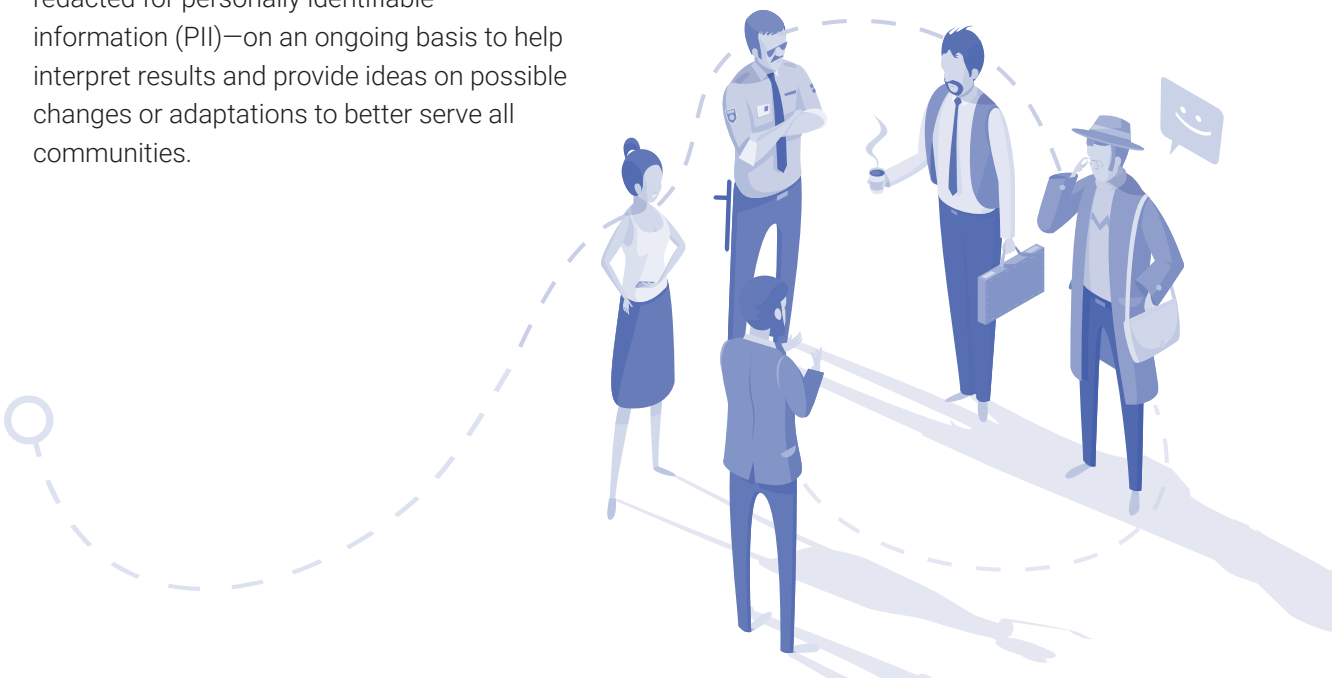
Roles of the community advisory board include, but are not limited to:

- Interpreting the results of your community mapping exercise and providing context around service gaps.
- Providing historical context of harm done to racially and ethnically diverse communities, intentionally or unintentionally, by systems (e.g., housing, education, health, criminal justice) and how that may impact how individuals seek support.
- Providing “access to the community” to help communicate with groups not engaging in traditional services to ensure that those voices are at the table during the development of your co-responder program.
- Partnering with co-responder model agencies to create a co-responder model mission and define success for the program.
- Sharing information about the co-responder program with the community, letting the community know that new services are available, and sharing the program “wins” in public forums or at networking events.
- Having the community advisory board overview co-responder program data—redacted for personally identifiable information (PII)—on an ongoing basis to help interpret results and provide ideas on possible changes or adaptations to better serve all communities.

The voices of victims/survivors are fundamental

to ensuring that your co-responder program is effective. Many victim service agencies have advisory boards or have victims/survivors serving on their governing boards. We recommend creating a separate victim/survivor board or including them as a member of your community advisory board. Ensure that they have space and time to share their experiences with your implementation team privately and confidentially. This extends to how victims/survivors identify themselves (again, note that victim terminology may be used internally but should not be used while in connection with the victim/survivor in person or in any files that they may receive, wherever possible). Also be considerate of how each person identifies in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. It is not your decision how to identify the victim/survivor when they are present and able to make the determination.

For more information on identification based on racial, ethnic, and gender identity, see [Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the Use of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Disability \(justice.gov\)](#). For more information and additional resources on community mapping, visit [Supplementary Materials C](#).



Understanding Your Organizational Capacity

As you assess your community resources, it is also important to consider each partner's organizational **capacity**. Determine an agency's ability to successfully apply existing and needed personnel, skills, resources, and abilities to meet the needs and expectations of the new co-responder program.⁶ Use the **Co-Responder Model Organizational Capacity Tool** in Supplementary Materials D to help you and your partners understand your capacity to implement a co-responder program.

Tips for Connecting With Your Community

- **Be assertive enough to talk about these issues, be humble enough to take a step back and listen.** Some community members may be hesitant to collaborate with law enforcement because of historical experiences in their communities. Prepare for courageous conversations and allow time for participants to share what has not worked in the past.
- **Be prepared to act.** When you ask community members something, be prepared to act on the suggestions that are feasible, authentically implement them, and report back the results. If you are unable to act at this time, be prepared to communicate this in an open, transparent manner.

Language Access

Language access is a critical need for victims/survivors and communities that identify as limited in their English proficiency. It increases safety for victims/survivors, communities, and service providers. There must be a dedication of resources to provide meaningful language access, including bilingual officers and staff, interpreters, and translations. It should be clear that the co-responder model is not one that involves law enforcement using bilingual advocates to interpret. Unless they have been trained as interpreters, bilingual advocates do not have the skills needed to interpret. Interpretation and translation services should be provided at no cost to victims/survivors. Language access services, or the lack thereof, can often be the difference between safety and harm or, even worse, loss of life.⁷ One option to consider is for language access services, which includes outreach to potential partners in the community.

⁶ Cox, K., Jolly, S., Van Der Staaij, S., and Van Stolk, C., 2018, *Understanding the Drivers of Organizational Capacity*, RAND Corporation, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2100/RR2189/RAND_RR2189.pdf.

⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2014/02/19/us/new-york-domestic-killing-warnings/index.html>

Courageous Conversation

Increasing organizational capacity will require funding, meaning multiple partners may be competing for the same monetary resources. This exercise can be challenging and initial conversations around funding require building trust and transparency among partners. Discuss as a team the realities of the funds needed to execute a co-responder model program and who within the partnership will be working to obtain specific resources. Can you apply together for grants or contracts? Will the funding be distributed equitably or equally?

Having a language access policy in place prepares your agency or organization to readily provide language access services, increases access to critical services and safety, and improves equity. Language access extends beyond the spoken language and includes language access services to individuals who identify as Deaf and hard of hearing, extending itself to include ASL and the use of assistive devices.

We all have practices that we have adopted to provide language access assistance to individuals with limited English proficiency. For example, your organization may have hired bilingual, bicultural advocates to support the needs of immigrant communities within your service area; your agency may have Vietnamese speaking law enforcement officers within your agency to help support the needs of an emerging Vietnamese community; or your organization may have translated critical documents such as an organizational brochure or form into a language spoken widely in your community in order to meet their needs. Although these are great starting points, it is critical that you have a formal written language access policy.

To formalize your agency/organization's language access practices into a written policy, the following resources are available.

- [Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence](#)
- [Esperanza United](#)
- [LEP.GOV](#)
- The Portland Police Bureau employs a [Citywide Language Access Program](#) that develops policy, standard operating procedures, tools, resources, and guidance based on national and federal standards and best practices. The program seeks to increase equitable access for community members who experience institutional language barriers.
- The [Boise, Idaho, Police Department](#) has a robust Language Access Plan that includes community liaison officers for specific communities, a training program for interpreters, and the continued maintenance of their own interpreters.

Limited English proficiency refers to individuals whose primary language is not English. Being limited English proficient (LEP) means that an individual does not read, write, or understand the English language well and that language assistance is needed for individuals to ensure their full understanding of what is occurring around them. Language access includes services to individuals who identify as Deaf and hard of hearing, extending to include ASL and the use of assistive devices.

Building Your Co-Responder Program

Once you have assessed your community's needs and the participating organizations' capacities and cultures, you can begin using this valuable information to build your co-responder program. Across the country, jurisdictions co-respond in varied ways. In Los Angeles, advocates respond in-car with Los Angeles Police Department's Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) officers. In New York, advocates are stationed in every New York City Police Department precinct to provide support to victims/survivors and assist officers in addressing their needs. In Clark County, Ohio, advocates are called to the scene using an on-call system, or they may be brought to the victim/survivor location for a follow-up visit with deputies, depending on the needs of the victim/survivor and the realities of their rural community. They also work closely with the prosecutors. In Rhode Island, advocates are based in local police stations, but travel to different towns' police departments on different days of the week to have a presence with both urban and rural departments. In Manchester, Connecticut, (population 36,700) an advocate is stationed at the police department to provide follow-up safety planning and services to victims/survivors who are assessed by officers to be in high danger. In Jackson County, Missouri, advocates respond with detectives to conduct follow-up visits with victims/survivors in their homes.

To build your co-responder program, you must identify the partners to include in your direct co-response. Along with the primary partners, you will need to connect with secondary partners to provide holistic services to victims/survivors.

Secondary partners may contribute in various ways, such as providing culturally affirming insights and expertise to help shape the project to meet the needs of a much broader community that includes underserved and marginalized communities, including access to networks and communities that primary partners may not have. They may also offer guidance, advice, or advocacy for the project's

Secondary partners refer to organizations, individuals, or entities that play a supporting role in achieving the project's goals but may not be directly responsible for its implementation or management. Unlike primary partners, who are typically the main stakeholders and actively involved in project activities, secondary partners provide additional resources, expertise, or collaboration to enhance the project's impact. Seeking out and engaging organizations and individuals from underserved and marginalized organizations is an opportunity to help to ensure that the project is grounded in the realities of communities disproportionately impacted by domestic violence.

objectives. While they may not have the same level of responsibility as primary partners, their involvement is valuable in terms of complementing and strengthening the project's outcomes.

To effectively engage secondary partners, it is important to clearly define their roles, responsibilities, and expectations from the beginning. It is also necessary to provide compensation for secondary partners' time and expertise. This helps ensure that their contributions align with the project's objectives and that there is a shared understanding of how they fit into the overall implementation strategy. Open communication, collaboration, and regular updates facilitate a productive partnership between primary and secondary partners, leading to successful project outcomes.

Next, you will need to select the members of your implementation team, the group of individuals who will spend the next 18 to 24 months developing

and implementing your co-responder program. With your implementation team in place, you can develop a shared vision for success and foundational principles to guide your program development. Once you have your implementation team moving in the same direction, you can start to make critical programmatic decisions such as who will respond, when to respond, how partners will arrive on location, what services will be provided on-scene, what follow-up looks like, and how the team will provide feedback on program activities. For a DART case study, see [Supplementary Materials E](#).

Step 1: Identify and Develop Partnerships

Engage in meaningful and equitable collaborations and partnerships. Collaboration makes interventions stronger and more comprehensive. Your team will develop new relationships, expand access to diverse resources, and gain insights and perspectives—all of which will enhance service provision.

Considerations for Establishing Partnerships

Establishing and maintaining partnerships is an intentional process involving respect and effort. Below are instructions to help you navigate the challenges that you may encounter along the way:

- Establish a clear delineation and understanding of roles, including limitations and expertise.
- Stay in your role and allow others to work in their roles.
- Be honest about the power and perceptions that accompany professions.

- Trust and provide reciprocity to your colleagues.
- Address disagreements and maintain a conflict-resolution process.
- Develop a mechanism for accountability to the community, such as a community advisory board discussed earlier.

Partnering With Prosecution

Partnering with local prosecutors can be critical to successful co-responder model implementation. We have discussed the importance of partnership from multiple lenses, and it is also essential to engage early on in your co-responder program development with your local prosecutor.

Prosecutors can assist with establishing in advance who handles certain responsibilities on-scene—especially pertaining to issues that may impact the prosecution of a criminal case. The guidance of prosecutors is helpful in determining who takes photographs or who interviews witnesses and victims/survivors. They can provide background for how the information will be handled during prosecution.

For example, if advocates are taking pictures, even on their cell phones, the photos and the phone itself may become evidence. If an advocate witnesses a statement and their name is mentioned in the police report, they may be considered a witness. Issues of confidentiality with regards to victims/survivors can impact a case as well. It is important to work these complex issues of confidentiality out with the prosecutor directly to establish what should be

Courageous Conversation

Imagine that your co-response program includes four core partners, a prosecutor, law enforcement administrator, an advocate from a local shelter, and an advocate from a culturally specific or faith-based organization. The advocate reports that her voice is not given as much weight as the prosecutor's because she did not go to law school or the officer's because she is younger and has less time on the job. **How do you bring all voices together, each with equal value?**

included in the co-responder policies, protocols, or manuals.

Potential Partners in the Community

Victim/survivor-serving institutions and faith-based organizations, medical clinics, and local community support are typical co-response networks due to their existing infrastructure. Government social service agencies, public housing authorities, child and family services, mental and behavioral health providers, domestic violence service providers, independent safe houses, and formal shelters may also be good partnerships to create or expand the co-responder program.

Once your community's resources and services have been assessed and mapped out, begin using that data to identify the partnerships that you will need to build a successful co-responder program. These partnerships extend beyond the primary organizations responding together. While the co-responding team is comprised of law enforcement and advocates, there are other necessary partnerships to consider. These include culturally and population-specific service providers, prosecutors, and other allied professionals. These organizations are typically members of [CCR Teams](#) and can be beneficial to the success of co-responding to VAWA crimes.

Challenges to Effective Collaboration

Although collaborations and partnerships are meant to bring individuals together, they are not without challenges.

Some of the challenges that impact the efficacy of collaborations and partnerships include:

- A history of problematic working relationships.
- Implicit or explicit bias.
- Imbalance of power based on perceptions of roles and experience.
- Differing philosophical approaches to the work.
- Not seeing partner organizations as dependable or reliable long-term.
- A lack of commitment to inclusion.
- Partnerships that are not equitable or reciprocal.
- Engagement of key partners as an afterthought.
- History of community relationships and current events.

Although collaborative partnerships can be challenging, with intention, persistence, and a willingness to engage in courageous conversations, we can learn to be better collaborators and partners. **Since co-responder programs focus on equity, partners should be equitably compensated for their time and expertise. All partners should request transparency in financial compensation.**

When talking with your prosecutor about program policy and/or procedures, some questions to discuss include:

- How is the co-response documented in the police report, if at all?
- Who participates in victim interviews and when?
- Who documents evidence, including the taking of photographs (both at the scene and during follow-up)? How should body-worn cameras (BWCs) be utilized on-scene?

Step 2: Form an Implementation Team and Plan

At this stage, your jurisdiction has identified the core partners that make up your co-responder program or you have an idea of who will be included. With the addition of the community partners necessary for a successful co-response model, you can begin to build your implementation team. **The implementation team should include individuals who are strong communicators, respect others (including those from cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds different from their own), and who will dive into the work to ensure that the program is successful.** Team members need to have capacity and flexibility to provide strong leadership during the duration of the implementation and evaluation phases, which may take up to two years or longer. They must also be able to effectively convey the message of why a co-responder program is important and how it is a positive program for everyone involved.

Defining Partner Roles

When you begin this work, it is important to have a clear understanding of each partner's ability to participate and to establish their roles on the team. Partners should define the roles for their agency and assess their capacity to meet expectations. Partners need to be aware of potential conflicts regarding their and their partner's roles. For example, if law enforcement needs information pertaining to a case, even if advocates have that information, they may not be free to disclose that information because of confidentiality requirements. The implementation team should discuss what each entity can and cannot do, why, and how they will adhere to their roles.

Each organization's roles should be documented in formal agreements such as memorandums of understanding (MOUs), contracts, or cooperative agreements and in the job descriptions for personnel connected to the co-response, including supervisors.

Position descriptions should be included for each partner organization that will ultimately be responsible for making decisions. Some other elements recommended for inclusion in policy and procedure manuals include frequency of partnership meetings, handling of confidential information, providing interpreters at no cost for partners, and conflict resolution processes.

Examples of position descriptions can be found in [Supplementary Materials F](#).

Establishing Communication and Decision-Making Processes

Effective collaboration requires communication among advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors, especially regarding cases where there are conflicting objectives. Policies and procedures around communication should be developed and included in your co-responder manual.

Challenges will inevitably arise during the implementation phase of a co-responder program. Challenges may range from logistical to administrative—such as scheduling problems, lack of coordination between participating agencies, and staffing shortages—as well as on-the-ground missteps by professionals due to unfamiliarity with new protocols. Conflicts may arise from differences in perspectives on how to do the work.

Courageous Conversation

In your district, officers are required to make an arrest after an incident. However, the victim/survivor does not want the arrest to be made. Discuss as a team how to respond in a trauma-informed way to the victim/survivor.

While collaborative communication is key, it is also necessary to clearly define who has decision-making power in times of conflict. This role should be agreed upon in the beginning stages of program development—not after a conflict has arisen. The absence of a decision-making authority can lead to unresolved conflict, resulting in a lack of trust and partner buy-in. That is why it is imperative to identify accountability for decision-making in the job descriptions for key roles. This responsibility should also be included in performance evaluations.

The implementation of a co-responder program is not a speedy process, and moving forward in haste may result in missing critical steps. Moving too quickly can erode trust and negatively impact partner motivation, making the process take longer. We recommend that your implementation team develop a timeline that includes milestones and important dates. Because of the governmental nature of co-responder programs, your team should include time in the implementation plan for multiple layers of approval processes and revisions. Jurisdictions with experience implementing co-responder programs recommend this timeline for important steps in the process.

Co-Responder Program Implementation Timeline

Task	Implementation Phase
Assess partner organizational capacity and culture, conduct community assessments, obtain buy-in from key stakeholders, and secure/identify funding.	Year 1: 1st Quarter
Continue conducting community assessments, conduct community mapping, form the community advisory board or committee, and secure and identify funding.	Year 1: 2nd Quarter
Identify funding opportunities, secure funding, form the implementation team to develop policies and procedures, and compose written agreements.	Year 1: 3rd and 4th Quarters
Develop a co-responder program, draft a program manual, and conduct training.	Year 2: 1st and 2nd Quarters
Conduct training.	Year 2: 3rd and 4th Quarters
Initial implementation phase, conduct initial evaluation, and make programmatic adjustments.	Year 3: 1st Quarter
Conduct initial evaluation and make programmatic adjustments.	Year 3: 2nd Quarter
Implement the co-responder model.	Year 3: 3rd and 4th Quarters

Note: Size of the jurisdiction may determine the timeline on implementation and evaluation. The additional six months of Year 3 could be available for unexpected challenges.

Step 3: Develop Guiding Principles

Guiding principles encompass the values that people and organizations strive to embody when they work collaboratively. In the co-responder context, guiding principles help set expectations and establish a common vision for the partner organizations responsible for developing and implementing the co-responder program. Ideally, the partner organizations forming the co-responder team, with input from others in the community, should envision and establish their guiding principles collaboratively. Guiding principles can serve as a compass during the navigation of planning and implementation. These principles may be referred to as program needs change over time, and innovative approaches may be called for as well. Incorporating language access demonstrates a commitment to serving all survivors equitably, regardless of their language backgrounds. By adopting a culturally responsive approach, co-responders recognize that culture shapes one's experiences, beliefs, and help-seeking behaviors and that these factors must be considered when providing support.

In developing *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*, our task force collaboratively created and adhered to the following guiding principles. These may serve as an example for communities engaged in co-responder program development and implementation:

- **Victim-centered practices**, including incorporating the victim's voice and choice, exercising informed decision-making, and protecting confidentiality.
 - **A focus on safety** for victims, law enforcement, advocates, and the entire community.
 - **Equitable partnerships and collaboration**, with accountability, transparency, trust, and a safe environment in which to engage in challenging conversations.
 - **Ongoing community engagement** throughout the entire life cycle of the program.
 - **Accountability to victims and to the entire community.**
- **Trauma-responsive policies and practices** that promote safety and healing by recognizing and adapting to the needs of people who have suffered from trauma.

We recommend that agencies and communities engaged in the development and implementation of

Unbiased and equitable response to all members of the community, with specific attention to those who are historically marginalized and underserved, is a cornerstone principle. It guides all the work and is a key component of all the remaining guiding principles—it is also why some principles refer, where relevant, to the “entire community.”

co-responder programs create guiding principles that address common values and goals. It will serve the team well as it encounters challenging issues, differing perspectives, and potential conflicts. By referring to the guiding principles, partners can explore solutions and responses that reflect the shared values of the overall team and pass over those that do not. For a reference tool, these guiding principles and additional clarifying information are included in the Guiding Principles Reference Tool in the [Supplementary Materials G](#).

Once you have established your guiding principles, it is time to define success for your program.

Step 4: Define Success

Why are you implementing a co-responder program?

A shared definition of success is critical to forming a sustainable co-responder program. Partner organizations may have different missions, roles, and reasons for entering the partnership, but for the partnership to succeed, a common vision for success must be established, protected, and evaluated throughout the life of the co-responder program. It is okay for partners to work with different missions if they do not counteract each other's efforts. After you have defined success for your co-responder program, create measures that your co-responder program team are held accountable to. Measuring success or impact comes in many forms and should include:

- Co-responder program service data.
- Client impact information.
- Staff performance.
- Staff satisfaction surveys related to the co-responder partnership.
- Program fidelity measures (e.g., forms are completed, and response protocol standards are followed).

Ways to help your team develop a shared definition of success include:

- Review current matrices that each partner uses to define success. Identify commonalities and conflicting measures. Talk as a team about each measurement:
 - How do these sound to partners? Do all partners view these matrices as success?
 - Are there suggestions that can build a measure into one where all partners see their work reflected in the measure?
 - Are there alternative measures that can be adapted to measure the success of the program in a victim-centered way?
 - Are there incremental steps to success that you can track and build upon? For example, engaging in services or participating in follow-up interviews can be big steps for victims/survivors.
- Create a mission statement for the co-responder program.
- Talk to victims/survivors about what success looked like for them in the moment that a co-responder call occurred.

Example

Law enforcement may feel a good measure of success is fewer calls for service to the same address, but for a co-responder program, this may not be a good measure of success because the victim should feel safe calling law enforcement when they need additional assistance.

With your team in place and mission defined, it is time to select the core components of your community's co-responder program.

Step 5: Selecting Key Components

Your co-responder program structure will vary based on a variety of factors including the community's needs, size, available funding, organizational capacity, and more. When determining the format of your co-responder program, consider the following components:

When Do You Call an Advocate to the Scene?

A call comes in to 9-1-1, and officers are dispatched to the scene of a domestic call for service. Upon arriving and securing the scene, officers determine that an advocate should be called to co-respond. What is next?

Determining when to call an advocate to the scene or to include them in a follow-up visit is one of the first steps in designing your co-responder program. Responses need to be reliable and consistent, with consideration for back-up response needs when challenges arise (e.g., the victim/survivor might be LEP, speak a language of lesser diffusion, or use sign language).

There are multiple ways in which you can design your co-response. Important things to note:

- Advocate response time to an on-scene incident should not take longer than 30 to 45 minutes, unless working in a more rural community.
- On-scene calls for service will take 20 to 60 minutes, depending on the investigative needs of the call.
- Responses need to be reliable and consistent, with consideration for back-up response when challenges arise.

Jurisdictions across the country use different methods for initiating a call that require an advocate to co-respond with law enforcement. Below are a few examples.

Lethality assessment protocols and programs are tools that address safety and other needs and may be used in conjunction with a co-responder program. Advocates and law enforcement collaborate to ensure that the victim receives the specialized services that they need. Lethality assessments evaluate risk factors “on the spot” while identifying service provision needs in an expedited manner, minimizing re-traumatization of the victim, and exposure to unnecessary external factors.

Risk Assessment Response

When developing a co-responder program, a risk assessment tool that is currently used by your jurisdiction may be used to determine when to request an advocate to co-respond. It can also be used as a tool to gain a better understanding of the victim/survivor’s risk of danger. Examples of risk assessment strategies include, but are not limited to, risk/lethality assessments, Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams, and many more. For more information about risk assessment tools, visit the Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection website at DVRISC.org.

Risk assessment tools used on-scene by officers have a series of evidence-based questions to determine if a victim is at an elevated risk for being seriously injured or killed. High-risk factors include strangulation, the threat or use of a weapon, and the threat of violence against the victims. These factors are all automatic triggers for a high danger reading. Other risk factors—such as if the offender has access to a firearm, controls the victim’s activities, is unemployed, or has stalked the victim—can accumulate to trigger the protocol for high danger. Most risk assessment tools also include an officer’s investigation and observations at the scene. Based on the victim/survivor’s responses to these assessment tools, it can be determined that an advocate be called to the scene. Please note, risk assessment tools have varied success in responses for culturally and marginalized communities. Because of this reality, we recommend that additional protocol options are implemented to ensure that all victims/survivors benefit from your co-responder program. For more information on utilizing risk and lethality assessment strategies along with a co-responder program, please refer to [Supplementary Materials H](#).

High-Risk Team Response

High-risk teams are multidisciplinary professionals focused on holding accountable repeat domestic violence and/or sexual assault offenders. Many high-risk offenders are tracked by providing 9-1-1 dispatchers with their names and addresses, alerting law enforcement if a call for service involves that perpetrator. When that high-risk notification is provided, advocates can be dispatched at the same time to support the victims/survivors.

Ride-Along Response

If resources permit, consider having advocates in-car, riding with officers. This allows advocates to respond at the same moment as law enforcement. Once officers secure the scene, advocates can begin working with the victim/survivor. Operating in-car response teams requires large investments in staff time and equipment; however, the response is extremely victim-centered, bringing the advocates to the scene as soon as possible to ensure that the victim/survivor receives immediate support. It also creates an environment that builds trust and partnerships between co-responders riding together. For this type of model, it is important to outline partnership boundaries and ensure opportunities for advocates and officers to connect with staff from their own organizations.

Follow-Up Response

Using a follow-up co-response model gives the co-response team 24 to 48 hours to return to the victim/survivor’s home after a call for service to provide support and services. While the follow-up response is not immediate, it does allow the victim/survivor time to sleep, ensures that their children are taken care of, and that they have the capacity and time to talk. A follow-up co-response also provides

predictable schedules for advocacy staff, which can be less demanding on agency resources.

Co-Location Response

While co-location of services is not new, placing advocates in law enforcement facilities (e.g., police precincts, sheriff departments) has increased in recent years, and the co-location response model has expanded to more communities across the country. This model reduces risk and liability for advocates and provides predictable schedules for advocacy staff. It does not provide the in-home, on-scene support that other models provide.

This type of model may not be suitable to support victims/survivors who do not trust or want to engage with law enforcement, particularly in a law enforcement facility. To operate this type of model, it is critical that the advocates have a private place to work and meet with victims/survivors to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Placing an advocate in a cubicle with open workspace without a private place for conversations is not appropriate.

The response options mentioned in this guide can be used in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking cases. It is important to ensure that your co-responder team is trained in all areas of victimization and can support a victim/survivor's individual needs that arise from their specific situation and form of victimization. Your community, like many others, may choose to respond in multiple ways (e.g., combining an on-scene response with a follow-up option or having advocates located at the police department who can serve victims/survivors in the facility and accompany detectives on follow-up visits). Whatever response you choose, it is important that you formalize the response in policies, procedures, protocols, and/or guidelines so that all parties know when a co-response will be activated.

How Will the Advocate Respond?

One complex component of building a co-response model is determining how the advocate will respond to the scene. Advocates dispatched at the same

time as officers or responding in-car with officers will take less time and bring more immediate services to victims/survivors. This could also reduce officers' time on-scene, depending on the needs of the investigation. This response time advantage comes at a cost of having an advocate available for on-call shifts and/or during predetermined off-hours shifts. Advocates responding on their own will require reimbursement of mileage and/or require the use of an agency-owned vehicle. You will also need to consider vacation, sick leave, and training time coverage along with the supervision needed to support advocates working in the field.

On-call response models allow advocates to work separately from law enforcement in their own office or at home, in the evenings, and on weekends. As a jurisdiction, you can determine if response shifts are best suited for your co-response, depending on call volume.

An example is to have an advocate working a weekend shift on Saturday from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight, due to the high volume of calls received during that time, and then move to an on-call system from 12:00 Midnight to 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, as call volume during that time is lower.

Determining when to bring advocates into the co-response will depend on multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- Number of calls for service.
- Geographic considerations, including drive time for advocates responding from their offices and/or residences.
- Staffing levels for both law enforcement and victim service agencies.
- A process for determining if a co-response is required (e.g., all domestic violence/sexual assault calls, screening tool results, or high-risk designated addresses).

- Facility space for co-location options (advocates must have a private space for confidentiality purposes).
- Law enforcement vehicle availability for in-car co-response options.

Who Will Respond? A Community-Based Advocate, a System-Based Advocate, a Culturally Specific Advocate, or a Combination of Advocates?

Traditionally, co-responder models include either a system-based or community-based advocate. Communities benefit from having both types of advocates available to support victims/survivors as they navigate the criminal justice system or if they choose not to engage with the criminal justice system at all. Advocates should be trained to provide crisis intervention services focused on safety and helping the victim/survivor navigate the next 24 to 48 hours. Services needed for the victim/survivor beyond that time frame can be addressed in follow-up advocacy appointments. This results in the average time on-scene for a co-response to take 30 to 60 minutes. While determining who will respond with officers in your co-response model may be dependent on available resources, two additional consideration factors are key: confidentiality and advocate focus.

System-based advocates work with victims/survivors seeking help from the criminal justice system (e.g., via law enforcement agencies or prosecutor's offices and typically known as victim witness advocates). System-based advocates serve as the primary contact for victims/survivors within a specific criminal justice agency and focus on helping them navigate the criminal justice system. They have a detailed understanding and access to information about criminal justice proceedings. System-based advocates are invaluable in helping victims/survivors understand the complicated steps of the criminal justice process. While their advocacy work is trauma-informed, their end goal is typically two-fold: to support victims/survivors and to further an investigation or prosecution. **Information that a victim/survivor shares with a system-based advocate is not confidential and may be required**

to be shared with the defendant in a criminal case.

This may reduce a victim/survivor's willingness to communicate with a system-based advocate.

Community-based advocates are typically employed by nonprofit organizations including culturally specific organizations dedicated to assisting victims/survivors as a core component of their mission. Community-based advocates have a singular focus on supporting victims/survivors. Their services often include navigation of the criminal justice system but also additional systems and resources including housing, child protective services, childcare needs/services, employment, and much more. **Community-based advocates may be required by VAWA, other funding sources, and/or by state laws to keep all information about the victim/survivor confidential as well as information shared by the victim/survivor.**

Community-based advocates often have a broader range of referrals and resources available to meet the holistic needs of the victim/survivor and can work with them well beyond criminal justice proceedings. Because community-based advocates are required by law to keep a victim/survivor's information confidential, victims/survivors are often more willing to share information in greater detail, which can positively impact their safety.

The resources and structures in your community will determine if it is best to include a community-based advocate as part of your co-response program. **It is our recommendation to have a community-based advocate respond with officers to provide victims/survivors the opportunity to share the totality of their needs confidentially.** Each jurisdiction's representatives consult with the prosecuting authority to ensure that having the community-based advocate respond with officers complies with all statutory guidelines, rules of criminal procedure, and rules of evidence. For additional information, see [Supplementary Materials I](#).

Culturally specific advocates are employed by organizations with the singular focus of helping victims/survivors get the assistance that they need in a way most closely connected to their cultural norms and beliefs. Some culturally specific advocates

may be protected by federal confidentiality requirements, providing confidential services to victims/survivors if their organization's funding sources have confidentiality requirements. Culturally specific advocates are highly beneficial and can provide services in a way that supports the culture of a victim/survivor. **Providing a co-response in a victim/survivor's primary language is not all there is to being culturally responsive.** Understanding cultural norms, values, appropriate resources,

not be able to share information that the victim/survivor has shared with them in confidence. **Victims/survivors are entitled to safety and services regardless of whether they choose to involve the criminal justice system.** It is important for all partners to understand and respect these differences. All advocates are focused on the safety of victims/survivors and are trained to use a trauma-informed approach when supporting them.

“When we respond to a call and meet with victims who are Spanish speaking only (i.e., the majority of citizens in our division), you can see their sigh of relief when Erica, a community-based advocate, and I greet them in Spanish. Erica never hesitates to translate information for the victims to complete a restraining order (certain courts only accept statements written in English). Erica enjoys accompanying victims to court during their restraining order hearing and criminal hearing. Victims cannot thank her enough when Erica is right there by their side as support and to clarify the process and court procedures for them.”

—Los Angeles Police Department, DART Unit Officer

historical trauma, and primary concerns/needs are all ways that a culturally specific advocate can benefit a co-response team. If a culturally specific organization is not able to be part of an on-scene co-response due to resources or agency mission, including them in direct follow-up services for victims/survivors is critical and should be a formal component of any co-responder policy or procedure. It is also essential that culturally specific advocacy organizations are compensated for their efforts. This consideration should take place when requesting funds for your co-responder program.

Confidentiality

While law enforcement can share information, the advocate, on the other hand, may be bound by privilege or confidentiality requirements.⁸ They may

What Happens On-Scene?

After the co-responder team has been notified by a call for service or follow-up visit to respond to a location, the first step is for the officer to secure the scene. A co-responding advocate should not attempt to contact a victim/survivor until their law enforcement partner has indicated that it is safe to do so. Each jurisdiction should determine how to signal that the scene is secure between partners.

Once law enforcement has secured the scene and determined that it is safe, the advocate should garner as much information as possible from law enforcement prior to engaging with the victim/survivor to better assess the victim/survivor's needs for support and services. This may include information from the victim/survivor's statement,

⁸ When an advocate talks about confidentiality, they are typically referring to 34 U.S.C. 12291(b)(2), a provision of VAWA that requires all grantees and subgrantees receiving VAWA funding from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, to protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons to whom those grantees and subgrantees are providing services.

Courageous Conversation

What will co-responding partners do on-scene when officers do not have probable cause to make an arrest, but the victim/survivor and advocate believe that the abusive partner should be taken into custody?

results from a risk/lethality assessment screening, or information about past calls for service to the location. When an advocate conducts their conversation with a victim/survivor, it is critical that it takes place in a safe, private location away from surrounding parties (out of earshot), including law enforcement, to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Body-Worn Cameras

While developing a co-response model, one conversation that will need to occur is how the team will handle law enforcement officers with BWCs. While BWCs can assist with criminal investigations and be used by victims/survivors in civil court, this can conflict with confidentiality and safety concerns for the victim/survivor. Recordings can be used to

Courageous Conversation

An officer is on-scene speaking to a victim/survivor and wearing a BWC. The advocate notices that the victim/survivor is uncomfortable speaking to law enforcement. How can you effectively explain the situation and role of confidentiality to the officer?

review the accuracy of interpreted conversations. Confidentiality for victims/survivors is not only about privacy, but also about increasing and maintaining safety.

There are many ways that law enforcement officers can address this on-scene. For example, patrol officers wear BWCs on-scene, but secondary officers responding as part of a co-response team do not. Another example is to train officers to walk away and give advocates space and time to privately talk with victims/survivors on-scene.

Benefits of BWCs to Survivors

Victims/survivors have stated that the BWCs are a life-saving tool for them in the situations of gender-based violence as well as racism and discrimination. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have also benefitted from the footage retrieved from BWCs, in some instances reducing dual arrests and documenting unfair or inequitable treatment. On-site recordings of an abusive situation or of excited utterances may assist victims/survivors in their defense or for use in protective order hearings. BWC footage is also beneficial to survivors who experienced trauma and had forgotten the details of the events. Footage may also be useful to victims/survivors, providing an opportunity to review how the advocates and officers interact with the victim/survivor.

For more information on BWC policy and best practices, consult [National Forum on BWCs and Violence Against Women](#).

Safety Planning

Once the advocate begins to speak with the victim/survivor, they utilize the de-escalation and crisis intervention skills that they have acquired to gather information from the victim/survivor to safety plan and support the victim/survivor for the next 24 to 48 hours. Advocates on-scene should be prepared to support the victim/survivor in the way that they feel most comfortable. This is also the point at which the responding advocate must determine if they are the appropriate responding advocate to complete

the safety planning phase. The advocate and law enforcement co-response team may determine that a culturally specific advocate or a community-based advocate is needed in a particular situation for the most effective safety planning. One example may be if the co-responder team is male and the victim/survivor is a Muslim woman who is prohibited by religious rule to be alone with males; a culturally specific or faith-based advocate may be called to the scene to complete the safety planning. This should include safety planning around:

- The victim/survivor staying in the home if the abusive partner is in custody.
- The victim/survivor staying in the home if the abusive partner is not in custody.
- The victim/survivor moving into a shelter or other alternative housing.
- The victim/survivor needing to receive medical or other emergency services.
- The victim/survivor's child/children.

If officer assistance is needed for transport or arrest information, the advocate can help the victim/survivor communicate their needs for follow-up assistance.

Safety Planning With a Limited English Proficient Victim/Survivor

When law enforcement officers respond to a domestic violence call involving LEP victims, it is crucial to ensure language access to effectively communicate and provide support. Here are some steps that law enforcement should consider taking on the scene:

1. Assess the language barrier:

- Recognize potential language barriers by observing the victim's difficulty in understanding or responding in English.
- Ask simple questions to gauge the level of English proficiency.
- If there is a clear language barrier, take immediate action to ensure effective communication.

2. Utilize language access resources:

- Carry language identification cards or utilize mobile translation applications to identify the victim's language.
- Contact a professional interpreter service or language line to facilitate communication.
- If available, use department-provided interpreters or bilingual officers who are proficient in the victim's language.

3. Provide written materials:

- Offer written materials, such as brochures or pamphlets, translated into the victim's language.
- Ensure that these materials are culturally appropriate and contain information about available support services.

4. Document language access efforts:

- Document the steps taken to ensure language access in the incident report.
- Record the use of interpreters, language identification tools, or any other language access resources utilized.

5. Seek additional support:

- If the language barrier is significant or if complex legal or safety issues arise, consider involving a victim advocate who speaks the victim's language.
- Victim advocates can provide emotional support, explain the legal process, and connect the victim with additional resources.

Remember, creating a safe and supportive environment for LEP victims is essential. By prioritizing language access and employing trained interpreters or bilingual officers, law enforcement can effectively communicate, ensure meaningful participation, and provide appropriate support to LEP victims of domestic violence.

Identifying the Predominant Aggressor and Dual Arrests

The **QVW Policing Guidance** states that having officers trained to distinguish between an assailant's violence and a victim's self-defense actions is **critical**. It is common in domestic violence incidents for both the abuser and the victim to have used physical force.

Law enforcement officers should be aware of the potential for abusers to report domestic violence complaints preemptively, claiming that they themselves are the victims or that a victim may feel safe to retaliate once law enforcement is present. Deciding on-scene who the predominant aggressor is can be challenging, which sometimes leads to dual arrests or arresting the wrong party. This may happen when defensive wounds are present or when the victim is animated, angry, or hostile and perceived by the officer(s) as posing a threat of violence.

Prior to implementing your co-responder program, we recommend that your jurisdiction develops a protocol for identifying predominant aggressors and that discourages dual arrests of an offender and a victim/survivor. Training law enforcement to understand and apply self-defense laws can help them avoid making dual arrests.

When a victim is arrested for retaliating in self-defense against their abuser—or “hitting them first” in one instance, even though the party who hit first is the victim of ongoing and more dangerous abuse—it leaves the victim vulnerable to further harm and less likely to call for police assistance next time. Arresting victims punitively subjects them to the legal system when they are, in fact, in urgent need of protection. Law enforcement should use discretion in making arrest decisions based on which party poses a threat to the other party or public safety. Such discretion, if permitted, must be done in a bias-free manner, and reviewed for bias as part of routine supervisor reviews of arrest decisions and data analysis.

Make sure to include the role of the advocate partner in dual arrest situations. How and when they can talk to each party, when services can be provided,

and debriefing arrest decisions after the call for service between partners are all important factors to consider.

In addition, it is critical to understand predominant aggressors and dual arrests in culturally specific communities, as it requires careful consideration of several factors. Often, when only one party speaks English and an interpreter is not used, the non-English speaking victim is identified as the aggressor.

Some key considerations are:

1. Different cultures may have unique perspectives on gender roles, power dynamics, and conflict resolution. It is important to approach the issue with cultural sensitivity, avoiding assumptions or stereotypes.
2. Language barriers can hinder communication and understanding between law enforcement and culturally specific communities. Providing interpreters or bilingual officers can help ensure accurate interpretation of statements and reduce misunderstandings.
3. Each culture may have its own norms and values regarding family dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and conflict resolution. Understanding these cultural norms is crucial to accurately assess the dynamics of a situation and determine the predominant aggressor.
4. Prioritize the safety and well-being of victims while considering cultural factors. Engaging with culturally specific organizations and community leaders can help provide support and resources to victims while respecting cultural values and preferences.
5. Building trust and fostering collaboration with culturally specific communities is vital. Engaging community leaders, cultural organizations, and advocates in dialogue and decision-making processes can help develop effective strategies for addressing domestic violence within these communities.
6. Law enforcement officers should receive cultural competency training to be sensitive to the unique needs and challenges of

culturally specific communities. This includes understanding cultural nuances, biases, and effective communication strategies.

7. Collecting accurate data on predominant aggressor determinations and dual arrests within culturally specific communities is important. Research can help identify patterns, barriers, and effective practices for addressing domestic violence in these communities.

Each culturally specific community is unique, and it is crucial to approach them with an open mind, respect, and a willingness to learn and adapt strategies to best serve their needs.

Concluding a Call

When concluding a call, some jurisdictions take the opportunity to have the victim/survivor sign paperwork, particularly forms, which allow advocates to share detailed information with law enforcement. Given what is known about the trauma that domestic and sexual violence causes and how it impacts the brain, **it is not recommended to have victims/survivors sign paperwork on-scene**, including *Release of Information* forms. Signing forms and information releases can have a lasting effect on a victim/survivor's case. Saving this step until a follow-up visit allows the victim/survivor to deescalate from the traumatic event that they experienced. Advocates can inform the co-responding officers that they developed a safety plan with the victim/survivor and provided follow-up information without releasing

When completing police reports, we recommend that police and community-based organizations work with the prosecution to determine their jurisdiction's requirements with respect to identifying data in police reports. Building this partnership is intended to solidify the working relationship between law enforcement, prosecution, and community-based advocates as they work together to ensure victim safety and offender accountability.

specific details so that the officer knows that the co-response incident is concluded, and the team can move on to the next call or return to the station. A release of information form is different than a referral form. If an advocate is unavailable, a law enforcement co-responder may need to collect contact information from the victim/survivor so that advocates can make follow-up phone calls with the victim/survivor's permission.

What Will Happen During a Follow-Up Visit?

A follow-up visit can typically last from 20 to 40 minutes and will begin with the officer ensuring that the scene is secure and safe. Officers usually remain present during a follow-up visit, so it is important to let the victim/survivor know that the limits to confidentiality have changed now that the officer is present. If the victim/survivor would like to speak to the advocate alone, ask the officer to move far enough away so that the conversation can be held confidentially.

During the follow-up visit, the focus of advocacy services is to support the victim/survivor through safety planning, answering questions, providing information, and making referrals for additional services such as counseling.

What Equipment Will Be Needed?

In addition to personnel, equipment will be necessary for a successful program. The following are some items to consider when developing your program; these will depend on what type of co-responder model you choose:

- **Laptop:** Password protected and a versatile option compared to a desktop computer, especially if responding in the field or working in different offices.
- **Tablet:** Password protected, important if you are going to utilize videoconferencing (i.e., advocates virtually connecting to a victim/survivor); also useful for interpretation services.
- **Wireless hot spot:** For when you may need access to the Internet.

- **Business cell phone:** Necessary to protect victim/survivor confidentiality.
- **Camera:** Necessary to document victim/survivor injuries, documents, or location—can be combined with the cell phone, as newer phones have high-quality cameras.
- **Educational, marketing, and promotional material including business cards.**
- **Ballistic vest:** This is if an advocate will be responding in the field where an emergency may arise.
- **Vehicle:** This is if you will need a specially assigned vehicle to keep transport and store equipment in or if responders will use a shared vehicle (i.e., a business vehicle used by nonteam members, so it will need to be cleaned out every day).
- **Advocate identification badge or card.**
- **Victim/survivor transportation costs:** If your team will be assisting the victim/survivor with transportation, consider having some pre-loaded transit cards or creating an account with a ride-share program to easily request rides when needed.
- **Portable scanner:** Advocates may need to scan releases of information or other important documents that require a victim/survivor's signature on-scene.

Step 6: Formalize Decisions, Manage Logistics, and Implement Your Co-Responder Program

Once you have selected your co-responder model and secured the appropriate equipment and personnel to implement your program, now is the time to formalize procedures, manage legal and human resource logistics, and officially put your co-responder program into practice.

Policies, Procedures, and Program Guides

When starting a new program, we often rely on existing procedures and the experiences of our team members. In thinking about longevity and sustainability, it is important to have set policies in place for your co-responder program. To ensure

the safety of victims/survivors, advocates, and law enforcement officers, there must be confidence in the consistency of the co-responder actions. For these reasons, you must move beyond expected practices into the creation of concrete, documented policies. **We recommend developing co-responder program policies and procedures.** This can be in the form of a program guide or another official set of actions agreed upon by all partners. The policy and procedure manual should also provide clear instructions on steps to work through the challenges that may arise, such as providing no-cost access to victims/survivors who are LEP or use different modes of communication.

Developing policies necessary to implement a co-responder program begins during the partnership development phase. As you establish roles and responsibilities, make sure to define success for your co-responder program, create accountability and reporting structures, evaluate your program's impact and areas for improvement, and formalize those decisions. You can begin the formalization process by developing an MOU with project partners and creating a program manual for co-responding staff. Also ensure that you build co-responder program expectations into co-responding staff and supervisors' job descriptions.

The development of a co-responder program policy and procedure manual is an actionable step toward maintaining institutional knowledge.

It is important when developing policies to think about scalability and sustainability. Employ a process that can be taught and replicated throughout each agency that is involved.

Samples of MOUs can be found in the [Supplementary Materials J](#).

Legal Considerations

Each partner organization should connect with legal counsel to determine what legal considerations could impact program design and implementation. There are many legal implications to consider when implementing a co-responder program, including but not limited to:

- Related state and local laws:
 - State and local laws will vary widely and may contradict each other. It is important to keep up-to-date with any laws affecting the implementation of your program.
 - Certain states have statutorily required risk or lethality assessments.
- Liability issues for co-responding agencies and individuals:
 - A co-responder program will inherently cause different liability issues for every discipline involved. It is imperative that you have robust discussions and policies related to liability and mitigating risk to your agency (e.g., insurance, staff training, and protective equipment). The best way to mitigate risk is to have clear and honest communication between partner agencies about apprehensions, safety concerns, and resources needed. **We strongly advise that agencies and organizations consult with counsel.** Successful communities have overcome this concern by having a clear understanding of roles on-scene and organization protections.
- Examples of risk factors to consider include but are not limited to:
 - Workers' compensation insurance for staff now working in the field instead of in an office setting.
 - Staff health care needs (e.g., vaccinations, accommodations for their new work setting).
 - Protective equipment.
 - Communication equipment.
- Opening community-based advocates to potential subpoena:
 - Being on-scene can make a community-based advocate a witness to an ongoing crime.
 - Acting in a first responder capacity, a responding advocate could hear, "excited utterances" or other information that can be used as testimony in court proceedings. Each state has different laws and requirements for these situations.
- Requiring staff to work different shifts than your agency is accustomed to.
 - Be aware of labor laws in your state and how they apply to shift work and overtime.

Personnel and Recruitment

When recruiting and selecting members of the co-responder team, law enforcement and victim/survivor service agencies may want to follow the guidelines set forth in their policies outlining the selection of personnel for a specialized unit or assignment.

Working in a co-responder program is different from other units in any department. There should be more scrutiny to ensure that those in the field have the right experience and commitment. Law enforcement leadership may want to seek legal guidance regarding any union contract language as it applies to recruitment and selection of personnel. It is also important that job postings and bulletins clearly define and outline specific co-responder program expectations.

The team should be diverse and reflect the demographic of the community that will be supported on-scene. Consider the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic makeup of your co-response teams, as well as the historical and geographical location of the participants, to ensure that the response team will be both respectful and accepted by the community that it is sworn to protect and serve.

Staffing is a critical component of any successful co-responder program, and teams that have shown the most longevity have a staffing model that has substitutes available to fill in during personal leave, training, and other needs. Your department should discuss feasibility and plan accordingly based upon funding and capacity.

Implementing a co-responder program can change partner organizations' staffing models and even the nature of the work expected of staff. For example, depending on the type of co-responder program that you are implementing, advocates who were once working in an office setting may now be working in the field, in homes, or at government facilities. The

increased risk, necessary professional skills, and nontraditional work schedules require appropriate compensation. This may include shift differential and other benefits offered to personnel in similar assignments.

Different funding sources have limitations on the way that staff are compensated. It is important to review your funding source guidelines to determine if hazard pay or stipends are possible.

We recommend having advocates work specific shifts, including evening and weekend shifts, instead of using an on-call system. On-call work leads to burnout and turnover due to the nature of pivoting from personal life activities (e.g., sleeping) to crisis work. Shifts also reduce response times and other barriers to response work (missing a call, weather issues, etc.).

When determining suitable compensation for teams, consider how much each partner agency is compensating its team and if those pay scales should be more equitable. Traditionally, law enforcement officers are paid higher salaries than advocates because of the nature of their work. When looking at a co-responder model, the risks and nature of the work performed by advocates and officers are more closely aligned. The pay should reflect these similarities. **The work is hard, so be sure to offer competitive salaries to recruit the best qualified individuals.**

The disciplines in a co-responder program have different trends related to staff turnover. For example, law enforcement agencies have a historically lower rate of turnover than victim service agencies because of factors including compensation, benefits, and retirement plans; however, rotating law enforcement through different

departments can increase turnover for the co-responder program. At the onset of building your co-responder program, address development and implementation strategies to deal with turnover for the different disciplines involved in your model.

When developing a program, be realistic about the typical retention period for each position. **We encourage a rolling hiring practice to avoid gaps in service.** While funding is a main driver, retaining just one advocate per position means that when an advocate leaves, the vacancy will create a lag time that could be months before the reintroduction of services. This could be detrimental to your program, as the skills and relationships necessary for the program will be lacking. In addition to time for recruitment and onboarding, consider the training time necessary to learn the role. Training will take between three to six months, including the mentoring process. Considering these practices on the front end can reduce the likelihood of staff being overburdened or failing to fulfill contract requirements because of an inability to respond to your program's criteria.

Communities implementing successful co-responder models have a clear structure of leadership and accountability. Successful programs are usually overseen by supervisors that have experience in cross-disciplinary collaboration and are committed to the program, including the process of maintaining the necessary partnerships and holding their staff accountable. It is important to select co-responder program supervisors who are not responding law enforcement or victim/survivor advocates.

Review the Human Resources Considerations document in [Supplemental Materials K](#) to learn about strategies to encourage staff retention, such as vicarious trauma support, job satisfaction surveys, professional development opportunities, and a dedicated sustainability position.

Piloting a Co-Responder Model

Because challenges are inevitable, developing mechanisms to effectively identify and address issues is a crucial part of program development. One strategy is to begin implementation on a pilot basis with a built-in system for regular check-ins among partners and assessment of how things are progressing. Once the kinks are worked out through changes in approach or policy adjustments, the program can be expanded to its final dimensions.

Some piloting options include, but are not limited to, beginning implementation with:

- One officer and one advocate, during a limited number of shifts.
- One precinct or district before launching a wider rollout.
- Follow-up visits before moving to an on-scene response.

Remember at every step to ask,

“What are the most effective ways that a co-responder team can support victims/survivors from *all* of our communities?”

Sharing Your Co-Responder Program

Gaining buy-in from key leaders and administrators in law enforcement, victim/survivor advocate organizations, community-based representation, and the community at large is vital to the program's success. Once the community has committed to supporting a co-responder program, a targeted outreach and awareness campaign should be created.

Public education campaigns engaging diverse and culturally specific populations, such as historically underserved groups such as Native American, Black, LGBTQIA+, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latin, immigrant communities, communities of impending gentrification, campus communities, rural communities, military communities, the elderly, and others will help to address the unique barriers that each group faces when seeking services.

Emphasize and reassure individuals that the goal in making these connections is not to bring disciplinary or legal action, but to aid victims/survivors. Additional multilingual and adaptive public service announcements may be created in unison with local organizations. Finally, take advantage of other opportunities such as local events, city council meetings, and town hall sessions to share information about your co-responder program.

“Officer Charles, an officer with the LAPD DART Unit, has participated in community outreach efforts to educate the community on domestic violence, including information on the co-responder program at their Citizen’s Academy. After the presentation, Officer Charles answered questions from community members, bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community.”

—Los Angeles Police Department, DART Unit

Training

Training Delivery

Co-responder training delivery should be conducted in-person and as a team whenever possible. While this form of training can be difficult from a resource perspective, the benefit to trainees is important due to the nuances of cross-discipline partnerships, conducted in a complex environment.

Training must be carefully designed and include role-plays, scenarios, and modeling by leadership. The training team should be multidisciplinary, including at least a law enforcement representative and an advocate as faculty. Likewise, the development of curricula and training objectives should be the purview of a multidisciplinary training team that seeks input and feedback from a range of partner groups, especially all project team members—including community partners, such as culturally specific, community-based organizations. Community partners should receive financial compensation for the time that they invest in the program, providing input and feedback for the training. Additional faculty beyond an advocate law enforcement team should be created, where appropriate for the subject matter.

Multiple strategies for delivering the training are available, and each community should consider which one(s) are most appropriate given the size of the community and partner agencies, their administrative and operational structure, audience, and content. Depending on these characteristics, consider using such strategies as, but not limited to roll call training, informal meetings within agencies, and city/ jurisdiction-wide training programs.

In addition to ensuring that multidisciplinary teams lead training programs, those responsible for the development of training should consider convening cross-training opportunities where possible. This incorporates opportunities for co-learning by law enforcement and advocates. Disciplines can also train each other on issues within their own expertise and address topics in which there

may be different approaches and/or professional expectations and limitations (e.g., confidentiality for advocates, mandatory arrest, and other professional requirements or standards for law enforcement). Such programs present fruitful opportunities for the conversations that are at the heart of an effective partnership and co-responder program. Having all key players present provides the additional value of multiple perspectives on challenging topics. As an example, a cross-training on stalking can enhance the work of both advocates and law enforcement. Advocates can train law enforcement on victim/survivor experiences and perspectives, and law enforcement can train advocates on what constitutes probable cause and evidence gathering.

Training Topics

Successful co-responder programs have foundational knowledge on best practices. Training curricula should be based on effective adult-education principles and include practical exercises and opportunities to apply the material presented during training programs.⁹

Pre-requisite trainings before beginning a co-responder program include:

- Fundamental VAWA crimes training, including the possible differences between statutory definitions of domestic abuse and the important dynamics often present in these cases, including coercive control, financial abuse, technological abuse, immigration-related abuse, and other forms of power and control beyond physical violence and threats thereof.
- Understanding confidentiality for victim advocates.
- Resources available in the community.
- Culturally responsive engagement for advocacy and law enforcement agencies.
- Principles of safety planning as a dynamic activity (not static, one-and-done).
 - The use of technology in safety planning.

⁹ See Futures Without Violence, <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/ILED>.

- Trauma-responsive policing and advocacy.
- Effective communication between the community, advocates, and law enforcement.
- The use of technology as an abusive tactic/tool.
- The impact of domestic violence on children.
- Vicarious trauma.
- Report writing and review, terminology, and language.
- Law enforcement-specific training (can be co-training):
 - Exploration of why victims/survivors may not report or disclose abuse, why they may recant or drop cases, the effects (and neurobiology) of trauma, trauma-responsive report writing, confidentiality, and other related topics.
- Coordination of the co-responder program with other existing programs.
- Ensuring culturally responsive implementation, in partnership with culturally specific organizations.
- Utilizing language access resources.
- Working with prosecution partners.
- Advocate-specific training:
 - Law enforcement radio training.
 - Advocate on-scene training to include, but not limited to, information about vehicles and equipment used, dispatch, active shooter trainings, and medical response technician first aid training.

Primary trainings for implementation of a co-responder program include:

- Purpose and effective implementation of policies, practices, forms, and other elements of the co-responder program and other relevant policies.
- Trauma-informed interviewing for law enforcement and advocates.
- Exploration of the roles of program participants (i.e., law enforcement and advocates) and other partners; discussion of each other's perspectives, objectives, responsibilities, and limitations; and how to navigate differences to best serve the community. Examples of topics for discussion:
 - The responsibility of advocates to assist victims/survivors, not join in investigations.
 - The responsibility and discretion of law enforcement to pursue certain cases.
 - Reports/allegations that trigger mandatory arrest or other required actions by law enforcement.
- Effective and authentic communication between advocates and law enforcement.
- Impact of BWCs on co-response work.
- Resolving conflicts with grace and compassion.

Recommended on-the-job training includes:

- Ride-along for responding staff and supervisors.
- Shadowing requirements for new staff.
- Mentoring assignments for new staff.
- Tours of both partner agency facilities.

Additional trainings recommended for a co-responder program include:

- Identifying predominant aggressors.
- Information about available community resources (including culturally specific community-based organizations).
- Ongoing training for law enforcement and advocates on current trends or promising practices such as strangulation, firearms seizure and surrender, stalking, and sexual assault response.
- Language access for LEP victims of crime.
- LGBTQIA+ victims of gender-based violence.
- Immigrant victims of gender-based violence.

Prosecutors should be included in co-training programs to help advocates and law enforcement better understand the responsibilities and professional limitations of prosecutors and their perspective on what is necessary to pursue a criminal prosecution.

Follow-Up Training and Retraining

The inevitability of turnover in personnel, the emergence of unanticipated challenges and training needs, and advances in best practices make it essential that co-responder programs continue to assess educational needs. Following this assessment, develop and deliver follow-up and specialized training, as well as retraining.

Programs should also establish a mechanism to identify mentors for new law enforcement officers and advocates and create a process to ask questions and seek assistance with issues that arise during implementation. Supervision is essential for both law enforcement and advocates to ensure continuity of service provision and support for co-responding partners. It is important to remember that laws may be added or changed annually that could impact your co-responder program. Recommended follow-up training programs include:

- Annual staff retraining (8-hour in service).

- Academy training for new officers.
- Regular roll call mini trainings and reminders.
- Advocacy staff onboarding requirements.
- On-scene shadowing or mentoring for partner agencies.

Follow-up and retraining are critical to sustaining your co-responder model. Be sure to budget funds to conduct these trainings.

Once training has commenced and been completed, it is essential to consider your program’s sustainability. We encourage you to think broadly about the concept of sustainability regarding your co-responder program, since there are several key components involved in ensuring that your program continues to be effective and impactful year-after-year. Please see [Supplementary Materials L](#) for example training topics and learning objectives.

Sustaining Your Co-Responder Program

Community needs evolve over time. The specific communities that we recognize as underserved or vulnerable will change, and the program must provide space and flexibility for change as you consider sustainability. Engaging with culturally specific organizations and having ongoing dialogue with victims/survivors and the agencies that serve

them does not end with program development. We encourage you to develop, standardize, and institutionalize a process of ongoing community engagement for the purpose of being responsive to the current and future dynamics of your community. This process will also benefit your partners as organizations experience events, internally and externally, that can dramatically impact and even change their organizations. Develop a proactive process so that your agencies are not forced to react to societal trends or events that will arise over time.

Courageous Conversation

A negative incident involving law enforcement is reported in a local newspaper. How will partners work through the situation in a way that is supportive, promotes accountability, and works to find solutions?

We recommend evaluating progress, challenges, and the overall success of the program six months after implementation. Moving forward, your co-responder team membership may change, but the team should continue to meet at least quarterly, making these topics standing agenda items.

Because of the nature of co-responder work, staff turnover and burnout do occur. Law enforcement

and advocates will experience high levels of **vicarious trauma** and burnout. Supervisors need to be aware of these critical issues, check in regularly with staff, and provide wellness opportunities.

Evaluating Your Program’s Effectiveness

Documenting and sharing your co-responder program’s impact and successes serves many purposes. It can help you achieve financial and structural stability for the work by attracting greater community and partner support, including dedicated funding for the program. By demonstrating the effectiveness of your program in concrete terms, you maintain energy and buy-in from the leadership of the partner organizations. By telling the story of your project and its successes to a broader audience, you provide hope for victims/survivors and others in the community that there is a place to turn for safety and support. Of course, funders may require that you collect and evaluate data from your program and explain how partners will use it to ensure program quality and to report community impact.

To be successful and reflect the needs and goals of your community, documentation and evaluation must include meaningful participation by a diverse group of community partners, including historically underserved and marginalized groups. These partners can help gather information about community needs and concerns, which should be used to shape the metrics against which the program’s accomplishments are measured. For example, if community organizations report that victims/survivors from a specific population regret having called law enforcement because doing so did not make them feel safer or more connected with support and services, one potential set of metrics to consider would be measures of victim/survivor experiences through surveys or focus groups.

As you and your partners discuss strategies to document and measure the impact of your work, you should consider both **quantitative** and **qualitative** measures; examples of each are provided in the chart below.

Measuring and Documenting Your Co-Responder Program

Quantitative	Qualitative
Number of calls for service resulting in a co-response	Victims/survivors’ reports of experiences calling law enforcement
Number of victims/survivors referred to services (shelter, advocacy, legal, etc.)	Victims/survivors’ reports of whether they feel safe after calling law enforcement
Number of victims/survivors accessing services	Partner (law enforcement/advocacy) perceptions of program impact/benefits
Performance measures: For example, number of co- and cross-trainings involving implementing agencies, number of public presentations on the program, or the number of community partners participating in meetings	Non-implementing agencies’ perceptions of the program
Review dispatch recordings (incoming calls and radio transmissions)	Community perceptions (including historically marginalized and underserved) of the program

Metrics can be incorporated in the strategies that you develop to obtain ongoing feedback on your program from partners and from the community. For example, you can ask questions that address the qualitative measures that you adopt for your program on a regular basis to track progress and identify emerging and ongoing challenges. You can also gather data related to quantitative measures on a regular basis.

Program partners should review and analyze all the data and information as it is collected for the purposes of documenting and sharing any successes and to course correct and ensure that you sustain program quality. Another component of evaluating the effectiveness of your program is to compare data on services provided through the program to the areas of identified needs to discern mismatches that can be addressed through new funding requests and reallocation of existing funding.

Flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances are hallmarks of effective programs. Data collection and analysis of needs versus services provided enable you to remain flexible and responsive and thus maximize your program's impact. In addition to analyzing data, you can conduct quality assurance reviews of:

- BWC footage.
- Police reports (recommended frequently), and supervisors can accompany co-response calls.

Evaluating ongoing partnerships is a beneficial endeavor to ensure the health of your co-responder program. Regular (quarterly, semi-annually) evaluation of the co-responder partnership provide supervisors with the opportunity to understand the realities of the co-responding staff and for co-responding staff the opportunity to share their opinions with leadership. Possible partnership measurements include:

- Job satisfaction.
- Satisfaction with their partner.
- Questions surrounding burnout and/or vicarious trauma.
- Inquiring about concerns/ideas/areas of improvement.
- Quality of communications.

If your agency has a dedicated sustainability position, consider making an evaluation component a part of their ongoing job duties. For resources regarding evaluation of co-responder programs, please see [Supplementary Materials M](#).

Conclusion

By responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking as a team, law enforcement and advocates can provide a more comprehensive and effective response to support victims/survivors and enhance community safety. Together, co-responder teams can build the skills, capacity, and relationships to address these violent crimes with expertise and care. Advocates can safely ensure that victims receive the comprehensive information and support that they need during a crisis, while law enforcement can focus on securing the scene and investigating the crime. This collaborative approach can enhance public trust in law enforcement and improve community safety.

Developing a co-responder program for VAWA crimes is not an easy task, and we hope this guide offers actionable and useful information to get you started on your journey. Should you require further assistance, please visit [LETTAC.org](https://www.lettac.org) or connect with the dedicated LETTAC support team at Contact@LETTAC.org.

LETTAC is a streamlined point of entry for law enforcement and partners to access tailored assistance to guide and strengthen efforts to best respond to, investigate, and prosecute intimate partner violence and VAWA crimes in a trauma-informed manner, supporting victim healing, safety, and justice. Request

LETTAC tailored assistance and get connected with seasoned Consortium members—leaders, trainers, SMEs, and innovators in the field—poised to support gender-based violent crime priorities in all jurisdictions and localities (including tribal nations and culturally specific communities and groups). These experts are LETTAC’s strength, our unique offering to the field, and the very backbone of our TTA.

In addition to collaborations and partnerships (e.g., implementing a co-responder model), other highly in-demand LETTAC training topics include trauma-informed interviewing, investigations, and report writing; determining the predominant aggressor; sexual assault investigations; and strangulation. To learn more about available training and request curated support, visit lettac.org/TTA. Interested in exploring other VAWA-related resources like this guide? Visit the LETTAC Clearinghouse at lettac.org/Clearinghouse for self-directed learning and discovery.

LETTAC Clearinghouse

The LETTAC Clearinghouse curates resources, expertise, and insights from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and partner agencies; innovators and leaders in the field; and peers to support your self-directed learning and exploration. Visit often for the latest additions and featured content.



LETTAC is a by-the-field, for-the-field resource founded on the driving goal of serving victims/survivors by supporting law enforcement. Connect with us today at lettac.org or Contact@LETTAC.org.

“When we followed up on a referral that we received from patrol officers, Erica, a victim advocate working with the Los Angeles Police Department’s DART Unit, introduced herself to the victim and explained who we were and the resources that we offered to victims of domestic violence. The victim did not have any family in California, it was just her and her daughter. She didn’t know where to seek help and at times felt hopeless because she felt alone with no support. I could see the victim crying, but she was crying because she never expected such support from the police and their partners. She authorized services and accepted all the help and information that Erica offered.”

—Los Angeles Police Department, DART Unit

Supplementary Materials Index

- A [Organizational Culture Characteristics](#)
- B [Role-Play Scenarios](#)
- C [Tips on Community Mapping](#)
- D [Co-Responder Model Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#)
- E [Los Angeles Police Department Domestic Abuse Response Team \(DART\) Case Study](#)
- F [Sample Position Descriptions](#)
- G [Guiding Principles Tool](#)
- H [Comparing Risk Assessment Tools Through a Co-Responder Lens](#)
- I [Advocate Roles](#)
- J [Example Memorandums of Understanding](#)
- K [Human Resources Considerations](#)
- L [Example Training Topics and Learning Objectives](#)
- M [Resources for Co-Responder Programs](#)

Supplementary Materials A

Organizational Culture Characteristics

Co-Responder Program Understanding Organizational Culture

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on Understanding Organizational Culture and supports the content in A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Understanding Organizational Culture section](#).

These characteristics of organizational culture can support an agency's ability to fully participate in and grow successful collaborations with other organizations:

- **Mission and purpose:** A strong culture often centers around a clear mission and purpose that guide actions and decisions.
- **Values and beliefs:** Organizational culture is built on a set of core values and beliefs that define what is important and desirable within the organization.
- **Norms and behaviors:** How members communicate, collaborate, and solve problems shapes decision-making, risk-taking, and adapting to change.
- **Leadership style:** Leaders' behaviors, communication styles, and priorities set the tone for the entire organization. Effective leaders are often aligned with the culture that they want to foster and function as role models for desired behaviors.
- **Communication and transparency:** Open and transparent communication is an important aspect of a healthy organizational culture. When communication flows freely and information is shared, it promotes trust, collaboration, and a sense of belonging.
- **Learning and innovation:** A culture that values continual learning and innovation encourages employees to seek innovative ideas, experiment, and take calculated risks, fostering a dynamic organization that can thrive.
- **Social dynamics:** Organizational culture also influences social interactions within the workplace. It can shape the degree of formality, inclusivity, and social cohesion among employees.
- **Service focus:** A culture that places a strong emphasis on understanding and meeting the needs of those that it serves encourages members to provide excellent service, build lasting relationships, and strive for the satisfaction of those that it serves.

Organizational culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that characterize an organization. You may call it the "personality" of an organization. This culture influences how members think, behave, and interact with each other as well as with those outside the organization.

Organizational culture is shaped by a variety of factors, including an organization's history, its leadership styles, norms within the professions of members of the organization, and experiences of individual staff and other members of the organization. An organization's culture can either help or hinder the successful leveraging of the organization's assets—personnel, skills, and resources—in relation to the implementation of a co-responder program.

It is important to consider and assess your own organizational culture and how it might impact the successful implementation of a co-responder model. Bearing in mind the organizational culture characteristics listed above, ask yourself and your team:

- What might create challenges to successfully collaborating with other organizations?
- Is my organization prepared to have courageous conversations internally and with partners?
- Is my entire organization ready to implement a co-responder model, or is there only a single enthusiastic champion?
- For advocacy agencies, how do my employees feel about partnering with law enforcement? Will they be open to moving from an office setting to a field setting and able to handle challenges such as weather, cleanliness, witnessing poverty, and more? Are my supervisors ready to support staff responding on-scene? If we already struggle with staff retention, how would making these changes help or hurt efforts to keep qualified staff members?
- For law enforcement agencies, how do my officers feel about responding to advocates? Will they be able to handle the additional responsibility of protecting the advocate on-scene or during follow-up visits? Is my organization willing to make domestic and sexual violence calls a priority?
- How would my organization feel about sharing funding with partner organizations, including culturally specific partners?
- How might mutually sharing information about my organizational culture with another organization benefit the planning and implementation of a collaboration? How might issues of confidentiality and privilege arise?

Resources: Michael Watkins, "What Is Organizational Culture? And Why Should We Care?" *Harvard Business Review*, May 15, 2013, <https://hbr.org/2013/05/what-is-organizational-culture>.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials B

Role-Play Scenarios

Note: Role-playing can help officers and advocates to explore how they would respond to various situations. Use these scenarios to generate discussions with your co-responder team. **Note:** This supplementary material provides additional detail on Understanding Organizational Culture and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Understanding Organizational Culture](#) section.

Scenario 1

You are dispatched to a call for a possible rolling domestic dispute between a driver and passenger driving down the road. The third-party caller advises that they are behind the vehicle and can see the driver potentially striking the passenger. You initiate a traffic stop and make contact with the female passenger. She has no visible injuries but is visibly crying and upset. The female exits the vehicle to come back and talk to you but refuses to give you any information about what is going on, only providing answers to basic questions.

Officer Procedure:

The officer can call or ask for an advocate to speak with the female to help bridge the gap and potentially get more information. If the officer calls using their phone, they will leave their phone with the victim and exit the patrol vehicle, ensuring audio/video recording equipment is turned off to preserve confidentiality. Let the female know when she is done to tap on the window for the officer to come back.

The officer can ask for an advocate to come to the scene to speak directly with the victim to provide options and a safety plan. Again, the officer should walk away to provide the advocate the space and confidentiality to speak with the passenger.

Advocate Procedure:

If an advocate is called to the scene, they will address law enforcement (preferably with the victim/survivor present) and get background and information on the call.

If it is a phone call to an advocate from the scene, speak to the officer first for background on the situation. The advocate can introduce themselves to the victim/survivor and redirect them to a quieter area to speak, away from law enforcement. It is good practice to advise the victim/survivor regarding confidentiality (and limitations, for systems-based advocates). If the victim/survivor was not present, let them know what information you have and offer them the ability to provide further information about the current incident. Get any relevant information (nature/history of the relationship, mutual children, key danger assessment questions, etc.) as well as contact information. The primary goal is safety first; what can be done to assure that the victim/survivor is safe and comfortable? For the advocate and the victim/survivor, there should be a safety plan for immediate needs, and then discuss how to proceed with law enforcement.

A good segue into this is to explain to the victim/survivor what their current options are and what comes next with each option. Try to keep it brief but pointed so that they have less information to digest during a traumatic time.

If the advocate is on-scene, and the victim/survivor chooses to speak with law enforcement, advocates can assist with comfort during the interview, but they should not interrupt the interview or statement process,

with the exception of potential rights violations to the victim/survivor.

Contact information should be exchanged and safety planning completed for the immediate time. Follow-up should be done within 24 hours.

Scenario 2

You are dispatched to a disturbance call at a fast-food restaurant by restaurant staff. Dispatch advised that an anonymous call was placed in reference to a white male and female arguing in the restaurant. The caller does not want to meet with law enforcement but provides a physical description of both parties. Once on the scene, you and your partner locate the subjects inside at the counter waiting for their order. Upon approach, both parties indicate that nothing is going on.

You separate the two parties, and the male advises he “showed up here first” and the female showed up and should not have known he was there. He advised that he has felt weird over the past several months, like things have been moved or are missing in the house, and he has been followed. The male advised that they used to live together, but she completely moved out two weeks ago. While they were together, she would threaten to harm herself and him. At any time that he called law enforcement before, nothing has been done. He asks you for help because no one has helped him so far.

Officer Procedure:

Speak with the male and discuss what stalking looks like. Get a picture of what the relationship looked like prior to their separation and what has happened since separation. Ask if the male would like to speak with an advocate and, if so, follow your procedure for that process.

If the male speaks with an advocate, ensure that you are providing space for confidentiality. If the male decides not to speak with an advocate, strongly suggest that he follow up later. Explain what stalking can look like, encourage them to use a [stalking log](#) to document future incidents. Encourage him to call if there are future incidents, potentially even if this occurs outside your jurisdiction (check your laws regarding stalking). Safety plan with the individual.

Advocate Procedure:

Advocates can provide follow up with this victim/survivor, as well as extensive safety planning. Depending on the jurisdiction and laws regarding stalking, it is helpful to explain and assist them with a stalking log, which should include (in this scenario) incidents from the time that the party moved out to the present and anything going forward, to include in a follow-up with law enforcement for a more detailed statement and possible charges. Stalking logs should include the date, time, location, discretion, and witnesses to the incident, as well as if law enforcement was contacted, report number(s), and jurisdiction reported to. Continue to follow up with the victim/survivor and ensure that follow-up is done completely with safety planning, including what is working, what is not, and what can be altered or added to make the situation safer. Tip: It can also be beneficial to include things from before the female moved out as part of a timeline that is less descriptive. This can give history to the case, can possibly be included in the charges, and can also be utilized in a victim impact statement later.

Scenario 3

You are dispatched to a house for a domestic violence call. The caller is a small child and advises that their father is hurting their mother. Dispatch keeps the child on the phone until you arrive. Once the child hears you knocking and announcing, they disconnect. After several attempts, a female answers the door with no

visible injuries and advises you that everything is fine. While speaking with the female at the front door, you hear a male yelling, "Who is it?" While speaking with the female, you are able to get her out on the front porch with the door still open.

Officer Procedure:

Try to separate potential victims/witnesses/offenders while interviewing them. They should not be able to see or hear one another. Speak with the female, ascertain the situation, and inquire who is in the residence, to include the child who called. Call in an advocate if the female is willing to speak with one to help determine the need for services, along with helping to obtain a statement and with safety planning.

Advocate Procedure:

The advocate called to the scene will follow the same procedures as in scenario 1. Ensure that safety precautions are taken prior to approaching the scene, and if the scene feels unsafe, do not hesitate to request an officer to meet you and walk you up to the scene. Ensure that the victim/survivor is aware of the call from the child, and that an investigation will be conducted, as well as advising of any Child Protective Services involvement that may come. For the victim/survivor, this may be scary, but having the information to process is important for them to understand in that moment. This should not be utilized as a threat but should be used for informational purposes. Again, giving victims/survivors information is key in getting cooperation. Often, they do not know what happens or what is coming, so they do not know what to expect. Taking that burden off will assist them in the process later.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials C

Tips on Community Mapping

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on Understanding Organizational Culture and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Community Mapping](#) section.

Once you have decided to initiate a co-responder program, understanding the available community resources to support it is crucial. A community resource mapping tool can help determine what is available in your community. While any team member may lead the implementation of the tool—law enforcement, a criminal justice-based advocate, or another participating partner—it will most likely be undertaken by an advocacy organization. A community mapping tool should account for things such as geography, social and economic factors, and cultural and ethnic diversity. Ideally, the result of the tool is to illustrate a story of survivorship, showing how the transition from victim to survivor could happen in any jurisdiction, both before and after the co-responder project.

The first step in effectively implementing a community mapping tool is to conduct an online search to find services in the community to support victims/survivors. To conduct an effective search, the team should “put themselves in the shoes” of a survivor searching for services. Do not begin with an existing list from a partner agency or a local resource list. The team should begin with simple search terms like “how to get help for domestic violence,” “looking for shelter,” “places that help provide safety in ____ area,” and “how to find a safe place for ____ and me.”

Using generic search terms ensures that the team will produce the same general idea of what is available in the community when a victim/survivor looks for services. Repeat the same search using all social media outlets. Admittedly, this is time-consuming; however, remember that you are trying to understand the experience of a victim/survivor searching for services.

After completing these initial steps, take what you have learned from online searches to develop a comprehensive picture of who would assist survivors with specific needs, such as shelter, food, services, safety, planning, counseling, long-term care, and medical assistance. This information will be more complete if you utilize the following factors:

- Data on demographics.
- Population size.
- Socioeconomics.
- Housing options.
- School district information.
- Law enforcement precincts serving each area.
- Number of calls for service reported.
- Domestic violence fatality review report information.
- Residents’ feelings about the community.
- The role, if any, of gentrification.
- New laws regarding or impacting the community, such as reproductive rights, voting rights, or access to government services.
- Laws around firearms.

Once these factors have been examined, you can begin connecting services. Establishing connections between serving organizations is vital. Each organization should know exactly what the others do and how to refer individuals to services. You may discover that, although multiple agencies are providing care for victims/survivors, they are not connected to the community or to each other, causing a breakdown or disconnect in how survivors would access them. By “breakdown,” we mean that survivors would need to navigate multiple steps to access the diverse services that they require. Continue this process of resource mapping, applying various lenses. Along this road, you may take detours for situations such as the survivor having children, the survivor deciding to move forward with criminal prosecution, or the survivor stopping with mutual aid services. In some instances, victims/survivors may not be willing to move forward with a criminal prosecution. Determine through your resource mapping process if they will still be eligible for additional services. Be sure to include faith- and community-based programs that are serving survivors, even if they are not currently funded.

Community involvement is critical for successful mapping. We know that victims/survivors from culturally and/or population-specific communities often seek services at lower rates. These individuals might be missing from your community map unless they are intentionally involved in the process.

One example of connecting services to support the victim/survivor is connecting vital records to the shelter system to replace duplicate documents that were destroyed or stolen by an abusive partner.

Community Mapping Resources

- [Center for Justice Innovation, Planning Resources](#)
- [Futures Without Violence, Collaborative Community Resource Mapping to Support Survivors of DV/SA/HT \(PDF file of PowerPoint presentation\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, Local Resources](#)

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials D

Co-Responder Model Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool

Note: This supplementary material provides additional details on Organizational Capacity Assessments and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Understanding Your Organizational Capacity](#) section.

Assessing Organizational Culture, Capacity, and Community: The Best Co-Responder Program for Your Community

A domestic violence co-responder model program involves significant responsibility. Conducting an organizational assessment to evaluate capacity for supporting this type of program is critical to successful implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness. Below are some key steps to consider.

1. **Define the purpose:** Clearly communicate the objectives of implementing a domestic violence co-responder model within your organization. Ensure that the purpose aligns with your organization's mission and values. If there is a misalignment, work to resolve it before moving on.
2. **Assess resources:** Evaluate the resources available, such as staff, funding, and technology, to determine if they are sufficient to support the implementation and ongoing operation of the co-responder program. Identify any gaps and plan for necessary adjustments. If funding from multiple sources is being used to support the program, determine how the funding responsibilities are shared.
3. **Review policies and procedures:** Examine your organization's existing policies and procedures related to domestic violence service provision. Ensure that they align with best practices and legal requirements. Identify any necessary updates or additions to support the co-responder program.
4. **Provide staff training and support:** Assess the training needs of staff who will be involved in the co-responder program. Consider the specific skills and knowledge required to effectively respond to domestic violence situations. Develop a comprehensive training program and provide ongoing support to ensure that staff members are equipped to manage sensitive cases.
5. **Empower collaboration with community partners:** Evaluate existing partnerships with local organizations, such as shelters, counseling services, legal aid providers, and community-based service providers. Strengthen and expand these collaborations to enhance the support available to domestic violence victims.
6. **Enable data collection and evaluation:** Establish mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data related to the outcomes and impact of the co-responder program. This will help your organization measure its effectiveness, identify areas for capacity building and improvement, and make data-informed decisions.
7. **Implement risk assessment and safety protocols:** Develop clear protocols for assessing and addressing the safety of domestic violence victims and responders. Consider the potential risks involved and establish guidelines to protect everyone involved in the co-responder program.
8. **Ensure continual improvement:** Implement a process for regular evaluation and improvement of the co-responder model. Encourage feedback from staff, clients, and community partners to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

As you engage in the design and implementation of your jurisdiction's co-responder program, reflect on the following questions when assessing your organization's capacity to engage in a co-responder model partnership with victims, survivors, community, service providers, and criminal justice-based partners.

1. Does your organization have a clear understanding of the co-responder model and its benefits?
2. Does your organization have the necessary resources (staff, training, etc.) to engage in a co-responder program?
3. Have you identified potential partners who are interested in and capable of participating in a co-responder program?
4. Do your potential partners represent the communities served within your jurisdiction (racially and ethnically diverse, LGBTQIA+, elderly, young adults, Deaf or hard of hearing, etc.)?
5. How does your organization currently deal with crisis situations? How might this change under a co-responder program?
6. Does your organization have a history of successful partnerships and collaborative efforts and with whom? With whom do you not have successful efforts?
7. Is there a strong leadership commitment within your organization to establishing and maintaining a co-responder model partnership?
8. Do you have a plan in place to address potential challenges and conflicts that may arise during the implementation of the co-responder model?
9. How would your organization ensure the continual training and support required for the co-responder model to be effective?
10. How would your organization measure the success and impact of the co-responder model partnership?
11. Is there a clear communication channel within your organization and with potential partners for effective coordination and information exchange in a co-responder program?
12. What procedures and policies would your organization need to modify or develop to effectively engage in a co-responder program?
13. Are you ready to invest the necessary time and resources needed to make the co-responder program a success?
14. What do you see as your organization's role in the design, implementation, and sustainability of a co-responder program within your jurisdiction?
15. What challenges do you foresee your organization facing? How could your organization mitigate these challenges?

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials E

Los Angeles Police Department Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) Case Study

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on building a co-responder program and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Building Your Co-Responder Program](#) section.

In 1994, the LAPD began its co-response program, DART, in which the LAPD partnered with community-based domestic violence service providers to respond to domestic violence-related calls. The LAPD is divided into 21 geographic areas, and each area has one DART unit. Each DART unit is comprised of at least one specially trained officer (a few areas have two officers) and one community-based advocate. They work 10-hour shifts, four days a week. The days and hours vary by area, as the work schedule is based on the area's related calls for service.

The DART unit monitors the radio for domestic violence calls, handles related calls, and responds, when available, to provide immediate safety planning and crisis intervention. The patrol or DART officer will ask for the victim's consent to talk with a community-based advocate. Victims are advised that they can talk with the advocate one-on-one or with the officer present. It is stressed that the community-based advocates are not affiliated with police, and cooperation with police is not required to receive services.

Each of the areas is partnered with a specific community-based organization, contracted through the City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office and paid for with general funds. Currently, six community-based organizations partner with the LAPD to operate the DART Program.

If the DART unit is not working and police determine that a community-based advocate is needed, usually in the more serious cases, most of the community-based organizations have an advocate available for 24/7 response. Officers or detectives will call and request a community-based advocate to respond to the scene or station to meet with the victim. In other cases, when a callout is not necessary, the LAPD has an "Authorization to Release Contact Information" form that is filled out on all domestic violence investigations when the DART unit does not respond, indicating whether the victim would like to talk to a community-based advocate. When a community-based advocate is working in the station and is not responding to a call in-person, they will call the victim who gave consent to talk to an advocate.

Lessons Learned From DART

The following are some of the critical components to consider when establishing a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) crimes co-responder program.

- **Funding:** In the early stages of DART, funding was a major concern. Initially, funding was obtained by state and federal grants. Private funding was also obtained through donors to the Los Angeles Police Foundation. About 10 years into the program, some funding was obtained through the city's general funds. However, since 2018, all funding is provided by the city's general funds.
- **Logistics:** Providing space for the advocates assigned to each station is important. Do they need laptops, printers, phones, and Internet access? Obtaining identification badges to provide access to

restricted areas of the station is recommended, so the advocate does not have to contact the LAPD every time they need to get into the station or various offices. Ensuring that each DART has a vehicle and computer that can access radio call information is also an important consideration.

- **Safety:** Decide if the DART unit will ride in black-and-white or unmarked vehicles and whether the officer will wear a uniform or plain clothes. Teach advocates how to use the police radio in case of an emergency and decide if advocates need a ballistic vest in case of emergency. Discuss field safety in the event a spontaneous tactical situation should occur (e.g., advocate staying in police vehicle; leaving the vehicle for a place of safety; or, as a last resort, driving away in the police vehicle for safety).
- **Confidentiality:** Discuss with officers that community-based advocates' conversations with a victim are protected by law. Advocates should not be listed in reports, as this could result in them being subpoenaed as witnesses. Take confidentiality concerns into account when developing body-worn video procedures.
- **Educating and training patrol officers:** Recruit officers in the LAPD academy learn about DART as a part of their training, and a community-based advocate speaks to the recruits during the course. At the areas, each DART unit attends roll calls to let patrol officers know that they are working, how to communicate with them, what DART can do, and to summarize any VAWA crimes trends that they are noticing.
- **Communication:** Developing a partnership between officers and community-based advocates is crucial. They are a team and need to trust each other and be able to communicate, even if they are at odds in some circumstances. Identify the contacts for each organization (e.g., LAPD and the Mayor's Office), and establish regular communication between them to discuss operations and any concerns that may arise.
- **Training:** DART officers and community-based advocates receive regular training on topics that they have identified an interest in or that have come up in meetings. Currently, there is one departmentwide training with all DART personnel and one bureau-level training (the 21 areas are divided into four bureaus) annually.
- **Procedures:** The LAPD and the organizations developed a cooperation agreement (separate from the contracts with the Mayor's Office) to document the expectations and procedures of each party. There is a cooperation agreement for each area that is reviewed and revised, if necessary, when new contracts are executed through the Mayor's Office (generally every three to four years).

It can be advantageous for advocates to hear information as it is shared with law enforcement, as it reduces the trauma of the victim having to repeat their story. The advocate may take notes during the interview and gain a better understanding through clarifying questions. Advocacy should follow up separately with the victim to further their safety plan and offer any other services available from the advocacy agency.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials F

Sample Position Descriptions

Note: Position descriptions are compiled from examples provided by various agencies. They should be tailored to each jurisdiction's needs and requirements. Please use them to help develop and implement individualized position descriptions strategically with your partners. Refer to the [Building Your Co-Responder Program](#) section.

<Insert agency name/logo>

Victim Advocate

Position Description

Under the supervision and direction of the [insert supervisor job title], is responsible for providing case management services to enable victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to overcome the negative and dehumanizing impact of crime on their lives.

Responsibilities

Victim Services

- Follows up with victims from domestic violence-related police reports
- Provides information to survivors regarding law enforcement processes
- Provides case management and victim services to victims of domestic violence
- Case management services include crisis counseling, supportive listening and validation, advocacy (with landlords, creditors, employers, family, medical staff, etc.), information and referral services, follow-up, crisis intervention, and assistance with filing victim compensation claims
- Maintains computerized records according to agency policy and procedure
- Provides information and assistance with the applications for orders of protection and crime victims compensation

Interagency Networking

- Maintains and develops effective working relationships with other victim service agencies and allied professionals in order to bring about effective service delivery for victims of domestic violence

Professional Development

- Attends seminars, workshops, and training sessions to keep abreast of developments in the field of victim services and developments in social services as they pertain to client accessibility
- Reads articles, reports, and books relevant to victim services and related research and/or legislation

Employment Standards

- Bachelor's degree in psychology, criminal justice, social work, urban affairs, or a related field or equivalent experience
- General knowledge of human behavior and social systems, with the ability to establish and maintain helping relationships
- The ability to respond effectively to people in crisis situations and to people of different culturally specific and marginalized communities with dignity and respect
- Ability to function effectively and efficiently in a high-crime area, while interfacing with other agencies and organizations
- Excellent verbal and written skills, plus planning and organizational skills required
- Proficient in Microsoft Office
- Must have own transportation and be willing to work some evening and weekend hours
- Previous experience with police collaboration preferred; previous experience with domestic violence and sexual assault highly preferred

Background Requirements

Candidates who have accepted an offer will be required to submit to a background investigation including criminal history, credit history, employment history, educational history, and personal and professional references.

This position description is intended to provide guidelines for job expectations and the employee's ability to perform the position described. It is not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all functions, responsibilities, skills, and abilities. Additional functions and requirements may be assigned by supervisors, as appropriate.

Note: Position descriptions are compiled from examples provided by various agencies. They should be tailored to each jurisdiction's needs and requirements. Please use them to help develop and implement individualized position descriptions strategically with your partners. Refer to the [Building Your Co-Responder Program](#) section.

<Insert agency name/logo>

Police Officer, Co-Responder Program

Position Description

Under the supervision and direction of the [insert supervisor job title], is responsible for providing case management services to enable victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to overcome the negative and dehumanizing impact of crime on their lives.

Responsibilities

1. Enforce the laws of <insert state>, governed by the <insert state> revised code
2. Enforce the laws, as governed by <insert county>, cities, villages, or townships
3. Build partnerships with community organizations, supervisors, subordinates, other criminal justice agencies, and county employees
4. Assist the lieutenant, major, chief, deputy, or sheriff in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of public safety programs
5. In addition to management responsibilities, be able to perform all the functions associated with subordinate positions
6. Prepare and supervise the preparation of necessary records and reports relating to activities
7. Plan, monitor, and implement programs and projects under the direction of the <insert supervisor>
8. Plan and prepare work schedules
9. Demonstrate a continual effort to improve operations, decrease turnaround times, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly to provide quality community service
10. Conduct internal investigations
11. Prepare periodic reports
12. Attend regular training to maintain required knowledge and increase knowledge in a specialized nature of work
13. Assist in the formation and implementation of emergency preparedness plans
14. Conduct roll call training and other types of job instructions
15. Hear and investigate complaints and prepare reports
16. Explain and interpret general and special orders

Skills

1. Proficient with weapons
2. Proficient computer skills
3. Proficient writing skills
4. Excellent interpersonal skills
5. Excellent reading comprehension
6. Always maintains a professional behavior and attitude when on duty, including during high-pressure or stressful situations
7. Operates a motor vehicle

Employment Standards

1. Be immersed in functions related to preventing gender bias in domestic violence, protective orders, stalking, strangulation, and sexual assault investigations (IPV)
2. Be immersed in functions related to strengthening the agency's response to IPV
3. Collaborate and coordinate with the grants and program manager on grant-related matters
4. Follow up on IPV investigations and assist in the execution of related arrests and interviews
5. Attend meetings related to IPV and preventing gender bias in associated investigations
6. Develop lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations and conduct agency and outside training on a wide variety of topics related to preventing gender bias in IPV investigations
7. Research, read, and critique academic articles and journals to evaluate current trends in the criminal justice system
8. Maintain training records and files
9. Attend training courses and engage in self-learning to become an expert practitioner in police-related matters
10. Be a consummate professional and good steward of professional police standards
11. Explore and embrace best practices in law enforcement through IACP, OACP, NTOA, CORSA, and other law enforcement oversight organizations
12. Be willing and able to occasionally work alternative hours and shifts in order to carry out the mission of the Professional Standards Division
13. Any other duties assigned by the <insert supervisor>
14. Must exhibit high moral and ethical standards

Background Requirements

- Candidates who have accepted an offer will be required to submit to a background investigation, including criminal history, credit history, employment history, educational history, and personal and professional references.
- This position description is intended to provide guidelines for job expectations and the employee's ability to perform the position described. It is not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all functions, responsibilities, skills, and abilities. Additional functions and requirements may be assigned by supervisors, as appropriate.

Note: Position descriptions are compiled from examples provided by various agencies. They should be tailored to each jurisdiction's needs and requirements. Please use them to help develop and implement individualized position descriptions strategically with your partners. Refer to the [Building Your Co-Responder Program](#) section.

<Insert agency name/logo>

DART Advocate Position

Job Summary

During peak hours, the DART advocate will respond with DART officers to the scene of domestic and intimate partner violence incidents in one of LAPD's 21 divisions to provide on-site crisis intervention including safety counseling and planning, referrals for shelter, wellness counseling, legal services, assistance with restraining orders, personal and criminal advocacy, comprehensive case management service, and other supports.

During nonpeak hours, the DART advocate will provide an immediate crisis and safety response to victims of domestic violence when contacted by law enforcement. The DART advocate is responsible for coordinating follow-up and wraparound services for victims encountered by the DART Unit or referred for assistance by the division detectives. Additionally, the DART advocate will work with LAPD DART personnel to coordinate community response efforts and domestic violence reduction initiatives.

We are looking for someone with a flexible schedule, as DART shifts vary based on peak hours for calls for service. We seek an individual who has a passion for helping others and a commitment to developing and strengthening community resources and partnerships.

About DART

DART are multidisciplinary crisis response teams that pair domestic violence advocates with specially trained LAPD officers. DART responds to 9-1-1 emergency calls for domestic violence incidents. Both the officers and the victim advocates are highly trained and have extensive knowledge on signs of intimate partner violence, sensitivity working with victims and their children, and other issues of domestic violence. DART advocates are not law enforcement personnel and do not work for the police. Any information that a victim discusses with a DART advocate is confidential and cannot be shared with third parties without written authorization.

Duties and Responsibilities

DART advocates will be co-located at one of the 21 LAPD divisions to provide the following activities:

- Provide immediate crisis and safety counseling to victims of domestic violence contacted by the LAPD
- Provide trauma informed crisis intervention services, including telephone or face-to-face crisis intervention counseling, advocacy, accompaniment, and referrals to domestic violence survivors
- Conduct comprehensive needs and risk assessments, as well as client intake processes for continuation of services in counseling, case management, and/or legal programs

- Prepare a case service plan and objectives with the survivor to ensure that they receive a full range of services, as needed
- Assist victims in obtaining domestic violence restraining orders and accompaniment to court proceedings, witness interviews, and other related appointments, as appropriate
- Educate survivors about the dynamics of domestic violence and available community resources
- Explain the civil and criminal legal system to survivors and link survivors to social services or other community resources, as needed
- Provide education on life skills, financial literacy, professional development, resume writing, and interviewing skills to survivors
- Follow up with victims referred by police departments and provide victims with referrals, information, services, and support, as needed
- Coordinate with the DART project manager to promote systems advocacy with law enforcement agencies, prosecuting agencies, medical personnel, and other victim service agencies
- Facilitate communication between hospitals, law enforcement, and legal system agencies on behalf of victims of domestic violence
- Assist victims with completion of Victim Impact Statements and Victim Compensation Program forms
- Assist in providing ongoing outreach to law enforcement, medical facilities, and other service agencies
- Develop and facilitate training to social services, law enforcement, medical personnel, and community partners
- Conduct community workshops, parenting classes, and financial literacy support
- Represent the DART Program at community outreach events
- Collect statistical and demographic information, including incident and watch reports, and ensure accurate recordkeeping
- Respond in a timely manner to email and phone requests for service
- Attend and participate in DART meetings, as scheduled
- When requested by the DART project manager, assist with training of staff, volunteers, law enforcement, and medical personnel
- Coordinate the recruitment, training, and onboarding of DART volunteers
- Must work a 4/10 schedule during DART peak hours and work nonpeak hours as needed; work schedule must mirror that of the assigned DART officer

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience
- Bilingual capability (English/Spanish) preferred
- Must have the state mandated 40-hour domestic violence counselor certification
- Experience working with victims and survivors of domestic violence/intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) victims
- Must have an understanding of domestic abuse and related issues
- Demonstrate knowledge of trauma-informed crisis intervention, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, stalking, elder abuse intervention, and experience in crisis counseling
- Ability to function independently and in a team environment
- Demonstrated ability to handle confidential information
- Ability to deal well in crises
- Willingness to respond on-scene with LAPD officers and provide immediate crisis intervention to DV/IPV victims
- Willingness to work from the police station and the field
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with criminal justice and social service agencies members
- Ability to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary environment
- Strong and effective oral and written communication skills, as well as experience public speaking and facilitating group discussions
- Ability to work well with a diverse group of people
- Ability to work with clients, volunteers, and staff members in a nonjudgmental manner
- Ability to relate in an empathetic, supportive, nonjudgmental manner to victims and their families
- Demonstrate initiative and professionalism, with the ability to work and maintain workload independently
- Capacity to balance and provide self-care while meeting the demands of a crisis center
- Computer literacy required: email, Microsoft Office, and Internet basics
- Flexible schedule to fit varying shifts
- Capacity to work some weekends and/or evenings
- Understanding of the civil and criminal justice systems, especially as related to DV/IPV
- Strong organizational skills
- Ability to pass the Department of Justice background check
- A valid California driver's license and automobile insurance

Knowledge, Specialized Skills, and Abilities

Candidates must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide risk assessment and the management of multidisciplinary team relationships, as well as the capacity to remain calm, focused, and responsive in crisis situations. The candidate must have effective interpersonal skills, clear professional boundaries, and the ability to work in partnership with the LAPD. Criminal background clearance, a California driver's license, an automobile, and automobile insurance will be required.

Salary and Benefits:

This is a full-time position. The salary range is XXXX annually, commensurate with experience. Full-time employees are offered a generous benefits package that includes paid sick and vacation leave. In addition, employees can participate in an optional contributory 401(k) retirement plan and dependent and health flex savings accounts (FSA).

Note: Position descriptions are compiled from examples provided by various agencies. They should be tailored to each jurisdiction's needs and requirements. Please use them to help develop and implement individualized position descriptions strategically with your partners. Refer to the [Building Your Co-Responder Program](#) section.

<Insert agency name/logo>

DART Officer Position

Job Summary

During peak hours, the DART Officer will respond with DART advocates to the scene of domestic and intimate partner violence incidents at the officer's assigned division. The DART officer will seek the victim's consent for the DART advocate to speak with the victim and provide on-site crisis intervention including safety planning and referrals for shelter. During nonpeak hours, the DART officer will work with the DART advocate to provide an immediate crisis and safety response to victims of domestic violence when contacted by patrol officers or detectives at their assigned division. Additionally, the DART officer will work with LAPD DART personnel to coordinate community response efforts and domestic violence reduction initiatives.

The DART officer should have a flexible schedule, as DART shifts vary based on peak hours for calls for service. Any interested officer should have a passion for helping others and a commitment to developing and strengthening community resources and partnerships.

About DART

DART are multidisciplinary crisis response teams that pair domestic violence advocates with specially trained LAPD officers. DART responds to 9-1-1 emergency calls for domestic violence incidents. Both the officers and the victim advocates are highly trained and have extensive knowledge on signs of intimate partner violence, sensitivity working with victims and their children, and other issues of domestic violence. DART advocates are not law enforcement personnel and do not work for the police. Any information that a victim discusses with a DART advocate is confidential and cannot be shared with third parties without written authorization.

Duties and Responsibilities:

DART officers will be partnered with a DART advocate co-located at one of the 21 LAPD divisions to provide the following activities:

- Assignment to detectives under the direct supervision of the major assault crimes coordinator
- Attend the roll call that most closely coincides with the officer's start of watch
- Respond to domestic violence calls for service and assist the primary responding unit by providing investigative expertise/support including, but not limited to, the following areas:
- Completion of applicable report(s), to include crime/arrest reports, domestic violence incident reports, etc.

- Interview techniques/questions (with emphasis on strangulation investigations)
- Emergency protective orders
- Provide telephonic advice when unable to respond to domestic violence calls for service
- Inform the victim of their right to have a domestic violence advocate and a support person of the victim's choosing present at any interview by law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, or defense attorney, pursuant to California Penal Code Section 679.05
- Assist the DART advocate in providing immediate crisis and safety counseling to victims of domestic violence
- Provide detail and assist victims in obtaining domestic violence restraining orders, accompaniment to court proceedings, witness interviews, and other related appointments, as appropriate
- Educate victims about the dynamics of domestic violence and available community resources
- Explain the civil and criminal legal system to victims and link victims to social services or other community resources, as needed
- Follow up with victims referred by patrol officers and detectives and provide victims with referrals, information, services, and support, as needed
- Assist in providing ongoing outreach to law enforcement personnel assigned to the division and other service agencies
- Provide knowledge and advice to law enforcement personnel at the division level
- With the DART advocate, represent the DART Program at community outreach events
- Attend and participate in DART meetings, as scheduled
- Must work a 4/10 schedule during DART peak hours and work nonpeak hours, as needed; work schedule must mirror that of the assigned DART advocate

Qualifications

- Completed at least two years of patrol time
- Bilingual capability (English/Spanish) preferred
- Experience working with victims of DV/IPV victims
- Understanding of domestic abuse and related issues
- Demonstrated knowledge of trauma informed crisis intervention, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, stalking, and elder abuse intervention
- Ability to function independently and in a team environment
- Demonstrated ability to handle confidential information
- Willingness to respond on-scene with DV advocates and provide immediate crisis intervention to DV/IPV victims
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with criminal justice and social service agencies members
- Ability to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary environment

- Strong and effective oral and written communication skills, as well as experience public speaking and facilitating group discussions
- Ability to work well with a diverse group of people
- Ability to relate in an empathetic, supportive, nonjudgmental manner to victims and their families
- Demonstrate initiative and professionalism
- Flexible schedule to fit varying shifts
- Capacity to work some weekends and/or evenings
- Understanding of the civil and criminal justice systems, especially as related to DV/IPV

Knowledge, Specialized Skills, and Abilities

Candidates must possess the ability, knowledge, and skill to provide risk assessment and the management of multidisciplinary team relationships, as well as the capacity to remain calm, focused, and responsive in crisis situations. The candidate must have effective interpersonal skills, clear professional boundaries, and the ability to work in partnership with the LAPD. Criminal background clearance, a California driver's license, an automobile, and automobile insurance will be required.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials G

Guiding Principles Tool

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on Guiding Principles and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Guiding Principles](#) section.

Guiding principles encompass the values that people and organizations strive to embody when they work collaboratively. In the co-responder context, guiding principles help set expectations and establish a common vision for the partner organizations responsible for developing and implementing the co-responder program. Ideally, the partner organizations forming the co-responder team, with input from others in the community, should envision and establish their guiding principles collaboratively. Guiding principles can serve as a compass as planning and implementation are navigated. They may be referred to as program needs change over time, and innovative approaches may be called for as well.

In developing *A Roadmap to Building a Successful Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking (VAWA Crimes) Program Guide*, our task force collaboratively created and adhered to the following guiding principles. These may serve as an example for communities engaged in co-responder program development and implementation:

Unbiased and equitable response to all members of the community, with specific attention to those who are historically marginalized and underserved is a cornerstone principle. It guides all the work and is a key component of all the remaining guiding principles—it is also why some principles refer, where relevant, to the “entire community.”

- **Victim-centered practices**, including incorporating the victim’s voice and choice, exercising informed decision making, and protecting confidentiality.
- **A focus on safety** for victims, law enforcement, advocates, and the entire community.
- **Equitable partnerships and collaboration**, with accountability, transparency, trust, and a safe environment in which to engage in challenging conversations.
- **Ongoing community engagement** throughout the entire life cycle of the program.
- **Accountability to victims and to the entire community.**
- **Trauma-responsive policies and practices** that promote safety and healing by recognizing and adapting to the needs of people who have suffered trauma.

We recommend that agencies and communities engaged in the development and implementation of co-responder programs create guiding principles that address common values and goals. It will serve the team well as it encounters challenging issues, differing perspectives, and potential conflicts.

Clarifying notes about the language used in the guiding principles:

- Adopting **victim-centered practices** sets the expectation that every victim is afforded the opportunity, to the extent possible, to have their expressed wishes considered and to be provided with the information necessary to make informed choices (including whether and to whom to disclose abuse and whether to participate in criminal processes). It does not mean that the victim has the power to decide how professionals respond to their situation; decision-makers must have the discretion to act in accordance with their mandate to protect public safety.
- Disciplines often define the term **safety** differently, and it is important to work through any conflicts or inconsistencies as a team. Ultimately, safety is often best identified and defined by the victim.
- **Equitable partnerships** recognize that individuals and organizations devoting their time and resources to the project must be monetarily compensated fairly for that work and that inclusion in the work is more than checking a diversity, equity, and inclusion “box”—their roles and perspectives help shape the work in a meaningful way.
- **Historically marginalized and underserved** includes all populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services, including populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity; underserved racial and ethnic populations; and populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age). See [34 U.S.C. § 12291\(a\)\(39\)](#). In addition to geographic and special needs barriers, some populations, especially racially and ethnically diverse communities and LGBTQIA+ communities, are considered underserved because they reasonably distrust and may avoid engaging with the legal system because of historical violence and oppression against their communities.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials H

Comparing Risk Assessment Tools Through a Co-Responder Lens

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on risk assessment tools and supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please use it to further your understanding on this topic and to foster conversations with your team after reading the [Building a Co-Responder Program](#) section.

While both lethality assessment program (LAP) and co-responder models prioritize victim/survivor safety and collaboration, there are core differences that distinguish their approaches. The models diverge in four key areas: **location and safety of the advocate, confidentiality, the determination of and response to danger, and the partnership between law enforcement and the advocate.**

Location and Safety of Advocate

In the LAP model, while officers respond to the incident, victim advocates are not normally present at the scene. Toward the conclusion of the officer's investigation and after a lethality assessment is conducted, if there is a determination of high danger, officers will contact a victim advocate by telephone. The advocate will review the assessment and discuss safety planning based on the feedback from the officer and victim/survivor. If the victim is uncomfortable speaking with an advocate, the officer will attempt to serve as a liaison. The advocate will provide information about resources and support. After the victim is transferred to a safe location, they can choose to follow up but do not have to continue engaging with the advocate.

In the co-responder model, the officer and the advocate respond to the scene of the incident together. Unlike in the LAP model, a primary consideration is the safety of the advocate. Written procedures and protocols should be created to ensure that their safety is maintained. Law enforcement will ensure scene integrity and find a private location for the victim and the advocate to speak in person. While helping to create a safety plan, the advocate has the benefit of observing the physical and emotional well-being of the victim. Based on these observations, the advocate can offer resources that are appropriate for the victim. The officer, advocate, and victim work together to determine a safe location for the victim. Once the victim is at this location, the advocate will encourage them to follow up for any services that they may require. The victim/survivor can choose to follow up but does not have to continue engaging with the advocate.

Confidentiality

A core priority of any victim and advocate relationship is confidentiality. Any conversation between a victim/survivor and advocate can be confidential, while no such privilege exists for conversations between victims and law enforcement. Consequently, it is necessary to have policies and procedures in place that protect and support confidentiality. In the LAP model, confidentiality is maintained by allowing the victim to speak privately by phone with an advocate. The victim will need to be in a location where law enforcement is unable to listen to the call. In the co-responder model, the victim/survivor and advocate are both present at the scene. As a result, the officer will want to ensure the safety of both without compromising their right to privacy and confidentiality. This can be a challenge with multiple individuals to keep track of.

Differences Between Co-Responder and LAP Models		
	Co-Responder Model	LAP
Location and Safety of Advocate	Advocate at the scene with an officer, safety planning is required	Advocate not at scene, contacted by phone
Confidentiality	Victim and advocate need a private space for confidentiality	Victim needs a private space to speak with the advocate over the phone
Determination of and Response to Danger	Officer and advocate determine the level of risk and an appropriate response	Officer uses an assessment tool to determine risk, only contacts the advocate during high-danger determinations
Partnership Between Law Enforcement and Advocate	In-person, at the scene, working together	By phone, law enforcement request the support of the advocate

Determination of and Response to Danger

The LAP and co-responder models have different ways of determining risk for a victim/survivor. In the LAP model, an assessment tool is used in conjunction with the officer's investigation to decide if the victim/survivor faces a high risk of serious injury or being killed. In the co-responder model, the officer can work with the advocate and the victim/survivor to determine the victim/survivor's risk of danger. While the advocate or officer can use an assessment tool, they do not necessarily need to, instead relying on previous training and experience.

Based on the level of risk, the models have different responses to ensure victim/survivor safety. In the LAP model, if a determination of high danger is made, the protocol requires the officer to contact the advocate to assist the victim/survivor with safety planning and discuss resources available. If a determination of nonhigh danger is made, the protocol does not require the officer to contact an advocate but has them provide the victim/survivor with general safety planning and the resources available through the domestic violence program. In a co-responder model, the advocate is present for the entirety of the process. Unlike the LAP model, whether there is a determination of high danger or nonhigh danger, the advocate will be available to provide safety planning and offer resources to the victim/survivor.

Partnership Between Law Enforcement and Advocates

Communication is fundamental to any successful intervention in cases of domestic violence. In the LAP model, officers at the scene contact the advocate after they have built a rapport with the victim/survivor. Inherently, they establish a relationship with the victim/survivor before the advocate gets involved. In the co-responder model, the advocate is present at the beginning and establishes a relationship with the victim/survivor at the same time as the officer. The difference in timing can impact the dynamic of building trust.

While in the LAP model, the officer contacts the advocate as a resource. In the co-responder model, the officer and advocate immediately start out as partners. In other words, there is a greater level of parity between the two parties. The model is most effective when the same officers and advocates work together on cases, helping to develop a greater level of trust and partnership.

The LAP and co-responder programs can work in tandem with one another. While separately, their processes are different, they can be modified and coordinated in a way that may be most effective for your community.

Risk Assessment Tools

Note About Risk Assessment Tools:

When considering using risk assessment tools, remember that there are different costs and benefits. The LAP provides law enforcement with an effective tool for determining high danger and for providing prosecutors with evidence to request a high bond. The LAP, though, takes the control out of the victims' hands, reducing their autonomy. Other assessments, like the Danger Assessment, are confidential between the victim and the advocate. The advocate has full autonomy and can decide whether to share the results with law enforcement. If advocates do not share the assessment, law enforcement loses a potential tool to support offender accountability. If you are planning to implement a risk assessment, consider the trade-offs to ensure that the tool is the right fit for your community.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials I

Advocate Roles

Note: This supplementary material provides additional detail on advocate roles and supports the content in A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking. Read the section on [Advocate Roles](#) and utilize this chart to help you and your team better understand the different types of advocates and how their roles assist victims/survivors on-scene when co-responding with law enforcement.

Responding to the Scene—Initial Roles

Officer	Community-Based Advocate (Including Culturally Specific Advocates)	System-Based Advocate (Victim Assistant)
Primary concern: ensure safety	Respond to location (police department/community-based location)	Respond to location (police department/community-based location)
Contact the identified victim or caller	Provide crisis intervention support, including safety planning	Provide crisis intervention support, including safety planning
Separate the victim, offender, and any witnesses or involved parties if the predominant aggressor has not been determined	Provide information and answer questions about the current event and the next 48 hours	Provide information and answer questions about current event and the next 48 hours
Identify the use of self-defense	Provide information on available supportive services to meet the immediate, most pressing needs identified by the victim	Connect the victim to community-based advocates to learn about/obtain supportive services
Identify the predominant aggressor		Inform the victim that communications are not confidential
Initiate the co-responding model (use of a LAP; need for immediate advocate assistance; and need for advanced investigatory or specific officer, depending on the model you are using)	Keep all services and communications confidential	

Responding to the Scene—Initial Roles (continued)

Officer	Community-Based Advocate (Including Culturally Specific Advocates)	System-Based Advocate (Victim Assistant)
Respond to the scene with or adjacent to the advocate	Follow up with law enforcement and/or system-based advocates to support the victim as their case moves through the criminal justice process	Connect with the victim regarding case status, notices, and other information to support the victim during the criminal justice process
Provide advanced follow-up to assist the victim or gather more evidence		
Continue to work with the team to provide what the victim needs moving forward		

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials J

Example Memorandums of Understanding

Note: These example memorandums of understanding are provided by agencies to assist you in developing your own agreement. Please customize it based upon the needs of your jurisdiction. This tool supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please read [Step 6: Formalize Decisions, Manage Logistics, and Implement Your Co-Response](#) of the guide for additional information.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

<Insert agency/organization name here>

and

<Insert police department name here>

This Inter-Agency Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered <insert date>

PARTIES

This memorandum of understanding is between the *<insert law enforcement agency>* and *<insert victim services agency>*. The parties agree to each identify a central point-of-contact for the other, and with respect to this Agreement, the points-of-contact are as follows:

- *<Insert law enforcement contact information>*
- *<Insert victim services agency contact information>*

Unless otherwise agreed to, all information-sharing between the parties described in this Agreement will flow between these points-of-contact. The parties agree to share a contact list with their point-of-contact for implementation of this Agreement and to notify the parties of any changes to their points-of-contact as soon as practicable.

Description of Parties:

- Per *<insert state>* revised code, the *<insert law enforcement agency>* is tasked with the responsibility of preserving the peace of the public, overseeing the enforcement of court orders, providing courthouse security, and conducting jail operations within its jurisdiction.
- *<Insert victim services agency, local nonprofit organization>* offers a wide range of programs and services to protect, educate, and empower those affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, dating violence, and/or stalking. Their core services include a 24-hour crisis line, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, and professional trauma counseling services.

History of Relationship:

<Insert the background and history of the relationship between the two entities, law enforcement and victim services>

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to assist in identifying victims and connecting them to coordinated, trauma-informed services soon after a crime is reported. Through a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach, adult victims of domestic

violence, sexual assault, stalking, and strangulation will be offered assistance immediately following a crime, informing the victims of their rights; updates on the investigation, as appropriate; and possibly until prosecution, depending on the case. It is further the purpose of this Agreement to promote collaboration between the parties to enhance the reporting, investigation, and appropriate response to these types of cases in *<insert jurisdiction>*.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The parties agree to the following set of principles:

- A. Improving Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration: The parties agree to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration and protect the victim's confidential information.
- B. Upholding Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and Victims' Rights: The parties agree to comply with state and federal laws in a manner that protects individuals' civil rights and liberties, while prosecuting crimes and championing justice for survivors.
- C. Centering the Victim's Needs: The parties agree to focus on and strengthen the response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and strangulation.
- D. Ensuring Accountability and Auditing: To promote greater transparency, the parties will implement a means to monitor, record, and accurately maintain all reports, their outcomes, and processes while maintaining confidentiality where the law provides.
- E. Specialized Training and Knowledge: The parties agree that crimes related to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and strangulation require specialized, trauma-informed training for the parties and other potential first responders.

JURISDICTION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The parties understand that there are various law enforcement agencies in *<insert county>*, each having designated jurisdictional boundaries of enforcement, per the *<insert state>* revised code. The *<insert law enforcement agency>* has jurisdiction in the entire county and will assist other law enforcement agencies, when requested.

VICTIM SERVICES

The *<insert law enforcement agency>* agrees to provide shared office space to *<insert victim services agency and address>*. *<Insert victim services agency>* agrees to ensure that a victim advocate is available and works from the shared office space on the dates and times agreed upon in the written quarterly schedule. Through coordinated efforts, the parties will establish a co-responding model for addressing intimate partner crime within *<insert jurisdiction>*. The parties agree, with the victim's consent, to provide the following.

Assigned staff at the *<insert law enforcement agency name>* will:

- Provide crisis intervention.
- Provide information, resources, and referrals.
- Explain the process of criminal investigation and agency involvement.
- Answer any questions and address any concerns that the victim may have.
- Provide victims with a realistic expectation of what will happen during any investigation and explain the criminal justice process in *<insert jurisdiction>*.

- Ensure that victims have the information that they need to make informed decisions.
- Assist in developing the safety plan and utilizing equipment, when necessary (cameras, working with dispatch for regular checks, charging offenders that violate orders of protection, etc.).
- Work to protect the victim's rights.
- Assist victims with obtaining copies of reports, obtaining property collected as evidence, etc.
- Ensure that offenders placed in jail are served with any orders of protection that have been granted prior to their release.
- Provide victim advocates with times and places of court proceedings.
- Serve as a communication link for victims within the court system.
- Help explain the nature and status of court proceedings.

On-site partner victim advocates will:

- Provide information, resources, and referrals.
- Provide crisis intervention and emotional support.
- Encourage victims to report crimes but provide assistance whether they report the crime or not.
- Accompany victims to interviews, exams, follow-up appointments, and courtroom proceedings.
- Provide safety planning.
- Work to protect the victim's rights.
- Assist in securing orders of protection.
- Assist in accessing crime victim compensation.
- Help victims obtain shelter/financial assistance.
- Provide counseling and case management.
- Serve as a liaison between other agencies.
- Help provide access to services for victims with physical or mental disabilities.
- Help provide access to interpretive services for people who are Deaf/hard of hearing and non-English speakers.
- Assist with transportation to appointments and proceedings, if needed.
- Provide victims with times and places of court proceedings and accompany them to court.
- Act as a liaison with law enforcement and other community agencies.

The parties agree to have and share policies setting out their respective responsibilities related to victim support, from the time of the report through resolution of the investigation and including prosecution, as applicable.

The *<insert law enforcement agency>* agrees to provide information regarding victim rights and services when responding to reports of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and strangulation. The *<insert law enforcement agency>* agrees to notify the assigned victim advocate of *<insert victim advocate agency>* when a report of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or strangulation is generated.

The assigned victim advocate will also provide information regarding victim's rights and resources, and they

will be responsible for reviewing rights with victims. The assigned victim advocate will coordinate services, including providing the appropriate referrals and resources, developing safety plans, providing access to protection order information/forms, and assisting the victim with financial resources through the *<insert state>* Attorney General's Victim Compensation Program, if applicable.

COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The *<insert law enforcement agency>* commits the following to this project:

- A shared office space for victim advocates located at *<insert address>*.
- A full-time deputy assigned to Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT).
- Development and printing of documents/brochures for crime victims that outline rights, available services, and contact information.
- Trained, trauma-informed staff.

<Insert victim advocate agency name> commits the following to this project:

- Will serve in rotation by assignment to provide advocacy and support services to victims and their families on-site at the *<insert law enforcement agency>*.
- Will also respond through on-call rotation to the hospital or any other secure community location as identified by the *<insert law enforcement agency>* to provide immediate advocacy and crisis stabilization support for victims and their families.
- Will serve as a member of the CCRT, including representation by advocates and agency leadership, including but not limited to the executive director.
- Will provide advocacy services aligned with the evidence-based and best practices of the Community Advocacy Project Model. Provide crosstraining to the CCRT members in best practice protocols.
- Will provide follow-up for all reported incidents of crime related to domestic and intimate partner violence, strangulation, and stalking as assigned by the *<insert law enforcement agency>*.
- Will provide follow-up for all open advocacy/victim assistance cases in keeping with agency accreditation and best practices to ensure engagement, connectivity of supports, and safety.
- Will provide emergency shelter and safe house services, with priority for victims and their families referred from the *<insert law enforcement agency>*.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The parties agree to collect data on:

- Domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and strangulation reports/cases, as well as VOCA and VAWA required data.
- Training (topics covered; number of staff members trained/participated; trainer/presenter information; location; and dates to be included).
- Whether the parties met the Agreement requirements and if not, why.
- The victim services survey.
- The community partner survey.

The parties agree to determine common definitions to ensure a valid comparison of data collected. Data collection related to the parties' actions according to this Agreement will be reviewed directly between the parties on a minimum of a biannual basis. Parties will evaluate changes in the number of reports each year and discuss whether any increases or decreases in reporting are due to changes in actual crime levels or changes in levels of reporting. Performance improvement areas, including strategies to increase levels of reporting and decrease instances of crime, will be identified through review of the data, and the responsible party will develop action steps to improve those areas. Each party representative responsible for implementation of this Agreement will meet at least annually to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the Agreement to determine areas for improvement and discuss appropriate next steps.

INDEMNIFICATION AND HOLD HARMLESS

Each agency will be responsible for the acts of its own employees while acting within the scope of their employment. Each party agrees that its obligations under this provision extend to any claim, demand, and/or cause of action brought by or on behalf of any of its employees or agents. Nothing in this Agreement shall be interpreted to limit or restrict each of the parties' legal, jurisdictional, or other rights or obligations with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. No provision of this Agreement shall form the basis of a cause of action at law or equity by any Party against any other Party, nor shall any provision of this Agreement form the basis of a cause of action at law or equity by any third party.

AUTHORITY

Each signatory to this Agreement represents that they have full and sufficient authority to execute this Agreement on behalf of their organization, as the case may be, and that upon execution of this Agreement, it shall constitute a binding obligation of the parties.

MISCELLANEOUS

This Agreement is effective upon signature by each party and may be terminated upon 30 days' notice by any party. This Agreement may be amended or terminated by mutual Agreement of the parties. An amendment or termination should be done in writing. Each party agrees to act in good faith to observe the terms of this Agreement; however, nothing in this Agreement is intended to require any unlawful or unauthorized act by any party.

We, the undersigned, have read and agree with this Agreement.

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Note: These example memorandum of understanding is provided to assist you in developing your own agreement. Please customize it based upon the needs of your jurisdiction. This tool supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please read [Step 6: Formalize Decisions, Manage Logistics, and Implement Your Co-Response](#) of the guide for additional information.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

<Insert agency/organization name here>

and

<Insert police department name here>

The memorandum of understanding (hereinafter referred to as “MOU”) is a collaborative agreement between the *<insert victim advocate agency>*, a 501c3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization, and the *<insert law enforcement agency>*.

The MOU reflects the shared commitment of the department and *<insert victim advocate agency name>* to provide to victims of domestic violence and homicide safe and effective services. The department and *<insert victim advocate agency name>* partner to provide victims with a high level of quality services while allowing law enforcement to remain focused on the investigatory portion of the process.

Duties of the Department

The department will, to the extent permitted by law, provide to *<insert victim advocate agency>*:

- Reports filed on domestic violence incidents (including intimate partner sexual assaults).
- Reports filed on homicides incidents.
- Office space, phone and computer access, and general support for the activities performed by the *<insert victim advocate agency>* victim advocates.

The department is responsible for any follow-up investigation(s), as necessary to be determined by the department.

Duties of *<insert victim advocate agency>*

<Insert victim advocate agency> will:

- Provide two full-time advocates wherein one will be embedded in the Domestic Violence Unit and one will be embedded in the Homicide Unit.
 - The contracted advocates will report to the commander of the designated unit.
 - The contracted advocate assigned to the Domestic Violence Unit will provide initial assistance including, but not limited to, safety planning, information gathering, and providing information regarding social service resources.
 - The contracted advocate assigned to the Homicide Unit will provide follow-up assistance including, but not limited to, grief, information around the criminal justice system, assistance with filings of crime victim compensation forms, and crisis intervention.

- Provide assistance through the use of the contracted advocates who will work in tandem with the detective(s) to ensure that all information about certain incident(s) is documented.
- Provide on-site assistance at the department headquarters as an immediate resource to victims who come to the department to file a report or provide information.

The department and *<insert victim advocate agency>* agree to confidentially share information to the extent permitted by law and consistent with the Criminal Justice Information Services requirements as necessary to best assist victims, with the objective of keeping the victim safe by providing efficient and coordinated assistance. Except as required by law, no representative of the department or *<insert victim advocate agency>* will be asked to divulge information provided by the victim without the victim's consent. The department and *<insert victim advocate agency>* will maintain the confidentiality of all records and files, except as required by law.

Cross-training is available between the parties to this agreement and may be arranged to support the needs of each party, as necessary.

Any disagreements or questions about the specifics of this MOU will be addressed and resolved between the department and *<insert victim advocate agency>*'s *<insert title>*.

This Agreement is not a binding contract but represents the parties' mutual understandings, intentions, and expectations with respect to collaboration relating to services in support of victims of violence.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, *<insert victim advocate agency>* and the department have executed this Agreement by their respective representatives designated below.

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials K

Human Resources Considerations

Note: This tool supports the content in *A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking*. Please read the [Personnel and Recruitment](#) section of the guide for additional information.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Co-Responders

When considering recruitment and selection of members of the co-responder team, police and victim service agencies may want to follow the guidelines set forth in policies outlining selection of personnel for a specialized unit or assignment. The training and experience of team members is a critical component to the success of this program. Police leadership may want to seek legal guidance regarding any union contract language as it applies to recruitment and selection of personnel. It is also important that job postings and bulletins clearly define the expectations and outline specific co-responder model expectations.

Benefits and Compensation for Co-Responders

Team members should be properly compensated and receive the same benefits as others in a specialized unit or assignment. This may include shift differential and other benefits offered to personnel in similar assignments. Different funding sources have limitations on the way that you can compensate staff. It will be important to review your funding source guidelines to determine if hazard pay or stipends are possible. This may require you to consult with your legal team to work within grant limitations. Both the law enforcement officer and the advocate should be properly compensated for this specialized role.

Shift Coordination

Moving to a co-responder model may require your staff to work different shifts than your agency is accustomed to. If your agency typically runs a five-day and 40-hour work week schedule and your co-responder model requires your staff to work longer hours, such as a 10-hour day for four days, you will want to look at the labor laws that apply to your state and determine if special designation is required to avoid overtime costs. If this is not possible, then budgeting for overtime at your planning stages will be critical.

Human Resources Support

If your agency does not have a human resources team, it is worth exploring the feasibility of building your team as you embark on this project. Areas you should immediately consult human resources about include ensuring that your worker's compensation policy and insurances are updated to reflect your co-responder model. Human resources should also be consulted in circumstances in which a temporary replacement is needed for a team member due to injury, illness, or family medical leave. Staffing is a critical component of any successful co-responder model, and teams that have shown the most longevity have a rotating hiring model in which substitutes are always available to fill in. Your department should discuss the feasibility of this and plan according to what your funding and capacity allow.

When drafting your personnel policy, administrators should have a procedure in place with respect to handling conflicts between co-responder teams. This policy should clearly define formal violations related to employee conduct, and a procedure should be in place for conflicts that do not rise to the level of a formal violation. It is important to remember that this kind of partnership may be new for your staff members and,

as a result, there may be some growing pains requiring management to intervene. Having a clear plan of action for these types of conflicts can help keep them from escalating.

Support for Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious trauma is defined as “[t]he emotional residue of exposure to traumatic stories and experiences of others through work, witnessing fear, pain, and terror that others have experienced.” Victim services professionals are exposed to vicarious trauma daily and may even experience primary trauma in their personal lives that mimics the experiences that they witness in their clients. Acknowledging that this is a work hazard and normalizing the experience is the first step in creating an environment that fosters emotional sustainability. Offering training to staff on a minimum of an annual basis is a good strategy to provide resources and normalize discussing vicarious trauma.

Your agency should consider offering an Employee Assistance Program as a part of its benefits package. This can be a tool to increase staff retention and decrease burnout and can operate as a recruitment tool for attracting qualified individuals who want to remain in this career path. Another strategy is offering mental health days that can be accessed by staff in hourly increments if they are experiencing vicarious trauma. Overall, your agency should consider the emotional well-being of its staff and the toll that this work will take as a sustainability strategy.

Job Satisfaction Surveys

In the same way that listening to the community is an integral component to building your program, hearing from your staff is a necessary part of sustaining it. Staff engagement surveys should be conducted annually. Key strategies to implementing a successful survey are maintaining a reasonable length or time commitment, asking relevant questions that will garner information on the specific topic area of interest, and ensuring a clear feedback loop. It is critical that there is a clear through-line from the surveys that you administer to your organizational policies and procedures. Surveys should be used as a tool for policy review, and incorporating staff feedback should be commonplace practice.

Professional Development

The perception that your agency is a place where an employee can meet their professional goals and have access to career mobility is key to staff retention. Promotion opportunities and upward and linear organizational pathways should be clear to all staff, regardless of level. Some human resources tools that are commonly utilized are newsletters that highlight specific positions and the pathways to obtaining them, mentorship, and advertisement of available professional development training. Your agency should consider mandating career development plans as part of employee performance evaluations so that the agency and management value staff’s individual growth.

Model Fidelity and Succession Planning

When thinking of sustainability, strive for program longevity. Because a co-responder program will involve working with different organizational structures, it is crucial for institutionalization to be at the forefront of planning. **When a dynamic leader of a program or organization leaves, a project can fall apart, and not institutionalizing best practices can be detrimental to the long-term success of the program.** It is important to recognize that institutionalization will look different for every discipline involved in your model, so we outlined some key points of consideration for partner agencies.

Depending on the type of program that you have chosen, it is important to have a plan for changes in law enforcement personnel. Government entities tend to have more predictable retirement schedules, so

planning for a key figure's retirement is important. If your program has a law enforcement champion (a high-ranking official who supports it), then it is especially critical to plan for succession when that individual is no longer with the organization or is transferred to another department. It is also important to identify the steps necessary for model institutionalization for your specific law enforcement agency. This could include a written policy that outlines annual resources that are to be allocated to the program; a requirement for collaboration with culturally specific, community-based organizations; and a definition for successful community engagement. **We encourage you to memorialize your guiding principles into a concrete, departmentwide policy.**

Promoting Your Co-Responder Program to Your Community

Use positive language and catchphrases promoting healthy relationships and nonviolence to encourage people to tune in to informational webinars and events. Also, consider using alternative outreach methods, such as music; drama; and social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to appeal to younger audiences. Make announcements and outreach open and inclusive and establish the groundwork for developing public education campaigns and grassroots community organizing. Foster open dialogue through community conversations. Go where the people are, such as malls, shopping centers, bookstores, coffee shops, free food happy hours, open mic nights, day parties, or poetry slams. Create events with system-based advocates, law enforcement, community-based organizations, participants, providers, faith-based organizations, and anyone who would like to join. Make events kid and pet friendly!

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials L

Example Training Topics and Learning Objectives

Note: This tool supports the content in A Roadmap to Success: Building a Co-Responder Program for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking. Please read the [Training](#) section of the guide for additional information.

Training Topics and Learning Objectives

	Learning objectives Learners will be better able to:	Possible learning activities
Domestic violence fundamentals	<p>Recognize and address the power and control dynamics inherent in most cases of domestic violence</p> <p>Identify and respond to forms of domestic violence not explicitly addressed in statutory definitions (e.g., coercive controlling abuse, financial abuse, technology-related abuse, cultural abuse, and immigration-related abuse)</p> <p>Describe the forms of coercive control and nonphysical abuse present in many cases, and respond appropriately within their professional roles</p>	<p>Interactive, scenario-based exercises on contextual analysis of domestic violence and identification of forms of abuse and their impact on victims/survivors and children</p> <p>Facilitated discussion of responses to forms of abuse not covered in statutory definitions</p>
Meeting victims/survivors where they are	<p>Recognize why a victim/survivor may not report or disclose abuse to a professional and how to establish trust and other conditions to encourage informed disclosure</p> <p>Explain why a victim/survivor may exhibit nonintuitive behaviors, including recanting or declining to participate in legal cases, failing to report abuse, denying or minimizing abuse, etc.</p> <p>Explain the effects of trauma on a victim/survivor, including neurobiological and other consequences, and how they affect the victim/survivor’s actions and presentation</p> <p>Incorporate trauma-responsive practices, including interviewing, report writing, and other related practices</p> <p>Implement forensic experiential trauma interviewing (FETI) or other types of trauma-informed interviewing for officers and advocates</p>	<p>Interactive, scenario-based exercises on identifying barriers that entrap victims/survivors and barriers to disclosure</p> <p>A “walk in their shoes” exercise</p> <p>Introduction to trauma and its effects on neurobiology</p> <p>Interactive, practice sessions on the use of trauma-responsive interviewing and FETI interviewing</p>

Training Topics and Learning Objectives (continued)

	Learning objectives Learners will be better able to:	Possible learning activities
Safety planning	<p>Conduct ongoing, dynamic, and proactive safety planning (as opposed to a “one-and-done” approach)</p> <p>Describe the elements of an effective safety plan</p> <p>Implement a victim/survivor-led approach to safety planning</p>	<p>Interactive lecture on the safety planning process and key components</p> <p>Role-play session practice session</p>
Understanding and appreciating program participants’ different roles	<p>Recognize and support the role of the professionals involved in co-responder programs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates’ role, such as their responsibility to assist victims/survivors and not discuss the case with or otherwise assist law enforcement <p>Law enforcement’s role, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility and discretion of officers to pursue certain cases; limitations regarding the types of cases that they will investigate (e.g., may not fully investigate a fraud claim, but simply document it) • Reports/allegations that trigger mandatory arrest or other required action by law enforcement • Engage in effective and authentic communication between advocates and law enforcement officers 	<p>Co-training with faculty from all disciplines</p> <p>Scenario-based, facilitated conversations to explore roles (and unhelpful assumptions/misconceptions about them)</p> <p>Facilitated conversation about professional standards and ethical limitations for all co-responder participants</p>
Conflict resolution and positive relationships among professionals	<p>Engage in “courageous conversations” and address areas of conflict productively and positively</p> <p>Resolve conflicts with grace and compassion</p>	<p>Discussion of the elements of authentic, respectful conversations</p> <p>Discussion of conflict-resolution strategies, with role-play opportunities to practice</p> <p>Self-reflection and sharing of participants’ needs and perspectives regarding respect, empathy, compassion, etc.</p>

Training Topics and Learning Objectives (continued)

	Learning objectives Learners will be better able to:	Possible learning activities
Navigating confidentiality in co-responder programs	<p>Explain co-response partners' differing professional standards for confidentiality and what constitutes protected, confidential information</p> <p>Implement concrete strategies for effective collaboration while adhering to professional responsibilities regarding confidentiality, including the safe use of waivers and other tools</p>	<p>Interactive presentation on professional standards (e.g., confidentiality and legal requirements for disclosure)</p> <p>Facilitated creative problem-solving discussion of effective response within confidentiality limitations (can be used to develop/enhance info-sharing policies/agreements)</p> <p>Facilitated exploration of waivers and other tools and how they may be applied</p> <p>Discussion regarding the process for resolving conflicts and challenges around information sharing and confidentiality</p>
Effective implementation of a co-responder program	<p>Explain the purpose of key co-responder program policies, practices, and forms</p> <p>Effectively implement the co-responder program, consistent with governing policies and practices</p>	<p>Interactive presentation on policies, etc.</p> <p>Scenario-based exercises on implementation of key policies/practices</p> <p>Practice sessions on the use of forms</p>
Complex on-scene dynamics and effective co-response	<p>Co-respond safely, collaboratively, and effectively in cases in which a predominant aggressor assessment is necessary</p> <p>Co-respond safely, collaboratively, and effectively in cases in which a dual arrest is made by law enforcement</p>	<p>Interactive, scenario-based exercises on implementation of on-scene co-response when circumstances require a predominant aggressor analysis (tailored to each jurisdiction's law)</p> <p>Interactive, scenario-based exercises on implementation of on-scene co-response when both parties are arrested</p>

Training Topics and Learning Objectives (continued)

	Learning objectives Learners will be better able to:	Possible learning activities
<p>Culturally responsive Implementation of the co-responder program (segment must be developed with culturally specific, community-based organizations and other community partners)</p>	<p>Identify and take steps to mitigate their own implicit bias</p> <p>Effectively collaborate with culturally specific, community-based organizations in the implementation and improvement of the co-responder program</p>	
<p>Community resources</p>	<p>Describe and make appropriate referrals to community-based resources for victims/survivors, including culturally specific, community-based organizations</p> <p>Engage effectively and respectfully with community resources</p>	<p>Presentations by community-based agencies/providers to whom referral may be made (should be compensated for their participation)</p> <p>Scenario-based exercise regarding making appropriate referrals to community-based resources (and follow up)</p>
<p>Language access (segment must be developed with community language access service providers)</p>	<p>Identify language access resources in the community and collaborate to ensure non-English speaking people have full access to all services and opportunities offered by the program</p> <p>Work effectively with language access providers at the scene and during follow-up responses</p> <p>Avoid common pitfalls in working with language access professionals and people who need language access services</p>	

Training Topics and Learning Objectives (continued)

Vicarious trauma	<p>Explain what vicarious trauma is and how to recognize its symptoms in themselves and their colleagues</p> <p>Implement strategies to prevent and mitigate vicarious trauma</p>	
Advocate-specific training (should implement as co-training with law enforcement)	<p>For advocates responding on-scene:</p> <p>Participate in police radio training (and should be assigned call numbers)</p> <p>Attend roll call</p> <p>Understand the operation of vehicles and equipment</p> <p>Participate in firearms training, active shooter training, medical response technician first aid training, etc.</p>	
Coordination of the co-responder model with other existing programs	<p>Effectively co-implement and coordinate the co-responder program and other existing program (LAP, DVHRT, etc.)</p> <p>Ensure that co-implementation avoids imposing undue burdens on victims/survivors and others at the scene</p> <p>Streamline services and referrals for victims/survivors while implementing multiple programs</p>	
Ongoing training for officers and advocates	<p>Provide professionals implementing co-responder programs with cutting edge training on emerging issues and best practices in areas such as the response to strangulation, firearms surrender, stalking, and sexual assault response</p> <p>Equip officers and advocates involved in co-response to serve as subject-matter experts in their agencies, sharing information from training programs with colleagues</p>	

This project was supported by Grant No. 2020-TA-AX-K033 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Supplementary Materials M

Resources for Co-Responder Programs

[National Violence Against Women
Law Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Consortium \(LETTAC\)](#)

[Office on Violence Against Women](#)

[Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)—Safety Planning](#)

[Agency Self-Assessment and Community Assessment:
Approaches to Domestic and Sexual Violence
International Association of Chiefs of Police \(theiacp.org\)](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Infographic:
6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

[Esperanza](#)

[Ujima, Inc.](#)

[Tools and Strategies for Assessing Danger or Risk of Lethality](#)

[Domestic Violence Resource for Increasing Safety and Connection \(DV RISC\)](#)

[Confidentiality Toolkit—Safety Net Project](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on the VAWA Confidentiality Provision](#)

[Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\)—Policing Guidance](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—Trauma Fact Sheets](#)

Additional Resources:

[SART Toolkit—Develop a SART](#)

[Intimate Partner Violence Resources](#)

[National Network to End Domestic Violence](#)

[Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit \(air.org\)](#)



**CO-RESPONDER
PROGRAM**

A LETTAC Initiative